

The Spirit of Love - Part 3

by William Law

God's love is the foundation of our redemption, and Christ's sacrifice is the means by which we are redeemed from sin and restored to our original state of glory and happiness.

Scripture: Isaiah 43:25, John 3:16, Romans 1:18, Romans 5:8, 2 Corinthians 5:19, Ephesians 1:3, Ephesians 2:4-5, Colossians 1:13-14, 1 Peter 5:10, 1 John 4:8

Topics: "God's Love", "Atonement and Redemption"

Description

William Law discusses the nature of God's love and the concept of atonement, emphasizing that God's essence is pure love, devoid of wrath or resentment. He argues that the evils and discord in the world stem from fallen nature, not from God, and that Christ's atonement is not to appease divine wrath but to restore humanity to its original state of righteousness. Law asserts that the suffering and death of Christ were necessary for overcoming the fallen state of man, and that true redemption comes from the transformation of the individual through Christ's nature within them. The dialogue concludes with a strong affirmation that God's love is the foundation of redemption, not a response to divine anger.

Transcript

THE

SECOND DIALOGUE

BETWEEN

Theogenes, Eusebius, and Theophilus.

[Love-2.2-1] Eusebius. There is no Occasion to resume any Thing of our Yesterday's Discourse. The following Propositions are sufficiently proved.

[Love-2.2-2] First, That God is an abyssal Infinity of Love, Wisdom, and Goodness; that He ever was, and ever will be one and the same unchangeable Will to all Goodness and Works of Love, as incapable of any Sensibility of Wrath, or acting under it, as of falling into Pain or Darkness, and acting under their Direction.

[Love-2.2-3] Secondly, That all Wrath, Strife, Discord, Hatred, Envy, or Pride, &c., all Heat and Cold, all Enmity in the Elements, all Thickness, Grossness, and Darkness are Things that have no Existence but in and from the Sphere of fallen Nature.

[Love-2.2-4] Thirdly, That all the Evils of Contrariety and Disorder in fallen Nature are only as so many Materials in the Hands of infinite Love and Wisdom, all made to work in their different Ways, as far as is possible, to one and the same End, viz., to turn temporal Evil into eternal Good.

[Love-2.2-5] So that whether you look at Light or Darkness, at Night or Day, at Fire or Water, at Heaven or Earth, at Life or Death, at Prosperity or Adversity, at blasting Winds or heavenly Dews, at Sickness or Health, you see nothing but such a State of Things, in and through which, the supernatural Deity wills and seeks the Restoration of fallen Nature and Creature to their first Perfection.

[Love-2.2-6] It now only remains, that the Doctrine of Scripture concerning the Atonement, necessary to be made by the Life, Sufferings, and Death of Christ be explained, or in other Words, the true Meaning of that Righteousness or Justice of God, that must have Satisfaction done to it, before Man can be reconciled to God.

[Love-2.2-7] For this Doctrine is thought by some to favour the Opinion of a Wrath and Resentment in the Deity itself.

[Love-2.2-8] Theophilus. This Doctrine, Eusebius, of the Atonement made by Christ, and the absolute Necessity and real Efficacy of it, to satisfy the Righteousness, or Justice of God, is the very Ground and Foundation of Christian Redemption, and the Life and Strength of every Part of it. But then, this very Doctrine is so far from favouring the Opinion of a Wrath in the Deity itself, that it is an absolute full Denial of it, and the strongest of Demonstrations, that the Wrath, or Resentment, that is to be pacified or atoned, cannot possibly be in the Deity itself.

[Love-2.2-9] For this Wrath that is to be atoned and pacified is, in its whole Nature, nothing else but Sin, or Disorder in the Creature. And when Sin is extinguished in the Creature, all the Wrath that is between God and the Creature is fully atoned. Search all the Bible, from one End to the other, and you will find, that the Atonement of that which is called the Divine Wrath or Justice, and the extinguishing of Sin in the Creature, are only different Expressions for one and the same individual Thing. And therefore, unless you will place Sin in God, that Wrath, that is to be atoned or pacified, cannot be placed in Him.

[Love-2.2-10] The whole Nature of our Redemption has no other End, but to remove or extinguish the Wrath that is between God and Man. When this is removed, Man is reconciled to God. Therefore, where the Wrath is, or where that is which wants to be atoned, there is that which is the blamable Cause of the Separation between God and Man; there is that which Christ came into the World to extinguish, to quench, or atone. If, therefore, this Wrath, which is the blamable Cause of the Separation between God and Man, is in God Himself, if Christ died to atone, or extinguish a Wrath that was got into the holy Deity itself, then it must be said, that Christ made an Atonement for God, and not for Man; that He died for the Good and Benefit of God, and not of Man; and that which is called our Redemption, ought rather to be called the Redemption of God, as saving and delivering Him, and not Man, from his own Wrath.

[Love-2.2-11] This Blasphemy is unavoidable, if you suppose that Wrath, for which Christ died, to be a Wrath in God Himself.

[Love-2.2-12] Again, The very Nature of Atonement absolutely shows, that that which is to be atoned cannot possibly be in God, nor even in any good Being. For Atonement implies the Alteration, or Removal of something that is not as it ought to be. And therefore, every Creature, so long as it is good, and has its proper State of Goodness, neither wants, nor can admit of any Atonement, because it has nothing in it that

wants to be altered or taken out of it. And therefore, Atonement cannot possibly have any Place in God, because nothing in God either wants, or can receive Alteration; neither can it have Place in any Creature, but so far as it has lost, or altered that which it had from God, and is fallen into Disorder; and then, that which brings this Creature back to its first State, which alters that which is wrong in it, and takes its Evil out of it, is its true and proper Atonement.

[Love-2.2-13] Water is the proper Atonement of the Rage of Fire; and that which changes a Tempest into a Calm is its true Atonement. And, therefore, as sure as Christ is a Propitiation and Atonement, so sure is it, that that which he does, as a Propitiation and Atonement, can have no Place, but in altering that Evil and Disorder which, in the State and Life of the fallen Creature, wants to be altered.

[Love-2.2-14] Suppose the Creature not fallen, and then there is no Room nor Possibility for Atonement; a plain and full Proof, that the Work of Atonement is nothing else but the altering or quenching that which is Evil in the fallen Creature.

[Love-2.2-15] Hell, Wrath, Darkness, Misery, and eternal Death, mean the same Thing through all Scripture, and these are the only Things from which we want to be redeemed; and where there is nothing of Hell, there, there is nothing of Wrath, nor any Thing that wants, or can admit of the Benefits of the Atonement made by Christ.

[Love-2.2-16] Either, therefore, all Hell is in the Essence of the holy Deity, or nothing that wants to be atoned by the Merits and Death of Christ, can possibly be in the Deity itself.

[Love-2.2-17] The Apostle saith, that "we are by Nature Children of Wrath"; the same Thing as when the Psalmist saith, "I was shapen in Wickedness, and in Sin hath my Mother conceived me." And therefore, that Wrath which wants the Atonement of the Sufferings, Blood, and Death of Christ, is no other than that Sin, or sinful State, in which we are naturally born. But now, if this Wrath could be supposed to be in the Deity itself, then it would follow, that by being by Nature Children of Wrath, we should thereby be the true Children of God; we should not want any Atonement, or new Birth from above, to make us Partakers of the Divine Nature, because that Wrath that was in us would be our dwelling in God and he in us.

