

The High and Deep Searching Out

of

The Threefold Life of Man

through or according to

The Three Principles

Jacob Boehme

alias

Teutonicus Philosophus

Translated by John Sparrow
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A SHORT CONTENTS OF THIS BOOK

By the Author

Being a high and deep searching out of the Three-fold Life of Man, through the Three Principles.

Wherein is clearly shewn that which is eternal; and also that which is mortal.

And wherefore God, who is the highest Good, hath brought all things to light.

Also wherefore one thing is contrary to another, and destroyeth it: and then what is right or true, and what is evil or false, and how the one severeth (distinguishes) itself from the other.

Wherein especially the Three Principles are founded, which are the only original or fountain whence all things flow and are generated.

Whereby the multitude of meanings and opinions about faith and religion may be known: and what is the cause of the multitudes of opinions among men concerning the essence and will of God; also what is best for man to do, that he may attain the highest and eternal good.

And then concerning the end and issue of all things; wherefore all things have appeared in such a property and essence as they have had; for the comfort of the poor wounded sick soul of man, and for the rebuilding or edification of the true Christian religion; wherein the Antichrist standeth quite naked and revealed.

Set down for a remembrance to ourself, and for a stay to uphold us in these distracted miserable times.

Introduction to the electronic text edition (april, 2009)

It is with great pleasure that I offer this electronic edition of Jacob Boehme's work on the Threefold Life of Man.

It was his third book, after "Aurora" and "The Three Principles of the Divine Essence".

The main purpose of this edition, which will become available on a chapter-by-chapter basis, is to provide material for search-engines in order to make Boehme's texts easily retrievable.

All the non-essential has been stripped to speed up the processing of this text, such as the intro by the Rev. G. W. Allen, most notes in the margin and italics. You may find scanned editions on www.scribd.com which offer these features.

Other advantages of free electronic texts are obvious: availability for research purposes, possibility of enlarging fonts, text-to-speech conversions, etc. This is not primarily intended to replace printed books, although ebook readers may take a fair share out of that market in the near future.

Boehme's work deserves to be available freely, after about four hundred years.

Lastly, I wish you an inspirative study of this great work.

Martin Euser

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Threefold Life of Man

Jacob Boehme

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THE FIRST CHAPTER

1. WHEN we consider the beginning of our life, and compare the same with the eternal life, which we have in the promise, we cannot say nor find that we are at home in this life. For we see the beginning and the end of the outward life, as also the total decay and final corruption of our bodies; and besides, we see or know of no returning into this [outward] life, neither have we any promise of it from the high and eternal Good.

2. Seeing then there is a life in us which is eternal and incorruptible, wherewith we strive after the highest good; and a life (from this world) which is finite and corruptible, and also a life in which the source and original cause of life standeth, wherein the highest danger of eternal perdition, misery, and calamity doth consist; therefore it is of necessity that we consider the beginning of life, from whence all these things proceed and have their original.

3. So now when we consider the life, what it is, then we find that it is a burning fire, which consumeth, and when it hath no more [fuel] to feed upon, it goeth out; as may be seen in all fires. For the life hath its nourishment from the body, and the body from the food; for when the body hath no more food, then it is consumed by the fire of the life, so that it fadeth and perisheth, as a fair flower, when it hath no water, withereth.

4. But seeing there is in man a life which is eternal and incorruptible, which is the soul, which is also a fire, and hath need of nutriment as well as the elementary life hath, therefore we ought to consider the property and food of that life, what that is which continually feedeth it, so that it never goeth out in eternity.

5. And thirdly we find in the life of our souls, that there is in it a greater hunger after another higher and better life, viz. after the highest good, which is called the divine life; insomuch that the soul is not contented with its own food, but it desireth, with great longing and panting, the highest and best good, not only for a pleasant habitation, but in a hunger for a food.

6. And so now we perceive, in our very great and true knowledge, that every life desireth its [own] mother, (out of which the life is generated) for a food; as the wood, which is the mother of the fire, that the fire desireth to have, and if it be severed from its mother it goeth out. In like manner, the earth is the mother of all trees and herbs, and they desire it; and the water (with the other elements) is the mother of the earth, or else it would be dead [or barren], and there would grow neither metals, trees, herbs, nor grass out of it.

7. We see especially, that the elementary life consisteth in a boiling, and is a [kind of] seething, and when it leaveth boiling it goeth out: also we know that the constellations kindle the elements, and the stars are the fire of the elements, and the sun kindleth the stars, so that there is a boiling and seething amongst them: but the elementary life is finite and corruptible, and the life of the soul is eternal.

8. Now seeing it is eternal, therefore it must also be from the eternal; as the dear Moses hath written very rightly of it, that God breathed into man the living breath, and so man is become a living soul.

9. Yet we cannot say, though indeed man standeth in a Threefold Life, that each life is apart in a several form; but we find that they are in one another, and yet each life hath its own

working in its dominion, viz. in its mother : for as God the Father is all, because all cometh from him, and he is present every where, and is the fullness of every thing, and the thing doth not comprehend him; also the thing is not God, nor his spirit, nor the true divine essence; so that it cannot be said of any comprehensible thing, that it is God, or that God is here present more than in other places, and yet he is really present, he containeth the thing, and the thing containeth not him; he comprehendeth the thing, and the thing comprehendeth not him; for he dwelleth not in the thing, but in himself, in another Principle.

10. So also is the soul of man breathed in from God; it dwelleth in the body, and is environed with the spirit of the stars and elements, not only as a garment covereth the body, but it is infected with the spirit of the stars and elements, as the pestilence or other [infectious] disease infecteth the elementary spirit, so that it poisoneth its body, and so it decayeth and dieth, and then the source [or property] of the stars also breaketh itself off from the soul, and consumeth itself: whereby the elementary mother breaketh off, and so the spirit of the stars hath no more food, and therefore consumeth itself, but the soul remaineth naked [feeble,empty], because it liveth by another food.

11. Understand us here in this manner; though the soul be thus captivated with the spirit of the stars and elements, so that the source [or property] thereof dwelleth in the soul, yet the soul hath another food, and liveth in another Principle, and is another [thing or] being [substance].

12. For its essences [or the faculties or powers of its substance] are not from the constellation, but have their beginning and corporeal union out of the Eternal Band, out of the eternal nature, which is God's, the Father's, before the light of his love, wherein he entereth into himself, and maketh to himself the second Principle in his love, out of

which he continually generateth his eternal Word and Heart, from eternity to eternity; where the holy name of God continually ariseth [or discovered itself] and holdeth its divine nature, as a spirit in the second Principle, in itself, and dwelleth in nothing else, but merely in itself

13. For although the band of the eternal nature is in it, yet the divine spirit is not subjected under that band; for the spirit kindleth that band, so that it becometh enlightened and springing [sprouting] with the virtue of the light in the love, in the life of the Word and Heart of God, so that it is a holy habitation and paradise of that spirit, which is called God.

14. So also the soul of man is out of the band of the eternal original, eternally standing therein, and desireth in itself, in the second Principle, to press into God, and to satiate itself in the power of God; but because it cannot with its whole being (with its own essences) enter into the light and power of God; as little as the eternal nature can press into the light of God, so that it may have the light for its own in its own power, but the light shineth out of the love in its own Principle in the eternal nature, so that the light remaineth Lord in the eternal nature, because the eternal nature doth not comprehend it, but rejoiceth in the light, and bringeth forth its wonders in the power and understanding of the light, where then they are revealed. Thus also the soul cannot in its essences press into the light of God, and over-master it, but must in itself, in another Principle, press into God, into his love.

