

The Supersensual Life

by Jacob Boehme

translated by William Law

The Disciple said to his Master: Sir, how may I come to the Supersensual Life, so that I may see God, and hear God speak?

The Master answered and said: Son, when thou canst throw thyself into That, where no Creature dwelleth, though it be but for a Moment, then thou hearest what God speaketh.

Disciple. Is that where no Creature dwelleth near at hand; or is it afar off?

Master. It is in thee. And if thou canst, my Son, for a while but cease from all thy thinking and willing, then thou shalt hear the unspeakable Words of God.

Disciple. How can I hear Him speak, when I stand still from thinking and willing?

Master. When thou standest still from the thinking of self, and the willing of self; "When both thy intellect and will are quiet, and passive to the Impressions of the Eternal Word and Spirit; and when thy Soul is winged up, and above that which is temporal, the outward Senses, and the Imagination being locked up by holy Abstraction," then the Eternal Hearing, Seeing, and Speaking will be revealed in thee; and so God heareth "and seeth through thee," being now the Organ of His Spirit; and so God speaketh in thee, and whispereth to thy Spirit, and thy Spirit heareth His Voice. Blessed art thou therefore if that thou canst stand still from Self-thinking and Self-willing, and canst stop the Wheel of thy Imagination and Senses forasmuch as hereby thou mayest arrive at length to see the great Salvation of God being made capable of all Manner of Divine Sensations and Heavenly Communications. Since it is nought indeed but thine own Hearing and Willing that do hinder thee, so that thou dost not see and hear God.

Disciple. But wherewith shall I hear and see God, forasmuch as He is above Nature and Creature?

Master. Son, when thou art quiet and silent, then art thou as God was before Nature and Creature; thou art that which God then was; thou art that whereof He made thy Nature and Creature: then thou hearest and seest even with that wherewith God Himself saw and heard in thee, before ever thine own Willing or thine own Seeing began.

Disciple. What now hinders or keeps me back, so that I cannot come to that, wherewith God is to be seen and heard?

Master. Nothing truly but thine own Willing, Hearing, and Seeing do keep thee back from it, and do hinder thee from coming to the Supersensual State. And it is because thou strivest so against that, out of which thou thyself art descended and derived, that thou thus breakest thyself off, with thine own Willing, from God's Willing, and with thine own Seeing, from God's Seeing. Inasmuch as in thine own Seeing thou dost see in thine own Willing only, and with thine own Understanding thou dost understand but in and according to this thine own Willing, as the same stands divided from the Divine Will. This thy Willing moreover stops thy Hearing, and maketh thee deaf towards God, through thy own thinking upon terrestrial Things, and thy attending to that which is without thee; and so it brings thee into a Ground, where thou art laid hold on and captivated in Nature. And having brought thee hither, it overshadows thee with that which thou willest; it binds thee with thine own Chains, and it keeps thee in thine own dark Prison which thou makest for thyself; so that thou can'st not go out thence, or come to that State which is Supernatural and Supersensual.

Disciple. But being as I am in Nature, and thus bound, as with my own Chains, and by my own natural Will; pray be so kind, Sir, as to tell me, how I may come through Nature into the supersensual and supernatural Ground, without the destroying of Nature ?

Master. Three Things are requisite in order to this. The First is, Thou must resign up thy Will to God; and must sink thyself

down to the Dust in His Mercy. The Second is, Thou must hate thy own Will, and forbear from doing that to which thy own Will doth drive thee. The Third is, Thou must bow thy soul under the Cross, heartily submitting thyself to it, that thou mayest be able to bear the Temptations of Nature and Creature. And if thou dost thus, know that God will speak into thee, and will bring thy resigned will into Himself, in the supernatural Ground; and then thou shalt hear, my Son, what the Lord speaketh in thee.

Disciple, This is a hard saying, Master, for I must forsake the World, and my Life too, if I should do thus.

Master. Be not discouraged hereat. If thou forsakest the World, then thou comest into that out of which the World is made; and if thou lovest thy Life, then thy Life is in that, for whose sake thou forsakest it. Thy Life is in God, from whence it came into the Body; and as thou comest to have thine own Power faint and weak and dying, the Power of God will then work in thee and through thee.

Disciple. Nevertheless as God hath created Man in and for the Natural Life, to rule over all Creatures on Earth, and to be a Lord over all Things in this World, it seems not to be at all unreasonable, that Man should therefore possess this World, and the Things therein for his own.

Master. If thou rulest over all creatures but outwardly, there cannot be much in that. But if thou hast a Mind to possess all Things and to be a Lord indeed over all Things in this World, there is quite another Method to be taken by thee.

Disciple. Pray, how is that? And what Method must I take, whereby to arrive at this Sovereignty?

Master. Thou must learn to distinguish well betwixt the Thing, and that which only is an image thereof; betwixt that Sovereignty which is substantial, and in the inward Ground or Nature, and that which is imaginary, and in an outward Form, or Semblance, betwixt that which is properly Angelical, and that which is no more than bestial. If thou rulest now over the Creatures externally only, and not from the right internal Ground of the renewed Nature; then thy Will and ruling is verily in a bestial Kind or Manner, and thine at best is but a Sort of imaginary and transitory Government, being void of that which is substantial and permanent, the which only thou art to desire and press after. Thus by thy outwardly lording it over the Creatures, it is most easy for thee to lose the Substance and the Reality, while thou hast nought remaining but the Image or Shadow only of thy first and original Lordship; wherein thou art made capable to be again invested, if thou beest but wise, and takest thy Investiture from the Supreme Lord in the right Course and Manner. Whereas by thy willing and ruling thus after a bestial Manner, thou bringest also thy Desire into a bestial Essence, by which Means thou becomest infected and captivated therein, and gettest therewith a bestial Nature and Condition of Life. But if thou shalt have put off the bestial and ferine Nature, and if thou hast left the imaginary Life, and quitted the low imaged Condition of it; then thou art come into the superimaginariness, and into the intellectual Life, which is a State of living above Images, Figures, and Shadows, And so thou rulest over all Creatures, being re-united with thine Original, in that very Ground or Source, out of which they were and are created; and henceforth nothing on Earth can hurt thee. For thou art like all things: and nothing is unlike thee.

Disciple. O loving Master, pray teach me how I may come the shortest Way to be like unto All Things.

Master. With all my Heart. Do but think on the Words of our Lord Jesus Christ; when He said, "Except ye be converted, and become as little Children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." There is no shorter Way than this; neither can there be a better Way found. Verily, Jesus saith unto thee, Unless thou turn and become as a Child, hanging upon Him for All Things, thou shalt not see the Kingdom of God. This do, and nothing shall hurt thee; for thou shalt be at Friendship with all the Things that are, as thou dependest on the Author and Fountain of them, and becomest like Him, by such Dependence, and by the Union of thy Will with His Will. But mark what I have further to say; and be not thou startled at it, though it may seem hard for thee at first to conceive. If thou wilt be like All Things, thou must forsake All Things; thou must turn thy Desire away from them All, and not desire or hanker after any of them; thou must not extend thy Will to possess that for thy own, or as thine own, which is Something, whatsoever that Something be. For as soon as ever thou takest Something into thy Desire, and receivest it into thee for thine own, or in Propriety, then this very Something (of what Nature soever it is) is the same with thyself; and this worketh with thee in thy Will, and thou art thence bound to protect it, and to take Care of it even as of thy own Being. But if thou dost receive no Thing into thy Desire, then thou art free from All Things, and rulest over all Things at once, as a Prince of God. For thou hast received nothing for thine own, and art nothing to all Things; and all Things are as nothing to thee. Thou art

as a Child, which understands not what a Thing is; and though thou dost perhaps understand it, yet thou understandest it without mixing with it, and without sensibly affecting or touching thy Perception, even in that Manner wherein God doth rule and see all Things; He comprehending All, and yet nothing comprehending Him.

