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The spiritual side of Samuel Richardson

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The Relationship between Richardson and Law

Having come across the name of William Law in the previous chapters, we shall now further explore the relationship between Law and Richardson. Law's life has been researched quite extensively by such scholars as Stephen Hobhouse, John Brazier Green and A. Keith Walker.³⁴⁵ An important source for Law is Walton's *Notes and Materials for an Adequate Biography of the Celebrated Divine and Theosopher William Law*, privately printed in 1854, in which we also find much additional information on Law and his relation with the mystics.

Walton especially mentions Boehme, whose writings he describes as unpremeditated, simple, unsophisticated effusions, not characterized by the high sentiment of sanctity of the mystic schools, but rather presenting a piety and devotion of a utilitarian character, though still after the pure gospel form. Walton specifically refers to Boehme's regeneration, repentance and resignation tracts. He points at a connection between Boehme, Law, Zinzendorf and the Methodists and traces the popular religion of the nineteenth century as well as the popular sciences back to "the source, or fundamental revealments [sic] of Behmen".³⁴⁶ Modern scholars have confirmed this connection. Dietrich Meyer describes the great influence Henriette Katharina von Gersdorf had on her grandson Zinzendorf as follows:

Henriette Katharina von Gersdorf war ein durchaus selbständiger Charakter. [Sie] vertrat ihre eigenen Anschauungen und konnte auch an Halle Kritik üben. Sie war eine "Mittlerin" (Zinzendorf) sowohl zwischen Orthodoxen und Pietisten als auch zwischen den einzelnen Gruppen des kirchlichen und radikalen Pietismus. Sie setzte sich kritisch mit Johann Wilhelm Petersen auseinander und war bekümmert über dessen unbiblischen Ansichten von

³⁴⁵ For details about Law see A.Keith Walker's *William Law: His Life and Thought*, London, 1973. The relationship between Law and Wesley has been explored in John Brazier Green's *John Wesley and William Law*, London, 1945. See for the controversy between Law and Wesley, Byrom's letter to Hildesley of October 8, 1757 in Talon, *Op. cit.*, p. 278. Stephen Hobhouse discussed the relation between Law and Quakerism in *William Law and Eighteenth-Century Quakerism*, (1927), New York, 1972. Editions of Law's complete works are those of 1762 and Moreton's *Works*, 9 volumes of 1892-93 (a reprint of the 1762 edition). In 2001 a reprint of the Moreton edition was published by Wipf and Stock Publishers, Oregon, U.S.A.

³⁴⁶ C. Walton, *Notes and Materials for an Adequate Biography of the Celebrated Divine and Theosopher William Law*, London, 1854, p. x.

der Bekehrung nach dem Tode. Sie las Jakob Böhme sowie Jane Leade. Sie hatte alchemistische Neigungen, malte und musizierte. Mit dieser weiten, *philadelphischen* Gesinnung hat sie ihren Enkel geprägt und ihm ihre musische, poetische Begabung vererbt. (*Italics are mine*)³⁴⁷

As to Law, he lived a tranquil life. In contrast to his contemporary John Wesley, who showed such widespread activity and who was known to thousands of people, Law travelled little and was personally known only to a small circle. There are relatively few salient moments in his career, which revolved around three fixed points, Cambridge, Putney and King's Cliffe. About fifteen years younger than Cheyne and some three years older than Richardson, Law was born in 1686 in the Northamptonshire village of King's Cliffe to which he returned in 1740 and where he died in 1761. He was educated at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, where he studied classics, philosophy, mathematics as well as Hebrew. He became a Fellow of the College in 1711. When in 1714 Queen Anne died and George, Elector of Hanover, was invited to succeed to the English throne to ensure the Protestant succession and public peace, Law became a Nonjuror for he refused to break his Oath of Allegiance to the House of Stuart. As a result of this he lost his Fellowship.

It is through the journal and the correspondence of his friend John Byrom, whose interest in Law was first kindled in 1729 by the *Serious Call*, that we know several facts about Law which we would otherwise not have known. Byrom's journal informs us that Cheyne was the one who mentioned the book *Fides et Ratio*, in which Law found Boehme's name.³⁴⁸ Recording a conversation he had with Law in May 1743, Byrom writes that Law:

mentioned Dr Cheyne ... that the Dr was always talking in coffee-houses about naked faith, pure love, ... that Dr Cheyne was the providential occasion of his meeting or knowing of Jacob Behmen by a book which the Dr mentioned to him in a letter, which book mentioned Behmen.³⁴⁹

Edited by Poirer, *Fides et Ratio* consists of five separate sections which, except for Poirer's preface, are all anonymous or pseudonymous. The main discourse, entitled *Animadversions*, praises the writings of Boehme.³⁵⁰

³⁴⁷ Martin Brecht et al., *Geschichte des Pietismus: Der Pietismus im 18. Jahrhundert*, Band 2, Göttingen, 1995, p. 7.

³⁴⁸ Stephen Hobhouse, "Fides et Ratio: The Book Which Introduced Jacob Boehme to William Law", in *Journal of Theological Studies*, 37, (1936), pp. 350-368. As mentioned in footnote 345, Hobhouse explored the relationship of Law and Quakerism in *William Law and Eighteenth-Century Quakerism* and he described Law's library in "An English Mystic's Library", *The Friend*, December 11, 1925. There is a catalogue of Law's library made by Rufus M. Jones in 1927.

³⁴⁹ Stephen Hobhouse, *Op. cit.*, pp. 350-351.

³⁵⁰ The title page of the book is *Fides et Ratio collatae, ac suo utraque loco redditae, adversus Principia J. Lockii. ... Cum accessione triplici: 1, de fide implicita sive nuda, 2, De ss. Scripturarum certitudine ac sensu, 3, De perfectione et felicitate in hac vita. Edidit et praefatus est Petrus Poirer. Amstelaedami, 1708*. The main discourse, entitled *Animadversions*, begins by the reprinting of a

Since, according to Hobhouse, Law's writings began to contain a genuine mystical note after 1735, Cheyne must have mentioned *Fides et Ratio* probably late 1735 or 1736. It is interesting that its reputed author, Count von Metternich (1660-1727), was in close sympathy with, if not actually a Philadelphian, and, moreover, a friend of some of Cheyne's friends in Scotland.³⁵¹ After Law had read *Fides et Ratio*, he obtained one of Boehme's books and towards the end of his life he described to his Moravian admirer, Francis Okely, the experience he had when reading it:

When I first began to read him, he put me into a *perfect sweat*. But as I discerned sound truths, and glimmerings of a deep ground and sense, even in the passages not then clearly intelligible to me; and found in myself a strong incentive to *dig* in these writings, I followed the impulse with continual aspirations and prayer to God for his help and divine illumination, if that I was called to understand them. By patiently reading in this manner again and again, and from time to time, passing over any little objections and difficulties that stood in my way for the moment, I perceived that my heart felt well, and my understanding kept gradually opening; till at length I discovered the wonderful treasure there was hid in this field.³⁵²

In the prefatory advertisement to *A Demonstration of the Errors of a late Book* (1737), written against Bishop Hoadly's *Plain Account of the Nature and End of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper*, Moreton explained that the *Demonstration* was written after Law had become "greatly influenced by the writings of Jacob Behmen".³⁵³ Moreton further writes that *The Grounds and*

series of twenty-two *Theses*, deduced by a Scottish disciple from the principles of Locke, demonstrating that "Reason is the more excellent [i.e. a better guide to Truth] than Faith". The writer then takes these *Theses* and refutes them one by one in 474 sections. This must have appealed strongly to Law who was much opposed to the Christian rationalism of Locke with its rejection of innate ideas and its conception of the human mind as a *tabula rasa*.

³⁵¹ For a survey of the Philadelphian Society see Nils Thune, *The Behmenists and the Philadelphians: A Contribution to the Study of English Mysticism in the 17th and 18th Centuries*, Uppsala, 1948. On the similarities and differences between the Philadelphian Society and the Quakers, Thune quotes from one of their publications: "the Philadelphians were not so silly as to place Religion in Thouing and Theeing, in keeping their Hats, or in a sad countenance. Then as to their Peculiar Principles, I told them I knew none but that single Opinion, That the Coming of Christ was near at Hand; and therefore they think it their Duty to warn and awaken the World, that they may prepare for that great and solemn Time, by a good Life, universal Charity, and Union amongst the Protestant Churches". See also the words from probably Dr Francis Lee: "The Philadelphian Society must be considered as a part of the great movement for awakening spiritual life which had broken out like a new reformation in Germany under the name of Pietism. The Philadelphians do not want to be taken for a special sect separated from others, but that they felt allied to any movement of the age contending for the increase of spiritual life." (Nils Thune, pp. 93-94).

³⁵² A. Keith Walker, *William Law: His Life and Thought*, SPCK, London, 1973, pp. 98-99. The relationship between Law and John Wesley is described by J. Brazier Green in *John Wesley and William Law*, London, 1945.

³⁵³ *Works*, V, p. v.

Reasons of Christian Regeneration (1739) was based upon the “teaching or revelation of Jacob Behmen”, adding:

The influence of Jacob Behmen’s writings with William Law has proved fatal to Law’s reputation as a Religious Teacher with many persons; and a great stumbling-block to those to whom the ‘Christian Perfection’ and the ‘Serious Call’ have been most convincing and productive of eternal benefit.³⁵⁴

The way in which Law approached the subject of “universalism” and the doctrine of “Free Will” is interesting. In *The Grounds and Reasons of Christian Regeneration* Law writes :

For *God is Love*, yea, *all Love*, and so all Love, *that nothing* but Love can come from him; and the Christian religion, is nothing else but an *open, full* Manifestation of his *universal* Love towards *all* Mankind.³⁵⁵

He appeals to the state of “your own Hearts and Consciences”³⁵⁶ to prove the “*Necessity* of your embracing this Mystery of *Divine Love*” and adds:

[He] will grant you all *that* you can suppose, of the Goodness of God, and that no Creature will be finally lost, but what *Infinite Love* cannot save. But still, here is no *Shadow* of Security for *Infidelity*; and your *refusing* to be *saved* through the *Son* of God, whilst the Soul is in the *redeemable State* of this Life, may at the Separation of the Body, *for* aught you know, leave it in *such* a Hell, as the infinite Love of God *cannot* deliver it from. For, *first*, you have no *Kind*, or *Degree* of Proof, that your Soul is not that *dark, self-tormenting, anguishing* and *imperishable Fire*, above-mentioned, which has lost its *own proper* Light, and is only comforted by the Light of the *Sun*, till its Redemption be effected. *Secondly*, You have no *Kind*, or *Degree* of Proof, that God himself *can* redeem, or save, or enlighten this *dark Fire-Soul*, any other Way than, as the Gospel proposes, by the *Birth* of the Son of God in it. Therefore your own Hearts must tell you, that for aught you know, *Infidelity*, or the *refusing* of this Birth of the Son of God, may, at the End of Life, leave you in *such* a State of *Self-torment*, as the infinite Love of God can no way deliver you from.³⁵⁷

³⁵⁴ Ibid., p. vii.

³⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 156.

³⁵⁶ Law had written earlier in the *Demonstration* that “we are apt to consider *Conscience* only as some working of our Heart, that checks us, and so we are rather afraid, than fond of it. But if we looked upon it as it really is, so much of *God within* us, revealing himself within us, so much of a heavenly Life, that is striving to raise us from the dead, we should love and adhere to it, as our happy Guide to Heaven” (*Works*, V, p. 94). If we read these lines in connection with Lovelace’s killing his conscience, then we will recognize how Richardson wanted us to understand that Lovelace had killed the “*God within* him”.

³⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 158.

Cheyne was a great admirer of Law and they corresponded together. One such letter by Law to Cheyne is on the subject of spirituality and the attitude of rationalists towards it. Law writes:

Spirituality itself is such a contrariety both to learned and unlearn'd Human Nature, that nothing whimsical or conjectural should be connected with it. This gives Rationalists too great an opportunity of exploding it all as chimerical, and makes even people well inclined to it, to be distrustful of it, and afraid of giving in to it. Whereas if the true spirituality of the Christian life was kept within its own bounds, supported only by Scripture doctrines, and the plain appearances of Nature and experience, Human reason would be strangely at a loss to know how to expose it. I could almost wish that we had no spiritual Books but those that have been wrote by Catholics.³⁵⁸

According to Talon, Law here refers to Cheyne's admiration for the Marquis de Marsay, whom Cheyne had described to Byrom in 1741 as "that wonderful German author of several treatises in French, printed at Berlebourg entituled, *Témoignage d'un enfant de la vérité & droiture des voyes d'Esprit, &c.*"³⁵⁹ Cheyne had asked both Byrom and Law (the "solid most judge in these sublime and abstracted matters") for their opinions on Marsay, because of their experience in the "mysteries of the kingdom of heaven and the means of the universal restoration",³⁶⁰ especially since "his last labours in medicine" (*The Natural Method* and the *Essay on Regimen*) had some "very remote tendency that way". Because Law's first reaction had not been too positive, Cheyne had sent him "all the history of the person, adventures, and methods of proficiency ... with the number of his books ... consisting of eight to ten octavo volumes".³⁶¹

As to Cheyne's admiration for Guyon and Bourignon, Byrom tells us how, during one of his visits to Putney (Plate XIII) in April 1737, Law dismissively

³⁵⁸ Alastair Hamilton, "Hiël in England 1657-1810", in *Quaerendo*, 15/4 (1986), p. 293.

³⁵⁹ Talon, *Op. cit.*, p. 207. Charles Hector de St George Marquis de Marsay (1688-1753) was the son of a Huguenot family who had emigrated to Switzerland. In the 1710s Marsay became a great admirer of Bourignon. In 1726 he and his wife had plans to emigrate to Pennsylvania, plans which never materialized, probably because they became, though briefly, influenced by Zinzendorf during the latter's visit to Berlebourg. In the mid 1730s Marsay began to write various treatises collected under the main title "Zeugniss eines Kindes von der Richtigkeit der Wege des Geistes", deeply influenced by Madame Guyon's thoughts. Cheyne's admiration, then, does not come as a surprise. Edelmann, Marsay's contemporary, described Marsay and his friends as follows: "Da fand ich nun wider eine ganz andere Art von Heiligen, die zwar alle auch Separatisten waren: Aber sie hatten sich in die Schriften der Bourignon und der Guion dergestalt verbildet, dass sie sie mehr als die Bibel selbst venerirten. Der Herr von Marsay, auf dem der Geist dieser beyden Heiligen zwiefach zu ruhen schien, und der alle seine Schriften aus dem Wasser dieser Quellen schöpfte, war der Götze dieser kleinen Familie." (Cf. Hans Schneider, "Der Radikale Pietismus im 18. Jahrhundert", in Martin Brecht's *Geschichte des Pietismus: Der Pietismus im 18. Jahrhundert*, Band 2, Göttingen, 1995, pp. 128-130).

³⁶⁰ See footnote 279 above and footnote 495 below.

³⁶¹ Henry Talon, *Op. cit.*, pp. 207-213.



XIII. Lime Grove, home of the Gibbon family in Putney, where Byrom walked with William Law

referred to these two female mystics, expressing his view that they wrote too much and were inclined to delusion. He believed that the world would be reformed but that those fit to do so had not yet arrived. He recommended more solid mystical writers such as Ruysbroeck, Tauler, Thomas à Kempis, the old Roman Catholic writers, and, of course, Boehme, the only Protestant mystic on his list.³⁶²

The first clear reference to Law appears in Cheyne's letter to Richardson of 9 March 1742. It is in this letter that Cheyne enthusiastically asks Richardson "Have you seen *Law's Appeal*?" which he described as "admirable and unanswerable". Moreover, he wished all the Methodists "might get it by Heart".³⁶³ Cheyne is here referring to *An Appeal to all that Doubt, or Disbelieve the Truths of the Gospel, whether they be Deists, Arians, Socinians, or Nominal Christians*, published in 1740.

In *Master Printer Sale* mentions that Richardson had printed two works by Law. The first work was *The Oxford Methodists* (1733). Though the book has been attributed to Law by Dr. J.S. Simon, I have not found any proof of this, nor is it mentioned as Law's in any of the collected editions of Law's works.³⁶⁴ The second book listed by Sale was Law's preparation to a new edition of works by Jacob Boehme, i.e. *The Way to Divine Knowledge* (1752).³⁶⁵ The publisher of both works was William Innys, with whom, according to Sale, Richardson was

³⁶² Ibid., Byrom's journal entry for 19 April 1737, pp. 174-175. Byrom often visited Law at the home of the Gibbon family in Putney. Two years earlier Byrom had written in his journal for 7 June 1735 that Law had said "much about [Antoinette Bourignon] and against her" and that Law had locked her books up "that Miss Gibbon might not find [them] among his books" (cf. Talon, *Op. cit.*, p. 155). Ruysbroeck (or, more correctly, Ruusbroec) was a mystic who lived from 1293 to 1381. He wrote almost entirely in Middle Dutch and his works include *The Spiritual Espouses*, *The Book of Supreme Truth*, etc. Several of his works were translated into Latin in the 14th century. His writings show the influence of St. Augustine, Bede, St. Bernard, Dionysius the Pseudo-Areopagite and Eckhart. John Tauler (d. 1361) was a German spiritual teacher, influenced by Eckhart and the Neoplatonists. His spirituality is notable for its balance between inwardness (detachment, the birth of God in the soul, and living in the "ground" of the soul) and the external practice of the virtues and of pious exercises. He had a lasting influence on later German piety, both Catholic and Protestant. Thomas à Kempis (Thomas Hemerken) was an ascetical writer who lived from 1380 to 1471. He was educated at the school of the Brethren of the Common Life. After that he entered the house of the Canons Regular, a daughter-house of Windesheim (the chief representatives of the "Devotio Moderna"). He is the probable author of the *Imitation of Christ*, the famous manual of spiritual devotion meant to instruct Christians how to seek perfection by following Christ as their model.

³⁶³ Mullett, *The Letters of Doctor George Cheyne to Samuel Richardson*, p. 88.

³⁶⁴ Cf. John S. Simon, *John Wesley and the Religious Societies*, London, 1921, p. 97. An article appeared in *Fog's Weekly Journal* on 9 December 1732, apparently severely and unfairly attacking the Oxford Methodists. The reply to this attack was given in a pamphlet of thirty pages, of which the title page reads: "THE OXFORD METHODISTS: Being an Account of some Young Gentlemen in That City, in Derision so called; Setting forth their Rise and Designs, with Some Occasional Remarks on A Letter inserted in *Fog's Journal of December 9th*, 1732, relating to them. In a Letter from a Gentleman near Oxford, to his Friend at London." For an extensive treatment of this issue, see J. Brazier Green, *John Wesley and William Law*, London, 1945, pp. 55-59. J. Roberts published an octavo edition of the *Oxford Methodists* (32 pages) in London in 1733. The British Library lists William Law as the author (shelfmark 859.c.5(1)).

³⁶⁵ Sale, *Op. cit.*, p. 183.

never close, but their relationship continued over a long period.³⁶⁶

Richardson as the Printer of Law's Works

During my research I came across a collection of three of Law's books, the first of which was Law's *Appeal* (pp. 1-214) followed by *Some Animadversions upon Dr. Trapp's late Reply* (pp. 215-332).³⁶⁷ These two works have always been printed together. Though originally printed in 1740, this edition was published in 1742. The third book in the collection was the third edition of *An Earnest and Serious Answer to Dr. Trapp's Discourse of the Folly, Sin, and Danger of being Righteous over-much* (renumbered pp. 1-92), the first edition of which was also published in 1740, while the second edition appeared in 1741. This third edition of 1756 was again published by Innys and since it has the same imprint used by Richardson in 1740 for Cheyne's *Essay on Regimen* (Plate XIV), it is obvious that Richardson printed this edition.³⁶⁸

Further research has yielded the following result. I found a second edition of Law's *Practical Treatise upon Christian Perfection* (first edition 1726), published by William and John Innys in 1728. This second edition contains on p. 68 another imprint used by Richardson,³⁶⁹ which connects Richardson with Law's works as early as 1728. It therefore seems reasonable to suppose that Innys had Richardson involved in the printing of Law's works from 1728 onwards. In answer to Cheyne's question as to whether or not Richardson had seen Law's *Appeal*, Richardson may have written that, indeed, he knew the *Appeal*, for he was involved in printing Law's books.