15. For you must here understand another new birth in the soul: For it must not only press forth out of the life of the stars and elements, but also out of its own source [or property] of life, and incline its will into the life of God, endeavouring to be therein : this [inclined or] created will is received of God, and God dwelleth in that will; and so cometh the divine life and light into the soul, and

so it is a child of God : for it standeth in its source [or property] and life, as God the Father himself [doth] in the source [or property] of the eternal nature.

16. And here we understand, that without [beyond] the divine light (which is the second Principle) in the eternal nature there is an anguishing source [or property]; for the band of life stands in the fire; but when that fire is inspired and captivated by the divine love, then the life in itself goeth forwards forth into another source [or property]; for another Principle is broken open for it, wherein it liveth; and that life is in God; even as God dwelleth in himself, and yet is really all himself, all is come from his nature: yet you must understand not as from the eternal nature, only the souls and the angelical spirits [are so]; but from his created [creaturely] will, which hath a beginning, viz. from the external; and therefore every thing of this [outward] world is transitory. And herein we find the great and terrible Fall of our soul in our first parents, that it is entered into the spirit of this world, into a strange lodging, and hath forsaken the divine light, wherein it was an angel and child of God; therefore it must go forth again out of the spirit of the stars and elements, and [pass] in a new birth, into the life of God.

17. But because that was not possible for the soul to do, therefore the life of God came to us, out of love and grace, into the flesh, and took our human soul again in it into the divine life in the power of the light,' that we might here be able to press into the same life to God in a new birth. For, as we went wholly with the soul of Adam out from the life of God (for the children of Adam have inherited [all] from their parents' soul, being sprung wholly [from them] as from a tree), so also hath the life of God in Christ regenerated us again, so that we can enter again, in the life of Christ, into the life of God. And thus now our soul standeth in the band of the eternal original, infected

with the spirit of this world, and captivated by the wrath of the original, in the life of the eternal fire, viz. in the eternal nature; therefore we must, every one of us by ourselves, press with our soul in the life of Christ, to God, into the New Regeneration in the life and spirit of Christ: and here no hypocrisy, appearing holiness, or any meritorious works, will avail any thing, for the poor soul can no other way be helped, except it enter into itself (in a new created will) with steadfast earnest purpose and resolution, into the life of Christ; and then it will be received, with very great glory [honour] by God and his children, in the second Principle; and the noble precious treasure (viz. the light of the eternal life) will be given to it, which enlighteneth the source [or property] of the soul in the first Principle, wherein it standeth substantially with its essences for ever, and turneth the anguish into love, and the rising and burning own property into an humble lovely mirth in meek joy.

18. And thus the soul is a joyful habitation in the divine life, as if I should liken it to a kindled light, when the wick of the candle burneth, and casteth a pleasant light, [or shineth bright] and hath no pain in the shining, but at lightsome pleasantness, and yet the wick continueth burning: yet you must understand, that there is in the burning wick no pain or woe, but that there is only a cause of the glance of life; for no fire is comparable to the divine [fire].

19. For the divine nature, out of which the divine fire of life burneth, is filled with the love of God, so that the light of God maketh another Principle in itself, wherein nature is not felt [or perceived], for it is the end of nature; therefore the soul cannot comprehend, in its own essences, the light of God to possess it. For the soul is a fire in the eternal nature, and doth not reach the end of nature; for it continueth in nature as a creature created out of the eternal nature, which yet hath no comprehensibility, but is a spirit in a seven-fold form:

whereas yet in the originality there are not seven, but only four forms known, which uphold the eternal band, and those [four] are the source [or property] in the anguish, wherein the eternal consisteth; and thereout the other forms are wholly generated, wherein God and the Kingdom of heaven consist; and in the four forms the anguish and torment consist, if they are singly alone, and therein we understand hell-fire [to consist], and the eternal wrath of God : and although we do not know the originality of the essence of God, yet we know the eternal birth [geniture], which never had any beginning. And seeing it had no beginning, therefore it is the same this day that ever it was from eternity : and therefore we may well comprehend what we see and know this day in the light of God.

20. None ought to account us ignorant, because God hath given us to know his own essence, which we cannot and must not deny, upon pain of the loss of the divine light, and of our eternal salvation; for it is impossible for any man to have it, except it be given him out of grace in the love of God : and when that is given to a man, then that soul standeth in the knowledge in the wonders of God ; which [soul] then speaketh not of things strange and afar off, but of the things wherein it standeth, and of itself; for it becometh seeing in the light of God, so that it can know itself.

21. Now that this can be, consider, that the essences of the soul stand in the original in the first Principle, and that the divine light shineth in itself, and maketh the second Principle, and so there are two of them; and the soul seeth into the high knowledge of the light of the second Principle, which shineth in it: why then should it not speak of its native country, wherein it liveth ? And how wilt thou, mad world (in the third Principle in the spirit [or wisdom] of the stars and elements) forbid that to it, whereas thou art blind as to God, and liest captivated in the eternal wrath, in the source

[or property] of the original ?

22. Now seeing it is so, we will therefore set down the ground of the eternal band, to be a looking-glass for him that desireth to see; though it be true indeed that he cannot learn it of us. Unless he himself enter into the new birth into the life of Christ, that the divine light itself may shine in him, we are but as a history to him, and shall not be understood by him.

23. But when we speak of the source [or original] of the fire, and of its kindling (we mean concerning the fire of life) we know for certain, that in its original, before the kindling of the fire, it consists only in two forms, and hath but one mother, which is harsh [astringent or attractive], and draweth to her; and yet there is nothing in herself but a willing of the eternal Father in the eternal nature which he hath appointed in himself to reveal, and to declare his wonders.

24. Now that will is eternal, and is not stirred up by anything but by itself; and if that were not, all were nothing, neither darkness nor light: therefore seeing there is somewhat, it must needs be the eternal will, and that is astringent, and desirous of the wonders of the creation. Therefore seeing there is a desire, the desire attracteth to itself, and that which is attracted in the desire maketh the will full, so that the desire is fulfilled; for the will is as thin [or empty] as a nothing [vacuum], and that which is attracted into the will maketh the will thick [or gross and full] and that is its darkness: and the eternal desire standeth in the darkness.

25. Now when the will in the desire doth attract, that attracting is a sting [puncture or goad, pricking or spurring to motion] of the stirring; for the will is thin as a nothing, and is quiet and still, as [if it were] nothing: but the will being an eternal desiring, therefore it attracteth

to itself eternally; and having nothing to attract it attracteth itself, and impregnateth [or filleth] itself, and so the nothing cometh to be a darkness; and the attracting maketh the sting of the first essences [spur to the beginning of the being of a thing], so that there is a stirring and original of mobility.

26. Now the will cannot endure the attracting and impregnation, for it would be free, and yet cannot, because it is desirous; and seeing it cannot be free, it entereth with the attracting into itself, and taketh [or conceiveth] in itself another will, which is, to go out from the darkness into itself, and that other conceived will is the eternal mind, and entereth into itself as a sudden flash [of lightning] and dissipateth the darkness, and goeth forth into itself, and dwelleth in itself, and maketh to itself another [or second] Principle of another quality [source or condition], for the sting of the stirring remaineth in the darkness.

27. Therefore now we should speak of the forms of the sour [or astringent] dark nature. For we understand that the darkness hath a longing after the light, which eternally standeth before it, but in another Principle.

28. For the two forms, the sour and the bitter stinging, are the original of all things; and the eternal will is the mother [or matrix] wherein they are generated : and we are to know that the sourness [astringency or attraction] always attracteth with the conception of the will, and that attracting is the stinging of the stirring, which the sourness [harshness] cannot well endure: for the attracting sourness desireth the sour strong shutting up in death, and the stinging bitterness is the opener, and yet it were a nothing in itself without the will.

29. Now when the sourness attracteth so strongly, it cannot endure the stinging, viz. the sourness's own attracting, but stirreth much more; and the

sourness may not endure the stirring either, for it desireth the still death. And thus it is a Chain and Band, which ever maketh itself, and hath no [other] maker.