[Love-2.2-18] Again, All Scripture teaches us, That God wills and desires the Removal, or Extinction of that Wrath, which is betwixt God and the Creature; and therefore, all Scripture teaches, that the Wrath is not in God; for God cannot will the Removal, or Alteration of any Thing that is in Himself; this is as impossible, as for him to will the Extinction of his own Omnipotence. Nor can there be any Thing in God, contrary to, or against his own Will; and yet, if God wills the Extinction of a Wrath that is in Himself, it must be in Him, contrary to, or against his own Will.

[Love-2.2-19] This, I presume, is enough to show you, that the Atonement made by Christ is itself the greatest of all Proofs, that it was not to atone or extinguish any Wrath in the Deity itself; nor, indeed, any Way to affect, or alter any Quality, or Temper in the Divine Mind, but purely and solely to overcome and remove all that Death and Hell, and Wrath, and Darkness, that had opened itself in the Nature, Birth, and Life of fallen Man.

[Love-2.2-20] Eusebius. The Truth of all this is not to be denied. And yet it is as true, that all our Systems of Divinity give quite another Account of this most important Matter. The Satisfaction of Christ is represented as a Satisfaction made to a wrathful Deity; and the Merits of the Sufferings and Death of Christ, as that which could only avail with God, to give up his own Wrath, and think of Mercy toward Man.

Nay, what is still worse, if possible, the Ground, and Nature, and Efficacy of this great Transaction between God and Man, is often explained by Debtor and Creditor: Man, as having contracted a Debt with God that he could not pay, and God, as having a Right to insist upon the Payment of it; and therefore, only to be satisfied by receiving the Death and Sacrifice of Christ, as a valuable Consideration, instead of the Debt that was due to Him from Man.

[Love-2.2-21] Theophilus. Hence you may see, Eusebius, how unreasonably Complaint has been sometimes made against the Appeal, the Spirit of Prayer, &c., as introducing a Philosophy into the Doctrines of the Gospel, not enough supported by the Letter of Scripture; though every Thing there asserted has been over and over shown to be well grounded on the Letter of Scripture, and necessarily included in the most fundamental Doctrines of the Gospel.

[Love-2.2-22] Yet they who make this Complaint, blindly swallow a Vanity of Philosophy, in the most important part of Gospel Religion, which not only has less Scripture for it than the Infallibility of the Pope, but is directly contrary to the plain Letter of every single Text of Scripture that relates to this Matter: as I will now show you.

[Love-2.2-23] First, The Apostle saith, "God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, that all who believe in Him should not perish but have everlasting Life." What becomes now of the Philosophy of Debtor and Creditor, of a Satisfaction made by Christ to a Wrath in God? Is it not the grossest of all Fictions, and in full Contrariety to the plain written Word of God? "God so loved the World"; behold the Degree of it? But when did He so love it? Why, before it was redeemed, before He sent or gave his only Son to be the Redeemer of it. Here you see, that all Wrath in God, antecedent to our Redemption, or the Sacrifice of Christ for us, is utterly excluded; there is no Possibility for the Supposition of it, it is as absolutely denied as Words can do it. And therefore the infinite Love, Mercy, and Compassion of God toward fallen Man, are not purchased, or procured for us by the Death of Christ, but the Incarnation and Sufferings of Christ come from, and are given to us by the infinite antecedent Love of God for us, and are the gracious Effects of his own Love and Goodness toward us.

[Love-2.2-24] It is needless to show you, how constantly this same Doctrine is asserted and repeated by all the Apostles.

[Love-2.2-25] Thus says St. John again, "In this was manifested the Love of God toward us, because he sent his only begotten Son into the World, that we might live through him." Again, "this is the Record, that God hath given unto us eternal Life; and this Life is in his Son." Again, "God," saith St. Paul, "was in Christ, reconciling the World unto Himself, not imputing their Trespases to them." Which is repeated, and further opened in these Words, "Giving Thanks unto the Father, who hath made us meet to be Partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light, who hath delivered us from the Power of Darkness, and hath translated us into the Kingdom of his dear Son" (Col. 1:12-13). And again, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual Blessings in heavenly Places in Christ" (Eph. 1:3).

[Love-2.2-26] How great therefore, Eusebius, is the Error, how total the Disregard of Scripture, and how vain the Philosophy, which talks of a Wrath in God antecedent to our Redemption, or of a Debt which he could not forgive us, till he had received a Valuable Consideration for it, when all Scriptures from Page to Page tells us, that all the Mercy and Blessing and Benefits of Christ, as our Saviour, are the free antecedent Gift of God Himself to us, and bestowed upon us for no other Reason, from no other Motive,

but the Infinity of his own Love toward us, agreeable to what the Evangelical Prophet saith of God, "I am He that blotteth out Transgressions for my own sake" (Isa. 43:25), that is, not for any Reason or Motive that can be laid before me but because I am Love itself, and my own Nature is my immutable Reason why nothing but Works of Love, Blessing, and Goodness, can come from me.

[Love-2.2-27] Look we now at the Scripture Account of the Nature of the Atonement and Satisfaction of Christ, and this will further show us, that it is not to atone, or alter any Quality or Temper in the Divine Mind, nor for the Sake of God, but purely and solely to atone, to quench, and overcome that Death, and Wrath, and Hell, under the Power of which Man was fallen.

[Love-2.2-28] "As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive." This is the whole Work, the whole Nature, and the sole End of Christ's Sacrifice of Himself; and there is not a Syllable in Scripture, that gives you any other account of it. It all consists, from the Beginning to the End, in carrying on the one Work of Regeneration; and therefore the Apostle saith, "The first Adam was made a living Soul, but the last or Second Adam was made a Quickening Spirit," because sent into the World by God to quicken and revive that Life from above which we lost in Adam. And he is called our Ransom, our Atonement, &c., for no other Reason, but because that which He did and suffered in our fallen Nature, was as truly an efficacious Means of our being born again to a new heavenly Life, of Him, and from Him, as that which Adam did, was the true and natural Cause of our being born in Sin, and the Impurity of bestial Flesh and Blood.

[Love-2.2-29] And as Adam, by what He did, may be truly said to have purchased our Misery and Corruption, to have bought Death for us, and to have sold us into a Slavery under the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, though all that we have from him, or suffer by him, is only the inward working of his own Nature and Life within us, so, according to the plain meaning of the Words, Christ may be said to be our Price, our Ransom, and Atonement; though all that He does for us, as Buying, Ransoming, and Redeeming us, is done wholly and solely by a Birth of his own Nature and Spirit brought to Life in us.

[Love-2.2-30] The apostle saith, "Christ died for our Sins." Thence it is, that He is the great Sacrifice for Sin and its true Atonement. But how and why is he so? The Apostle tells you in these Words, "The Sting of Death is Sin;-- but Thanks be to God, who giveth us the Victory through our Lord Jesus Christ"; and therefore Christ is the Atonement of our Sins when, by and from Him, living in us, we have Victory over our sinful Nature.

