

The Second Chapter

Of the Word or Heart of God

1. **T**HIS is now what Saint John saith, ch. 1, *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and God was the Word. The same was in the beginning with God.* The Word is the will of the abyss: (*beginning*) is the conception [or apprehension] of the will, where it conceiveth and bringeth itself into an eternal beginning. The (*Word*)¹ is now the conceived, which in the will is a nothing, and with the conception there is a generation; this was in the beginning with the will, and in the will; but with the lubet of the will it receiveth its beginning in the conception of the will, therefore it is called [a] Heart, viz. a centre, or life-circle, wherein the original of the eternal life is.

2. And John saith further: *By the same were all things made; and without it was not any thing made that was made. In it was the life; and the life was the light of men.* Here, O man, take now this light of life, which was in the Word, and is eternal, and behold the being of all beings, and especially thyself, seeing thou art an image, life, and being of the unsearchable God, and a likeness as to him. Here consider time and eternity, heaven, hell, the world, light and darkness, pain and source, life and death, something and nothing. Here examine thyself, whether thou hast the light and life of the Word in thee, so that thou art able to see and understand all things. For thy life was in the Word, and was made manifest in the image which God created; it was breathed into it from the spirit of the Word. Now lift up thy understanding in the light of thy life, and behold the formed Word; consider its inward generation, for all is manifest in the light of life.

3. Sayest thou: I cannot, I am corrupt and depraved? Hear me! thou art not as yet born again of God; otherwise, if thou hadst again that same light, then thou couldst. Go to, then! we all indeed come far short of the glory which we ought to have in God; but I will shew thee somewhat: Have a care, and conceive it aright; be not a mocker, as the confused Babel is. Lo! when we would speak of the being of all beings, then we say, that from God and through God are all things. For Saint John saith also: *without him was not any thing made that was made.*

¹ *Wort* signifieth the *Word*. Which words in the High Dutch he expounds according to the language of Nature.

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4. Now saith reason, Whence or how hath God made good and evil, pain and source, life and death? Is there any such will in God which maketh the evil? Here reason beginneth to speculate, and will apprehend it; but reason goeth only about the outside of the circle, and cannot enter in; for it is without, and not in, the word of the life-circle.

5. Now then, behold thyself, and consider what thou art, view what the outward world is, with its dominion; and thou wilt find that thou, with thy outward spirit and being, art the outward world. Thou art a little world out of the great world, thy outward light is a chaos of the sun and stars, else thou couldst not see by the light of the sun.¹ The stars give the essence of discrimination or differentiation in the intellective sight. Thy body is fire, air, water, earth; therein also lieth the metalline property, for of whatsoever the sun with the stars is a spirit, of that the earth with the other elements is a being,² a coagulated power. What the superior [being] is, that also is the inferior; and all the creatures of this world are the same.

6. When I take up a stone or clod of earth and look upon it, then I see that which is above and that which is below, yea, [I see] the whole world therein; only, that in each thing one property happeneth to be the chief and most manifest; according to which it is named. All the other properties are jointly therein; only, in various diverse degrees and centres, and yet all the degrees and centres are but one only centre. There is but one only root whence all things proceed: it severiseth itself only in the compaction, where it is coagulated: its original is as a smoke or vaporous breath or exhalation from the Great Mystery of the expressed Word; which standeth in all places in the re-expressing, that is, in the re-breathing (or echoing forth), a likeness according to itself; an essence according to the spirit.

7. But now we cannot say that the outward world is God, or the speaking Word, which in itself is devoid of such essence; or likewise [we cannot say] that the outward man is God; but it is all only the expressed Word, which hath so coagulated itself in its re-conception to its own expression; and doth still continually coagulate itself with the four elements, through the spirit of the desire (viz. of the stars), and bringeth itself into such a motion and life; in the mode and manner as the eternal speaking Word maketh a Mystery (which is spiritual) in itself; which Mystery I call the centre of the eternal nature; where the eternal speaking Word bringeth itself into a generation, and also

¹ Or receive light from the sun.

² Essence substance or body.

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maketh in itself such a spiritual world as we have materially in the expressed Word.

8. For, I say, the inward world is the heaven wherein God dwelleth; and the outward world is expressed out of the inward, and hath only another beginning than the inward, but yet out of the inward. It is expressed from the inward through the motion of the eternal speaking Word, and closed into a beginning and end.

9. And the inward world standeth in the eternal speaking Word: The eternal Word hath spoken it (through the wisdom) out of its own powers, colours and virtues, into an essence, as a Great Mystery, from eternity; which essence also is only as a spiration from the Word in the wisdom, which hath its re-conception (to generation) in itself; and with the conception doth likewise coagulate itself, and introduceth itself into forms, after the manner of the generation of the eternal Word; as the powers, colours and virtues do generate themselves in the Word (through the wisdom), or as I might say, out of the wisdom in the Word.

10. Therefore there is nothing nigh unto or afar off from God; one world is in the other, and all are only one: But one is spiritual, the other corporeal, as soul and body are in each other; and also time and eternity are but one thing, yet in distinct or different beginnings. The spiritual world in the internal [Principle] hath an eternal beginning, and the outward a temporal; each hath its birth in itself. But the eternal speaking Word ruleth through and over all; yet it can neither be apprehended nor conceived, either by the spiritual or by the external world, that it should stand still; but it worketh from eternity to eternity, and its work¹ is conceived. For it is the formed Word, and the working Word is its life, and is incomprehensible; for the Word is without all essence, as a bare understanding only, or as a power that bringeth² itself into essence.

11. In the inward spiritual world the Word conceiveth itself into a spiritual essence, as one only element, wherein the four lie hid. But when God, viz. the Word, moved this one element, then the hidden properties did manifest themselves; as there are four elements.

¹ Or operation.

² Or worketh itself out in the essence.