Disciple. Ah! How shall I arrive at this Heavenly Understanding, at this Sight of All Things in God, at this pure and naked Knowledge which is abstracted from the Senses; at this Light above Nature and Creature; and at this Participation of the Divine Wisdom which oversees all Things, and governs through all intellectual Beings? For, alas, I am touched every Moment by the Things which are about me; and overshadowed by the Clouds and Fumes which rise up out of the Earth. I desire therefore to be taught, if possible, how I may attain such a State and Condition as no Creature may be able to touch me to hurt me; and how my Mind, being purged from sensible Objects and Things, may be prepared for the Entrance and Habitation of the Divine Wisdom in me?

Master. Thou desirest that I would teach thee how thou art to attain it; and I will direct thee to our Master, from Whom I have been taught it, that thou mayest learn it thyself from Him, Who alone teacheth the Heart. Hear thou Him. Wouldest thou arrive at this; wouldest thou remain untouched by Sensibles; wouldest thou behold Light in the very Light of God, and see all Things thereby; then consider the Words of Christ, Who is that Light, and Who is the Truth. O consider now His Words, who said, "Without Me ye can do nothing," and defer not to apply thyself unto Him, Who is the Strength of thy Salvation, and the Power of thy Life; and with Whom thou canst do all Things, by the Faith which He worketh in thee. But unless thou wholly givest thyself up to the Life of our Lord Jesus Christ, and resignest thy Will wholly to Him, and desirest nothing without Him, thou shalt never come to such a Rest as no Creature can disturb. Think what thou pleassest, and be never so much delighted in the Activity of thine own Reason, thou shalt find that in thine own Power, and without such a total Surrender to God, and to the Life of God, thou canst never arrive at such a Rest as this, or the true Quiet of the Soul, wherein no Creature can molest thee, or so much as touch thee. Which when thou shalt, by Grace, have attained to, then with thy Body thou art in the World, as in the properties of outward Nature; and with thy Reason, under the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; but with thy Will thou walkest in Heaven, and art at the End from whence all Creatures are proceeded forth, and to which they return again. And then thou canst in this End, which is the same with the Beginning, behold all Things outwardly with the Reason, and inwardly with the Mind; and so mayest thou rule in all Things and over all Things, with Christ; unto whom all Power is given both in Heaven and on Earth.

Disciple. O Master, the Creatures which live in me do withhold me, that I cannot so wholly yield and give up myself as I willingly would. What am I to do in this case?

Master. Let not this trouble thee. Doth thy Will go forth from the Creatures? Then the Creatures are forsaken in thee. They are in the World; and thy Body, which is in the World, is with the Creatures. But spiritually thou walkest with God, and conversest in Heaven; being in thy Mind redeemed from Earth, and separated from Creatures, to live the Life of God. And if thy Will thus leaveth the Creatures, and goeth forth from them, even as the Spirit goeth forth from the Body at Death; then are the Creatures dead in it, and do live only in the Body in the World. Since if thy Will do not bring itself in them, they cannot bring themselves into it, neither can they by any Means touch the Soul. And hence St Paul saith, "Our Conversation is in Heaven"; and also, "Ye are the Temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you." So then true Christians are the very Temples of the Holy Ghost, who dwelleth in them; that is, the Holy Ghost dwelleth in the Will, and the Creature dwelleth in the Body.

Disciple. If now the Holy Spirit doth dwell in the Will of the Mind, how ought I to keep myself so that He depart not from me again?

Master. Mark, my Son, the Words of our Lord Jesus Christ: "If ye abide in My Words, then My Words abide in you." If thou abidest with thy Will, in the Words of Christ; then His Word and Spirit abideth in thee, and all shall be done for thee that thou canst ask of Him. But if thy Will go into the Creature, then thou hast broken off thereby thyself from Him; and then thou canst not any otherwise keep thyself but by abiding continually in the most resigned Humility, and by entering into a constant Course of Penitence, wherein thou wilt be always grieved at thy own creaturely, and that Creatures do live still in thee, that is, in thy bodily Appetite. If thou dost thus, thou standest in a daily dying from the Creatures, and in a daily ascending into Heaven in thy Will; which Will is also the Will of thy Heavenly Father.

Disciple. O my loving Master, pray teach me how I may come to such a constant Course of holy Penitence, and to such a daily dying from all creaturely Objects; for how can I abide continually in Repentance?

Master. When thou leavest that which loveth thee, and lovest that which hateth thee; then thou mayest abide continually in Repentance.

Disciple. What is it that I must thus leave?

Master. All Things that love and entertain thee, because thy Will loves and entertains them. All Things that please and feed thee, because thy Will feeds and cherishes them: All Creatures in Flesh and Blood; in a Word, all Visibles and Sensibles, by which either the Imagination or sensitive Appetite in Men are delighted and refreshed. These the Will of thy Mind, or thy supreme Part, must leave and forsake; and must even account them all its Enemies. This is the leaving of what loves thee. And the loving of what hates thee, is the embracing the Reproach of the World. Thou must learn then to love the Cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, and for His sake to be pleased with the Reproach of the World which hates thee and derides thee; and let this be thy daily Exercise of Penitence to be crucified to the World, and the World to thee. And so thou shalt have continual Cause to hate thyself in the Creature, and to seek the Eternal Rest which is in Christ. To which Rest thou having thus attained, thy Will may therein safely rest and repose itself, according as thy Lord Christ hath said; "In Me ye may have Rest, but in the World ye shall have Anxiety: In Me ye may have Peace, but in the World ye shall have Tribulation."

Disciple. How shall I be now able to subsist in this Anxiety and Tribulation arising from the World, so as not to lose the Eternal Peace, or not enter into this Rest? And how may I recover myself in such a Temptation as this is, by not sinking under the World, but rising above it by a Life that is truly heavenly and Supersensual?

Master. If thou dost once every Hour throw thyself by Faith beyond all Creatures, beyond and above all sensual Perception and Apprehension, yea, above Discourse and Reasoning into the abyssal Mercy of God, into the Sufferings of our Lord, and into the Fellowship of His interceding, and yieldest thyself fully and absolutely thereinto; then thou shalt receive Power from above to rule over Death, and the Devil, and to subdue Hell and the World under thee: And then thou mayest subsist in all Temptations, and be the brighter for them.

Disciple. Blessed is the Man that arriveth to such a State as this. But, alas! poor man that I am, how is this possible as to me? And what, O my Master, would become of me, if I should never attain with my Mind to that, where no Creature is? Must I not cry out, I am undone?

Master. Son, why art thou so dispirited? Be of good Heart still; for thou mayest certainly yet attain to it. Do but believe, and all Things are made possible to thee. If it were that thy Will, O thou of little Courage, could break off itself for one Hour, or even but for one half Hour, from all Creatures, and plunge itself into That where no Creature is, or can be, presently it would be penetrated and clothed upon with the supreme Splendour of the Divine Glory, would taste in itself the most sweet Love of Jesus, the Sweetness whereof no Tongue can express, and would find in itself the unspeakable Words of our Lord concerning His Great Mercy. Thy Spirit would then feel In itself the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ to be very pleasing to it: and would thereupon love the Cross more than the Honours and Goods of the World.

Disciple. This for the Soul would be exceedingly well indeed: But what would then become of the Body seeing that it must of Necessity live in the Creature?

Master. The Body would by this Means be put into the Imitation of our Lord Christ, and of His Body: It would stand in the Communion of that most Blessed Body, which was the true Temple of the Deity; and in the Participation of all its gracious Effects, Virtues and Influences. It would live in the Creature not of Choice, but only as it is made subject unto Vanity, and in the World, as it is placed therein by the Ordination of the Creator, for its Cultivation and higher Advancement; and as groaning to be delivered out of it in God's Time and Manner, for its Perfection and Resuscitation in Eternal Liberty and Glory, like unto the Glorified Body of our Lord and His risen Saints.