[Love-2.2-31] The Scriptures frequently say, Christ gave himself for us. But what is the full Meaning, Effect, and Benefit, of his thus giving Himself for us? The Apostle puts this out of all Doubt, when he says, "Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purify to Himself a peculiar People;--that He might deliver us from this present World,--from the Curse of the Law,--from the Power of Satan,-- from the Wrath to come"; or as the Apostle saith in other Words, "that He might be made unto us, Wisdom, Righteousness, and Sanctification."

[Love-2.2-32] The whole Truth therefore of the Matter is plainly this. Christ given for us, is neither more nor less, than Christ given into us. And he is in no other Sense, our full, perfect, and sufficient Atonement, than as his Nature and Spirit are born, and formed in us, which so purgeth us from our Sins, that we are thereby in Him, and by Him dwelling in us, become new Creatures, having our Conversation in Heaven.

[Love-2.2-33] As Adam is truly our Defilement and Impurity, by his Birth in us, so Christ is our Atonement and Purification, by our being born again of Him, and having thereby quickened and revived in us that first Divine Life, which was extinguished in Adam. And therefore, as Adam purchased Death for us, just so in

the same Manner, in the same Degree, and in the same Sense, Christ purchases Life for us. And each of them only, and solely by their own inward Life within us.

[Love-2.2-34] This is the one Scripture Account of the whole Nature, the sole End, and full Efficacy of all that Christ did, and suffered for us. It is all comprehended in these two Texts of Scripture: (1) "That Christ was manifested to destroy the Works of the Devil; (2) That as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive." From the Beginning to the End of Christ's atoning Work, no other Power is ascribed to it, nothing else is intended by it, as an Appeaser of Wrath, but the destroying of all that in Man which comes from the Devil; no other Merits, or Value, or infinite Worth, than that of its infinite Ability, and Sufficiency to quicken again in all human Nature, that Heavenly Life that died in Adam.

[Love-2.2-35] Eusebius. Though all that is here said seems to have both the Letter and the Spirit of Scripture on its Side, yet I am afraid it will be thought not enough to assert the infinite Value and Merits of our Saviour's Sufferings. For it is the common Opinion of Doctors that the Righteousness or Justice of God must have Satisfaction done to it; And that nothing could avail with God, as a Satisfaction, but the infinite Worth and Value of the Sufferings of Christ.

[Love-2.2-36] Theophilus. It is true, Eusebius, that this is often, and almost always thus asserted in human Writers, but it is neither the Language nor the Doctrine of Scripture.

[Love-2.2-37] Not a Word is there said of a Righteousness or Justice as an Attribute in God, that must be satisfied; or that the Sacrifice of Christ, is that which satisfies the Righteousness that is in God Himself.

[Love-2.2-38] It has been sufficiently proved to you, that God wanted not to be reconciled to fallen Man; that He never was anything else toward him but Love; and that his Love brought forth the whole Scheme of his Redemption. Thence it is, that the Scriptures do not say that Christ came into the World to procure us the Divine Favour and good Will, in order to put a Stop to antecedent righteous Wrath in God toward us. No, the Reverse of all this is the Truth, viz., that Christ and his whole mediatorial Office came purely and solely from God, already so reconciled to us, as to bestow an Infinity of Love upon us. "The God of all Grace," saith the Apostle, "who hath called us to his eternal Glory by Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 5:10). Here you see, Christ is not the Cause or Motive of God's Mercy toward fallen Man, but God's own Love for us, his own Desire of our eternal Glory and Happiness hath for that End given us Christ, that we may be made Partakers of it. The same as when it is again said, "God was in Christ reconciling the World to Himself," that is, calling, and raising it out of its ungodly and miserable State.

[Love-2.2-39] Thus all the Mystery of our Redemption proclaims nothing but a God of Love toward fallen Man. It was the Love of God, that could not behold the Misery of fallen Man, without demanding and calling for his Salvation. It was Love alone, that wanted to have full Satisfaction done to it, and such a Love as could not be satisfied, till all that Glory and Happiness that was lost by the Death of Adam, was fully restored and regained again by the Death of Christ.

[Love-2.2-40] Eusebius. But is there not some good Sense, in which Righteousness or Justice may be said to be satisfied by the Atonement and Sacrifice of Christ?

[Love-2.2-41] Theophilus. Yes, most certainly there is. But then it is only that Righteousness or Justice that belongs to Man, and ought to be in him. Now Righteousness, wherever it is to be, has no Mercy in itself; it makes no Condescensions; it is inflexibly rigid; its Demands are inexorable; Prayers, Offerings, and Entreaties have no Effect upon it; it will have nothing but itself, nor will it ever cease its Demands, or

take any Thing in lieu of them, as a Satisfaction instead of itself. Thus, "Without Holiness," saith the Apostle, "no Man shall see the Lord." And again, "Nothing that is defiled, or impure, can enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." And this is meant by Righteousness being rigid and having no Mercy; it cannot spare, or have Pity, or hear Entreaty, because all its Demands are righteous, and good, and therefore must be satisfied, or fulfilled.

[Love-2.2-42] Now Righteousness has its absolute Demands upon Man, because Man was created righteous, and has lost that original Righteousness, which he ought to have kept in its first Purity. And this is the one, only Righteousness, or Justice, which Christ came into the World to satisfy, not by giving some highly valuable Thing as a Satisfaction to it, but by bringing back, or raising up again in all human Nature, that Holiness or Righteousness, which originally belonged to it. For to satisfy Righteousness, means neither more nor less than to fulfill it. Nor can Righteousness want to have Satisfaction in any Being, but in that Being, which has fallen from it; nor can it be satisfied, but in restoring or fulfilling Righteousness in that Being, which had departed from it. And therefore the Apostle saith, that "we are created again unto Righteousness in Christ Jesus." And this is the one and only Way of Christ's expiating, or taking away the Sins of the World, namely, by restoring to Man his lost Righteousness. For this End, saith the Scripture, "Christ gave Himself for the Church, that He might sanctify and cleanse it, that he might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having Spot, or Wrinkle, or any such Thing, but that it should be holy and without Blemish" (Eph. 5:25-27).

[Love-2.2-43] This is the one Righteousness, which Christ came into the World to satisfy, by fulfilling it himself, and enabling Man by a new Birth from him to fulfill it. And when all Unrighteousness is removed by Christ from the whole human Nature, then all that Righteousness is satisfied, for the doing of which, Christ poured out his most precious, availing, and meritorious Blood.

[Love-2.2-44] Eusebius. Oh Theophilus, the Ground on which you stand must certainly be true. It so easily, so fully solves all Difficulties and Objections, and enables you to give so plain and solid an Account of every Part of our Redemption. This great Point is so fully cleared up to me, that I do not desire another Word about it.

[Love-2.2-45] Theophilus. However, Eusebius, I will add a Word or two more upon it, that there may be no Room left, either for misunderstanding, or denying what has been just now said of the Nature of that Righteousness, which must have full Satisfaction done to it by the Atoning and Redeeming Work of Christ. And then you will be fully possessed of these two great Truths. First, That there is no righteous Wrath in the Deity itself, and therefore none to be atoned there. Secondly, That though God is in Himself a mere Infinity of Love, from whom nothing else but Works of Love and Blessing and Goodness can proceed, yet sinful Men are hereby not at all delivered from That which the Apostle calls the Terrors of the Lord, but that all the Threatenings of Woe, Misery, and Punishment, denounced in Scripture against Sin and Sinners, both in this World, and that which is to come, stand all of them in their full Force, and are not in the least Degree weakened, or less to be dreaded because God is all Love.