30. Now these entering into one another so swiftly, like a sudden thought, the sting would fain get out from the sourness, but cannot, for the sourness generateth and maintaineth it; and not being able to get the upper hand [or get loose] it turneth round like a wheel, and so breaketh asunder the attracted sourness, and maketh a continual [or stirring up and down] hurlyburly and mixture, in which the breaking [corrupting] or woe, doth consist; yet there is no feeling here, but [they are] only forms of nature: for it is no material [materia], but [it is] the original of the spirit or eternal nature in the eternal will.

31. For the sour desiring attracteth and maketh penetration, and the bitterness breaketh it asunder in the turning wheel, and so there ariseth multiplicity of essences, and it is as it were a furiousness, or as I may say in a similitude, a confusion of the eternal mobility, a cause of the essences: And this the eternal will must suffer [to be] in itself, and therefore it conceiveth or taketh to itself another will, to fly out from this wheel, and yet cannot do it, for it is its own substance; and seeing it cannot, and yet cannot leave its eternal desire and longing, it holdeth and attracteth to itself; so that the essences are continually generated, and yet (without the desiring) they are nothing; and thus the whole form standeth in the noise [or sound], and is called MAR: and seeing the will cannot be free, it falleth into a great anguish, to speak according to man's understanding, that the Reader may comprehend the sense and depth of it.

32. For the will is the conception, and that which is conceived in the will is its darkness, and the desiring is the essence, and the contrary will is the wheel of the multiplicity of essences, so that they are numberless; but the multitude is according to the mobility. These two forms are the eternal essences, and the eternal band, which maketh itself, and cannot do otherwise.

33. For the vast infinite space desireth narrowness and inclosure [or comprehension] wherein it may manifest itself, for else in the wide stillness there would be no manifestation; therefore there must be an attraction and inclosing, out of which the manifestation appeareth; and therefore also there must be a contrary will; for a transparent and quiet will is as nothing, and generateth nothing: but if a will must generate, then it must be in somewhat wherein it may form and may generate in that thing; for Nothing is nothing but a stillness without any stirring, where there is neither darkness nor light, neither life nor death.

34. Now since we clearly perceive that there is both light and darkness, and moreover an eternal stirring and forming, which is not only in the place of this world as far as our senses reach, but without end and number, where the angelical world shineth clearly (and yet not in the inclosure of the darkness), therefore we should raise our thoughts [or senses] towards the angelical world, which yet is not without this place [of this world], but it is in another property, and in the eternal light; and yet there could be no light except there were a genetrix [or matrix] to bring it forth.

35. Now if it shine out of the genetrix [or matrix], then it must come forth out of the genetrix. For the genetrix is a darkness, and yet that were nothing either if the eteimal word (which maketh [attract, frame, or create] the eternal will)

were not there.

And in the making or creating is the birth of the eternal Being; of which John saith, In the beginning was the Word, which was in the beginning with God, all things were made by it (and without it was nothing made that was made).

36. Consider here, my beloved mind, whence light and darkness come, also joy and heaviness, love and hate; as also the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of hell, good and evil, life, and the shutting up in death.

37. Thou sayest, God hath created it; very well: but? why art thou blind, and dost not acknowledge it, whereas thou art indeed the similitude of God? Why speakest thou more of God than thou knowest, and is revealed or manifested to thee? Wherefore dost thou make laws [canons and ordinances] concerning the will of God, of which thou knowest nothing, seeing thou dost not know Him? Or why dost thou shut up thy life in death, whereas thou mightest well live, and know God, who dwelleth in thee? For thou hearest it also from St. John, that all things are made by the Word,

38. Seeing then God is the Word which hath made all things, he must therefore be in all things: for a spirit is not a made thing, but a generated thing in itself, which hath the centre of its birth in itself; or else it would be corruptible: therefore now the centre must stand in the eternal maker, or else it were transitory: for there is nothing from eternity but the Word, and the Word was God: and therefore it must needs be its own eternal maker of itself; and. itself must express itself as a Word out of itself, as out of its own maker.

39. For where there is a word, there also is a speaker to speak it. Now since it is the Father that speaketh it, and the Word which is spoken

out of the centre of the Father is the Son thereof; and seeing the Father in his centre calleth himself a consuming fire, and yet the Son (the Word) is a light of love, humility, meekness, purity, and holiness, and that the Father of the Word is so also called and acknowledged throughout the holy Scripture, therefore we should consider the source [quality or property] of the fire in the centre of the Father, seeing the Father and the Word are one, and yet in two [distinct] forms: and that also the wrath and the anger, together with the abyss of hell, stand in the centre of the Father.

40. For St. John saith, Of and through it are all things, and without it was nothing made : for when the Word desired to make [or create], and the Father through the Word, then there was no matter for him to make it of; for All was [as it were] nothing, neither good nor evil, neither light nor darkness, but the centre stood there: for the will is his Heart, Son, and Word, which only is the eternal Being, and the Band which maketh itself; and yet the Deity may not thus be comprehended, because a being affordeth a [distinct difference or] divisibility, and appeareth in two Principles.

41. Therefore we will lay before you the ground, as we certainly know it: and our purpose in writing is to the end that you might see how blind you are; and how without knowledge you meddle, when you make such large expositions of the writings of the Saints, about the essence and will of God, and yet know him not

42. You persecute, despise, and disgrace one another; you raise wars, uproars, and tumults, and make desolate countries and nations, about [what is] the true knowledge of God and his will, and yet you are as blind as a stone concerning God: you do not know your own selves,

and yet you are so furiously mad, that you contend about [your knowing of] God, who is the maker, preserver, and upholder of all things; who is the centre in all things: so also you strive about his light, which yet did never appear in wrath and malice or wickedness, but in friendly meek humility and in love his centre springeth up: and you are so furious and mad, and yet suppose that you have it upon your tongue in your malicious contention : you have it not; but you have merely the history of the Saints, who have had the light shining forth out of their centre; and therefore they have spoken from the Holy Ghost, which proceedeth out of the light. But you take their words, and the centre of your heart is fast shut, you run galloping in the four forms of wickedness or malice, [viz. in pride, covetousness, envy, and anger].

43. Therefore I will shew you the ground of the two eternal Principles [that spring] out of one centre, that you might yet see how you run on in the kingdom of the devil, to try whether you will yet turn and leave off your pride, and enter into yourself, and so you might attain the highest eternal Good.

44. Therefore I will shew you what we are in soul and body, also what God, heaven, and hell are; do not take it to be a fiction [opinion or conceit], for it demonstrates itself in all things, there is nothing so small but it stands manifest therein, and do not blindfold yourselves in your base pride, in your conceitedness, but search the ground of nature, and then you shall understand [learn, or find all things experimentally] all things; and do not run on so furiously upon the bare letter of the history, do not make laws according to your own conceits and opinions so blindly, by which you persecute [vex and prosecute] one another; in this you are blinder than the heathen.

45. Search after the heart, and after the spirit of the Scriptures, that it might be born in you, and that you might open the centre of the love of God; and so you might know God, and rightly speak of him. For from the history none should take upon him to be a master, or call himself a knower of the essence of God, but from the Holy Ghost, which appeareth in another Principle (in the centre of man's life) unto those that seek it in true earnestness, as we are commanded by Christ to knock and seek for it of his Father (viz. in the centre of the life) with true earnest desirous humility, and we shall find it.

46. For none can know or rightly seek or find God his Lord without the Holy Ghost, which springeth forth from the heart of the humble seeker, and enlighteneth the mind, so that the senses [inward senses or thoughts] are enlightened, and the desire is turned to God; that person only findeth the dear Virgin, the Wisdom of God, which leadeth in the right way, and bringeth to the fresh waters of eternal life, and quickeneth the soul, and so the New Body groweth on the soul in Christ; of which we will, hereafter following, write according to its high and precious worth.