Disciple. But the Body being in its present Constitution, so made subject to Vanity, and living in a vain Image and creaturely Shadow, according to the Life of the undergraduated Creatures or Brutes, whose Breath goeth downward to the Earth; I am

still very much afraid thereof, lest it should continue to depress the Mind which is lifted up to God, by hanging as a dead Weight thereto; and go on to amuse and perplex the same, as formerly, with Dreams and Trifles, by letting in the Objects from without, in order to draw me down into the World and the Hurry thereof; where I would fain maintain my Conversation in Heaven, even while I am living in the World. What therefore must I do with this Body, that I may be able to keep up so desirable a Conversation; and not to be under any Subjection to it any longer?

Master. There is no other Way for thee that I know but to present the Body whereof thou complainest (which is the Beast to be sacrificed), "a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God." And this shall be thy rational service, whereby this thy Body will be put, as thou desirest, into the Imitation of Jesus Christ, Who said, His Kingdom was not of this World. Be not thou then conformed to it, but be ye transformed by the renewing of thy Mind; which renewed Mind is to have Dominion over the Body, that so thou mayest prove, both in Body and Mind, what is the perfect Will of God, and accordingly perform the same with and by His Grace operating in thee. Whereupon the Body, or the Animal Life, would, being thus offered up, begin to die, both from without and from within. From without, that is, from the Vanity and evil Customs and Fashions of the World. It would be an utter Enemy to all the Poms thereof, and to all the Gaudery, Pageantry, Pride, Ambition, and Haughtiness therein. From within, it would die as to all the Lusts and Appetites of the Flesh, and would get a Mind and Will wholly new, for its Government and Management; being now made subject to the Spirit, which would continually be directed to God, and so consequently that which is subject to it, and thus thy very Body is become the Temple of God and of His Spirit, in Imitation of thy Lord's Body.

Disciple. But the World would hate it, and despise it for so doing; seeing it must hereby contradict the World, and must live and act quite otherwise than the World doth. This is most certain. And how can this then be taken?

Master. It would not take that as any Harm done to it, but would rather rejoice that it is become worthy to be like unto the Image of our Lord Jesus Christ, being transformed from that of the World : And it would be most willing to bear that Cross after our Lord; merely that our Lord might bestow upon it the Influence of His sweet and Precious Love.

Disciple. I do not doubt but in some this may be even so. Nevertheless for my own Part, I am in a Straight betwixt two, not feeling yet enough of that blessed Influence upon me. O how willingly should my Body bear that, could this be safely depended upon by me, according to what is urged! Wherefore pardon me, loving Sir, in this one Thing, if my Impatience doth still further demand "what would become of it, if the Anger of God from within, and the wicked World also from without, should at once assault it, as the same really happened to our Lord Christ?"

Master. Be that unto thee, even as unto our Lord Christ, when He was reproached, reviled and crucified by the World; and when the Anger of God so fiercely assaulted Him for our Sake. Now what did He under this most terrible Assault both from without and from within? Why: He commended His Soul into the Hands of His Father, and so departed from the Anguish of this World into the Eternal Joy. Do thou likewise; and His Death shall be thy Life.

Disciple. Be it unto me as unto the Lord Christ; and unto my Body as unto His; which into His Hands I have commended, and for the Sake of His Name do offer up, according to His revealed Will. Nevertheless I am desirous to know what would become of my Body in its pressing forth from the Anguish of this miserable World into the Power of the Heavenly Kingdom.

Master. It would get forth from the Reproach and Contradiction of the World, by a Conformity to the Passion of Jesus Christ; and from the Sorrows and Pains in the Flesh, which are only the Effects of some sensible Impression of Things without, by a quiet Introversion of the Spirit, and secret Communion with the Deity manifesting itself for that End. It would penetrate into itself; it would sink into the great Love of God; it would be sustained and refreshed by the most sweet Name Jesus; and it would see and find within itself a new World springing forth as through the Anger of God, into the Love and Joy Eternal. And then should a Man wrap his Soul in this, even in the great Love of God, and clothe himself therewith as with a Garment; and should account thence all Things alike; because in the Creature he finds nothing that can give him without God, the least Satisfaction; and because also nothing of Harm can touch him more, while he remains in this Love, the which indeed is stronger than all Things, and makes a Man hence invulnerable both from within and without, by taking out the Sting and Poison of the Creatures, and destroying the Power of Death. And whether the Body be in Hell or on Earth, all is alike to him; for whether it be there or here, his mind is still in the greatest Love of God; which is no less than to say, that he is in Heaven.

Disciple. But how would a Man's Body be maintained in the World; or how would he be able to maintain those that are his, if he should by such a Conversation incur the Displeasure of all the World ?

Master. Such a Man gets greater Favours than the World is able to bestow upon him. He hath God for his Friend; he hath all His Angels for his Friends: In all Dangers and necessities these protect and relieve him; so that he need fear no Manner of Evil; no Creature can hurt him. God is his Helper; and that is sufficient. Also God is his Blessing in every Thing: and though sometimes it may seem as if God would not bless him, yet is this but for a Trial to him, and for the Attraction of the Divine Love; to the End he may more fervently pray to God, and commit all his ways unto Him.

Disciple. He loses however by all his good Friends; and there will be none to help him in his Necessity.

Master. Nay, but he gets the Hearts of all his good Friends into his Possession, and loses none but his Enemies, who before loved his Vanity and Wickedness.

Disciple. How is it that he can get his good Friends in his Possession ?

Master. He gets the very Hearts and Souls of all those that belong to our Lord Jesus to be his Brethren, and the Members of his own very Life. For all the Children of God are but One in Christ, which one is Christ in All: and therefore He gets them all to be his Fellow Members in the Body of Christ, whence they have all the same Love of God, as the Branches of a Tree in one and the same Root, and spring all from one and the same Source of Life in them. So that he can have no Want of Spiritual Friends and Relations, who are all rooted with him together in the Love which is from above; who are all of the same Blood and Kindred in Christ Jesus; and who are cherished all by the same quickening Sap and Spirit diffusing itself through them universally from the one true Vine, which is the Tree of Life and Love. These are Friends worth having; and though here they may be unknown to him, will abide his Friends beyond Death, to all Eternity. But neither can he want even outward natural Friends; as our Lord Christ when on Earth did not want such also. For though indeed the High-Priests and Potentates of the World could not have a Love to Him, because they belonged not to Him, neither stood in any Kind of Relation to Him, as being not of this World, yet those loved Him who were capable of His Love, and receptive of His Words. So in like Manner, those who love Truth and Righteousness will love that man, and will associate themselves unto him, yea, though they may perhaps be outwardly at some Distance or seeming Disagreement, from the Situation of their worldly Affairs, or out of some certain Respects; yet in their Hearts they cannot but cleave to him. For though they be not yet actually incorporated into one Body with him, yet they cannot resist being of one Mind with him, and being united in Affection for the great Regard they bear to the Truth, which shines forth in his Words and in his Life. By which they are made either his declared or his secret Friends; and he doth so get their Hearts, as they will be delighted above all Things in his Company, for the Sake thereof, and will court his Friendship, and will come unto him by Stealth, if openly they dare not, for the Benefit of his Conversation and Advice even as Nicodemus did unto Christ, who came to Him by Night, and in his Heart loved Jesus for the Truth's Sake, though outwardly he feared the World. And thus thou shalt have many Friends that are not known to thee; and some known to thee, who may not appear so before the World.

Disciple. Nevertheless it is very grievous to be generally despised of the World, and to be trampled upon by men as the very Off-scouring thereof.

Master. That which now seems so hard and heavy to thee, thou wilt yet hereafter be most of all in Love with. which is Supernatural and Supersensual; but pray tell me now, why must Love and Hatred, Friend and Foe, thus be together? Would not Love alone be better? Wherefore, I say, are Love and Trouble thus joined?