[Love-2.2-46] Every Thing that God hath created, is right and just and good in its Kind, and hath its own Righteousness within itself. The Rectitude of its Nature is its only Law; and it hath no other Righteousness, but that of continuing in its first State. No Creature is subject to any Pain, or Punishment, or Guilt of Sin, but because it has departed from its first right State, and only does, and can feel the painful Loss of its own first Perfection. And every intelligent Creature, that departs from the State of its Creation, is unrighteous, evil, and full of its own Misery. And there is no Possibility for any disordered, fallen Creature

to be free from its own Misery and Pain, till it is again in its first State of Perfection. This is the certain and infallible Ground of the absolute Necessity, either of a perfect Holiness in this Life, or of a further Purification after Death, before Man can enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

[Love-2.2-47] Now this Pain and Misery, which is inseparable from the Creature that is not in that State in which it ought to be, and in which it was created, is nothing else but the painful State of the Creature for Want of its own proper Righteousness, as Sickness is the painful State of the Creature for Want of its own proper Health.

[Love-2.2-48] No other Righteousness, or other Justice, no other severe Vengeance, demands Satisfaction, or torments the Sinner, but that very Righteousness, which once was in him, which still belongs to him, and therefore will not suffer him to have any Rest or Peace, till it is again in him as it was at the first. All, therefore, that Christ does as an Atonement for Sin, or as a Satisfaction to Righteousness, is all done in, and to, and for Man, and has no other Operation but that of renewing the fallen Nature of Man, and raising it up into its first State of original Righteousness. And if this Righteousness, which belongs solely to Man, and wants no Satisfaction, but that of being restored and fulfilled in the human Nature, is sometimes called the Righteousness of God, it is only so called, because it is a Righteousness which Man had originally from God, in and by his Creation; and, therefore, as it comes from God, has its whole Nature and Power of Working as it does from God, it may very justly be called God's Righteousness.

[Love-2.2-49] Agreeably to this Way of ascribing that to God, which is only in the State and Condition of Man, the Psalmist saith of God, "Thine Arrows stick fast in me, and thy Hand presseth me sore." And yet nothing else, or more is meant by it, than when he saith, "My Sins have taken such Hold of me that I am not able to look up--My Iniquities are gone over my Head, and are like a sore Burden too heavy for me to bear."

[Love-2.2-50] Now, whether you call this State of Man the Burden of his Sins and Wickednesses, or the Arrows of the Almighty, and the Weight of God's Hand, they mean but one and the same Thing, which can only be called by these different Names, for no other Reason but this, because Man's own original Righteousness, which he had from God, makes his sinful State a Pain and Torment to him, and lies heavy upon him in every Commission of Sin. And when the Psalmist again saith, "Take thy Plague away from me, I am even consumed by means of thy heavy Hand," it is only praying to be delivered from his own Plague, and praying for the same Thing as when he saith, in other Words, "Make me a clean Heart, O God, and renew a right Spirit within me."

[Love-2.2-51] Now this Language of Scripture, which teaches us to call the Pains and Torments of our Sins, the Arrows, Darts, and Strokes of God's Hand upon us, which calls us to own the Power, Presence, and Operation of God, in all that we feel and find in our own inward State, is the Language of the most exalted Piety, and highly suitable to that Scripture which tells us, "That in God we live, and move, and have our Being". For by teaching us to find, and own the Power and Operation of God in every Thing that passes within us, it keeps us continually turned to God for all that we want, and by all that we feel within ourselves, and brings us to this best of all Confessions, that Pain, as well as Peace of Mind, is the Effect and Manifestation of God's infinite Love and Goodness toward us.

[Love-2.2-52] For we could not have this Pain and Sensibility of the Burden of Sin, but because the Love and Goodness of God made us originally righteous and happy; and therefore, all the Pains and Torments

of Sin come from God's first Goodness toward us, and are in themselves merely and truly the Arrows of his Love, and his blessed Means of drawing us back to that first righteous State in and for which his first and never ceasing Love created us.

[Love-2.2-53] Eusebius. The Matter, therefore, plainly stands thus. There is no righteous Wrath, or vindictive Justice in the Deity itself, which, as a Quality or Attribute of Resentment in the Divine Mind, wants to be contented, atoned, or satisfied; but Man's Original Righteousness, which was once his Peace, and Happiness, and Rest in God, is by the Fall of Adam become his Tormentor, his Plague, that continually exercises its good Vengeance upon him, till it truly regains its first State in him.

[Love-2.2-54] Secondly, Man must be under this Pain, Punishment, and Vengeance to all Eternity; there is no Possibility, in the Nature of the Thing, for it to be otherwise, though God be all Love, unless Man's lost Righteousness be fully again possessed by him. And, therefore, the Doctrine of God's being all Love, of having no Wrath in Himself, has nothing in it to abate the Force of those Scriptures which threaten Punishment to Sinners, or to make them less fearful of living and dying in their Sins.

[Love-2.2-55] Theophilus. What you say, Eusebius, is very true; but then it is but half the Truth of this Matter. You should have added, that this Doctrine is the one Ground, and only Reason, why the Scriptures abound with so many Declarations of Woe, Misery, and Judgments, sometimes executed, and sometimes only threatened by God, and why all Sinners to the End of the World must know and feel "that the Wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all Ungodliness and Unrighteousness, and that Indignation and Wrath, Tribulation and Anguish, must be upon every Soul of Man that doth Evil" (Rom. 1:18, 2:8-9).

[Love-2.2-56] For all these Things, which the Apostle elsewhere calls "the Terrors of the Lord", have no Ground, nothing that calls for them, nothing that vindicates the Fitness and Justice of them, either with Regard to God or Man, but this one Truth, viz., That God is in Himself a mere Infinity of Love, from whom nothing but outflowings of Love and Goodness can come forth from Eternity to Eternity. For if God is all Love, if he wills nothing toward fallen Man but his full Deliverance from the blind Slavery and Captivity of his earthly, bestial Nature, then every kind of Punishment, Distress, and Affliction, that can extinguish the Lusts of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eyes, and the Pride of this Life, may and ought to be expected from God, merely because he is all Love and good Will toward fallen Man.

[Love-2.2-57] To say, therefore, as some have said, If God is all Love toward fallen Man, how can he threaten or chastise Sinners? This is no better than saying, If God is all Goodness in Himself, and towards Man, how can He do that in and to Man, which is for his Good? As absurd as to say, If the able Physician is all Love, Goodness, and good Will toward his Patients, how can he blister, purge, or scarify them, how can he order one to be trepanned, and another to have a Limb cut off? Nay, so absurd is this Reasoning, that if it could be proved, that God had no Chastisement for Sinners, the very Want of this Chastisement would be the greatest of all Proofs, that God was not all Love and Goodness toward Man.