47. We advise the seeking Eeader, that loveth God, to consider concerning God; and that he do not collect in his mind and thoughts, and seek for the pure Deity only aloft above the stars, dwelling there only in heaven, thinking that he doth rule and govern only by his spirit and power in this world, as the sun standeth aloft in the deep, and worketh by his beams all over the whole world : no.

48. The pure Deity is in all places and all corners, and present every where all over: the birth of the holy Trinity in one essence is every where: and the angelical world reacheth to every

part, wherever you can think, even in the midst of the earth, stones, and rocks: as also hell and the kingdom of God's wrath is every where all over.

49. For the severe kingdom in the anger of the darkness is in the centre, and keepeth its source and dominion in the darkness; and the Deity goeth forth (in the centre) in itself, and maketh a habitation [of joy] in itself, but unsearchably or incomprehensibly to the darkness, because it openeth another Principle: for the eternal Word is the eternal will, and a cause of the eternal nature; and the eternal nature is the eternal Father, wherein all things are created by the Word, you must understand, in the eternal nature. And if the eternal will did not create in itself [another or] a second will, to go forth, (as a shining light flameth forth from a candle and departeth not away from the candle) the Father would be alone, and be only an austere darkness: also this world (viz. the Third Principle) could not have been created.

50. But the Father containeth in him the eternal nature in his own essence, and is the eternal will itself, and generateth out of himself [another or] a second will, which, in the first eternal will (which is the Father) openeth the Principle of the light, in which the Father (with the eternal essences, in his eternal original will) becometh amiable, friendly, mild, pure, and gentle; and so the Father is not in the source [or quality] of darkness: for the recomprehended will (which goeth forth out of the centre, and dispelleth the darkness) is his Heart, and dwelleth in itself, and enlighteneth the Father [or is the glance and light or lustre of the Father], and that will is the Word of the eternal Father, which is generated out of the eternal essences, and is rightly another Person; for he dwelleth in the Father's essences [or essential powers] in himself, and is the light of the Father; and this Word (or will) hath

created all things, (understand, out of the essences of the Father) for it [the Word] is the eternal omnipotency, because it cannot be comprehended by the eternal essences; for it breaketh asunder the eternal essences, and dwelleth in itself, and shineth out of the essences, and yet it cannot depart from the essences, as little as the glance or light departeth from the fire.

THE SECOND CHAPTER

1. SEEING we have mentioned such a ground to you, we will shew you farther the ground of the genetrix [or matrix], begettress, pregnant mother or womb], for we see it clearly in this world, in the dominion of the elements: (and yet much more in ourselves, in our minds, whence the senses [or thoughts] arise, whereby they walk, converse, and direct all their actions) that there is a genetrix, which doth afford so much; and if there be a genetrix, then there must be a centre or circle of life wherein the genetrix hath its dominion: for the nothing doth not move nor stir; but if there be a stirring, that moveth every life, that must not be a strange [or heterogeneous] thing, because it is in every thing that thing's own spirit and life, as well in the vegetative and insensitive as in the sensitive living [things].

2. And let not the dissemblers and hypocrites mislead you, who are mere book-learned in the history, and boast and vapour with strange languages, and would be respected for it, whereas they understand them not in the least: they understand not their mother tongue; if they understood that rightly (together with the spirits of the letters) then they would know nature therein.

3. It is mere pride that forbiddeth you to search or seek, that you should not find, and that (the pride) with her crowned [or cornered] cap may domineer (like a proud woman) over the wonders of God; for so the devil would have it, that he might not be known: they are more blind than the simple laity.

4. If you desire to seek, then knock, that the right door may be opened for you, and seek in the fear and the love of God, and you shall find well

enough; let not the calumnies of the proud divert you: for if the right door be opened to you, then you shall see how very blind they [the clergy] are : their pride hath blinded the whole world, so that every one looketh merely at their eloquence [fine language, or good expressions], and upon their [several] strange languages, and think they understand very well. Thus they domineer over men's souls. Whereas their knowing is altogether doubtful, as may be seen by their disputations and contentions.

5. Therefore I say still, none should trust their soul with such hypocrites and dissembling men: for the soul standeth not in this world, but in the original of the essence of all essences, and it is in the centre of the eternal band, wherein God, and the kingdom of heaven and hell standeth; and if it [the soul] attaineth the love of God in the light, (which dwelleth in the ground of the soul), it may well see the eternal nature, as also God, and the kingdom of heaven, and of hell: if it do not suffer itself to be blinded: it is not hard or difficult: it is but to go about the new birth, or Regeneration out of the darkness into the light, without which you cannot reach the depth in the centre.

6. And now if we will speak of the centre, or the circle of the life, we must consider the genetrix [or matrix] which is the centre, and the essence of all essences. All things are generated out of the centre, and out of that which is generated all things are created which are in being. And we have cleared to you the ground, how the eternal Word was in the beginning (as in the centre) and the Word is God's, and the eternal will is that Word. For the eternal God hath that will in him, and that is his Heart; and in that recomprehended will (in the eternal Father of all things) the eternal Deity hath its name GOD.

7. For we cannot say that God hath a maker, as also the will hath no maker; for he maketh himself from eternity to eternity continually; whereas it is

not a making but an eternal generation. The Word in the Father, and the spirit which goeth forth from the power, is the life of the Deity.

8. But now we see that the mark standeth in the centre: for God is also an angry zealous or jealous God, and a consuming fire; and in that source [or quality] standeth the abyss of hell, the anger and malice of all the devils, as also the poison [corruption] of all creatures : and it is found that without poison and eagerness [fierceness or stinging sharpness] there is no life: and from thence ariseth all contrariety and strife: and it is found that the strongest and most eager is the most useful and profitable: for it maketh all tilings, and is the only cause of all mobility and life.

9. For, as is mentioned before, the eternal Word (viz. the eternal will of the Father) is the Creator of all things; and the eternal Father is the being of the will, out of which the Word hath created all things. Now the essences are the being which causeth the will: for here you must understand that there are two wills in one being, and they cause two Principles: One is the love and the other is the anger or the source [or property] of wrath. The first will is not called God, but nature: the second will is called A and O, the beginning and the end, from eternity to eternity: and in the first will nature could not be manifest; the second will [it is that] maketh nature manifest; for the second will is the virtue in the strength; and the one would be nothing without the other.

10. Seeing then that the will of the Father in the eternity is the first, therefore also he is the first person in the ternary [trinity], viz. the centre itself. So now the will or the centre is to desire to generate the Word or Heart: for it is nothing else, and it can be called nothing else, but the desiring in the will.

11. Thus we search in a deep sense in the mind; and find that the desiring is eager and attractive; for it is the strong might: not in one point only, but every where all over, contracting the wideness into narrowness, to manifest itself [therein]. For else there would be nothing in the whole deep, and there would appear nothing, but all would be still and quiet.

12. But now the desiring attracteth, and yet it hath nothing there but itself: and that which is attracted is the impregnation of the desiring, and maketh the desire full, and yet is nothing but a darkness, for that which is attracted is thicker than the will, and therefore it is the darkness of the thin will.

13. For the will is as thin [or empty] as [if it were] nothing, and very still and quiet: but the desiring maketh it full, and the going forth in the desiring is the essences, viz. a sting of sensibility, (which is against the sensibility), which the desiring also cannot endure, but attracteth the more vehemently to it; and so the sting or puncture is the greater, and rageth against the attracting, and yet cannot get out of it, for the desiring generateth it, and yet cannot endure it, for it is such an enmity as [is between] heat and cold.

