

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER

*Of the lamentable and miserable State
and Condition
of the corrupt perished Nature, and
Original of the four Elements, instead of
the holy Government of God.*

1. ALTHOUGH God be an eternal, almighty regent or governor, whom none can resist, yet *nature* in its kindling hath now gotten a very monstrous strange government, such as was *not* before the times of the wrath.
2. For the six qualifying or fountain spirits did generate the seventh nature-spirit before the times of the wrath, in the place of this world, very meekly and *pleasantly*, as is now done in heaven, and not so much as the least spark of wrath or anger rose up therein.
3. Moreover, all was very bright and light therein, neither was there need of any *other* light; but the fountain or well-spring of the Heart of God enlightened *all*, and was a light in all, which did shine everywhere all over incessantly without any obstacle. For nature was very rarified and thin or transparent, and all stood merely in power, and was in a very pleasant *lovely* temper.
4. But as soon as *in nature* the fight began with the proud devil, then in the seventh nature-spirit, in the court, region or extent of *Lucifer*, which is the place of this world, all gat *another* form and operation.
5. For nature gat a twofold source, and the outermost birth or geniture in nature was kindled in the wrath-fire, which fire now is called the *wrath of God*, or *the burning hell*.

Note.

6. Here is required most inward sense or perception to understand this; for the place where the light is generated in the heart alone comprehendeth it, the *outward* man doth not comprehend it at all.

7. But behold! when *Lucifer* with his host or army stirred or *awakened* the wrath-fire in the nature of God, so that God was moved to anger in nature in the place of *Lucifer*, then the outermost birth or geniture in nature gat *another* quality, which was very fierce, astringent, cold, hot, bitter and sour.

8. The moving or boiling spirit, which *before* qualified or operated very meekly in nature, became, in its outermost birth or geniture, very exalted and *terrible*, which now, in the outermost birth, is called the *wind*, or the element of *air*, in regard of its elevation or expansion.

9. For when the seven spirits kindled themselves in their outermost birth or geniture, then they generated such a *violent* moving spirit; and so the sweet water, which before the times of the wrath was very rarified and thin and incomprehensible, grew very thick and elevated and swelled, and the astringent quality grew very sharp and cold-fiery or fierce-cold, for it got a strong attracting together, like *salt*.

10. For the saltwater or salt [or saltpetre], which still to this day is found in the earth, hath its original and descent from the *first kindling* of the astringent quality; and so the stones also have their beginning and descent from thence, as also the earth.

11. For the astringent quality now attracted the *Salitter* very strongly together, and dried it, whence the *bitter* earth is proceeded; but the stones are from the *Salitter* which at that time

stood in the power of the tone or tune.

12. For as nature, with the working, wrestling and rising up of its birth or geniture, stood in the time of the kindling, just *such a matter* attracted itself together.

Now it may be asked, How then is a comprehensible or palpable son come to be out of an incomprehensible mother ?

Answer.

13. Thou hast a *similitude* of this, in that the earth and stones are proceeded out of the incomprehensibility.

14. For behold, the deep between heaven and earth is also incomprehensible, and yet the elementary qualities *sometimes* generate living comprehensible flesh therein, as grasshoppers, flies, and worms or creeping things.

15. Which is caused by the *strong* attracting together of the qualities, in which attracted *Salitter* the life is suddenly generated. For when the heat kindleth the astringent quality, then the life riseth up, for the bitter quality stirreth itself, which is the original of life.

16. So in like manner the *earth* and *stones* have their descent; for when the *Salitter* kindled itself in nature, then all became very rugged, thick and dark, like a thick dark mist or cloud, which the astringent quality dried up hard with its coldness.

17. But seeing the light in the outermost birth was extinguished, the heat also was captivated in the comprehensibility or palpability, and could *no more* generate its life. From thence *death* came into nature, so that nature or the corrupt earth could no more help it, and thereupon *another*

creation of light must needs follow, or else the earth would have been an *eternal* indissolvable death ; but now the earth generateth or bringeth forth fruit in the power and kindling of the *created* light.

Now one might ask, What is the condition then of this *twofold* birth or geniture ? Is God then extinguished in the kindling of the wrath-fire, in the place of this world, so that nothing else is there but a *mere* wrath-fire ? Or is the *one* only God become a *twofold* God ?

Answer.

18. Thou canst not better comprehend, apprehend or understand this, than in and by thy *own* body, which, through the first fall of *Adam* with all its [the body's] birth or geniture, fitness, faculties and will, is become just such a house as the place of this world is come to be.