Master. If Love dwelt not in Trouble, it could have nothing to love: but its Substance which it loves, namely, the poor Soul, being in Trouble and Pain, it hath thence Cause to love this its own Substance, and to deliver it from Pain; that so itself may be by it again beloved. Neither could any one know what Love is, if there were no Hatred; or what Friendship is, if there were no Foe to contend with: Or in one Word, if Love had not something which it might love, and manifest the Virtue and Power of Love, by working our Deliverance to the Beloved from all Pain and Trouble.

Disciple. Pray what is the Virtue, the Power, the Height and the Greatness of Love?

Master. The Virtue of Love is Nothing and All, or that Nothing visible out of which All Things proceed; its Power is through All Things; its Height is as high as God; its Greatness is as great as God. Its Virtue is the Principle of all Principles; its Power supports the Heavens and upholds the Earth; its Height is higher than the Highest Heavens; and its Greatness is even greater than the very Manifestation of the Godhead in the glorious Light of the Divine Essence, as being infinitely capable of greater and greater Manifestations in all Eternity. What can I say more? Love is higher than the Highest. Love is greater than the Greatest. Yea, it is in a certain Sense greater than God; while yet in the highest Sense of all, God is Love, and Love is God. Love being the highest Principle, is the Virtue of all Virtues; from whence they flow forth. Love being the greatest Majesty, is the Power of all Powers, from whence they severally operate: And it is the Holy Magical Root, or Ghostly Power from whence all the Wonders of God have been wrought by the Hands of His elect Servants, in all their Generations successively. Whosoever finds it, finds Nothing and All Things.

Disciple. Dear Master, pray tell me how I may understand this.

Master. First then, in that I said, its Virtue is Nothing, or that Nothing, which is the Beginning of All Things, thou must understand it thus: When thou art gone forth wholly from the Creature, and from that which is visible, and art become Nothing to all that is Nature and Creature, then thou art in that Eternal One, which is God Himself: And then thou shalt perceive and feel in thy Interior, the highest Virtue of Love. But in that I said, Its Power is through All Things, this is that which thou perceivest and findest in thy own Soul and Body experimentally, whenever this great Love is enkindled within thee; seeing that it will burn more than the Fire can do, as it did in the Prophets of old, and afterwards in the Apostles, when God conversed with them bodily, and when His Spirit descended upon them in the Oratory of Zion. Thou shalt then see also in all the Works of God, how Love hath poured forth itself into all Things: Inwardly in the Virtue and Power of every Thing; and outwardly in the Figure and Form thereof.

And in that I said, Its Height is as high as God; thou mayst understand this in thyself; forasmuch as it brings thee to be as high as God Himself is, by being united to God: As may be seen by our beloved Lord Christ in our Humanity. Which Humanity Love hath brought up into the highest Throne, above all Angelical Principalities and Powers, into the very Power of the Deity itself.

But in that I also said, Its Greatness is as great as God, thou art hereby to understand, that there is a certain Greatness and Latitude of Heart in Love, which is inexpressible; for it enlarges the Soul as wide as the whole Creation of God. And this shall be truly experienced by thee, beyond all Words, when the Throne of Love shall be set up in thy Heart.

Moreover in that I said, Its Virtue is the Principle of all Principles, hereby it is given thee to understand, that Love is the principiating Cause of all created beings, both spiritual and corporeal, by Virtue whereof the second Causes do move and act occasionally, according to certain Eternal Laws from the Beginning implanted in the very Constitution of Things thus originated. This Virtue which is in Love, is the very Life and Energy of all the Principles of Nature, superior and inferior: It reaches to all Worlds, and to all Manner of Beings in them contained, they being the Workmanship of Divine Love and is the first Mover, and first Moveable both in Heaven above and in the Earth beneath, and in the Water under the Earth. And hence there is given to it the Name of the Lucid Aleph, or Alpha; by which is expressed the Beginning of the Alphabet of Nature, and of the Book of Creation and Providence, or the Divine Archetypal Book, in which is the Light of Wisdom, and the Source of all Lights and Forms.

And in that I said, Its Power supports the Heavens; by this thou wilt come to understand, that as the Heavens, visible and invisible, are originated from this great Principle, so are they likewise necessarily sustained by it; and that therefore if this should be but never so little withdrawn, all the Lights, Glories, Beauties, and Forms of the heavenly Worlds, would presently sink into Darkness and Chaos.

And whereas I further said, that it upholds the Earth: this will appear to thee no less evident than the former, and thou shalt perceive it in thyself by daily and hourly Experience; forasmuch as the Earth without it, even thy own Earth also (that is, thy Body) would certainly be without Form and void. By the Power thereof the Earth hath been thus long upheld, notwithstanding a foreign usurped Power introduced by the Folly of Sin: And should this but once fail or recede, there could no longer be either Vegetation or Animation upon it; yea, the very Pillars of it be overthrown quite, and the Band of Union, which is that of Attraction or Magnetism, called the Centripetal Power, being broken and dissolved, all must thence run into the utmost

Disorder, and falling away as into Shivers, would be dispersed as loose Dust before the Wind.

But in that I said, Its Height is higher than the highest Heavens; this thou mayest also understand within thyself: For shouldst thou ascend in Spirit through all the Orders of Angels and heavenly Powers, yet the Power of Love still is undeniably superior to them all, and as the Throne of God, Who sits upon the Heaven of Heavens, is higher than the highest of them, even so must Love also be, which fills them all, and comprehends them all.

And whereas I said of the Greatness of Love, that it is greater than the very Manifestation of the Godhead in the Light of the Divine Essence; that is also true: For Love enters even into that where the Godhead is not manifested in this glorious Light, and where God may be said not to dwell. And entering thereinto, Love begins to manifest to the Soul the Light of the Godhead: and thus is the Darkness broken through, and the Wonders of the new Creation successively manifested.

Thus shalt thou be brought to understand really and fundamentally, what is the Virtue and Power of Love, and what the Height and Greatness thereof is; how that it is indeed the Virtue of all Virtues, though it be invisible, and as Nothing in Appearance. inasmuch as it is the Worker of all Things and a powerful vital Energy passing through all Virtues and Powers natural and supernatural; and the Power of all Powers, nothing being able to let or obstruct the Omnipotence of Love, or to resist Its invincible penetrating Might, which passes through the whole Creation of God, inspecting and governing all Things.

And in that I said, It is higher than the highest, and greater than the greatest; thou mayest hereby perceive as in a Glimpse, the supreme Height and Greatness of Omnipotent Love, which infinitely transcends all that human Sense and Reason can reach to. The highest Archangels and the Greatest Powers of Heaven, are in Comparison of it, but as Dwarfs. Nothing can be conceived higher and greater in God Himself, by the very highest and greatest of His Creatures. There is such an Infinity in it, as comprehends and surpasses all the Divine Attributes. But in that it was also said, Its Greatness is greater than God; that likewise is very true in the Sense wherein it was spoken. For Love, as I before observed, can there enter where God dwelleth not, since the most high God dwelleth not in Darkness, but in the Light; the hellish Darkness being put under His Feet. Thus for Instance, when our beloved Lord Christ was in Hell, Hell was not the Mansion of God or of Christ; Hell was not God, neither was it with God, nor could it be at all with Him; Hell stood in the Darkness and Anxiety of Nature, and no Light of the Divine Majesty did there enter: God was not there; for He is not in the Darkness, or in the Anguish; but Love Was there; and Love destroyed Death and conquered Hell. So also when thou art in Anguish or Trouble, which is Hell within God is not the Anguish or Trouble; neither is He in the Anguish or Trouble; but His Love is there, and brings thee out of the Anguish and Trouble into God, leading thee into the Light and joy of His Presence, When God hides Himself in thee, Love is still there, and makes Him manifest in thee. Such is the inconceivable Greatness and Largeness of Love; which will hence appear to thee as great as God above Nature, and greater than God in Nature, or as considered in His manifestative Glory.