It then would come as no surprise that, only a few weeks later on 26 April 1742, Cheyne writes that Law had already sent him the *Regeneration (The Grounds and Reasons of Christian Regeneration)*, published in 1739) as well as the *Appeal*, but that he would very much appreciate it if Richardson would ask William Innys to get all Law's works bound and send them to him:

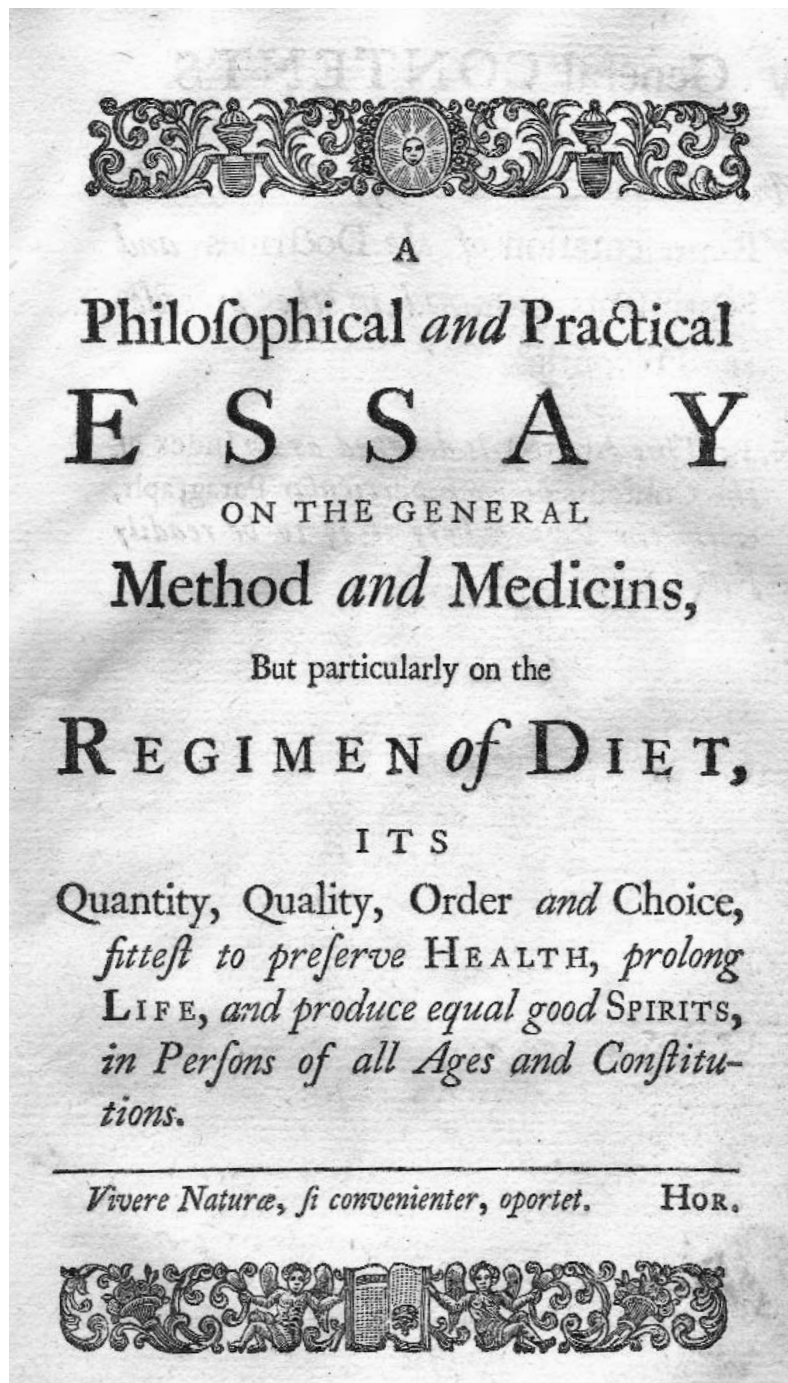
I have had but too much of your Compliments and Gratitude, and instead of your thinking yourself in my Debt for any Thing I can do for you, I have always thought myself in Yours. Remember the Catechism, Mr. Baillie's Character, ... but to ease your hyppish, honest, grateful Heart, if you'll get Innys to gather all Mr. Law's Pieces, all he ever wrote or published or is reckoned his, and get

³⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 328.

³⁶⁷ It is a collection of Law's works which belongs to the library of the Vrije Universiteit of Amsterdam.

³⁶⁸ I found that the first (1740) and second edition (1741) of *An Earnest and Serious Answer to Dr. Trapp* are in the British Library, but with different imprints on the first page of each edition. I have been unable to check whether these imprints belonged to Richardson, since Sale's list of Richardson's imprints is not complete. This, however, does not exclude Richardson's involvement in these editions.

³⁶⁹ This imprint has been listed by Sale as no. 53, but has not been connected by him with this particular work (Sale, *Op. cit.*, p. 292). This edition was also found at the library of the Vrije Universiteit of Amsterdam.



XIV. The title page of Cheyne's *Essay on Regimen* (first edition 1740). The imprint at the top of the page also appears in Law's *Answer to Dr. Trapp* (third edition 1756).

them handsomely bound and send them to me, I will keep them in my Family and Library as an eternal Remembrance of you and him, whom I know to be the greatest best Man, and the most solid and deep of this Island. I have most of his larger Pieces already sent by himself, his *Appeal* and *Regeneration* lately.³⁷⁰ (Italics are mine)

In a footnote to his letter to Richardson of 17 May 1742, Cheyne mentions that he has received Richardson's "most valuable Present of Mr. Law's Works".³⁷¹ Having established the connection between Law and Richardson, we will now have a closer look at Law's *Christian Regeneration* and *Appeal*.

Law's *Christian Regeneration* and Boehme's Doctrine of Regeneration

As mentioned above, Law had published in 1739 *The Grounds and Reasons of Christian Regeneration, or, The New Birth, Offered to the Consideration of Christians and Deists* in which the subject of rebirth, or the New Man, features prominently. Law compares the world with a hospital "where People *only* are, because they are *distempered*" and where there is no happiness, but that of being healed and "made fit to *leave it*".³⁷² It is also in the *Regeneration* that Law refers to a dark guest hidden within every man, "a *hidden Hell* within us":

There is a *dark Guest* within [every Man], concealed under the *Cover* of Flesh and Blood, often *lulled asleep* by wordly *Light* and *Amusements*, yet such as will, in spite of everything, show itself, which if it has not its *proper Relief* in this Life, must be *his Torment* in Eternity.³⁷³

Since these issues of rebirth and the New Man are themes in *Clarissa* and *Sir Charles Grandison*, it is important to have a look at Boehme's doctrine of

³⁷⁰ Mullett, *Op. cit.*, p. 93.

³⁷¹ Ibid., p. 99. It is probably in reference to these books that Shuttleton made his obnoxious remark that Richardson was Cheyne's patient, whom he paid for medical advice with "parcels of trade-discount books". (Cf. "'Pamela's Library': Samuel Richardson and Dr. Cheyne's 'Universal Cure'", in *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 1999, Feb. 23 (1), p. 59.

³⁷² *Works*, Vol. V, p. 143.

³⁷³ Ibid., p. 141. Boehme referred to the dark guest within as follows: "Seeing therefore wee are in such horrible danger in this world, that wee are environed with enemies on every side, and have a very unsafe Pilgrimage or Journey to walke, and above all, wee carry our worst Enemy within us, which wee our selves hide, and desire not to learne to know it, though it [note adds: viz. our evill & corrupt nature and will, which is inclined to all evill] be the most horrible Guest of all, which casteth us headlong into the anger of God; yea it selfe is the very Anger of God, which throweth us into the eternall Fire of Wrath, into the Eternall, unquenchable torment: therefore it is most needfull for us to learne to know this Enemy, what he is, who he is, and whence he is, how he cometh into us, and what in us is his proper own" (*The Three Principles*, Preface 9). In the *Threefold Life of Man* Boehme writes: "You goe to Church, into the Congregation of Christ, and you bring a false hypocrite, lyer, a covetous, angry, adulterous, proud person and soule *in with you*; and the same you bring *out with you* againe, what benefit have you thereby? You goe into the Congregation to the Supper of Christ, and desire Christs flesh and bloud, and yet keepe the black Devill in you for a Guest: What meane you?" (14:18).

Regeneration on which Law's theory is based. Boehme believed that Lucifer's fall was beyond remedy, but that Adam's was not, for the latter had desired to know good and evil, while the former had said "Evil, be thou my good." Consequently, Adam introduced into his mind a false knowledge, which, however, did not entirely destroy the true Divine perception. He still recognizes evil as evil, whereas Lucifer knows evil as good. Thus Adam had died, not to the entire ability to know good, but only to the true, Divine perception which knows only good. This true, Divine perception went into a hiddenness, but it is still there as a latent potentiality within him. And yet Adam is at first totally unaware of it so much so that it seems it was not in him at all. According to Boehme, natural life is a life in death, and if the dead life is to come to real life, it can only be through that whereby we come to this life, a birth.

Boehme explains that the power of this new birth is the power of God through the life and death of Christ, the second Adam, who came down to save man, or to "re-tincture" the disappeared divine nature that stood as dead, that it might again spring forth to new life. Christ leads us to the recovery of the true Divine perception, by leading us to the cross, on which we must crucify the false which lies over and obscures the true. In Evelyn Underhill's words, to be *re-born* means "to return to a world where the spirit of wisdom and love governs and animal-man obeys". It means, says the Philadelphian Jane Lead, "the bringing forth of a new-created Godlike similitude in the soul".³⁷⁴ Underhill states that this idea of re-birth is perhaps of Oriental origin and that it can be traced back to Egypt, being found in the Hermetic writings of the third century B.C.³⁷⁵ We have already seen how Sparrow connected Boehme with Hermes Trismegistos.³⁷⁶

Alchemic symbols such as "re-tincture" were also used by the "Hermetic Philosophers" or "Spiritual Alchemists", but Underhill warns us that the hermetic writers did not always use the symbols in the same sense, nor did their later admirers. Some of the alchemic symbolism clearly dealt with the physical quest for gold. Typical of the different alchemist recipes was fire. We have seen how Cheyne uses the word "fire" in a literal sense, although mostly with a negative connotation, as the "tortures of fire", because he disapproved of alchemy, whereas Law, like Boehme, uses it in a figurative sense.