14. And so the desiring, which in itself is an earnest longing, by its longing doth awaken such a raging (which doth so sting in that will) that the longing becometh very sour and strongly attracting, that it might hold the sting fast, whereby the sting, as a stirring life, affordeth mobility, in which the longing attaineth the first crack [or shriek] of trembling, from whence ariseth a contrary anguish: for in the anguish of the longing (in the hard attracting) is caused a sharp coldness: and the attraction is eager, bitter and stinging, so that it affordeth a terrible strong power, which the sting cannot endure, but would fain break away, and yet it cannot: For its own mother that generateth it,

holdeth it, and so, seeing it cannot get away upwards, it runneth round like a wheel, and breaketh asunder the contraction, from whence the essences of multiplicity arise.

15. And this is the right centre: for in the wheel existeth the nature of mobility and of the essences: and it is a band of the spirit, though without feeling [perception] or understanding: but in this form only, is it called the centre : for it is the circle of life, which the desiring hath shut up, out of the still wideness, into narrowness: although it is not comprehensible, but every where merely spirit and form of nature.

16. Seeing then that the Raver maketh such a stinging bitter wheel (in the sharp cold) therefore the centre is so terrible, like a great anguish, where the life is continually broken [or destroyed], and by the essences is also built [again] in such a manner, and is like to life and death.

17. The philosophers and high knowers [naturalists] of nature, write, that nature consisteth in three² things, viz. in Sulphur, Mercury, and Salt, which is very right: but the simple will understand nothing therein : and although the apprehension of it was open to the wise [so that they understood it] yet at this present time very few understand the centre, but they have it in the history, as also [they have] the divinity or theology from the mouth of the Apostles, which at present is also no other than a history, without the power and the living spirit (which was among the Apostles), as is clearly testified by their contentious disputations, lip-labour and dead letter [in their teachings].

18. Now seeing we have through the divine grace attained the light, and are able to know the centre, which is the birth of our life, we have power

to demonstrate it, and shew what is comprised and understood in the three words, Sulphur, Mercury, and Salt: not that we thereby despise the ignorant blindness: but as a Christian we would willingly afford and shew them the light. And although our speech seemeth simple, yet our knowledge, meaning, and apprehension is very deep: none should be offended at the simple speech: as if we had not the deep apprehension. Let him but read it with a true earnestness, and consider seriously of it, in the fear of God, and he shall find well enough what spirit's child we are in this writing; but we would have him faithfully warned, concerning the scorners and hypocrites.

19. As is mentioned concerning the Sulphur, the centre is and may very well be called PHUR: but if the light be generated, the light that shineth out of the PHUR is called SUL, for it is the soul thereof. And as I say of the dark centre, wherein the divine light is generated, the same I say also of nature : though indeed they are one : but we must so speak, that we might bring it into the thoughts of the Reader, that he might incline his mind to the light, and so attain it.

20. For the two forms, viz. sharp cold, and bitter stinging, which are generated by the longing in eternal will, they hold the centre, and make the wheel of the essences, whence the senses [Or thoughts], as also perception and mobility continually arise eternally.

21. Now these two forms are in very great and terrible anguish, in themselves, without the other forms that are generated out of them. For the attracting sharp sourness is like to hard stones, and the sting of the attracting is the breaker of the astringency : and so it is like a wheel, and may well be called PHUR: as the language of nature in that syllable doth declare.

22. Therefore though the two forms enter so terribly in themselves into the will, and hold the

will in the darkness, yet the will cannot be captivated, for its own propriety is to be meek and quiet, and that propriety it cannot lose in the two forms, for it is incomprehensible; and yet it must be in the two forms, and dwelleth in the sting, and is the flash thereof; for the two forms are dark in themselves, but the will is not [so], for it is free in itself; but the two forms take it into their property, for it is their father, and it sharpeneth itself in their properties, so that it shineth as a flash [of lightning].

23. For the sour astringency maketh dark; and the bitter sting (in the wheel) dissipateth the darkness : and so the liberty of the still will shineth in the wheel in the whirring as a flash [of lightning] : for the will so sharpeneth itself from the sour astringency, that it becometh very strong; for it is as when steel and a stone are knocked one against another to strike fire.

24. For there is understood to be in the fire, two things; viz. the liberty without nature, and the sour strongness of nature; as you have an' example in a stone, out of which you strike fire. For when you strike upon the sharp of the stone, the bitter sting of nature sharpeneth itself, and is stirred [vexed or angered] in the highest degree. For nature is dissipated or broken asunder in the sharpness, so that the liberty shineth as a flash [of lightning]: and that you may here see to be true : for as soon as the liberty shineth, it consumeth the darkness, and thence it cometh that the sharpness of God the Father is a consuming fire. For as soon as the flash in the sharpness seizeth on any thing that is essential, it consumeih it instantly, so that there is no nature more left.

25. And the cause of the flash going out so suddenly is that the sharpness cannot retain it: for the flash is free from nature and is only seen in the breaking.

26. And we give you to understand that this liberty without the nature is God the Father: and the nature is thus generated in him, so that he is omnipotent over nature, even as the mind of man is above the senses; for it hath all one original, as we will shew you hereafter following.

27. Further concerning the birth of nature, we give you to understand this by way of similitude: When the flash shineth thus in the sour anguish, then there is a very great crack, which the sourness captivateth, and terrifieth much more, for its dark propriety in the sour death is killed in a moment, so that it loseth its sour propriety and sinketh back, and can no more attract so strongly; and then the flash goeth directly through the sting of the raging of the whirring wheel: where the sting must spread forth on each side, and the flash goeth through the midst; and so the wheel cometh to be a cross, and can no more whirl about, but standeth shivering in the sharp might of the will of the eternal liberty, which is God the Father.

28. And now when the strong sourness hath captivated the flash of the liberty, that it loseth its propriety, then the fourth form (viz. the salt-spirit) is generated: for the stern harshness becometh pliant from the fire and the crack; and yet retaineth the sharpness: and so this form is like a sharp water-spirit: and the flash (viz. the crack) is the third form, and maketh in itself in the sour killed anguish a brimstone-spirit.

29. For if the stern sourness loseth its first dry propriety, it must be soft, and yet it cannot, for it is terribly sharp : and here is the mark [goal, limit, butt] of eternal death : for the desire out of the free will cannot attract so any more : for it standeth in the anguish of the crack, and yet retaineth its propriety in the attracting.

30. For every anguish hath a desire to go forth from the source [or pain]: and it is the natural

right of the anguish to expel from itself, and yet it cannot, but the pain is thereby more stirred and greater: as may be understood in a raging swelling sore, where the member in the essences [humours] laboureth to be rid of the pain, and by the labouring of the essences the sore becometh bigger, and the source (in the brimstone-spirit) is swelled up : and the more the essences strive the greater is the wheel of the anguish.

31. Thus I propose nature to you, to be considered of, which if you consider it well, cannot bespoken against: for it appeareth in all things, and it hath its birth just so. And nature standeth thus in four forms.

32. First, in a sour and strong attracting, which is called harshness [sourness, tartness, astringency], and maketh in itself sharp coldness.

33. And then, secondly, the attracting is its sting [spur], which rageth in the sourness, and breaketh the hardness, and maketh the wheel of the innumerable essences, wherein the wonders are generated.

34. But the flash of the liberty of the eternal will, which sharpeneth itself in the sourness, and turneth to consuming fire, breaketh its wheel, wherein as a flash it penetrateth through in a moment, and terrifieth its mother, the sourness, which loseth her hard propriety, and is changed into a sharp nature like Salt; and in this sharpness, the sting also loseth its own right and becometh bitter: for it hath in it two forms, viz. the raging, and also the flash of the fire, which are like brimstone, and it is the might of the kindling of the fire, for the source [or property] of the fire standeth therein.