Lastly, Whereas I also said, Whosoever finds it, finds Nothing and All Things; that is also certain and true. But how finds he Nothing? Why, I will tell thee how. He that findeth it, findeth a Supernatural Supersensual Abyss, which hath no Ground or Byss to stand on, and where there is no Place to dwell in; and he findeth also Nothing is like unto it, and therefore it may fitly be compared to Nothing; for it is deeper than any Thing, and is as Nothing with Respect to All Things, forasmuch as it is not comprehensible by any of them. And because it is Nothing respectively, it is therefore free from All Things; and is that only Good, which a Man cannot express or utter what it is; there being Nothing to which it may be compared, to express it by.

But in that I lastly said, Whosoever finds it, finds All Things; there is nothing can be more true than this Assertion. It hath been the Beginning of All Things; and it ruleth All Things. It is also the End of All Things; and will thence comprehend All Things within its Circle. All Things are from it, and in it, and by it. If thou findest it, thou comest into that Ground from whence All Things are proceeded, and wherein they subsist; and thou art in it a King over all the Works of God.

Here the Disciple was exceedingly ravished with what his Master had so wonderfully and surprisingly declared, and returned his most humble and hearty Thanks for that Light, which he had been an Instrument of conveying to him. But being desirous to hear further concerning these high Matters, and to know somewhat more particularly, he requested him, that he would give him Leave to wait on him the next Day again ; and that he would then be pleased to show him how and where he might find this which was so much beyond all Price and Value, and whereabouts the Seat and Abode of it might be in human Nature; with the entire Process of the Discovery and bringing it forth to Light.

The Master said to him: This then we will discourse about at our next Conference, as God shall reveal the same to us by His Spirit, which is a Searcher of All Things. And if thou dost remember well what I answered thee in the Beginning, thou shalt soon come thereby to understand that hidden mystical Wisdom of God, which none of the Wise Men of the World know; and where the Mine thereof is to be found in thee, shall be given thee from above to discern. Be silent therefore in thy Spirit, and watch unto Prayer; that when we meet again To-morrow in the Love of Christ, thy Mind may be disposed for finding that noble Pearl, which to the World appears Nothing, but which to the Children of Wisdom is All Things.

DIALOGUE II

ARGUMENT

Herein is described and set forth the Manner of passing the Gulf which divides betwixt the two Principles or States of Heaven and Hell: and it is particularly shewn how this Transaction is carried on in the Soul; what the Partition Wall therein is, which separates from God.

What the breaking down of this Partition Wall, and how effected; what the Centre of Light is, and the pressing into that Centre is; What the Light of God, and the Light of Nature are; how they are operative in their several Spheres, and how to be kept from interfering with each other; with some Account of the two Wills and their Contraposition in the Fallen State; of the Magical Wheel of the Will, and how the Motion thereof may be regulated; of the Eye in the Midst thereof, what the Right Eye is to the Soul, and what the Left is, but especially what the Single Eye is, and in what Manner it is to be obtained; of Purification from the Contagion of Matter, of the Destruction of Evil, and of the very Annihilation of it, by the Subsidence of the Will from its own Something into Nothing; of the Naked and Magical Faith, and the Attraction thereby of a certain Divine Substantiality and Vestment; how all consists in the Will, and proceeds but from one Point; where that Point is placed, and how it may be found out; and which is both the safest and nearest Way to attain to the high supersensual State, and the internal Kingdom of Christ, according to the true Heavenly Magic or Wisdom.

The Disciple being very earnest to be more fully instructed how he might arrive at the supersensual Life, and how, having found all Things, he might come to be a king over all God's Works, came again to his Master the next Morning, having watched the Night in Prayer, that he might be disposed to receive and apprehend the Instructions that should be given him by Divine Irradiation upon his Mind. And the Disciple after a little Space of Silence, bowed himself, and thus brake forth :

Disciple. O my Master! my Master! I have now endeavoured so to recollect my Soul in the Presence of God, and to cast myself into that Deep where no Creature doth nor can dwell; that I might hear the Voice of my Lord speaking in me; and be initiated into that high Life, whereof I heard yesterday such great and amazing Things pronounced. But, alas! I neither hear nor see as I should: There is still such a Partition Wall in me which beats back the Heavenly Sounds in their Passage, and obstructs the Entrance of that Light by which alone Divine Objects are discoverable, as till this be broken down, I can have but small Hopes, yea, even none at all, of arriving at those glorious Attainments which you pressed me to, or of entering into that where no Creature dwells, and which you call Nothing and All Things. Wherefore be so kind as to inform me what is required on my Part, that this Partition which hinders may be broken or removed.

Master. This Partition is the Creaturely Will in thee: and this can be broken by nothing but by the Grace of Self-Denial, which is the Entrance into the true following of Christ; and totally removed by nothing but a perfect Conformity with the Divine Will.

Disciple. But how shall I be able to break this Creaturely Will which is in me, and is at Enmity with the Divine Will? Or, what shall I do to follow Christ in so difficult a Path, and not to faint in a continual Course of Self-Denial and Resignation to the Will of God?

Master. This is not to be done by thyself, but by the Light and Grace of God received into thy Soul, which will if thou gainsay not, break the Darkness that is in thee, and melt down thine own Will, which worketh in the Darkness and Corruption of Nature, and bring it into the Obedience of Christ, whereby the Partition of the Creaturely Self is removed from betwixt God and thee.

Disciple. I know that I cannot do it of myself. But I would fain learn how I must receive this Divine Light and Grace into me,

which is to do it for me, if I hinder it: not my own self. What is then required of me in order to admit this Breaker of the Partition and to Promote the Attainment of the Ends of such Admission?

Master. There is nothing more required of thee at first, than not to resist this Grace, which is manifested in thee, and nothing in the whole Process of thy Work, but to be obedient and passive to the Light of God shining through the Darkness of thy Creaturely Being, which comprehendeth it not, as reaching no higher than the Light of Nature.

Disciple. But is it not for me to attain, if I can, both the Light of God, and the Light of the outward Nature too: And to make use of them both for the ordering my Life wisely and prudently?

Master. It is right, I confess, so to do. And it is indeed a Treasure above all earthly Treasures, to be possessed of the Light of God and Nature, operating in their Spheres; and to have both the Eye of Time and Eternity at once open together, and yet not to interfere with each other.

Disciple. This is a great Satisfaction to me to hear; having been very uneasy about it for some Time. But how this can be without interfering with each other, there is the Difficulty: Wherefore fain would I know, if it were lawful, the Boundaries of the one and the other; and how both the Divine and the Natural Light may in their several Spheres respectively act and operate, for the Manifestation of the Mysteries of God and Nature, and for the Conduct of my outward and inward Life?

Master. That each of these may be preserved distinct in their several Spheres, without confounding Things Heavenly and Things Earthly, or breaking the golden Chain of Wisdom, it will be necessary, my Child, in the first Place to wait for and attend the Supernatural and Divine Light, as that superior Light appointed to govern the Day, rising in the true East, which is the Centre of Paradise; and in great Might breaking forth as out of the Darkness within thee, through a Pillar of Fire and Thunder Clouds, and thereby also reflecting upon the inferior Light of Nature a Sort of Image of itself, whereby only it can be kept in its due Subordination, that which is below being made subservient to that which is above; and that which is without to that which is within. Thus there will be no Danger of interfering; but all will go right, and every Thing abide in its proper Sphere.

Disciple. Therefore, unless Reason or the Light of Nature be sanctified in my Soul, and illuminated by this superior Light, as from the central East of the holy Light-World, by the Eternal and Intellectual Sun; I perceive there will be always some Confusion, and I shall never be able to manage aright either what concerneth Time or Eternity: But I must always be at a Loss, or break the Links of Wisdom's Chain.