The alchemists' primary object was to produce the Philosopher's Stone, a perfect and incorrupt, "noble tincture", which would purge all baser metals and turn them into pure gold. The quest of the Stone was a symbol of man's quest for perfection, and consequently a beautiful symbol of the mystic life. Underhill describes the activities of both the real alchemists and the spiritual alchemist as follows:

³⁷⁴ Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism*, London, 1948, p. 123.

³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, footnote 3 on p. 122.

³⁷⁶ See footnote 200 above.

Nature, they thought, was always trying to make gold, this incorruptible and perfect thing; and the other metals are merely the results of the frustration of her original design. Upon the spiritual plane they held that the Divine Idea is always aiming at "Spiritual Gold" - divine humanity, the New Man, citizen of the transcendental world - and "natural man" as we ordinarily know him is a lower metal, silver at best. He is a departure from the "plan", who yet bears within himself, if we could find it, the spark or seed of absolute perfection: the "tincture" which makes gold. Hence the prosecution of a spiritual chemistry is a proper part of the true Hermetic science. The art of the chemist, whether spiritual or physical, consists in completing the work of perfection, bringing forth and making dominant, as it were, the "latent goldness" which "lies obscure" in metal or man. Thus the proper art of the Spiritual Alchemist, with whom alone we are here concerned, was the production of the spiritual and only valid tincture or Philosopher's Stone; the mystic seed of transcendental life which should invade, tinge, and wholly transmute the imperfect self into spiritual gold. [His] quest was truly a spiritual search into the deepest secrets of the soul.³⁷⁷

To Boehme the *Magnum Opus* seemed a magnificent symbol of the "maximum opus" of regeneration or new birth. The transmutation of the base metal into the perfect metal stands for the transmutation of the fallen, external nature into the unfallen internal in which man was originally created in the image and likeness of God. And the process through solution, purification, and re-fixation exemplifies the spiritual process, through putting the false imagination to death to be followed by the re-creation of the "new man". Many of the Christian alchemists identified the indwelling Christ, the Sun of righteousness, with the "Lapis Philosophorum" and with Sol. His spirit was the noble tincture which should, and would, restore an imperfect world.³⁷⁸

Yet Law wrote in *The Way to Divine Knowledge* that when Boehme's work first appeared in English, his readers were people of "the greatest Wit and Abilities", who, instead of entering into his "*one only* Design", i.e. their own regeneration from an earthly to a heavenly life, turned "*Chemists*" and set up furnaces to "regenerate *Metals*", in search of the Philosopher's Stone. This had never been Boehme's intention, Law wrote, for "of all Men in the World" no one had so deeply and from such a true ground laid open the "exceeding Vanity of such Labour, and utter Impossibility of Success in it from any Art or Skill in the Use of Fire".³⁷⁹ This concurs with Boehme's admonition. He had written in the *Signatura Rerum*:

Herein now lieth the Philosophers Stone, [to know] how the Seed of the Woman bruise the Serpents Head, which is done in the Spirit and Essence,

³⁷⁷ Underhill, *Op. cit.*, pp. 142-143.

³⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 143-144.

³⁷⁹ *Works*, Vol VII, p. 196.

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Temporally and Eternally; the sting of the Serpent is Gods Anger-fire, and the Womans Seed is Gods Love-fire, which must be again awakened, and illustrate [through shine, irradiate] the Anger, and deprive the Wrath of its might, and put it into the divine Joyfulness. Now observe the Process, and meditate thereon, ye dear Children of Wisdom, and then ye shall have Enough Temporally and Eternally; do not as Babel doth, which tickleth and comforteth it self with the Philosophers Stone, and boasteth of it, but keepeth only a gross Masons-Stone shut up in Poyson and Death, in stead of the precious Philosophers Stone: What is it for Babel to have the Stone, when it lieth wholly shut up in Babel? It is as if a Lord bestowed a Country upon me, which indeed was mine, but I could not take possession of it, and remained still a poor man for all that, and yet I boasted of the Dominion, and so had the Name, and not the Power: Even thus it goeth with Babel about the precious Stone of the New-birth in Christ Jesus. (*Signatura Rerum*, 7:23, 25)

In the *Christian Regeneration* Law described the process of rebirth or regeneration as follows:

Regeneration, or the *Renewal* of our first Birth and State, is something entirely *distinct*, from this first *sudden Conversion*, or *Call* to Repentance; ... it is not a Thing done in an *Instant*, but is a certain *Process*, a *gradual Release* from our Captivity and Disorder, consisting of several *Stages* and *Degrees*, both of Death and Life, which the Soul must go through, before it can have thoroughly put off the old Man.³⁸⁰

Law did not believe that this process must necessarily be of the same degree in all or that there are no exceptions, but added that it is certain that Christ is the pattern:

What he did for us, *that* we are also to do for ourselves, or, in other Words, we must *follow him in the Regeneration*. For what he did, he did, both as our *Atonement* and *Example*, his Process, or Course of Life, Temptations, Sufferings, denying his own Will, Death and Resurrection, all done, and gone through, on our Account, because the human Soul wanted *such a Process* of Regeneration and Redemption; because, only in such a *gradual Process*, all that was lost in *Adam*, could be restored to us again. And therefore it is beyond all doubt, *that* this *Process* is to be looked upon, as the stated Method of our Purification.³⁸¹

It is a process which Lovelace rejects, whereas Clarissa embraces it. In *A Demonstration* Law had made a distinction between the Christ of history and the

³⁸⁰ Ibid., Vol. V, p. 180.

³⁸¹ Ibid.

Christ of experience:

The Gospel is not a History of something that was done, and past 1700 Years ago, or of a Redemption that was then *present*, and only to be transmitted to Posterity as a Matter of *History*; but it is a Declaration of a Redeemer, and a redeeming Power that is always in its *redeeming State*, and equally *present* to every Man.³⁸²

It is clear why Cheyne was full of admiration for Law, for they were kindred spirits. We have seen how Cheyne was fascinated with the phenomenon of attraction. Law was equally interested in this subject and wrote in *A Demonstration*:

For all is *Magnetism*, all is *Sentiment*, *Instinct*, and *Attraction*, and the *Freedom* of the Will has the Government of it. There is nothing in the Universe but Magnetism, and the Impediments of it. For as all things come from God, and all things have *something* of God and Goodness in them, so all things have *magnetical* Effects and *Instincts* both towards God and one another. This is the *Life*, the *Force*, the *Power*, the *Nature* of everything, and hence everything has all that is really Good or Evil in it; Reason stands only as a Busybody, as an idle Spectator of all this, and has only an *imaginary* Power over it.³⁸³

Law added:

³⁸² Ibid., Vol. V, p. 105. See also Boehme, *The Threefold Life of Man*: "But for you to depend wholly on *the History*, and so to apply the merit, suffering, and death of Christ, and will still keepe the Devill lodging in your soule, that is a *reproach* to Christ; what doth it avails you to pray, *that God would forgive you for Christs sake*; when you forgive not all others? Your heart sticketh full of revenge and robbery" (14:17). The distinction between the Christ of history and the Christ of experience is reminiscent of the seventeenth-century English enthusiasts, also found among the Seekers, with their strong Anabaptist tinge, and the early Quakers (see also R. Knox, *Enthusiasm*, pp. 94, 174-175). See Boehme's first epistle, "a Theosophical letter, or letter of divine wisdom, wherein the life of a true Christian is described ...", in which he writes that: "He is farre from a Christian, who onely comforteth himselfe with the Passion, Death, and Satisfaction of Christ, and doth apply and impute it to himselfe as a pardon or gift of favour, and yet remaineth still an unregenerated, wilde [wordly, and sensuall] Beast; such a Christian is every ungodly Man: For every one would faine be saved through a gift of favour, the devill also would very willingly be an Angell againe by grace received and applyed from without. But to turne, ... and be borne anew of Gods grace-water of love, and the holy Ghost, that pleaseth him not. Even so it pleaseth not the Titular Christian, who will put upon himselfe the mantle of Christs grace [and apply his merits unto himselfe by an Historicall laying claime to a promise] and yet will not enter into the Adoption and New birth; albeit Christ saith, that he cannot otherwise see the Kingdome of God" (*Epistles*, 1:7-8).

³⁸³ *Works*, Vol. V, p. 90. Boehme explained that magnetical attraction is the beginning of nature (cf. *Concerning the Election of Grace or of Gods Will towards Man, commonly called Predestination*, 2:41). See also footnote 262 on magnetism, Law and Freke. Boehme stated that "although men cannot say of God that the pure Deity is Nature, but that it is the Majesty in the Ternary; yet we must say that God is in Nature, although Nature can as little reach or comprehend him, as the Aire can comprehend the Sunshine" (*XL Questions*, 1:5).

This is that Trumpet of God which will raise and separate the Dead, and then all Impediments being removed, everything will take its place, not according to the Images and Ideas it has here played with, but according to the inward Tendency and Attraction of its Nature, and heaven and hell will each take its own. And even whilst we are in this Life, this Magnetism is the *Mark* within us, to what Part we belong; and that which has its Attraction in us, has the Right to us, and Power over us.³⁸⁴

As to the relation between reason and sensibility, Law writes:

It is the *Sensibility* of the Soul that must receive what this World can communicate to it; it is the *Sensibility* of the Soul that must receive what God can communicate to it. Reason may follow after in either Case, and view through its own Glass what is done, but it can do no more. Now the *Sensibility* of the Soul, which is its Capacity for Divine Communications, or for the Operation of God's Holy Spirit upon it, consists in *inward Sentiment* of the *Weight* and Disorder of *Sin*, and in an inward *Sentiment* of *Hope* and *Conversion* to the Mercy of God. It is this *Seed* of Life, or *Sensibility*, that the Holy Spirit of God acts upon, moves and quickens, and enlightens.³⁸⁵

Law explains that "nothing but this *Sensibility*, or State of Heart, has Eyes to see, or Ears to hear the *Things* of the Spirit of God."³⁸⁶

As to the freedom of the will and happiness, Law wrote:

Now the *Freedom* of the Will ... is only a Liberty of *choosing* to be made happy, either by yielding ourselves up to the *Attraction* or *Operation* of God upon us, or to be miserable, by yielding ourselves up to the *Impressions* of the World, and sensible Things.³⁸⁷

Cheyne's interest in the concept of rebirth again appears from his letter to Richardson of 30 June 1742, in which he expressed his conviction that "low-living", which in Richardson's case meant a diet of bread and milk, would "mend a bad or weakened Constitution of Body". It was a method which, according to him, had a great analogy to the "meanest Purification and Regeneration preserved in holy Writ." He believed this diet would help to throw off the "old corrupted Mass" or "old Man with all his Works of Darkness", which represented repentance, self-denial, sensuality and sin. The "new Man", guided by the Divine Spirit, would obtain inward peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, "freedom of spirits", serenity, activity, and gaiety, and a returning health

³⁸⁴ *Works*, Vol. V, pp. 90-91.