[Love-2.2-58] The meek, merciful, and compassionate Jesus, who had no Errand in this World but to bless and save Mankind, said, "If thy right Eye or thy right Hand offend thee, pluck out the one, cut off the other, and cast them from thee." And that He said all this from mere Love, he adds, It is better for thee to do this, than that thy whole Body should be cast into Hell". Therefore, if the Holy Jesus had been wanting in this Severity, he had been wanting in true Love toward Man.

[Love-2.2-59] And therefore, the pure, mere Love of God, is that alone from which Sinners are justly to expect from God, that no Sin will pass unpunished, but that his Love will visit them with every Calamity

and Distress, that can help to break and purify the bestial Heart of Man, and awaken in him true Repentance and Conversion to God. It is Love alone in the holy Deity, that Will allow no Peace to the wicked, nor ever cease its Judgments, till every Sinner is forced to confess, That it is good for him that he has been in Trouble, and thankfully own, That not the Wrath, but the Love of God, has plucked out that right Eye, cut off that right Hand, which he ought to have done, but would not do, for himself and his own Salvation.

[Love-2.2-60] Again, this Doctrine that allows of no Wrath in the Divine Mind, but places it all in the Evil State of fallen Nature and Creature, has every Thing in it that can prove to Man the dreadful Nature of Sin, and the absolute Necessity of totally departing from it. It leaves no Room for Self-Delusion, but puts an End to every false Hope, or vain seeking for Relief in any Thing else, but the total Extinction of Sin. And this it effectually does, by showing, that Damnation is no foreign, separate, or imposed State, that is brought in upon us, or adjudged to us by the Will of God, but is the inborn, natural, essential State of our own disordered Nature, which is absolutely impossible, in the Nature of the Thing, to be any Thing else but our own Hell, both here and hereafter, unless all Sin be separated from us, and Righteousness be again made our natural State, by a Birth of itself in us. And all this, not because God will have it so, by an arbitrary Act of his sovereign Will, but because he cannot change his own Nature, or make any Thing to be happy and blessed, but only that which has its proper Righteousness, and is of one Will and Spirit with Himself.

[Love-2.2-61] If then every Creature that has lost, or is without the true Rectitude of its Nature, must as such, be of all Necessity, absolutely separated from God, and necessarily under the Pain and Misery of a Life that has lost all its own natural Good; if no Omnipotence or Mercy, or Goodness of God, can make it to be otherwise, or give any Relief to the Sinner, but by a total Extinction of Sin by a Birth of Righteousness in the Soul, then it fully appears, that according to this Doctrine, every Thing in God, and Nature, and Creature, calls the Sinner to an absolute Renunciation of all Sin, as the one only possible Means of Salvation, and leaves no Room for him to deceive himself with the Hopes that any Thing else will do instead of it. Vainly therefore is it said, That if God be all Love, the Sinner is let loose from the dreadful Apprehensions of living and dying in his Sins.

[Love-2.2-62] On the other Hand, deny this Doctrine, and say, with the current of scholastic Divines, That the Sinner must be doomed to eternal Pain and Death, unless a supposed Wrath, in the Mind of the Deity, be first atoned and satisfied; and that Christ's Death was that valuable Gift, or Offering made to God, by which alone he could be moved to lay aside, or extinguish his own Wrath toward fallen Man; say this, and then you open a wide Door for Licentiousness and Infidelity in some, and superstitious Fears in others.

[Love-2.2-63] For if the Evil, the Misery, and sad Effects of Sin, are placed in a Wrath in the Divine Mind, what can this beget in the Minds of the pious, but superstitious Fears about a supposed Wrath in God which they can never know when it is, or is not, atoned? Every Kind of Superstition has its Birth from this Belief, and cannot well be otherwise. And as to the Licentious, who want to stifle all Fears of gratifying all their Passions, this Doctrine has a natural Tendency to do this for them. For if they are taught, that the Hurt and Misery of Sin, is not its own natural State, not owing to its own Wrath and Disorder, but to a Wrath in the Deity, how easy is it for them to believe, either that God may not be so full of Wrath as is given out, or that he may overcome it himself, and not keep the Sinner eternally in a Misery that is not his own, but wholly brought upon him from without, by a Resentment in the Divine Mind.

[Love-2.2-64] Again, this Account which the Schools give of the Sacrifice of Christ, made to atone a Wrath in the Deity by the infinite Value of Christ's Death, is that alone which helps Socinians, Deists, and Infidels of all Kinds, to such Cavils and Objections to the Mystery of our Redemption, as neither have, nor can be silenced by the most able Defenders of that scholastic Fiction. The Learning of a Grotius or Stillingfleet, when defending such an Account of the Atonement and Satisfaction, rather increases than lessens the Objections to this Mystery: But if you take this Matter as it truly is in itself, viz., That God is in Himself all Love and Goodness, therefore can be nothing else but all Love and Goodness toward fallen Man, and that fallen Man is subject to no Pain or Misery, either present or to come, but what is the natural, unavoidable, essential Effect of his own evil and disordered Nature, impossible to be altered by himself, and that the infinite, never ceasing Love of God, has given Jesus Christ in all his Process, as the highest, and only possible Means, that Heaven and Earth can afford, to save Man from himself, from his own Evil, Misery, and Death, and restore to him his original Divine Life. When you look at this Matter in this true Light, then a God, all Love, and an Atonement for Sin by Christ, not made to pacify a Wrath in God, but to bring forth, fulfill, and restore Righteousness in the Creature that had lost it, has every Thing in it that can make the Providence of God adorable, and the State of Man comfortable.

[Love-2.2-65] Here all Superstition and superstitious Fears are at once totally cut off, and every Work of Piety is turned into a Work of Love. Here every false Hope of every Kind is taken from the Licentious; they have no Ground left to stand upon: Nothing to trust to, as a Deliverance from Misery, but the one total Abolition of Sin.

[Love-2.2-66] The Socinian and the Infidel are here also robbed of all their Philosophy against this Mystery; for as it is not founded upon, does not teach an infinite Resentment, that could only be satisfied by an infinite Atonement, as it stands not upon the Ground of Debtor and Creditor, all their Arguments which suppose it to be such, are quite beside the Matter and touch nothing of the Truth of this blessed Mystery. For it is the very Reverse of all this, it declares a God that is all Love; and the Atonement of Christ to be nothing else in itself, but the highest, most natural, and efficacious Means through all the Possibility of Things, that the infinite Love and Wisdom of God could use, to put an End to Sin, and Death, and Hell, and restore to Man his first Divine State or Life. I say, the most natural, efficacious Means through all the Possibilities of Nature; for there is nothing that is supernatural, however mysterious, in the whole System of our Redemption; every Part of it has its Ground in the Workings and Powers of Nature, and all our Redemption is only Nature set right, or made to be that which it ought to be.

[Love-2.2-67] There is nothing that is supernatural, but God alone; every Thing besides Him is from and subject to the State of Nature. It can never rise out of it, or have anything contrary to it. No Creature can have either Health or Sickness, Good or Evil, or any State either from God, or itself, but strictly according to the Capacities, Powers, and Workings of Nature.