Master. It is even so as thou hast said. All is Confusion, if thou hast no more but the dim Light of Nature, or unsanctified and unregenerated Reason to guide thee by; and if only the Eye of Time be opened in thee, which cannot pierce beyond its own Limit. Wherefore seek the Fountain of Light, waiting in the deep Ground of thy Soul for the rising there of the Sun of Righteousness, whereby the Light of Nature in thee, with the Properties thereof, will be made to shine seven Times brighter than ordinary. For it shall receive the Stamp, Image, and Impression of the Supersensual and Supernatural; so that the sensual and rational Life will hence be brought into the most perfect Order and Harmony.

Disciple. But how am I to wait for the rising of this glorious Sun, and how am I to seek in the Centre, this Fountain of Light, which may enlighten me throughout, and bring all my Properties into perfect Harmony? I am in Nature as I said before; and which Way shall I pass through Nature, and the Light thereof, so that I may come into that Supernatural and Supersensual Ground, whence this true Light, which is the Light of Minds, doth arise; and this, without the Destruction of my Nature, or quenching the Light of it, which is my Reason?

Master. Cease but from thine own Activity, steadfastly fixing thine eye upon one point, and with a strong purpose relying upon the promised grace of God in Christ, to bring thee out of thy darkness into His marvellous light. For this end gather in all thy thoughts, and by faith press into the Centre, laying hold upon the Word of God, which is infallible, and which hath called thee. Be thou then obedient to this call; and be silent before the Lord, sitting alone with Him in thy inmost and most hidden cell, thy mind being centrally united in itself, and attending His will in the patience of Hope. So shall thy light break forth as the morning; and after the redness thereof is passed, the Sun Himself, which thou waitest for, shall arise unto thee, and under His most healing wings thou shalt greatly rejoice; ascending and descending in His bright and salutiferous beams. Behold this is the true

supersensual ground of life.

Disciple. I believe it indeed to be even so. But will not this destroy Nature? Will not the Light of Nature in me be extinguished by this greater Light? Or, must not the outward Life hence perish with the earthly Body which I carry?

Master. By no Means at all. It is true, the evil Nature will be destroyed by it; but by the Destruction thereof you can be no Loser, but very much a Gainer. The Eternal Band of Nature is the same afterward as before; and the Properties are the same. So that Nature hereby is only advanced and meliorated; and the Light thereof, or human Reason, by being kept within its due Bounds, and regulated by a superior Light, is only made useful.

Disciple. Pray therefore let me know how this inferior Light ought to be used by me how it is to be kept within its due Bounds and after what Manner the superior Light doth regulate it and ennoble it.

Master. Know then, my beloved Son, that if thou wilt keep the Light of Nature within its own proper Bounds, and make use thereof in just Subordination to the Light of God: thou must consider that there are in the Soul two Wills, an inferior Will, which is for driving thee to Things without and below; and a superior Will, which is for drawing to Things within and above. These two Wills are now set together, as it were, Back to Back, and in a direct Contrariety to each other; but in the Beginning it was not so. For this Contraposition of the Soul in these two is no more than the Effect of the Fallen State; since before that they were placed one under the other, that is, the superior Will Above, as the Lord, and the inferior Below, as the Subject. And thus it ought to have continued. Thou must also further consider, that answering to these two Wills there are likewise two Eyes in the Soul, whereby they are severally directed; forasmuch as these Eyes are not united in one single View, but look quite contrary Ways at once. They are in a like Manner set one against the other, without a common Medium to join them. And hence, so long as this Double-sightedness doth remain, it is impossible there should be any Agreement in the Determination of this or that Will. This is very plain: And it sheweth the Necessity that this Malady, arising from the Dis-union of the Rays of Vision be some Way remedied and redressed, in order to a true Discernment in the Mind. Both these Eyes therefore must be made to unite by a Concentration of Rays; there being nothing more dangerous than for the Mind to abide thus in the Duplicity, and not to seek to arrive at the Unity. Thou perceivest, I know, that thou hast two Wills in thee, one set against the other, the superior and the inferior; and that thou hast also two Eyes within, one against another whereof the one Eye may be called the Right Eye, and the other the Left Eye. Thou perceivest too, doubtless, that it is according to the Right Eye that the Wheel of the superior Will is moved; and that it is according to the Motion of the Left Eye, that the contrary Wheel in the lower is turned about.

Disciple. I perceive this, Sir, to be very true; and this it is which causeth a continual Combat in me, and createth to me greater Anxiety than I am able to express. Nor am I unacquainted with the Disease of my own Soul, which you have so clearly declared. Alas! I perceive and lament this Malady, which so miserably disturbeth my Sight; whence I feel such irregular and convulsive Motions drawing me on this Side and that Side. The Spirit seeth not as the Flesh seeth; neither doth, or can the Flesh see, as the Spirit seeth. Hence the Spirit willeth against the Flesh; and the Flesh willeth against the Spirit in me. This hath been my hard Case. And how shall it be remedied? O how may I arrive at the Unity of Will, and how come into the Unity of Vision!

Master. Mark now what I say: The Right Eye looketh forward in thee into Eternity The Left Eye looketh backward in the into Time. If now thou sufferest thyself. to be always looking into Nature, and the Things of Time, and to be leading the Will and to be seeking somewhat for itself in the Desire, it will be impossible for thee ever to arrive at the Unity, which thou wishest for Remember this; and be upon thy watch, Give not thy Mind leave to enter in, nor to fill itself with, that which is without thee: neither look thou backward upon thyself; but quit thyself, and look forward upon Christ. Let not thy Left Eye deceive thee, by making continually one Representation after another, and stirring up thereby an earnest Longing in the Self-Propriety; but let thy Right Eye command back this Left, and attract it to thee, so that it may not gad abroad into the Wonders and Delights of Nature. Yea, it is better to pluck it quite out, and to cast it from thee, than to suffer it to proceed forth without Restraint into Nature, and to follow its own Lusts: However there is for this no necessity, since both Eyes may become very useful, if ordered aright; and both the Divine and natural Light may in the Soul subsist together, and be of mutual Service to each other. But never shalt thou arrive at the Unity of Vision or Uniformity of Will, but by entering fully into the Will of our Saviour Christ,

and therein bringing the Eye of Time into the Eye of Eternity; and then descending by Means of this united through the Light of God into the Light of Nature.

Disciple. So then if I can but enter into the Will of my Lord, and abide therein, I am safe, and may both attain to the Light of God in the Spirit of my Soul, and see with the Eye of God, that is, the Eye of Eternity in the Eternal Ground of my Will; and may also at the same Time enjoy the Light of this World nevertheless; not degrading, but adorning the Light of Nature; and beholding as with the Eye of Eternity Things Eternal, so with the Eye of Nature Things natural, and both contemplating therein the Wonders of God, and sustaining also thereby the Life of my outward Vehicle or body.

Master. It is very right. Thou hast well understood; and thou desirest now to enter into the Will of God, and to abide therein as in the Supersensual Ground of Light and Life, where thou mayest in His Light behold both Time and Eternity, and bring all the Wonders created of God for the exterior into the interior Life, and so eternally rejoice in them to the Glory of Christ; the Partition of thy Creaturely Will being broken down, and the Eye of thy Spirit simplified in and through the Eye of God manifesting itself in the Centre of thy Life. Let this be so now; for it is God's Will.

Disciple. But it is very hard to be always looking forwards into Eternity; and consequently to attain to this single Eye, and Simplicity of Divine Vision. The Entrance of a Soul naked into the Will of God, shutting out all Imaginations and Desires, and breaking down the strong Partition which you mention, is indeed somewhat very terrible and shocking to human Nature, as in its present State. O what shall I do, that I may reach this which I so much long for?