35. Understand us rightly thus : the flash of fire out of the sharpness maketh the third form in nature: for it maketh in the sourness, and out of the Eager (the bitter sting in the tart anguish)

a brimstone-spirit, wherein the flash standeth, and is the soul (or the eternal life) of the four forms. For the anguish maketh in itself again a desire to fly out from the anguish, and yet there is nothing that can fly away, but so it is in the centre, and is called the centre no more.

36. The fourth form is the changing of the hard sourness, viz. the crack of the flash, the dark hardness perceiving that it is feeble, and [as it were] dead and overcome; and it is then turned into* SAL, and yet retaineth the propriety of the sour attracting.

37. Thus the four forms of nature are no more called the centre, though indeed they have the centre in them, and in their original, but [are called] Sulphur, Mercurius, and Sal. For the brimstone-spirit is the soul of the four forms: for it hath the fire in it, and the anguish in it maketh another will, so that the four forms have an eternal will in them, which is their own: for that will is to fly aloft out of the four forms, above nature, and to kindle nature in the fire, and so to be in a horrible might, as may be [discerned and] considered in the devils, who live in such a will as this, as we shall shew afterward.

38. Thus understand us rightly what the wise-of old have understood by the three words, Sulphur, Mercurius, and Sal: though they all could not apprehend the high light, yet they understood it well enough in the light of this world, viz. in the third Principle; all which hath one and the same understanding and meaning; only they understood not the three Principles; or else they had known God; and so they remained in the light of this world as heathen with their understanding. For they had found the soul of the four forms in the light of the virtue of the sun [only], and the second Principle was no further revealed to them.

39. There the soul standeth in the eternal band, and there, in the cross of nature, out of the original eternal will, is the eternal Word generated, which is the maker and creator in nature, and this hath been hidden to them, even to this very day: but the time discovereth it, where it To be seen, standeth as a banner [to be seen]: of which [shall be spoken] in its place.

40. And deep considerate reason hath it very clearly in our description what Sulphur, Mercurius, and Sal are: for SUL is the soul, and is a brimstone-spirit, which hath the flash of fire with all forms in it: but if the power and light of the sun operate therein (seeing the soul standeth in flesh and blood) the sun with its friendly beams maketh out of the sour salt-spirit, an oil, and kindleth the fire : and so the brimstone-spirit burneth, and is a light in the essences: and out of the anxious will cometh the mind: and out of the wheel of the essences come the thoughts: for the virtue of the sun hath also the mind, so that it doth not stand in the anguish, but rejoiceth in the virtue of the light.

41. Thus SUL is the soul, in an herb it is the oil, and in man also according to the spirit of this world in the third Principle, which is continually generated out of the anguish of the will in the mind, and the brimstone-worm is the spirit, which hath the fire and burneth: PHUR is the sour wheel in itself which causeth that.

42. Mercurius comprehendeth all the four forms, even as the life springeth up, and yet hath not its beginning in the centre as the PHUR hath; but after the flash of fire, when the sour dark form is terrified, where the hardness is turned into pliant sharpness, and where the second will (viz. the will of nature, which is called the anguish) ariseth, there Mercurius hath its original. For MER is the shivering wheel, very horrible, sharp,

venomous, and hostile; which assimilateth it thus in the sourness in the flash of fire, where the sour wrathful life ariseth. The syllable CU is the pressing out, of the anxious will of the mind, from nature; which is climbing up, and willetth to be out aloft. RI is the comprehension of the flash of fire, which in MER giveth a clear sound and tune. For the flash maketh the tune, and it is the salt-spirit which soundeth, and its form [or quality] is gritty like sand, and herein arise noises, sounds, and voices, and thus CU comprehendeth the flash, and so the pressure is as a wind that thrusteth upwards, and giveth a spirit to the flash, so that it liveth and burneth. Thus the syllable US is called the burning fire, which with the spirit continually driveth itself forth: and the syllable CU presseth continually upon the flash.

43. And the third word SAL is the salt-spirit; because the ancient wisemen saw how nature is thus divided into many parts, and that every form of nature hath a particular matter in this world, as may be seen in the earth: and that the salt-spirit especially is the greatest in corporeal things (for it preserveth the body that it doth not decay), therefore they have rightly set down this gate only ; which is the mother of nature. For out of this form, in the creation, earth, stones, water, and all sorts of minerals were made, yet with the mixture of the other forms; as you shall see hereafter: My beloved Reader, understand us thus according to our own sense, meaning, and apprehension.

44. The four forms in themselves are the anger and the wrath of God in the eternal nature: and they are in themselves nothing else but such a source [or property] as standeth in the darkness, and is not material, but an originality of the spirit, without which there would be nothing.

45. For the four forms are the cause of all

things, as you may perceive that every life hath poison, yea the poison itself is the life : and therefore many creatures are so venomous, because they proceed from a poisonous original. And you must know, (though these be the chief causes of nature), that nature consisteth in very many more other forms: for this maketh the wheel of the essences, which maketh innumerable essences: where every essence is again a centre : so that a whole birth of quite another form may appear.

46. Therefore the power of God is unsearchable : and our writing is not to that end that we should search out the ground of the Deity in the eternal nature [and lay it before any] : no, that cannot be : but we will direct the blind the way that himself must go: we cannot go with his feet, but (as a Christian) we would fain lead him, and impart to him what we have; not out of boasting in ourselves, but that we might help to plant the great body [consisting] of the members in Christ; of which we will make mention hereafter: to which end these very high things are mentioned, that we might shew you the right mark in the original : that yourself might see, and learn to understand the course of the world, and how blind all are concerning God, and what the cause and end of it is.

47. We tell you this that you might rightly consider it; for these four forms are in all things : yet in this world (as in the third Principle) they are not understood [to be] in their very eager [Or their utmost effect] essences. For the virtue of the sun, in the elements, tempereth all things, so that the essences stand not in such a wrathful source [or property], but are as a pleasant friendly life : as the light out of the second Principle (which is the light out of the Word and Heart of God the Father) doth enlighten the four forms in the centre of the angelical spirits, so that they are in their own centre friendly, lovely, and very pleasant.

48. And you should well consider the Fall of the devils, who have lost the light of the Heart of God, and must now stand in the four forms of the original, in such an anxious source [or condition] as was above mentioned.

49. Thus is the soul of man also together out of this eternal band breathed into man, and enlightened from the light of God : but in the fall of Adam it is gone out from the eternal light of the Heart of God, into the light of this world : and it hath now to expect (if it have not entered again into the light of God, when the light of this world doth break off from it) that it must then remain in the four forms (without the light) in the first birth of the life, with the devils.

50. For the four forms (without the eternal light) are the abyss, the anger of God, the hell, and the horrible flash of fire in the wheel of corruption [Or breaking] in the flying up of Mercury [or the terrible cracking noise].

Their light is in the brimstone-spirit, which they must awaken in themselves: or else their spirit standeth in eternal darkness, and its living form of the abyss is a dominion of a severe [eager property or] source, which climbeth up in the flash of fire [willing to be] above God and the kingdom of heaven, and yet cannot reach, nor feel, nor see them: for it [The eternal darkness].is a Principle, which comprehendeth neither this world nor the angelical world: and yet is not severed, [but is] in [one and the same] place.

51. For we offer to your consideration: that as we men with our [earthly] eyes which we have from this world cannot see God and the angels, which yet are every moment present to us; and the Deity itself is in us, and yet we are not able to comprehend it, except we put our imagination and earnest will into God,
[Set all our thoughts and resolutions upon God and goodness]

and then God appeareth to us in the will, and filleth the mind; where we feel a God and see him with our eyes [viz. the eyes of our mind].