19. First, thou hast the *bestial* flesh, which is come to be so through the lustful longing bite of the apple, for it is the house of *corruption*. For when *Adam* was made out of the corrupted *Salitter* of the earth, that is, out of the seed, or mass, or lump which the Creator extracted out of the corrupted earth, he was not then at first such flesh, else his body had been created *mortal*, but he had an *angelical* power-body, in which he should have subsisted eternally, and should have eaten angelical fruit, which did grow for him in Paradise before his fall, *before* the LORD cursed the earth.

20. But seeing the seed, or mass, or lump, out of which *Adam* was made, was somewhat infected with the corrupt disease or malady of the devil, *Adam* therefore longed after his mother, that is, to eat of the fruit of the corrupted earth, which then in its outward comprehensibility was become so evil, and in the wrath-fire was become so hard, palpable and comprehensible.

21. But seeing *Adam's spirit* longed after that fruit which was of the quality of the corrupted earth, *therefore* also nature formed or framed such a tree for him as was *like* the corrupted earth.

22. For *Adam* was the heart in nature, and therefore his animated or soulish spirit did *help* to image, fashion or form *this tree*, of which he would fain eat.

23. But when the devil saw that the *lust* was in *Adam*, then he stung confidently at the *Salitter* in *Adam*, and infected *yet* more and more the *Salitter* out of which *Adam* was made.

24. Then *it was time* that the Creator should frame a *wife* for him, who afterwards set the *sin on work*, and did eat of the false, evil or corrupt fruit. Else if *Adam* had eaten of the tree *before the woman* had been made out of him, then it would have been far *worse* than it is.

25. But seeing this requireth a high and deep description, as also requireth much room, therefore seek for it concerning the *fall* of *Adam*, where you will find it largely described.

So now I return to the forementioned Similitude.

26. Now when *Adam* did eat of the fruit, which was good and evil, then he suddenly gat *such a body* also. The fruit was corrupt or perished, and palpable, as to this day all fruits now on earth are; and so such a fleshly and palpable or comprehensible body *Adam* and *Eve* gat instantly.

27. But now the flesh is *not* the whole man ; for this flesh cannot comprehend or apprehend the Deity, else the flesh were not mortal and corruptible, or fading and transitory; for Christ

saith, [John vi. 63]: *It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing.* [the spirit is the life]

28. For *this flesh* cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven, but is only a *seed* which is sown into the earth, out of which will grow an impalpable or incomprehensible body, such as the *first* was before the fall. But the spirit is eternal life, which uniteth, qualifieth or mixeth with God, and comprehendeth the *internal* Deity in nature.

29. Now as man in his *outward* being is *corrupted*, and as to his fleshly birth or geniture is in the wrath of God, and is moreover also an *enemy* of God, and yet is but one man, and not two; and on the other hand, in his spiritual birth or geniture he is a child and *heir of God*, who ruleth and liveth with God, and qualifieth, mixeth or uniteth with the innermost birth or geniture of God; thus also is the place of this world come to be.

30. The outward comprehensibility or palpability in the whole nature of this world, and of all things which are therein, standeth all in the *wrath-fire* of God, for it is become thus through the kindling of nature; and lord *Lucifer* with his angels hath his dwelling now in the same outward birth or geniture which standeth in the wrath-fire.

31. But now the Deity is *not so separated* from the outward birth or geniture, as if they were *two* things in this world; if so, man could have *no hope*, and then this world did not stand in the power and love of God.

32. But the Deity *is* in the outward birth, hidden, and hath the fan or casting shovel in its hand, and will one day cast the chaff and the kindled *Salitter* upon a heap, and will draw away from it its inward birth or geniture, and give them to lord *Lucifer* and his *crew* of followers for an

eternal house.

33. In the *meanwhile* lord *Lucifer* must lie *captive* and imprisoned in the outermost birth in the nature of this world, in the *kindled* wrathfire; and therein he hath great power, and can reach into the *heart* of all creatures with his animated or soulish spirit in the outermost birth or geniture, which standeth in the wrath-fire.

34. Therefore the soul of man must fight and strive continually with the devil, for *he still presents before it the crab-apples of Paradise—* [*That is, the fierce source of malignity, "wherewith the soul is infected."*]—and invites it also to bite thereof, that he thereby may also bring it into his prison.

35. If that will not succeed to his purpose, then he strikes many a hard blow at the head, and that man must continually *lie under the cross*, affliction and misery in this world.

36. For he hideth the noble grain of mustardseed, so that *man doth not know himself*. And then the world supposeth that the man is thus plagued and smitten of God, whereby the devil's kingdom remaineth always *hidden* and undiscovered.

37. But stay a little; thou hast given me also many a blow, I have experimental knowledge of thee, and here I will open thy door to thee a little, that *another also* may see what thou art.