Master. My Son, let not the Eye of Nature with the Will of the Wonders depart from that Eye which is introverted into the Divine Liberty, and into the Eternal Light of the holy Majesty: but let it draw to thee those Wonders by Union with that heavenly internal Eye, which are externally wrought out and manifested in visible Nature. For while thou art in the World, and hast an honest Employment, thou art certainly by the Order of Providence obliged to labour in it, and to finish the Work given thee, according to thy best Ability, without repining in the least; seeking out and manifesting for God's Glory, the Wonders of Nature and Art. Since let the Nature be what it will, it is all the Work and Art of God: and let the Art also be. what it will, it is still God's Work; and His Art, rather than any Art or Cunning of Man. And all both in Art and Nature serveth but abundantly to manifest the wonderful Works of God; that He for all, and in all may be glorified. Yea, all serveth, if thou knowest rightly how to use them, but to recollect thee more inwards, and to draw thy Spirit into that majestic Light, wherein the original Patterns and Forms of Things visible are to be seen. Keep therefore in the Centre, and stir not out from the Presence of God revealed within thy Soul; let the World and the Devil make never so great a Noise and Bustle to draw thee out, mind them not; they cannot hurt thee. It is permitted to the Eye of thy Reason to seek Food, and to thy Hands, by their Labour, to get Food for the terrestrial Body: But then this Eye ought not with its Desire to enter into the Food prepared, which would be covetousness; but must in Resignation simply bring it before the Eye of God in thy Spirit, and then thou must seek to place it close to this very Eye, without letting it go. Mark this Lesson well.

Let the Hands or the Head be at Labour, thy Heart ought nevertheless to rest in God. God is a Spirit; dwell in the Spirit, work in the Spirit, pray in the Spirit, and do every Thing in the Spirit; for remember thou also art a Spirit, and thereby created in the Image of God: Therefore see thou attract not in thy Desire Matter unto thee, but as much as possible abstract thyself from all Matter whatever; and so, standing in the Centre, present thyself as a naked Spirit before God, in Simplicity and Purity; and be sure thy Spirit draw in nothing but Spirit.

Thou wilt yet be greatly enticed to draw Matter, and to gather that which the World calls Substance, thereby to have somewhat visible to trust to: But by no Means consent to the Tempter, nor yield to the Lustings of thy Flesh against the Spirit. For in so doing thou wilt infallibly obscure the Divine Light in thee; thy Spirit will stick in the dark covetous Root, and from the fiery Source of thy Soul will it blaze out in Pride and Anger; thy Will shall be chained In Earthliness, and shall sink through the Anguish into Darkness and Materiality; and never shalt thou be able to reach the still Liberty, or to stand before the Majesty of God. Since this is opening a Door for him who reigneth in the Corruption of Matter, possibly the Devil may roar at thee for this Refusal; because nothing can vex him worse than such a silent Abstraction of the Soul, and Controversion thereof to the Point of Rest from all that is worldly and circumferential: But regard him not; neither admit the least Dust of that Matter into which he may pretend any Claim to. It will be all Darkness to thee, as much Matter as is drawn in by the Desire of thy Will: It will darken

God's Majesty to thee; and will close the seeing Eye, by hiding from thee the Light of His beloved Countenance. This the Serpent longeth to do; but in vain except thou permittest thy Imagination, upon his Suggestion, to receive in the alluring Matter; else he can never get in. Behold then, if thou desirest to see God's Light in thy Soul, and be divinely illuminated and conducted this is the short Way that thou art to take not to let the Eye of thy Spirit enter into Matter, or fill itself with any Thing whatever; either in Heaven or Earth; but to let it enter by a naked Faith into the Light of the Majesty; and so receive by pure Love the Light of God, and attract the Divine Power into itself, putting on the Divine Body, and growing up in it to the full Maturity of the Humanity of Christ.

Disciple. As I said before, so I say again, this is very hard. I conceive indeed well enough that my Spirit ought to be free from the Contagion of Matter, and wholly empty, that it may admit into it the Spirit of God. Also, that this Spirit will not enter, but where the Will entereth into Nothing, and resigneth itself up in the Nakedness of Faith, and in the Purity of Love, to its Conduct; feeding magically upon the Word of God, and clothing itself thereby with a Divine Substantiality. But, alas, how hard is it for the Will to sink into nothing, to attract nothing, to imagine nothing!

Master. Let it be granted that it is so. Is it not surely worth thy while, and all that thou canst ever do?

Disciple. It is so, I must needs confess.

Master. But perhaps it may not be so hard as at first it appeareth to be; make but the Trial, and be in earnest. What is there required of thee, but to stand still, and see the Salvation of thy God? And couldst thou desire any Thing less? Where is the Hardship in this? Thou hast nothing to care for, nothing to desire in this Life, nothing to imagine or attract: Thou needest only cast thy Care upon God, Who careth for thee, and leave Him to dispose of thee according to His Good Will and Pleasure, even as if thou hadst no Will at all in thee. For He knoweth what is best; and if thou canst but trust Him, He will most certainly do better for thee, than if thou wert left to thine own Choice.

Disciple. This I most firmly believe.

Master. If thou believest, then go and do accordingly, All is in the Will, as I have shown thee. When the Will imagineth after somewhat, then entereth it into that somewhat, and this somewhat taketh presently the Will into itself, and overcloudeth it, so as it can have no Light, but must dwell in Darkness, unless it return back out of that somewhat into nothing. But when the Will imagineth or lusteth after nothing, then it entereth into nothing, where it receiveth the Will of God into itself, and so dwelleth in Light, and worketh all its Works in it.

Disciple. I am now satisfied that the main Cause of any one's spiritual Blindness, is his letting his Will into somewhat, or into that which he hath wrought, of what Nature soever it be, Good or Evil, and his setting his Heart and Affections upon the Work of his own Hands or Brain; and that when the earthly Body perisheth, then the Soul must be imprisoned in that very Thing which it shall have received and let in; and if the Light of God be not in it, being deprived of the Light of this World, it cannot but be found in a dark Prison.

Master. This is a very precious Gate of Knowledge; I am glad thou takest it into such Consideration. The understanding of the whole Scripture is contained in it; and all that hath been written from the Beginning of the World to this Day, may be found herein, by him that having entered with his Will into Nothing, hath there found All Things, by finding God; from Whom, and to Whom, and in Whom are All Things. By this Means thou shalt come to hear and see God; and after this earthly Life is ended, to see with the Eye of Eternity all the Wonders of God and of Nature, and more particularly those which shall be wrought by thee in the Flesh, or all that the Spirit of God shall have given thee to labour out for thyself and thy Neighbour, or all that the Eye of Reason enlightened from above, may at any Time have manifested to thee. Delay not therefore to enter in by this Gate, which if thou seest in the Spirit, as some highly favoured Souls have seen it, thou seest in the Supernatural Ground, all that God is, and can do; thou seest also therewith, as one hath said who was taken thereinto, through Heaven, Hell and Earth; and through the Essence of all Essences. Whosoever findeth it, hath found all that he can desire. Here is the Virtue and Power of the Love of God displayed. Here is the Height and Depth; here is the Breadth and Length thereof manifested, as ever the Capacity of thy Soul can contain. By this thou shalt come into that Ground out of which all Things are originated, and in which they subsist; and in it thou shalt reign over all God's Works, as a Prince of God.

Disciple. Pray tell me, dear Master where. dwelleth it in man?

Master. Where Man dwelleth not: there hath it its seat in Man.

Disciple. Where is that in a Man, where Man dwelleth not in himself?

Master. It is the resigned Ground of a Soul to which nothing cleaveth.

Disciple. Where is the Ground in any Soul, to which there will nothing stick? Or, where is that which abideth and dwelleth not in something?

Master. It is the Centre of Rest and Motion in the resigned Will of a truly contrite Spirit, which is crucified to the World. This Centre of the Will is impenetrable consequently to the World, the Devil, and Hell: Nothing in all the World can enter into it, or adhere to it, though never so many Devils should be in the Confederacy against it; because the Will is dead with Christ unto the World, but quickened with Him in the Centre thereof, after His blessed Image. Here it is where Man dwelleth not; and where no Self abideth, or can abide.

Disciple. O where is this naked Ground of the Soul void of all Self? And how shall I come at the hidden Centre where God dwelleth, and not man? Tell me plainly, loving Sir, where it is, and how it is to be found of me, and entered into ?