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

³⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 121.

and mended constitution.³⁸⁸ Cheyne adds that he could moralise “much further” on this topic and show the resemblance “much more extensive”, but he thought “such a Hint” would do for the time being.

However, clearly back on earth again, Cheyne immediately continues to advise Richardson not to neglect his “Thumb Vomits”, which though “most painful, disagreeable and irksome ... are by far the most beneficial”. Together with (cold) bathing they are, in his words:

Like Self-denial in Religion without which our Lord tells us none can be his Disciples. Milk and Bread is our only daily Food, sweet, mild, and nourishing and is like becoming little Children. Without becoming such we cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Cold Bathing is our Corporal Baptism and outward Cleansing. Go on with Faith and Patience and labour by the Assistance from above to cleanse the Outward and Inward Man from all Roots of Bitterness and labour to perfect Health and Holiness in the inner and outer Man.³⁸⁹

Cheyne realises that his words may be misinterpreted, for he writes that if some of “our pretty Fellows” were to see this “doughty Epistle” they would swear he was mad and Richardson “not wise”, but Cheyne adds that he is not afraid Richardson should mistake or despise his “Insinuations”, for Richardson had always shown a “Relish for Spiritual and internal Religion”.³⁹⁰

Law's Appeal to all that doubt, or disbelieve the Truths of the Gospel

The other book Cheyne referred to in his letter to Richardson was Law's *Appeal*, published in 1740. In the *Appeal* Law discusses subjects such as free will, the Trinity and the triune nature of God in human beings (“as there are *Three* in God, so there must be *Three* in the Creature”), Arianism and Deism. The Trinity as described by Boehme was a subject which, as we have seen, found its way into Cheyne's works. It was also an important issue with Law, who, like Cheyne, was everywhere in his work insistent upon the activity of the Holy Trinity in the work of creation as well as insistent upon the indwelling of the triune being of God in the life of man. Law writes in the *Appeal*:

³⁸⁸ Mullett, *Op. cit.*, p. 101. Cheyne did not understand how bathing could ever have come into disuse, especially among Christians, when it was commanded by Moses under the direction of the Holy Spirit to his chosen people, and perpetuated to us in the immersion at baptism by the same spirit. Cheyne explained that frequent washing of the body in water cleanses the “mouths” of the perspiratory ducts from the “glutinous foulness” that is continually falling upon them. He argued that having the circulation “full, free and open” would be of great benefit to health and long life. His advice to everyone who could afford it, was to have a bath in a basin at their house, at least two or three times a week, if not daily, or otherwise to go into a river or a “living” pond (*Essay of Health and Long Life*, pp. 100-102).

³⁸⁹ Mullett, *Op. cit.*, p. 101.

³⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 102.

Every Thing that is said of God, as Father, Regenerator, or Sanctifier of Man; every Thing that is said of Jesus Christ, as Redeeming, forming, dwelling in, and quickening; and of the Holy Spirit, as moving and sanctifying us; Every Thing that is said of the Holy Sacraments, or promised in and by them, has its deep and inward Ground *fully discovered*; and the whole Christian religion is built upon a *Rock*, and that Rock is *Nature*, and God will appear to be doing every Good to us, that the God of all Nature can possibly do. The Doctrine of the Holy Trinity is wholly practical; it is revealed to us, to discover our high Original and the Greatness of our Fall, to show us the deep and profound Operation of the triune God in the Recovery of the Divine Life in our Souls; For as every Thing that is in us, whether it be Heaven, or Hell, rises up in us by a *Birth*, and is generated in us by the Will-spirit of our Souls, which kindles itself either in Heaven or Hell; so this Mystery of the triune Deity manifesting itself, as a *Father* creating, as a *Son*, or *Word*, regenerating, as a *Holy Spirit* sanctifying us is not to entertain our Speculation with dry, metaphysical Distinctions of the Deity, but to show us from what a Height and Depth we are fallen, and to excite such a Prayer and Faith, such a Hungering and Thirsting after this triune Fountain of all Good, as may help to generate and bring forth in us that first Image of the Holy Trinity in which we were generated, and which must be born in us before we can enter into the State of the Blessed.³⁹¹

Also in *The Appeal*, Law discusses fire. He describes how fire is either a fire of wrath or a fire of love. If not overcome by Light, fire is the fire of wrath, which tears in pieces, consumes and devours all that it can lay hold of, because that is all it “wills”, whereas light is the fire of love, meek, and amiable.³⁹² Again, this may have influenced Richardson when writing the fire-scene and its aftermath in *Clarissa*, with Lovelace representing the fire of wrath (loveless), refusing to be overcome by Clarissa representing light or the fire of love.

Law discusses fire in a slightly different context further down in the *Appeal* when he compares fire, light and air in this world not only as a true resemblance of the Trinity in Unity, but as the Trinity itself in its “most *outward, lowest* kind of existence or manifestation”, for, so he argues, there could be no fire, fire could not generate light, air could not proceed from both, “these three could not be thus united, and thus divided, but because they have their *Root* and *Original* in the Triunity of the Deity”.³⁹³

This comparison of fire, light and air with God, the Son and the Holy Spirit may reflect Richardson’s statement that with his third and last novel, *Sir Charles Grandison*, he was completing a plan. For indeed *Sir Charles Grandison*, in which Sir Charles represents air, or the Holy Spirit, seems but a natural continuation of or sequel to *Clarissa*, in which Clarissa represents

³⁹¹ *Works*, Vol. VI, pp. 82-83.

³⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 112.

³⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 118.

light, or the Son. Richardson writes in the preface to *Sir Charles Grandison*:

The Editor of the following Letters takes Leave to observe, that he has now, in this Publication, completed the Plan, that was the Object of his Wishes, rather than of his Hopes, to accomplish.³⁹⁴

Since in the perception of Boehme, Cheyne and Law, the Son is necessarily and eternally begotten of the Father, and the Holy Spirit necessarily proceeds from both, it is not surprising that Sir Charles, as the Holy Spirit, has characteristics of all three.

Byrom's Versification of Law's Prose

Richardson's continued admiration of Law in later years may appear from the following two poems, found upon Richardson's death among his manuscripts. Although on top of the page of the manuscript the reader is referred to Law's *Appeal*, the first poem, to be quoted below, is actually based on *Some Animadversions upon Dr. Trapp's late Reply*, also published in 1740.³⁹⁵ Since Byrom often versified parts of Law's prose, and since Richardson printed some poems for Byrom, these poems may well be attributed to Byrom.³⁹⁶

The first poem reflects both Law's and Richardson's concern with the concept of universal love and their dismay at the disputes among the various sects of Christianity.

A Catholic Christian's Dying Speech.

In this divided State of Christendom,
Of diff'r'ng Parts one must conform to some.

³⁹⁴ *Sir Charles Grandison*, 1972, Part 1, p. 3.

³⁹⁵ *Works*, Vol. VI, p. 185. In the collection of the three books discussed on p. 118 above, the poem refers to the text on p. 279.

³⁹⁶ These poems are to be found in MS XVI, nr. 2. In the "Index to Poetry", nrs. 77 and 78 describe the two poems discussed. In this MS we find other poems by Byrom, e.g. nrs. 55, 56 and 57. See for the connection between Richardson, Byrom and Law, *The Private Journals and Literary Remains of John Byrom*, Vol. II, Part II, pp. 520-524, 543. In a letter dated October 21, 1751, Byrom writes to Law that the "letter to the Templar does indeed want to be printed". He then informs Law that Richardson "was so willing to print it upon hearing [it] repeated at first that I should have him to print it". If Law had no objection, Byrom writes he wanted "the other too", i.e. his poem *Enthusiasm*, to be printed by Richardson. Apparently not having received Byrom's letter, Law wrote to Byrom on November 4, 1751, that he had "desired Mr. Innys to let Mr. Richardson" print his work. It is in this letter that Law informs Byrom that both doctor Freke and Richardson will correct the proof sheets. In Byrom's *Journal* we also find Warburton's reaction to Byrom upon having read the *Epistle to a Gentleman of the Temple* and the *Essay on Enthusiasm* as he called them. Though trying to remain polite in his letter at the censure upon him in these two works, Warburton wrote to Hurd that "[Byrom] is certainly a man of genius, plunged deep into the rankest fanaticism. He is very libellous upon me; but I forgive him heartily, for he is not malevolent, but mad." (*Private Journal*, p. 522). Both the *Epistle to a Gentleman of the Temple* and the *Essay on Enthusiasm* are printed in *The Poems of John Byrom*, 3 Vols., Manchester, 1894-1912, Vol. II, Part I, 1895, pp. 138 ff. and 173 ff.

The Relationship between Richardson and Law

I have been led, and thought it best to join
The Church of England, in her Rites Divine;
And, as in Life I profited thereby,
In her Communion I desire to dye:
Trusting, that if I worship God with her,
In Spirit, and in Truth, I shall not err;
But as acceptable to him be found
As if in Times for one pure Church renown'd,
Born, I had really liv'd, in Heart, and Soul,
A faithful Member of th' unbroken whole.

Now as the time is come for me to go
From this divided State of Things below,
To share I hope, thro' Mercy in a scene
Where no Disorders, no Divisions reign;
Into his Hands as I am, now to fall,
Who is the great Creator of us all;
God of all Churches, who with unconfined
Unchanging Love embraces all Mankind;
Who for his Creatures, has prepared, above,
A Kingdom __ that of Universal Love, __
For them that worship him the best they can,
Of every People, Nation, Tribe, or Clan:

So in this Loving Spirit, I desire,
As in the midst of this one holy Choir,
With solemn Rites, and with a Christian view,
Of all the World to take my last Adieu.
Join'd, tho' of this divided Church, in Heart,
To what is good in every other Part;
Whatever is well-pleasing in God's Sight,
In any Church, with that I wou'd unite;
Praying that ev'ry Church may have its Saints,
And rise to the Perfection that it wants.