[Love-2.2-68] The Mystery of our Redemption, though it comes from the supernatural God, has nothing in it but what is done, and to be done, within the Sphere, and according to the Powers of Nature. There is nothing supernatural in it, or belonging to it, but that supernatural Love and Wisdom which brought it forth, presides over it, and will direct it till Christ, as a second Adam, has removed and extinguished all that Evil, which the first Adam brought into the human Nature.

[Love-2.2-69] And the whole Process of Jesus Christ, from his being the inspoken Word or Bruiser of the Serpent given to Adam, to his Birth, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension into Heaven, has all its Ground and Reason in this, because nothing else in all the Possibilities of Nature, either in Heaven or on Earth,

could begin, carry on, and totally effect Man's Deliverance from the Evil of his own fallen Nature.

[Love-2.2-70] Thus is Christ the one, full, sufficient Atonement for the Sin of the whole World, because He is the one only natural Remedy, and possible Cure of all the Evil that is broken forth in Nature, the one only natural Life, and Resurrection of all that Holiness and Happiness that died in Adam. And seeing all this Process of Christ is given to the World, from the supernatural, antecedent, infinite Love of God, therefore it is, that the Apostle saith, "God was in Christ reconciling the World to Himself." And Christ in God, is nothing else in his whole Nature, but that same, certain, and natural Parent of a Redemption to the whole human Nature, as fallen Adam was the certain and natural Parent of a miserable Life to every Man that is descended from him: With this only Difference, that from fallen Adam we are born in Sin, whether we will or no, but we cannot have the new Birth which Christ has all Power to bring forth in us, unless the Will of our Heart closes with it.

[Love-2.2-71] But as nothing came to us from Adam, but according to the Powers of Nature, and because he was that which he was with Relation to us; so it is with Christ and our Redemption by Him: All the Work is grounded in, and proceeds according to the Powers of Nature, or in a Way of natural Efficacy or Fitness to produce its Effects; and every Thing that is found in the Person, Character, and Condition of Christ, is only there as his true and natural Qualification to do all that He came to do, in us, and for us. That is to say, Christ was made to be that which He was; He was a Seed of Life in our first fallen Father; He lived as a Blessing of Promise in the Patriarchs, Prophets, and Israel of God; He was born as a Man of a pure Virgin; He did all that He did, whether as suffering, dying, conquering, rising, and ascending into Heaven, only as so many Things, which as naturally and as truly, according to the Nature of Things, qualified Him to be the Producer, or Quickener of a Divine Life in us, as the State and Condition of Adam qualified him to make us the slavish Children of earthly, bestial Flesh and Blood.

[Love-2.2-72] This is the comfortable Doctrine of our Redemption; nothing in God but an Infinity of Love and Goodness toward our fallen Condition; nothing in Christ, but that which had its Necessity in the Nature of Things, to make Him able to give, and us to receive, our full Salvation from Him.

[Love-2.2-73] I will now only add, That from the Beginning of Deism, and from the Time of Socinus, to this Day, not a Socinian or Deist has ever seen or opposed this Mystery in its true State, as is undeniably plain from all their Writings.

[Love-2.2-74] A late Writer, who has as much Knowledge, and Zeal, and Wit in the Cause of Deism, as any of his Predecessors, is forced to attack our Redemption by giving this false Account of it.

[Love-2.2-75] "That a perfectly innocent Being, of the highest Order among intelligent Natures, should personate the Offender, and suffer in his Place and Stead, in order to take down the Wrath and Resentment of the Deity against the Criminal, and dispose God to show Mercy to him,--the Deist conceives to be both unnatural, and improper, and therefore not to be ascribed to God without Blasphemy."

[Love-2.2-76] And again, "The common Notion of Redemption among Christians seems to represent the Deity in a disagreeable Light, as implacable and revengeful," &c.

[Love-2.2-77] What an Arrow is here, I will not say, shot beside the Mark, but shot at nothing! Because nothing of that, which he accuses is to be found in our Redemption. The God of Christians is so far from being, as he says, implacable and revengeful, that you have seen it proved from Text to Text, that the

whole Form and Manner of our Redemption comes wholly from the free, antecedent, infinite Love and Goodness of God towards fallen Man. That the innocent Christ did not suffer, to quiet an angry Deity, but merely as co-operating, assisting, and uniting with that Love of God, which desired our Salvation. That He did not suffer in our Place or Stead, but only on our Account, which is a quite different Matter. And to say, that He suffered in our Place or Stead, is as absurd, as contrary to Scripture, as to say, that He rose from the Dead, and Ascended into Heaven in our Place and Stead, that we might be excused from it. For his Sufferings, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension are all of them equally on our Account, for our Sake, for our Good and Benefit, but none of them possible to be in our Stead.

[Love-2.2-78] And as Scripture and Truth affirm, that He ascended into Heaven for us, though neither Scripture nor Truth will allow it to be in our Place and Stead, so for the same Reasons, it is strictly true, that He suffered, and died for us, though no more in our Place or Stead, nor any more desirable to be so, than his Ascension into Heaven for us should be in our Place and Stead.

[Love-2.2-79] I have quoted the above Passage, only to show you, that a Defender of Deism, however acute and ingenious, has not one Objection to the Doctrine of our Redemption, but what is founded on the grossest Ignorance, and total Mistake of the whole Nature of it. But when I lay this gross Ignorance to the Deists' Charge, I do not mean any natural Dullness, Want of Parts, or Incapacity in them to judge aright, but only that something or other, either Men or Books, or their own Way of Life, has hindered their seeing the true Ground and real Nature of Christianity, as it is in itself.

[Love-2.2-80] Eusebius. I would fain Hope, Theophilus, that from all that has been said in the Demonstration of the Fundamental Errors of the Plain Account, the Appeal to all that doubt, &c., and the rest that follow, to these Dialogues; in all which, Christianity and Deism, with their several Merits, are so plainly, and with so much good Will and Affection toward all Unbelievers, represented to them, all that are serious and well-minded amongst the Deists will be prevailed upon to reconsider the Matter. For though some People have been hasty enough to charge those Writings with Fanaticism, or Enthusiasm, as disclaiming the Use of our Reason in Religious Matters, yet this Charge can be made by none, but those who, having not read them, take up with hearsay Censures.

[Love-2.2-81] For in those Books, from the Beginning to the End, nothing is appealed to but the natural Light of the Mind, and the plain, known Nature of Things; no one is led, or desired to go one Step further. The Use of Reason is not only allowed, but asserted, and proved to be of the same Service to us in Things of Religion, as in Things that relate to our Senses in this World {Demonstration of Errors of the Plain Account}.

[Love-2.2-82] The true Ground, Nature, and Power of Faith is opened, by fully proving, that this Saying of Christ, "According to thy Faith, so be it done unto Thee," takes in every Individual of human Nature; and that all Men, whether Christians, Deists, Idolaters, or Atheists, are all of them equally Men of Faith, all equally, and absolutely governed by it, and therefore must have all that they have, Salvation or Damnation, strictly and solely according to their Faith {Way to Divine Knowledge}. All this is so evidently proved, that I can't help thinking, but that every considerate Reader must be forced to own it.

[Love-2.2-83] Theogenes. All this is well said. But let us now return to the finishing of our main Point, which was to show, that the Doctrine of a God all Love, does not only not destroy the Necessity of Christ's Death and the infinite Value and Merits of it, but is itself the fullest Proof and strongest Confirmation of both.