52. So also if we put our imagination and will into evil [and wickedness], then we receive the source of hell in the wrath : and the devil layeth fast hold on our very heart in the anger of God, yet we see him not with these eyes, only the mind and poor soul in the eternal source of the original understand it, and tremble at the wrath: so that many a soul despaireth, and casteth itself into the source of the original, and driveth the body to death, by sword, the rope, or the water, that it may thereby suddenly be rid of the torment, or source, in this life, which is from the Third Principle. For that soul standeth between the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of this world, in scorn, and therefore maketh haste to the abyss.

53. Also we give you very earnestly to consider: that God did not create a peculiar hell and place of torment, on purpose to plague the creatures, viz. angels and men; because he is a God that willeth not evil, and doth himself forbid it: and hath therefore suffered his heart to become man, that he might redeem man out of the eternal anguishing source [or torment] of the abyss, which endureth for ever.

54. And therefore as soon as the devils went away from the light of God, and would domineer in the might of the fire, over the meekness of the Heart of God, they were immediately, in the same hour and moment, in the abyss of hell, and were held by it: for there was no peculiar source [or place of torment] made for them: but they remained without God, in the four forms of the eternal nature.

55. So also it is with the souls of men if they

do not attain the light of God; which yet with great longing standeth before the soul, and it is hidden in the very ground of the soul. And the soul is to do no more but put its will (as a sprout out of the four forms) again into the light of God, where then it is regenerated anew in the will, and in the life of God.

56. We give the courteous Reader to understand: that the [hellish] creatures, which are the devils and the damned souls, have not only four forms in the band of their life; but their forms are infinite, like the thoughts of men: and they can turn themselves into the forms of all creatures : but there are only four forms manifest to them, as also in the abyss of hell: they may bring forth every form out of the matrix, except the light, the fire is their right life, and the sour astringency of the darkness is their right food.

57. For one essence nourisheth another, so that it is an eternal band: and so the devils and damned souls are only living spirits in the essences [Or essential powers] of the eternal original: out of which they are also created: for the matrix is the original genetrix, which continually generateth itself out of the eternal will.

58. And in that respect [or according to this form or property] God calleth himself a zealous [or jealous] angry God, and a consuming fire; for the fire of this original is consuming, for it is the centre of the eternal band. Therefore if it be kindled in the sour sharpness, it consumeth all whatsoever appeareth essentially in the four forms (you must understand, all that which is not generated out of their source [or property], for the devils are from the same source or property, it cannot consume them, for they are crude [that is] without a body), as may be seen by the sacrifices of Moses and the Children of Israel, which the fire devoured; as also by Elias and the two captains over fifties, in that the fire of God twice devoured fifty, when Israel was led in the source

of the Father by the Word: [that is, when Israel was disobedient to the light and Word, and thereby were given up to the wrath of God].

59. And now I will farther shew you the form of the Deity, that you may search through the ground of the eternal life, and learn to understand what the eternal good, and what the eternal evil is; as also that which is mortal in this world: and that you may learn to search and know the Will of the highest good: as also what God, heaven, hell, the devil, and this world are, and what is to be done therein.

60. John the Evangelist writeth very well, also deeply and clearly, that in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God, and all things were made by it: for the Word revealeth the Deity, and generateth the angelical world [which is] a Principle in itself: which is to be understood as followeth :

61. The first eternal will is God the Father, and it is, to generate his Son, viz. his Word; not out of anything else but out of himself: and we have already informed you about the essences, which are generated in the will, and also how the will in the essences is set in darkness, and how the darkness (in the wheel of the anxiety) is broken asunder by the flash of fire, and how the will cometh to be in four forms, whereas in the original all four are but one, but in the flash of fire appear in four forms: as also how the flash of fire doth exist, in that the first will doth sharpen itself in the eager hardness, so that the liberty of the will shineth in the flash. Whereby we have given you to understand, that the first will shineth in the flash of the fire, and is consuming by reason of the anxious sharpness, where the will continueth in the sharpness, and comprehendeth the other will in itself (understand in the centre of the sharpness), which [other will] is, to go out from the sharpness and to dwell in itself in the eternal liberty without

pain or source.

62. Therefore we now also give you to understand ; that the other re-comprehended will, to go out from the sharpness, is free from nature, viz. from its wrathfulness : for it stands in the centre, in itself, and retaineth all the virtue and form of the [first] centre, out of all essences, in itself: for it is the virtue and power of the first will, and is generated in the first will, and maketh (in the liberty of the first will) a centre of an out-birth [or procreation], incomprehensible by the four forms in the first will And this other generated will in the first will is the heart of the first will, and is in the first will as a word, which moveth in itself, and remaineth eternally in the birth of the first will; for it is his Son or Heart: and is severed [or distinct] from the first will in that it hath a several centre in itself

63. Now the Father, viz. the first will, expresseth all things by this Word (as out of the centre of the liberty); and that which proceedeth from the Father by the 'Word (viz. the spirit and power of the Father in the Word) formeth that which is expressed, after a spiritual manner, so that it appeareth as a spirit.

64. For in the sour matrix (viz. in the Fiat) all is comprehended, and the spirit of the Word formeth it in the centre of that essence wherein the Father moveth and expresseth by the Word, so that it is, and remaineth to be, an essence. For whatsoever is formed out of the eternal is spirit, and is eternal; as the angels and souls of men are.

65. But because it may happen that we should be as one that is dumb to you, and hard to be understood, in this description (for the understanding and apprehension of it is not in the

subtle spirit of this outward world), we will therefore shew how the other three heavenly forms are generated [being together with the four fore-mentioned forms, the seven forms or spirits of nature] in which [three forms] especially, God, the kingdom of heaven, paradise, and the angelical world are understood; to try whether it might be brought into the mind of the reader.

66. You must not understand it as if the Deity had a beginning, or were subject to any alteration, no; but I write in what manner it may be learnt and understood what the divine essence is : for we can bring no angelical words: and though we could use them, yet they would appear in this world no other than creaturely, and earthly to the earthly mind. For we are but a part of the whole and cannot speak the total, but in part, which the Reader ought to consider.

67. For the divine mind in the Heart of God, that alone is total [or perfect], but else there is nothing total, for without that, all stand in the essences, and God only is free, and nothing else; and therefore we speak but in part, and comprehend the total in the mind: for we have no tongue to express it, we only bring the Reader to a ladder (to heaven) [he must go up himself].

68. If we will rightly speak or write of God, we must speak of the light, and of the flame of love; for therein is God rightly understood.

69. We cannot say that the source of the fire is light, we see it only shine out of the fire. Thus now we have informed you concerning the original of the fire, how it is generated in the wheel of the essences, in the hard anxious sharpness, and receiveth its shining out of the eternal liberty, where the liberty is driven on in nature, so that the liberty becometh a source [or property], which is fire.

70. So also we have mentioned how the flash instantly presseth through the wheel of the essences, and maketh a cross; and then the wheel of the essences turneth round no more, but standeth wavering in the sound [of the crack]; and all essences receive their virtue and strength in the flash of the cross: for the flash presseth right through, and divideth the essences of the wheel: and the essences press through flatly [squarely] upon the flash: for the flash is their spirit, which in the sour astringency maketh a brimstony form.

71. Thus the birth standeth square like a cross, and hath beneath the centre of the birth, which driveth up the flash aloft, and so the whole birth is as a sprout, where the fire driveth up, and the essences hasten after the fire-spirit, as their own spirit, which attracteth and desireth them, for they are its food and nourishment, and it is their life, and one is not without the other.

72. Now understand us concerning the crack of the fire, for it is horrible and consuming, and overcometh all the forms of all the essences : for as soon as the twinkling beginneth, all the forms of the darkness are consumed, and the dark sour astringency (viz. the stern death) trembleth at the life, and falleth back as dead and overcome, and of hard becometh feeble and weak; and so becometh heavy, as being impotent and not fixed [not able to subsist] in itself; and thence cometh weight in nature. For the sour astringent matrix becometh thin and light, and a water-spirit, from whence the water is generated.