Father! Thy Kingdom come! Thy Sacred Will!
May all the Nations upon Earth fulfill!
Thy Name be praised by every living Breath;
Author of **Life**, and Vanquisher of **DEATH**.³⁹⁷

As an example of Law's beautiful prose, rather different from Cheyne's slightly awkward (or archaic) style, I will quote the text on which the poem is

³⁹⁷ Forster MSS, Folio XVI, nr. 47, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

based, preceded by the introduction to it:

We often hear of People of great *Zeal* and *Orthodoxy*, declaring on their *Death-beds* their strict Attachment to the Church of *England*, and making *solemn Protestations* against all other Churches; but how much better would it be, if such a Person was to say, 'In this *divided State* of Christendom, I must conform to some outwardly divided Part of it, and therefore I have chosen to live and die in outward Communion with the Church of *England*; fully believing, that if I worship God in *Spirit and in Truth* in this divided Part of the Church, I shall be as acceptable to him, as if I had been a faithful Member of the *one whole* Church, before it was broken into separate Parts.' But 'as I am now going out of this disordered Division into a more *universal State* of Things, as I am now falling into the Hands of the great Creator and Lover of *all Souls*; as I am going to the God of *all Churches*, to a Kingdom of *universal Love*, which must have its Inhabitants from *all People, Nations and Languages* of the Earth; so in this Spirit of universal Love, I desire to perform my last Act of Communion in this divided Church, uniting and joining in Heart and Spirit with all that is *Christian, Holy, Good, and Acceptable* to God in all other Churches; praying, from the Bottom of my Soul, that every Church may have *its Saints*, that God's Kingdom may come, his Will be done in every division of Christians and Men, and that *every Thing that hath Breath may praise the Lord*.'³⁹⁸

Reading the poem cited in connection with *Sir Charles Grandison*, we recognize that "This divided State of Christendom" reflects the differences between Protestant England and Roman Catholic Italy as well as between other denominations. Sir Charles, then, though on the literal or surface level a member of the Church of England, is in "heart and soul a faithful Member of the unbroken whole". Grandison Hall represents a place where "no Disorders, no Divisions reign". Godlike, Sir Charles embraces "all Mankind" in a "Kingdom of Universal Love". In Grandison Hall Grandison receives people that "worship [God] the best they can". The lines "of every People, Nation, Tribe or Clan" are echoed in Harriet's words: "But is not human nature the same in every country, allowing only for different customs? And is not the language of nature one language throughout the world, tho' there are different modes of speech to express it?" (I. 185) Defending Sir Charles, Mrs. Beaumont writes:

He is a man of honour in every sense of the word. If moral rectitude, if practical religion ... were lost in the rest of the world, it would, without glare or ostentation, be found in him. He is courted by the best, the wisest, the most eminent men, where-ever he goes; and he does good without distinction of religion, sects, or nation. (III. 169)

³⁹⁸ *Works*, Vol. VI, p. 185.

And in Volume VII Harriet writes in a letter to Mrs Shirley what a pity it is that different nations of the world, though of different persuasions, do not really consider themselves as the creatures of one God “the Sovereign of a thousand worlds” (VII. 367).

The second poem is also interesting. It is based on the words of Boehme, quoted by Law at the end of *The Spirit of Prayer* (1749-50), and reads as follows:

Mr. Law’s Quotation from Jacob Behmen at the Conclusion of
his Treatise upon the Spirit of Prayer.

Alas’ that we shou’d be so blindly led,
And fill the Heart with Fancies of the Head!
Truth in its Nature is as plain as Day;
But vain Conceptions still obscure its Ray:
Were its illuminating Power divine,
Within the Souls internal Ground to shine
Then were God present in its Life and Will,
Which he and all his heav’nly Powers, wou’d fill;
His manifested Love wou’d make it soon,
The Place and Dwelling of the great Triune:
The Temple of the Soul once freed from Sin,
God wou’d display his Deity therein;
The Father generate the Son, indeed,
And from them both, the Holy Ghost proceed.

Of all the World, saith Christ, I am the Light;
Who followeth me is never in the Night.
We need not go, then, for Direction, far
He is himself, the inward Morning Star,
That riseth in us, by a willing Birth;
And shineth in the Darkness of our Earth:
O! What a Triumph is there, in the Soul
When he enlightens its capacious whole!
Then a Man knows, what’s hid from him before
That he’s a Stranger in a foreigh Shore.³⁹⁹

Law’s original text, preceded by a small introduction, is as follows:

I shall conclude this *first Part*, with the Words of the heavenly Illuminated,
and blessed *Jacob Behmen*.

‘It is much to be lamented, that we are so blindly led, and the Truth withheld
from us through imaginary Conceptions; for if the *Divine Power* in the inward

³⁹⁹ Forster MSS, Folio XVI, nr. 46, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Ground of the Soul was manifest, and working with its Lustre in us, then is the whole Triune God present in the *Life* and *Will* of the Soul; and the Heaven, wherein God dwells, is opened in the Soul, and *There*, in the Soul, is the *Place* where the Father begets his Son, and where the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father and the Son. Christ says, "I am the Light of the World, he that followeth me, walketh not in Darkness." He directs us only to himself, He is the Morning Star, and is generated and rises in us, and shines in the Darkness of our Nature. O how great a Triumph is there in the Soul, when he arises in it! then a Man knows, as he never knew before, that he is a Stranger in a foreign Land.⁴⁰⁰

We find the confrontation between the head and the heart in the second line of Byrom's poem, when he writes that we "fill the Heart with Fancies of the Head". He laments that the divine power is not manifest in the soul: "Were its illuminating Power divine, within the Souls" then God would be present. Byrom refers to the "Temple of the Soul", which, when "freed from sin" would be the dwelling-place of the "great Triune", i.e. the Father, the Son and, from both, the Holy Ghost. He describes Christ "the Light" that "riseth in us by a willing Birth", who "enlightens" the soul. It is then that "a Man knows, what's hid from him before". This is reminiscent of the text quoted by Cheyne in the *Essay on Regimen*: "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." (1 Cor. 13:12) The connection between Boehme, Cheyne, Law, Byrom and Richardson is clear.

More Behmenism in Law's Later Works

Law continued to work with Boehme's ideas, and we shall see that, as the printer of Law's works, Richardson was involved. In *The Way to Divine Knowledge* (1752) and *The Spirit of Love* (2 parts, 1752-54) Law explains Boehme's theory of the seven natural "Forms" or "Properties", the first three of which are Harshness, Attraction and Bitterness. The fourth Form is Fire, essential in Boehme's theory. The fifth and sixth Forms are Light and Sound, and the seventh Form is the Body or Mansion of the six Forms. At the fourth Form of Fire, the evolution divides into two contrary directions, and it is within the power of the consciousness to decide which of the two it will take. The Fire is at first a cold and dark fire which can burn and hurt, but cannot purify. However, if the evolution goes on in the right way, the Fire grows stronger until it passes into the fifth Form, Light, the true Divine Light, and makes manifest things as they really are. When this Light arises, the Fire gives over all its power to the Light. Thereupon the first three Forms also change their character and be-

⁴⁰⁰ In the original *Spirit of Prayer* (2 parts, 1749-50), the text is found on p. 101 of part I. The Vrije Universiteit of Amsterdam has it in its collection bound together with *The Way to Divine Knowledge* (1750). Cf. William Law, *Works* (*The Spirit of Prayer*), Vol. VII, p. 47. (This volume likewise contains *The Way to Divine Knowledge*.)

come gentle, soft and harmonious. So, if the evolution has gone right, then the creature stands marked with the “signature” of God.

However, if the evolution had proceeded from the fourth Form in the false direction, preferring might, power and anger to meekness, humility and love, then its light is dull, its sound is harsh and its figure monstrous. So it is in the fourth Form, or Fire, that the great choice has to be made whether the Fire shall be the Fire of “self” which consumes, or the Fire of “love” which illuminates.⁴⁰¹

As mentioned above, Law discusses these seven Forms in *The Way to Divine Knowledge* and in the *Spirit of Love*.⁴⁰² In the latter work Law writes:

The fourth [Property], called *Fire*, the fifth, called the Form of *Light and Love*, and the sixth, *Sound* or *Understanding*, only declare the *gradual Effects* of the Entrance of the Deity into the first three Properties of Nature, changing, or bringing their strong wrathful *Attraction*, *Resistance*, and *Whirling*, into a Life and State of triumphing Joy, and Fulness of Satisfaction; which *State* of Peace and Joy in one another is called the *Seventh Property* or State of Nature.⁴⁰³

Law adds that this is what Boehme means by his “*Ternarius Sanctus*” or “the holy Manifestation of the Triune God in the *Seven Properties* of Nature, or Kingdom of Heaven.” Richardson must have been familiar with this theory of the seven properties of nature before Law discussed it in the 1750s, for the function of Fire in the seven Properties of nature seems to have influenced Richardson when he wrote the controversial fire-scene in *Clarissa*, and gives it a symbolic meaning, additional to the one described above.⁴⁰⁴ Lovelace’s plots and schemes extend to setting fire to the house they stay at. He tells Belford:

⁴⁰¹ This description is based on G.W. Allen’s article in the *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* as well as on the description of the seven natural Forms or Properties in Stephen Hobhouse’s *Selected Mystical Writings of William Law*, London, 1949, pp. 344-347. (See also Werner Buddecke, *Die Jakob Böhme-Ausgaben*, Volume II, Göttingen, 1957, p. 57).

⁴⁰² *Works*, Vol. VII, pp. 251-253; Vol. VIII, pp. 19-20.