[Love-2.2-84] Theophilus. How it could enter into anyone's Head, to charge this Doctrine with destroying the Necessity and Merits of Christ's Death, is exceeding strange.

[Love-2.2-85] For look where you will, no other Cause, or Reason of the Death of Christ, can be found but in the Love of God toward fallen Man. Nor could the Love of God will or accept of the Death of Christ, but because of its absolute Necessity, and availing Efficacy to do all that for fallen Man, which the Love of God would have to be done for him.

[Love-2.2-86] God did not, could not, love or like or desire the Sufferings and Death of Christ, for what they were in themselves, or as Sufferings of the highest Kind. No, the higher and greater such Sufferings had been, were they only considered in themselves, the less pleasing they had been to a God, that wills nothing but Blessing and Happiness to every Thing capable of it.

[Love-2.2-87] But all that Christ was and did and suffered was infinitely prized, and highly acceptable to the Love of God, because all that Christ was, and did, and suffered in his own Person, was That which gave him full Power, to be a common Father of Life to all that died in Adam.

[Love-2.2-88] Had Christ wanted anything that he was, or did, or suffered in his own Person, he could not have stood in that Relation to all Mankind as Adam had done. Had he not been given to the first fallen Man, as a Seed of the Woman, as a Light of Life, enlightening every Man that comes into the World, He could not have had his Seed in every Man, as Adam had, nor been as universal a Father of Life, as Adam was of Death. Had he not in the Fitness, or Fullness of Time, become a Man, born of a pure Virgin, the first Seed of Life in every Man, must have lain only as a Seed, and could not have come to the Fullness of the Birth of a new Man in Christ Jesus. For the Children can have no other State of Life, but that which their Father first had. And therefore Christ, as the Father of a regenerated human Race, must first stand in the Fullness of that human State, which was to be derived from him into all his Children.

[Love-2.2-89] This is the absolute Necessity of Christ's being all that he was, before he became Man; a Necessity arising from the Nature of the Thing. Because he could not possibly have had the Relation of a Father to all Mankind, nor any Power to be a Quickener of a Life of Heaven in them, but because He was both God in himself, and a Seed of God in all of them.

[Love-2.2-90] Now all that Christ was, and did, and suffered, after He became Man, is from the same Necessity founded in the Nature of the Thing. He suffered on no other Account, but because that which he came to do in, and for the human Nature, was and could be nothing else in itself, but a Work of Sufferings and Death.

[Love-2.2-91] A crooked Line cannot become straight, but by having all its Crookedness given up, or taken from it. And there is but one Way possible in Nature for a crooked Line to lose its Crookedness.

[Love-2.2-92] Now the Sufferings and Death of Christ stand in this kind of Necessity. He was made Man for our Salvation, that is, He took upon Him our fallen Nature, to bring it out of its evil crooked State, and set it again in that Rectitude in which it was created.

[Love-2.2-93] Now there was no more two Ways of doing this, than there are two Ways of making a crooked Line to become straight.

[Love-2.2-94] If the Life of fallen Nature, which Christ had taken upon Him, was to be overcome by Him, then every Kind of suffering and dying, that was a giving up, or departing from the Life of fallen Nature,

was just as necessary, in the Nature of the Thing, as that the Line to be made straight must give up, and Part with every Kind and Degree of its own Crookedness.

[Love-2.2-95] And therefore the Sufferings and Death of Christ were, in the Nature of the Thing, the only possible Way of his acting contrary to, and overcoming all the Evil that was in the fallen State of Man.

[Love-2.2-96] The Apostle saith, "The Captain of our Salvation was to be made perfect through Sufferings." This was the Ground and Reason of his Sufferings. Had he been without them, He could not have been perfect in Himself, as a Son of Man, nor the Restorer of Perfection in all Mankind. But why so? Because his Perfection, as a Son of Man, or the Captain of human Salvation, could only consist in his acting in, and with a Spirit suitable to the first created State of perfect Man; that is, He must in his Spirit be as much above all the Good and Evil of this fallen World, as the first Man was.

[Love-2.2-97] But now, He could not show that He was of this Spirit, that He was under no Power of fallen Nature, but lived in the Perfection of the first created Man; He could not do this, but by showing, that all the Good of the earthly Life was renounced by Him, and that all the Evil which the World, the Malice of Men and Devils, could bring upon Him, could not hinder his living wholly and solely to God, and doing his Will on Earth with the same Fullness, as Angels do it in Heaven.

[Love-2.2-98] But had there been any Evil in all fallen Nature, whether in Life, Death, or Hell, that had not attacked Him, with all its Force, He could not have been said to have overcome it. And therefore so sure as Christ, the Son of Man, was to overcome the World, Death, Hell, and Satan, so sure is it, that all the Evils which they could possibly bring upon Him, were to be felt and suffered by Him, as absolutely necessary in the Nature of the Thing, to declare his Perfection, and prove his Superiority over them. Surely, my Friend, it is now enough proved to you, how a God all Love toward fallen Man, must love, like, desire, and delight in all the Sufferings of Christ, which alone could enable Him, as a Son of Man, to undo, and reverse all that Evil, which the first Man had done to all his Posterity.

[Love-2.2-99] Eusebius. Oh, Sir, in what an adorable Light is this Mystery now placed. And yet in no other Light than that in which in the plain Letter of all Scripture sets it. No Wrath in God, no fictitious Atonement, no Folly of Debtor and Creditor, no suffering in Christ for Sufferings' sake, but a Christ suffering and dying, as his same Victory over Death and Hell, as when He rose from the Dead and ascended into Heaven.

[Love-2.2-100] Theophilus. Sure now, Eusebius, you plainly enough see wherein the infinite Merits, or the availing Efficacy, and glorious Power of the Sufferings and Death of Christ consist; since they were that, in and through which Christ himself came out of the State of fallen Nature, and got Power to give the same Victory to all his Brethren of the human Race.

[Love-2.2-101] Wonder not, therefore, that the Scriptures so frequently ascribe all our Salvation to the Sufferings and Death of Christ, that we are continually referred to them, as the Wounds and Stripes by which we are healed, as the Blood by which we are washed from our Sins, as the Price (much above Gold and precious Stones) by which we are bought.

[Love-2.2-102] Wonder not also that in the Old Testament, its Service Sacrifices, and Ceremonies were instituted to typify, and point at the great Sacrifice of Christ, and to keep up a continual Hope, strong Expectation, and Belief of it. And that in the New Testament, the Reality, the Benefits, and glorious Effects of Christ our Passover being actually sacrificed for us, are so joyfully repeated by every Apostle.

[Love-2.2-103] It is because Christ, as suffering and dying, was nothing else but Christ conquering and overcoming all the false Good, and the hellish Evil, of the fallen State of Man.

[Love-2.2-104] His Resurrection from the Grave, and Ascension into Heaven, though great in themselves, and necessary Parts of our Deliverance, were yet but the Consequences and genuine Effects of his Sufferings and Death. These were in themselves the Reality of his Conquest; all his great Work was done and effected in them and by them, and his Resurrection and Ascension were only his entering into the Possession of that, which his Sufferings and Death had gained for him.