73. And now this crack of the sour astringency in the dark death is a crack of great joy, for of dark it becometh light: and now when the flash twinkleth in the sour astringency of the sting, the sting is terrified much more than its mother, the sour astringency; and yet it is no hostile crack or terrifying, but a very joyful crack or terror of exulting that its mother is so thin, pliant, and

soft, whereby the sting loseth its fiery propriety, and in the liberty of the eternal will (in the centre) becometh white, clear, light, amiable, and joyful; and herewith springeth up the fifth form of nature, viz. the friendly love.

74. For there the flash desireth with great longing to have its mother for its food, and here is the true original of life; for it is the kindling of the light in the sour astringent matrix, where the severe tartness is turned into meekness : and you should rightly understand it here, that it is not so, wholly in the centre of its being; but (as I may say in a similitude) it is as if oil were generated in the meekness, out of which the light shineth constantly, and remaineth for ever, in which the flash loseth its propriety, and so out of its form a shining and light is produced, wherein there is a distinct centre, out of which the great joy springeth up; and yet the first four forms keep their own centre to themselves: for the darkness remaineth as an enclosed thing, and the light shineth in the darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not.

75. Thus there are two Principles; which are therefore two, because the meekness existeth out of the first eternal will, which [will] is free from the matrix [or nature] and is as thin as if it were nothing, and is still and quiet. Now that which is still and without a being in itself, that hath no darkness in it, but is merely a still clear light joy, without essence ; and that is the eternity which is without any thing, and is called God, above all other things, for there is nothing evil in it, and it is without a being.

76. Understand us thus; God the Father is so in himself, but without a name, for he is in himself the light clear bright eternity without a being, if we speak merely of the light of God.

77. But since he will not be without a being, therefore we consider his will, which he conceiveth in himself, out of nothing, but merely out of and in himself; and we understand the desire [is] in his will, and [that] in the desire [there is] the centre of the genetrix, wherein the being is generated.

78. Now the eternal genetrix desireth nothing but the Word, which doth create in the genetrix: for the eternal still and light joy createth nothing, but is merely still and light; for where there is no darkness, there is mere light without alteration; but the genetrix in the desire maketh the attraction, so that there is a darkness, which is eternal, wherein nature is generated; as is mentioned before.

79. And now the eternal genetrix, in the first longing, desireth the liberty (viz. God), and not the darkness, in itself: for he willeth not her, but the Word which createth in the longing of the genetrix : and yet there can be no genetrix without the attracting, which impregnateth itself in the will; in which impregnation the centre of the nature doth consist: and there would be no Word, if there were no nature.

80. For the Word taketh its original in nature: and we here give you highly and dearly to understand that two words are generated in nature : one is the first centre of the genetrix, in the stern wrath, to express the strong might of the mother of the first sour wrathfulness in the fire : which is here called the nature of God the Father, which he thus generateth in his still joy, in the conception of his will, without touching the liberty of the light.

81. And the other Word, [is that] which he [God the Father] generated out of nature, out of the meekness; understand [that] wherein the eternal liberty of

the fight is, which is called God, which is [arises] out of nature, and so the dark nature disappeareth, [which is] still in the fire of the sharpness, as is mentioned before, and yet the sour astringency (in its own dark propriety) is terrified, and loseth its eager propriety.

82. For the flash maketh the dark stern might thin again, and so a sprout springeth up therein out of the innumerable essences, and this is the virtue or power of the second centre: for in this springing up there is a love-desire, and the eternal light catcheth hold of the liberty without nature ; so that the liberty without nature kindleth in this love, and becometh a burning light, wherein the glance or brightness ariseth.

83. For there is no glance without nature, though indeed there is a light pleasant habitation: but the glance ariseth first from the sharpness: and yet in the springing up of love there is no sharpness that is perceptible, though indeed it is really; and so it is a birth of joy, and a right fulfilling of the first will, which is God's, which he putteth into desiring, and so generateth nature, and out of nature [he generateth] the sprout [or word] of love.

84. Thus the second sprout (or Word) of love dwelleth in the first will, and is its right fulfilling which it desireth: for it [the love] is meek, pleasant and friendly, and is the virtue and heart of the first will, from whence the eternal desire continually⁴ is sprouting and subsisting.

85. And thus the light breaketh open the gates of darkness, and the loving sprout [or second Word, which is the Heart of God] springeth up out of the dark nature, and dwelleth in the eternal stillness of the Father, and is called his Son: for the Father generateth him out of his eternal will; and herein is the glance [lustre, glory, or majesty] of the Father manifested, which otherwise (in the first

will in the dark nature) appeareth only in Fire; but in the second centre, [it appeareth] in the love in the light; and here love and enmity ought to be considered, and how they oppose one another.

86. For love is death to wrathfulness, and by its shining taketh away the power of the wrathfulness. And here the power of God in love and anger is rightly to be considered.

87. But that the love may thus be generated is caused by the first will from the still habitation ; for the still and clear habitation, which is without a source, desireth no fierceness, and yet causeth fierceness : and if the fierceness were not, there would be no sharpness ; and so the second centre (of love) would not be generated, out of which the supernatural light shineth, where then the name of God the Father and of God the Son existeth.

88. For if the eternal liberty did not generate the being of nature, there would be no Father, but a mere nothing: but since it doth generate the being of nature, therefore the generator, whence it is generated, is called Father.

89. Thus the light shineth in the darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not, as John saith; and thus light and darkness are opposite one to the other, and so the light is lord over the darkness: and it is an eternal band, where one would not be without the other: and here we are rightly to consider the enmity against the virtue of the light of God, how each of them taketh its original.

90. For the darkness holdeth in its centre sour fierceness; stinging anguish in the brimstone-spirit ; woe in the flash of fire; great fire in the breaking wheel; ascending of the essences in the flash of the might of the fire : and yet there is no

flying out, but it causeth such a will [of flying out, or flying away], and that is a spirit, and it is the band of nature, which God the Father generateth in his will, wherewith he manifesteth himself in the eternal stillness : whereas otherwise there would be nothing: and herein is God the Father (with his might and fiery sharpness) an angry zealous jealous God, and a consuming fire.

91. Let this be shewn you, O ye philosophers, which (from the counsel of God) is opened to you in the seventh seal, in Ternario Sancto.[Holy Ternary]

92. Thus the fountain of love is a clasping and keeping in of the fierce wrathfulness, yea, an overcoming of the fierce might: for the meekness taketh away the property of the fierce sour hard might of the fire ; and the light of the meekness holdeth the darkness captive, and dwelleth in the darkness [without being comprehended by the darkness].

93. And thus the fierce might willeth nothing else but the fierceness, and the shutting in of death; for the fierce sourness is the shutter up in death: and the meekness presseth forth as a sprout, and groweth out of death, and overcometh it: and maketh the eternal life, and turneth enmity into love.

94. Let this be a light unto you, O ye theologians [or divines]: and consider better, the writings of the saints, and behold the wonders of God with other eyes. Consider what God is, in love and anger: and observe how two Principles stand open, where each is desiring; desist from the natural wisdom of this world, and consider the eternal nature, and so you shall find God and the kingdom of heaven. Your laws will not do it: if you would know God, another manner of earnestness [or zeal] must be used [than to make conclusions in counsels and synods] ; you must go out

from Babel disputations], that you may attain the centre of the Son of God: and so you shall be bom [or generated] in meekness and in love ; and then you may feed the sheep of Christ: otherwise you are thieves and murderers, and step into the centre of the fierce wrath, where you do nothing else but devour the sheep of Christ, with your blowing up of hellish fire. O how falsely do you deal against love: how will you appear, when the sun riseth, and when you shall stand in the light; it shall hereafter be set before your eyes.