⁴⁰³ *Works*, Vol. VIII, p. 19-20. It is on p. 19 of this Volume (*The Spirit of Love*, Part I) that Law mentions Sir Isaac Newton. He writes: “Here ... in these *three Properties* of the *Desire*, you see the Ground and Reason of the *three* great Laws of *Matter* and *Motion* lately discovered, and so much celebrated; and need no more to be told, that the illustrious Sir *Isaac* ploughed with *Behmen’s* Heifer when he brought forth the Discovery of them. In the mathematical System of this great Philosopher these three Properties, *Attraction*, equal *Resistance*, and the *orbicular Motion* of the Planets as the Effect of them, &c., are only treated of as *Facts* and *Appearances*, whose Ground is not pretended to be known. But in our *Behmen*, the illuminated Instrument of God, their *Birth* and *Power* in Eternity are opened; their eternal Beginning is shown, and *how* and *why* all Worlds, and every Life of every Creature, whether it be heavenly, earthly, or hellish, must be in them, and from them, and can have no Nature, either spiritual or material, no kind of Happiness or Misery, but according to the working Power and State of these Properties. All outward Nature, all inward Life, is what it is, and works as it works, from this unceasing powerful *Attraction*, *Resistance*, and *Whirling*.” Earlier Law called this “*Whirling*” a “*Wheel*, or *whirling Anguish of Life*” and “the *Hell of Nature*” (*The Spirit of Love*, Part I, p. 18; see also *The Way to Divine Knowledge*, Vol. VII, p. 196).

⁴⁰⁴ See p. 127 above.

And now for a little mine which I am getting ready to spring. The *first* that I have sprung, and at the rate I go on (now a *resolution*, and now a *remorse*) perhaps the *last* that I shall attempt to spring. A *little* mine, I call it. But it may be attended with great effects. I shall not, however, absolutely depend upon the success of it, having much more effectual ones in reserve. And yet great engines are often moved by small springs. A little spark falling by accident into a powder magazine has done more execution in a siege than a hundred cannon. Come the worst, the *hymeneal torch*, and a *white sheet*, must be my *amende honorable*, as the French have it. (II. 482)

The fire scene follows on June 7, but not with the hoped for consequences. Yet, it represents a crucial moment in the story, because from this moment onwards Lovelace is hell-bent, or all darkness, whereas Clarissa becomes illuminated. If she had any doubts before, she is now completely enlightened as to Lovelace's dark intentions. We can only fully perceive Richardson's objective with the fire-scene if we take heed of Sparrow's warning in the *Signatura Rerum* that only those readers of Boehme who understand "the ground" of Kabbalah will be able to grasp the true meaning of certain words, for "the bare letter will not give the understanding". And Sparrow specifically refers to the word *flagrat* which meant not merely a burning, but an opening of life or death or "the dividing bound-mark" between the "dying" death in darkness and the "living" life in light, impressive words made even more so by the use of alliteration.⁴⁰⁵

The contrast between light and darkness becomes stronger and more explicit immediately after the fire-scene. At one point Clarissa is arrested and thrown into prison in a sham action brought upon her by Mrs Sinclair (III. 419). Belford visits her there and describes her in terms of "light", "illuminating" and "whiteness" contrasted with the darkness of her prison environment:

A horrid hole of a house, in an alley they call a court; stairs wretchedly narrow, ... into a den they led me, with broken walls. The windows dark and double-barred, the tops boarded to save mending; and only a little four-paned

⁴⁰⁵ See Sparrow's postscript to the *Signatura Rerum* in which he explains certain uncommon words used in the English translation. He writes on p. 207 that "words are *vehicula rerum*, they are formed to express things, not bare sounds, or empty ayrs. Now He that rightly understands the ground of the *Cabala* ... and knows how the Language of Nature speaks in every Tongue, may well translate [Boehme]; but the bare letter of his Writings, though never so exactly translated, will not give a man the understanding of them, but the Spirit of Regeneration in Christ, in whom the fullness of the Deity dwelleth bodily." Sparrow explains the use of the word *flagrat* as follows: "I have put it [German *Schra'ck*] *flagrat*, from the Latin word *flagro*, although by it I mean not a burning, but even the powerful opening of the Life or Death of the enkindling of the Fire in Nature; for the Fire is the dividing boundmark, wherein the life of both Principles is Opened and Severed; the life of the first is the dying death in the darkness, and the life of the Second is the living life in the Light; you may perceive a Resemblance of this *Flagrat* in [Thunder and Lightning, so also], in Gun powder, or the like. In some it is the horrible *Flagrat* to Death, and in others it is the pleasant Triumphant *Flagrat* to Life."

eyelet-hole of a casement to let in air. *And this, thou horrid Lovelace, was the bedchamber of the divine Clarissa!!!* She was kneeling in a corner of the room, near the dismal window ... her arms crossed upon the table, the fore-finger of her right hand in her Bible. Her dress was white damask, exceeding neat. The kneeling lady, sunk with majesty too in her white flowing robes ... illuminating that horrid corner, her linen beyond imagination white. (III. 444-446)

Exactly three months after the fire scene Clarissa dies, on Thursday,⁴⁰⁶ September 7 (IV. 348). The numbers three and seven are no coincidence, for they refer to Boehme's theory of the seven Properties, divided into two Ternaries and connected by Fire.

Law's Remarks on the Fable of the Bees

Law's influence on Richardson may also appear from a much earlier work called *Remarks on the Fable of the Bees*, published in 1723.⁴⁰⁷ It contained Law's answer to Bernard Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees; or Private Vices, Public Benefits*, a cynical defence of certain licentious ideas which Lovelace likes to quote. Law describes Mandeville's praise of immorality as follows:

[Mandeville writes] *that Evil, as well moral, as natural, is the solid Basis, the Life and Support of all Trades and Employments without exception; that there we must look for the true Origin of all Arts and Sciences; and that the Moment Evil ceases, the Society must be spoiled, if not dissolved.*⁴⁰⁸

Equally important is Mandeville's definition of man, quoted by Law:

*As for my part, say you, without any Compliment to the courteous Reader, or myself, I believe, Man (besides Skin, Flesh, Bones, &c., that are obvious to the Eye) to be a Compound of various Passions, that all of them as they are provoked, and come uppermost, govern him by turns whether he will or no.*⁴⁰⁹

According to Mandeville, the passions which govern men are "Pride, Shame, Fear, Lust and Anger".⁴¹⁰ Pity is a "Frailty of our Natures", Mandeville writes, of which "the weakest Minds have generally the greatest Share", referring to women and children to support his case. Of course, Law does not agree at all.

⁴⁰⁶ Thursday was one of the second Mrs Richardson's "lucky days". Pamela insisted on being married on a Thursday (*Pamela*, London, 1966, Vol. I, p. 292). Harriet and Sir Charles also married on a Thursday (*Sir Charles Grandison*, VI. 191).

⁴⁰⁷ J. Brazier Green, *John Wesley and William Law*, London, 1945, p. 37. See also Jonathan I. Israel, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity 1650-1750*, Oxford, 2001, pp. 596, 624-626.

⁴⁰⁸ *Works*, Vol. II, p. 4.

⁴⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁴¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

If women are more inclined to compassion “through a Tenderness of Nature”, Law writes, it is not from a weakness of their minds, but rather from “a right Judgment assisted, or made more easy, by a happy Tenderness of their Constitutions.”⁴¹¹

Pride, lust and anger are Lovelace’s main characteristics. Believing that the “gaining” of Clarissa is essential to his happiness, and arguing that it is perfectly natural for all men to aim at obtaining whatever they think will make them happy, he writes to John Belford in a Mandevillian vein:

Whatever our hearts are in, our heads will follow. Begin with *spiders*, with *flies*, with what we will, girl is the centre of gravity, and we all naturally tend to it. I cannot but observe that these *tame spirits* stand a poor chance in a fairly offensive war with such of us mad fellows as are above all law, and scorn to skulk behind the hypocritical screen of reputation. (II. 23)

He repeats this imagery once again to Belford:

I have known a bird actually starve itself, and die with grief, at its being caught and caged. But never did I meet with a woman who was so silly. Yet have I heard the dear souls most vehemently threaten their own lives on such an occasion. But it is saying nothing in a woman’s favour, if we do not allow her to have *more sense than a bird*. And yet we must all own, that it is more difficult to catch a *bird* than a *lady*. How usual a thing is it for women as well as men, without the least remorse, to ensnare, to cage, and torment, and even with burning knitting-needles to put out the eyes of the poor feathered songster; ... which, however, in proportion to its bulk, has more life than themselves (for a bird is all soul), and of consequence has as much feeling as the human creature! (II. 246-247)

Volume II of *Clarissa* ends with the following poem:

‘Tis nobler like a lion to invade
When appetite directs, and seize my prey,
Than to wait tamely, like a begging dog,
Till dull consent throws out the scraps of love. (II. 526)

Defending his actions, Lovelace directly refers to Mandeville and says that at worst, he is entirely within his “worthy” friend Mandeville’s assertion “that private vices are public benefits” (III. 145). Recognizing the similarities between Mandeville’s depiction of man and the character of Lovelace, could help us understand that Richardson’s creation of Lovelace was perhaps not at all a depiction of a “dark guest” within himself. In a letter of 14 February 1754

⁴¹¹ Ibid., pp. 17, 24-25.

Richardson wrote to Lady Bradshaigh that in his novels he wanted to form characters, “one I intend to be all goodness” so “all goodness he is”, whereas another he intended to be “all gravity” and “all gravity he is”. He added that it was “not fair to say” that he was identical, “anywhere”, while he “kept within the character”.⁴¹²

Rather than Richardson’s own “dark guest”, Lovelace represents a “loveless” human being, Cheyne’s “moral evil” or Boehme’s “unenlightened soul”. In his Preface to the *Aurora* Boehme explains that there are two qualities in nature: “The one is pleasant, heavenly and holy; the other is fierce, wrathfull, hellish and thirsty” (Preface, 8). Further down he adds:

Nature hath many times prepared and fitted a learned judicious man with good gifts, and then the Devil hath done his utmost to seduce that man, and bring him into *carnal pleasures*, to pride, to a desire to be rich, and to be in authority and power. Thereby the Devil hath ruled in him, and the fierce wrathful *Quality* hath overcome the good; his Understanding and his Knowledge and Wisdome hath been turn’d into Heresie and Errours, and he hath made a mock of the Truth, and been the Author of great errors on earth, and a good Leader of the Devils Host. For, the bad quality in Nature hath wrestled with the good even in the mothers womb, and doth still wrestle, and hath elevated itself, and spoiled many a noble fruit. (*Aurora*, Preface, 17-18)⁴¹³

It would seem unfair to suggest that Richardson, at times, allowed himself to be carried away by his “own heated imagination”, for in *Sir Charles Grandison* he allows Harriet to criticize the character of Sir Charles’s father, Sir Thomas Grandison (a rake and a libertine⁴¹⁴). She comments that his fine

⁴¹² John Carroll, *Selected Letters of Samuel Richardson*, Oxford, 1964, p. 286.