[Love-2.2-105] Wonder not then, that all the true Followers of Christ, the Saints of every Age, have so gloried in the Cross of Christ, have imputed such great Things to it, have desired nothing so much, as to be Partakers of it, to live in constant Union with it. It is because his Sufferings, his Death, and Cross, were the Fullness of his Victory over all the Works of the Devil. Not an Evil in Flesh and Blood, not a Misery of Life, not a Chain of Death, not a Power of Hell and Darkness, but were all baffled, broken, and overcome by the Process of a suffering, and dying Christ. Well therefore may the Cross of Christ be the Glory of Christians.

[Love-2.2-106] Eusebius. This Matter is so solidly and fully cleared up, that I am almost ashamed to ask you any Thing further about it. Yet explain a little more, if you please, how it is, that the Sufferings and Death of Christ, gave Him Power to become a common Father of Life to all that died in Adam. Or how it is, that we, by Virtue of them, have Victory over all the Evil of our fallen State.

[Love-2.2-107] Theophilus. You are to know, Eusebius, that the Christian Religion is no arbitrary System of Divine worship, but is the one true, real, and only Religion of Nature; that is, it is wholly founded in the Nature of Things, has nothing in it supernatural or contrary to the Powers and Demands of Nature; but all that it does, is only in, and by, and according to the Workings and Possibilities of Nature.

[Love-2.2-108] A Religion that is not founded in Nature, is all Fiction and Falsity, and as mere a nothing as an Idol. For as no Creature can be, or have any Thing, but what it is and has from the Nature of Things, nor have any Thing done to it, Good or Harm, but according to the unalterable Workings of Nature, so no Religion can be of any Service, but that which works with and according to the Demands of Nature. Nor can any fallen Creature be raised out of its fallen State, even by the Omnipotence of God, but according to the Nature of Things, or the unchangeable Powers of Nature; for Nature is the Opening and Manifestation of the Divine Omnipotence; it is God's Power-world; and therefore all that God doth, is and must be done in and by the Powers of Nature. God, though omnipotent, can give no Existence to any Creature, but it must have that Existence in Space and Time.-- Time cometh out of the Eternity, and Space cometh out of the Infinity of God--God hath an omnipotent Power over them, in them, and with them, to make both of them set forth and manifest the Wonders of his supernatural Deity. Yet Time can only be subservient to the Omnipotence of God, according to the Nature of Time; and Space can only obey his Will, according to the Nature of Space; but neither of them can, by any Power, be made to be in a supernatural State, or be any Thing but what they are in their own Nature.

[Love-2.2-109] Now Right and Wrong, Good and Evil, True and False, Happiness and Misery, are as unchangeable in Nature, as Time, and Space. And every State and Quality that is creaturely, or that can belong to any Creature, has its own Nature, as unchangeably as Time and Space have theirs.

[Love-2.2-110] Nothing therefore can be done to any Creature supernaturally, or in a Way that is without, or contrary to the Powers of Nature; but every Thing or Creature that is to be helped, that is to have any

Good done to it, or any Evil taken out of it, can only have it done so far, as the Powers of Nature are able and rightly directed to effect it.

[Love-2.2-111] And this is the true Ground of all Divine Revelation, or that Help which the supernatural Deity vouchsafes to the fallen State of Man. It is not to appoint an arbitrary System of religious Homage to God, but solely to point out, and provide for Man, blinded by his fallen State, that one only Religion, that, according to the Nature of Things, can possibly restore to him his lost Perfection. This is the Truth, the Goodness, and the Necessity of the Christian Religion; it is true, and good, and necessary, because it is as much the one only natural and possible Way of overcoming all the Evil of fallen Man, as Light is the one only natural, possible Thing that can expel Darkness.

[Love-2.2-112] And therefore it is, that all the Mysteries of the Gospel, however high, are yet true and necessary Parts of the one Religion of Nature; because they are no higher, nor otherwise, than the natural State of fallen Man absolutely stands in Need of. His Nature cannot be helped, or raised out of the Evils of its present State, by any Thing less than these Mysteries; and therefore, they are in the same Truth and Justness to be called his natural Religion, as that Remedy which alone has full Power to remove all the Evil of a Disease, may be justly called its natural Remedy.

[Love-2.2-113] For a Religion is not to be deemed natural, because it has nothing to do with Revelation; but then is it the one true Religion of Nature, when it has every Thing in it that our natural State stands in need of; every Thing that can help us out of our present Evil, and raise and exalt us to all the Happiness which our Nature is capable of having. Supposing, therefore, the Christian scheme of Redemption to be all that, and nothing else in itself, but that which the Nature of Things absolutely requires it to be, it must, for that very Reason, have its Mysteries.

[Love-2.2-114] For the fallen, corrupt, mortal State of Man, absolutely requires these two Things as its only Salvation. First, the Divine Life, or the Life of God, must be revived in the Soul of Man. Secondly, there must be a Resurrection of the Body in a better State after Death. Now nothing in the Power of Man, or in the Things of this World, can effect this Salvation. If, therefore, this is to be the Salvation of Man, then some Interposition of the Deity is absolutely necessary, in the Nature of the Thing, or Man can have no Religion that is sufficiently natural; that is to say, no Religion that is sufficient, or equal to the Wants of his Nature.

[Love-2.2-115] Now this necessary Interposition of the Deity, though doing nothing but in a natural Way, or according to the Nature of Things, must be mysterious to Man, because it is doing something more and higher than his Senses or Reason ever saw done, or possible to be done, either by himself, or any of the Powers of this World.

[Love-2.2-116] And this is the true Ground and Nature of the Mysteries of Christian Redemption. They are, in themselves, nothing else but what the Nature of Things requires them to be, as natural, efficacious Means of our Salvation, and all their Power is in a natural Way, or true Fitness of Cause for its Effect; but they are mysterious to Man, because brought into the Scheme of our Redemption by the Interposition of God, to work in a Way and manner above, and superior to all that is seen and done in the Things of the World.

[Love-2.2-117] The Mysteries, therefore, of the Gospel are so far from showing the Gospel not to be the one true Religion of Nature, that they are the greatest Proof of it, since they are that alone which can help Man to all that good which his natural State wants to have done to it.

[Love-2.2-118] For instance, if the Salvation of Man absolutely requires the Revival or Restoration of the Divine Life in the human Nature, then nothing can be the one, sufficient, true Religion of Nature, but that which has a natural Power to do this.

[Love-2.2-119] What a Grossness of Error is it, therefore, to blame that Doctrine which asserts the Incarnation of the Son of God, or the Necessity of the Word being made Flesh, when in the Nature of the Thing, nothing else but this very Mystery can be the natural, efficacious Cause of the Renewal of the Divine Life in the human Nature, or have any natural Efficacy to effect our Salvation?

[Love-2.2-120] Having now, Eusebius, established this Ground, that nothing is, or can be a Part of true, natural Religion, or have any real Efficacy, as a Means of Salvation, but only that which has its Efficacy in and from the Nature of Things, or in the natural Fitness of Cause to produce its Effect, you are brought into the clear View of this Truth, viz., That the Religion of Deism is false, and vain, and visionary, and to be rejected by every Man as the mere enthusiastic, fanatic Product of pure Imagination; and all for this plain Reason, beca

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