Master. There where the Soul hath slain its own Will, and willeth no more any Thing as from itself, but only as God willeth, and as His Spirit moveth upon the Soul, shall this appear: Where the Love of Self is banished, there dwelleth the Love of God. For so much of the Soul's own Will as is dead unto itself, even so much room hath the Will of God, which is His Love, taken up in that Soul. The Reason whereof is this: Where its own Will did before sit, there is now nothing; and where nothing is, there it is that the Love of God worketh alone.

Disciple. But how shall I comprehend it?

Master. If thou goest about to comprehend it, then it will fly away from thee; but if thou dost surrender thyself wholly up to it, then it will abide with thee, and become the Life of thy Life, and be natural to thee.

Disciple. And how can this be without dying, or the whole Destruction of my Will?

Master. Upon this entire Surrender and yielding up of thy Will, the Love of God in thee becometh the Life of thy Nature; it killeth thee not, but quickeneth thee, who art now dead to thyself in thine own Will, according to its proper Life, even the Life of God. And then thou livest, yet not to thy own Will; but thou livest to its Will; forasmuch as thy Will is henceforth become its Will. So then it is no longer thy Will, but the Will of God; no longer the Love of thyself, but the Love of God, which moveth and operateth in thee; and then, being thus comprehended in it, thou art dead indeed as to thyself, but art alive unto God. So being dead thou livest, or rather God liveth in thee by His Spirit; and His Love is made to thee Life from the Dead. Never couldest thou with all thy seeking, have comprehended it; but it hath apprehended thee. Much less couldest thou have comprehended it: But now it hath comprehended thee; and so the Treasure of Treasures is found.

Disciple. How is it that so few Souls do find it when yet all would be glad enough to have it?

Master. They all seek it in somewhat, and so they find it not: For where there is somewhat for the Soul to adhere to, there the Soul findeth but that somewhat only, and taketh up its Rest therein, until it seeth that it is to be found in nothing, and goeth out of the somewhat into nothing, even into that nothing out of which all Things may be made. The Soul here saith, "I have nothing, for I am utterly naked and stripped of every Thing: I can do nothing; for I have no Manner of Power, but am as Water poured out: I am nothing; for all that I am is no more than an Image of Being, and only God is to me I AM; and so sitting down in my own Nothingness, I give Glory to the Eternal Being, and will nothing myself, that so God may will All in me, being unto me my God and All Things." Herein now it is that so very few find this most precious Treasure in the Soul, though every one would so fain have it; and might also have it, were it not for this somewhat in every one which letteth.

Disciple. But if the Love should proffer itself to a Soul, could not that Soul find it, nor lay hold on it, without going for it into

Nothing?

Master. No verily. Men seek and find not, because they seek it not in the naked Ground where it lieth; but in something or other where it never will be, neither can be. They seek it in their own Will, and they find it not. They seek it in their Self-Desire, and they meet not with it. They look for it in an Image, or in an Opinion, or in Affection, or a natural Devotion and Fervour, and they lose the Substance by thus hunting after a Shadow. They search for it in something sensible or imaginary, in somewhat which they may have a more peculiar natural Inclination for, and Adhesion to; and so they miss of what they seek, for Want of diving into the Supersensual and Supernatural Ground where the Treasure is hid. Now, should the Love graciously condescend to Proffer itself to such as these, and even to present itself evidently before the Eye of their Spirit, yet would it find no Place in them at all, neither could it be held by them, or remain with them.

Disciple. Why not, if the Love should be willing and ready to offer itself, and to stay with them?

Master. Because the Imaginariness which is in their own Will hath set up itself in the Place thereof: And so this Imaginariness would have the Love in it; but the Love fleeth away, for it is its Prison. The Love may offer itself; but it cannot abide where the Self-Desire attracteth or imagineth. That Will which attracteth nothing, and to which nothing adhereth, is only capable of receiving it; for it dwelleth only in nothing, as I said, and therefore they find it not.

Disciple. If it dwell only in nothing, what is now the Office of it in nothing?

Master. The Office of the Love here is to penetrate incessantly into something; and if it penetrate into, and find a Place in something which is standing still and at Rest, then its Business is to take Possession thereof. And when it hath there taken Possession, then it rejoiceth therein with its flaming Love-Fire, even as the Sun doth in the visible World. And then the Office of it, is without Intermission to enkindle a Fire in this something, which may burn it up; and then, with the Flames thereof exceedingly to enflame itself, and raise the Heat of the Love-Fire by it, even seven Degrees higher.

Disciple. O, loving Master, how shall I understand this?

Master. If it but once kindle a Fire within thee, my Son, thou shalt then certainly feel how it consumeth all that which it toucheth; thou shalt feel it in the burning up thyself, and swiftly devouring all Egoity, or that which thou callest I and Me, as standing in a separate Root, and divided from the Deity, and Fountain of thy Being. And when this enkindling is made in thee, then the Love doth so exceedingly rejoice in thy Fire, as thou wouldst not for all the World be out of it; yea, would rather suffer thyself to be killed, than to enter into thy something again. This Fire now must grow hotter and hotter, till it shall have perfected its Office with respect to thee, and therefore will not give over, till it come to the seventh Degree. Its Flame hence also will be so very great, that it will never leave thee, though it should even cost thee thy temporal Life; but it would go with thee in its sweet loving Fire into Death; and if thou wentest also into Hell, it would break Hell in Pieces also for thy Sake, Nothing is more certain than this; for it is stronger than Death and Hell.

Disciple. Enough, my dearest Master, I can no longer endure that any Thing should divert me from it. But how shall I find the nearest Way to it?

Master. Where the Way is hardest, there go thou; and what the World casteth away, that take thou up. What the World doth, that do thou not; but in all Things walk thou contrary to the World. So thou comest the nearest Way to that which thou art seeking.

Disciple. If I should in all Things walk contrary to other People, I must needs be in a very unquiet and sad State; and the World would not fail to account me for a Madman.

Master. I bid thee not, Child, to do Harm to any one, thereby to create to thyself any Misery or Unquietness. This is not what I mean by walking contrary in every Thing to the World. But because the World, as the World, loveth only Deceit and Vanity, and walketh in false and treacherous Ways; thence, if thou hast a Mind to act a clean contrary Part to the Ways thereof, without any Exception or Reserve whatsoever, Walk thou only in the right Way, which is called the Way of Light, as that of the World is properly the Way of Darkness. For the right Way, even the path of Light is contrary to all the ways of the World.

But whereas thou art afraid of creating to thyself hereby Trouble and Inquietude, that indeed, will be according to the Flesh. In the World thou must have Trouble, and thy Flesh will not fail to be unquiet, and to give thee Occasion of continual Repentance. Nevertheless in this very Anxiety of Soul, arising either from the World or the Flesh, the Love doth most willingly enkindle itself, and its cheering and conquering Fire is but made to blaze forth with greater Strength for the Destruction of that Evil. And whereas thou dost also say, that the World will for this esteem thee mad; it is true the World will be apt enough to censure thee for a Madman in walking contrary to it: And thou art not to be surprised if the Children thereof laugh at thee, calling thee silly Fool.

For the way to the Love of God is Folly to the World, but is Wisdom to the Children of God. Hence, whenever the World perceiveth this Holy Fire of Love in God's Children, it concludeth immediately that they are turned Fools, and are besides themselves. But to the Children of God, that which is despised of the World is the Greatest Treasure; yea, so great a Treasure it is, as no Life can express, nor Tongue so much as name what this enflaming, all-conquering Love of God is. It is brighter than the Sun; it is sweeter than any Thing that is called sweet; it is stronger than all Strength; it is more nutrimental than Food ; more cheering to the Heart than Wine, and more pleasant than all the Joy and Pleasantness of this World. Whosoever obtaineth it, is richer than any Monarch on Earth and he who getteth it, is nobler than any Emperor can be, and more potent and absolute than all Power and Authority.

The End