⁴¹³ In this context we should read Boehme’s description of the “four new little sonnes of Lucifer”, i.e. pride (“all must stoop and bow to him”), covetousness (“avarice”), envy (“the *gout* of this world”), and wrath (roaring “as a fierce lion”) (cf. *Aurora*, 16:95-103). He concludes that “King *Lucifer* is the beginning of Sin and the *Sting of Death*, and the kindling of Gods wrath, and the beginning of all Evill, a corruption, perdition and destruction of this world; and whatever Evill is done, there, *he* is the first Author and *Causar* thereof. Also he is a murtherer and a Father of Lies, and a founder of Hell, a spoyler and corrupter, and destroyer of all that is *Good*, and an eternal Enemy of God, and of all good Angels and Men; against whom I, and all men that think to be saved, must daily and hourly *struggle* and fight, as against the worst and Archest enemy” (*Aurora*, 16:104-105).

⁴¹⁴ Keymer describes the four definitions of “libertine” as found in Johnson’s *Dictionary*: “In its original sense the Latin *libertinus* denotes a freedman or former slave, and from this root meaning develop three distinct senses. The first is relatively neutral, even perhaps positive: a libertine is ‘One unconfined; one at liberty’. But in the second this enviable state takes on more sinister implications: the libertine is ‘One who lives without restraint or law’. The third sense, more ominously still, finds this lawlessness of practice matched by a similar abandonment of ideological restraint: ‘One who pays no regard to the precepts of religion’. In its fullest and most subversive sense, ‘libertinism’ thus comes to mean ‘Irreligion; licentiousness of opinions and practice’. The idea is of a wholesale challenge to law, and thus to the society preserved by its rule - a challenge which moves from the transgression of particular laws to a theoretical rejection of law’s very grounding as authority or constraint.” (Cf. Tom Keymer, *Richardson’s Clarissa and the Eighteenth-Century Reader*, Cambridge, 1992, pp. 158, 163.)

poetical vein which he liked to cultivate made him somewhat suspicious and adds that "I have heard my grandfather say, that to be a poet, requires an heated imagination, which often runs away with the judgment" (II. 311).

The Law-edition of Boehme

We have seen how Law had been influenced by Boehme. He even projected a new translation of Boehme's works, for which *The Way to Divine Knowledge*, printed by Richardson in 1752, had been the preparation. After the death of both Law and Richardson in 1761, the work was actually carried out by two of Law's friends, George Ward and Thomas Langcake, who published a four-volume version (1764-81) which was paid for by Elizabeth Hutcheson.⁴¹⁵ Law's biographer, Christopher Walton, refers to the common but erroneous supposition that Law had been the editor of this incomplete edition and he explains that, though Law indeed had the intention to produce a new and correct translation of Boehme's works which can be inferred from his work *The Way to Divine Knowledge*, he died before the first of the volumes was printed. All the editors did was to take the original translations (by Ellistone and Sparrow) and make a few changes. They omitted certain portions of the prefaces and used the life of Boehme by Durand Hotham, which, according to Walton, was "tinctured by the phantasies and old wives' fables peculiar to the alchemists of former times". All in all, Walton concludes, the assumption that Law had edited this "memoir" has discredited Law's good sense and judgment.

There is a letter by Law on this subject in which he tells us how he had several times thought of undertaking a new edition of Boehme's work, but never found the time to do so. He explains how he had taught himself the "High Dutch Language" on purpose to know the original text of the "blessed Jacob". He refers to his own quarto edition of 1715, which had been carefully printed from the Gichtel edition of 1682.⁴¹⁶ It depicts a lily on the first page (see plate XV). Law acknowledges the quality of the impressive translation by Ellistone and Sparrow, which had been done with great piety and ability as well as appreciation of the author, especially by Ellistone, but he found it nevertheless "too much overloaded with words", while in many places the sense had been mistaken. He ends his letter by saying that if he were to undertake a new translation, he would try to make Boehme speak as he would have if he had written in English. Moreover, he would guard the reader at certain places

⁴¹⁵ A fifth volume had been planned, but Mrs Hutcheson died before it was completed. It was this four-volume edition of Boehme's main works through which the English Romantics, especially Blake and Coleridge, got to know Boehme. (See for more details Werner Buddecke, *Die Jakob Böhme-Ausgaben*, Vol. II, Göttingen, 1937-1957, pp. 54-56). Elizabeth Hutcheson was the widow of Law's friend, Archibald Hutcheson. She joined Law's household in 1743 together with Miss Hester Gibbon (aunt of the historian Edward Gibbon), accepting his spiritual direction and sharing in his local philanthropic activities. (Cf. J. Brazier Green, *Op. cit.*, pp. 43 and 74.) For the connection between Hutcheson and Richardson, see pp. 18 and 19 above.

⁴¹⁶ This edition is the *Theosophia Revelata. Das ist: Alle Göttliche Schriften des Gottseligen und hocheleuchteten Deutschen Theosophi Jacob Böhmens*, 2 Vols., Johann Otto Glüssing, Hamburg, 1715.



XV. Picture of a lily in Boehme's *Theosophia Revelata*. From the 1715 German edition in the possession of William Law. J.R. Ritman Library (Bibliotheca Philosophica Hermetica) in Amsterdam, B.P.H., no. 7119-8.

where Boehme might be misunderstood. And, lastly, that by prefaces or introductions he would guide the reader in the right use of these writings, which, he adds, would be entirely unnecessary if only the reader would observe Boehme's own directions. He is somewhat dismayed that though many people of learning had read Boehme with great earnestness, they merely stole from him "certain mysteries of nature" and ran away "with the Philosopher's Stone".⁴¹⁷ Even though Law here shows a certain dislike of the alchemists, we know that he had ten or eleven books on this subject in his library in King's Cliffe.⁴¹⁸ Henry Talon reproduced Stephen Hobhouse's restatement of the question surrounding the Law-edition as follows:

William Law learnt to read Boehme in his original German (the 1715 quarto edition still on the shelves at King's Cliffe), but unfortunately he did not live to translate or edit any of his works. The so-called Law edition of Boehme, the fine four-volume quarto of 1764-81, is substantially and with slight alterations a somewhat incomplete reprint (made by Law's friends as a pious offering to his memory) of the translations by John Sparrow, Ellistone, and Blunden. The beautiful translation of Boehme's *Supersensual Life* (attributed to Law by Whyte and others) is, as Walton indicated, by Law's fellow-nonjuror, the learned Francis Lee. *Selected Mystical Writings of William Law*, p. 267.⁴¹⁹

Law had procured the commentaries of Dionysius Andreas Freher and these provide the Law-edition with some remarkable and impressive illustrations.⁴²⁰ The three principal ones are figures of man, woman, and the zodiac, covered with symbols; various parts of these open to reveal significations of the symbols, or of bodily parts; the whole is a series of up to nine or ten layers, dramatically organized to reveal at the deepest level the highest secret and greatest significations. These symbolic drawings illustrating Boehme's mystical doctrine had such an overwhelming impact upon William Blake that, during a dinner party in 1825, he said "Michael Angelo could not have surpassed them". Law's great admiration for Boehme as the only one from among the generally anti-mystical Protestant spiritual writers compared with the great Catholic mystics also appears from the letter of Langcake to a friend, dated 30 November 1782, which said:

⁴¹⁷ Christopher Walton, *Behmen, Law, & Other Mystics: or The Present, Past and Future*, London, 1847, pp. 24-25.

⁴¹⁸ Stephen Hobhouse, "An English Mystic's Library", in *The Journal of the Friend's Historical Society*, December 11, 1925, p. 1087.

⁴¹⁹ Henry Talon, *William Law: A Study in Literary Craftsmanship*, London, 1948, p. 100. Also Désirée Hirst, *Hidden Riches. Traditional Symbolism from the Renaissance to Blake*, London, 1964, pp. 96-97.

⁴²⁰ Freher (1649-1728) was a German and one of Boehme's early exegetists. He was much admired by William Law. His manuscript works are in Dr. Williams's Library and in the British Museum. Excerpts were published by Christopher Walton in his *Notes and Materials for an Adequate Biography of William Law*, London, 1854.

The Relationship between Richardson and Law

Mr. Law said to me (of ... Protestant Mystics) that Jacob Behmen was the first in Excellency, Hiël the next, and in the third place the Quakers ... tho' the deep mystic writers of the Romish Church surpassed them in their exceeding Love of God and Divine Wisdom.⁴²¹

As we have seen, Boehme was a powerful thinker and mystic, but his odd expressions make him rather obscure. Most men of the Enlightenment would probably have agreed with Warburton:

Jacob Boehme, delivering to us ... a heap of unmeaning, or ... unintelligible words ... if indeed, this *Wisdom* did come down from above, it hath so degenerated on its way down, as to be ever unfit to return.⁴²²

Of course, William Law would not have agreed with such a view, but then again Law and Warburton disagreed on many things.⁴²³ Having established the connections between Boehme, Law and Richardson in this chapter, I will investigate Boehme's direct influence on Richardson in the next chapter.

⁴²¹ Désirée Hirst, *Op. cit.*, p. 196. See for Hiël, Alastair Hamilton's, "Hiël in England 1657-1810", in *Quaerendo*, 15/4 (1986), 282-304.

⁴²² A. Keith Walker, *Op. cit.*, p. 107.

⁴²³ See for instance Law's *Short Confutation of Dr. Warburton's Projected Defence (As he calls it) of Christianity, in his Divine Legation of Moses. In a Letter to the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of London*. This work was published in 1757. Law ends his confutation with the following words: "I should have had much Uneasiness, my Lord, in exposing so many gross Errors both in the Matter, and Manner of the Doctor's Books, did not my Heart bear me full Witness, that no want of Good-will, or due Respect towards him, but *solely* a Regard to That, which ought only to be regarded, has directed my Pen."