

## Author's Preface

1. **W**HEN we consider the visible world with its essence, and consider the life of the creatures, then we find therein the likeness of the invisible spiritual world, which is hidden in the visible world, as the soul in the body; and see thereby that the hidden God is nigh unto all, and through all; and yet wholly hidden to the visible essence.

2. We have an example hereof in the mind of man, which is an invisible fire, that is inclined to light and darkness, viz. to joy and sorrow; and yet in itself is none of these, but only a cause thereto; an invisible, incomprehensible source, fire; and yet as to its own essence is included in nothing, save only in the will of life.

3. The body cannot comprehend the mind; but the mind comprehends the body; and brings it to love, or dislike;<sup>1</sup> this likewise is to be understood of the Word and power of God; which is hidden to the visible sensible elements: and yet dwelleth through and in the elements; and worketh through the sensible life and essence, as the mind in the body.

4. For the visible sensible things are an essence of the invisible: from the invisible and incomprehensible the visible and comprehensible is proceeded: the visible essence is come to be from the expression or spiration of the invisible power: the invisible spiritual Word of divine power worketh with and through the visible essence, as the soul<sup>2</sup> with and through the body.

5. The inward spiritual soul of man was breathed into the visible image by the in-speaking, or inspiration, of the invisible Word of the divine power; (for an understanding to the created image) wherein man's science and knowledge of the invisible and visible essence consisteth.

6. Thus man hath now received ability from the invisible Word of God to the re-expression: that he again expresseth the hidden Word of the divine science into formation and severation: in manner and form of the temporal creatures; and formeth this spiritual Word according to animals and vegetables; whereby the invisible wisdom of God is portrayed and modellised into several distinct forms: as we plainly see, that the understanding of man expresseth all powers in their property, and giveth names unto all things, according to each

<sup>1</sup> Or sufferance and sorrow.

<sup>2</sup> In.

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thing's property, by which the hidden wisdom is known and understood in its power: and the hidden God is made manifest with<sup>1</sup> the visible things, for the delight and play of the divine Power: so that the invisible might play with the visible, and therein introduce itself into the sight and sense of itself.

7. As the mind doth introduce itself with the body and by the body into senses and thoughts, whereby it worketh and acteth sensibly to itself, so also the invisible world (worketh) through the visible, and with the visible world: we are not in any wise to think that a man cannot search out what the hidden divine world is, and what its operation and essence is, for on the visible essence of the creation we see a figure of the internal spiritual operation of the powerful world.

8. And we ought not to think otherwise of God, but that he is the most internal ground of all essences; and yet so, as that he cannot be comprehended of any thing by the own-peculiar power of the thing; but as the sun doth introduce itself with its light and power into the sensible living things, and worketh with [or in] all things, and introduceth itself also into an essence; the same likewise is to be understood concerning the divine Word with the life of the creatures.

9. Seeing then this visible world is the expressed, formed word, according to God's love and anger, viz. according to the Grand Mystery of the eternal spiritual nature, which spiritual world is hidden in the visible; and yet the human soul is a spark out of the eternal-speaking Word of the divine science and power: and the body an ens of the stars and elements; and also as to the internal ground an ens of heaven, viz. of the hidden world; therefore he hath might and ability to speak of the Grand Mystery whence all essences do originally arise.

10. Since then the great Mysteries, the beginning of and original of all things, do befall us by divine grace; that we are able (as through the ground of the soul) to understand the same in real knowledge, with the inspired word of the divine science, we will write down its ground (so far as it is permitted to us) in this book: for a Memorial to ourself, and for the exercise of divine knowledge to the Reader.

I I. And I. we will signify and declare what the centre and ground of all essences is.

II. What the divine manifestation (through the speaking of the word of God) is.

III. How evil and good have their original from one only

<sup>1</sup> In.

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ground, viz. light and darkness; life and death; joy and sorrow; and how it is in its ground; also whereunto every essence and source is profitable and necessary.<sup>1</sup>

IV. How all things have their ground from the Grand Mystery, viz. from the spiration of the eternal One.

V. How the eternal One introduceth itself into sensation, perception, and severation, to the science of itself, and the play of the divine power.

VI. How man may attain to the true knowledge of God, and to the knowledge of the eternal and temporal nature.

VII. Also how man may come unto the real contemplation of the Being of all beings.

VIII. Also of the creation of the world and of all creatures.

IX. And then of the original, fall, and restoration of man; what he is according to the first Adamical man in the kingdom of nature: and what he is in the new regeneration in the kingdom of grace, and how the new birth comes to pass.

X. Also what the Old and New Testaments are, each in its understanding.

12. And we will enlarge this exposition through all the chapters of the first Book of Moses; and signify how the Old Testament is a figure of the New: what is to be understood by the deeds of the holy patriarchs: wherefore the spirit of God did give them to be set down in Moses: and at what the figures of these written histories do look, and aim; and how the spirit of God in his children before the times of Christ did allude with them in the figure concerning the kingdom of Christ; whereby then God hath always represented this mercy-seat [or throne of grace] Christ: by whom he would blot out his anger and manifest his grace.

13. And how the whole time of this world is portrayed and modellised, as in a watch-work: how afterwards it should go in time: and what the inward spiritual world, and also the outward material world, is: also what the inward spiritual man, and then the external man of the essence of this world, is: how time and eternity are in one another, and how a man may understand all this.

14. Now if it should so fall out that when these our writings are read the Reader might not presently apprehend and understand the

<sup>1</sup> Text, unavoidable.

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same (seeing this ground which yet hath its full foundation and pregnant concordance, as well with the Scripture as through the light of nature, hath for a long time been very dark, and yet by divine grace is given to plain simplicity) let him not despise and reject the same, according to the course and custom of the wicked world; but look upon the ground of practice which is therein intimated; and give himself up thereunto; and pray God for light and understanding: and at last he will rightly understand our ground, and it will find very great love and acceptance with him.

15. But we have written nothing for the proud and haughty wiselings who know enough already; and yet indeed know nothing at all; whose belly is their God, who only adhere unto the Beast of the Babylonical Whore, and drink of her poison; and wilfully will be in blindness, and the devil's snare: But we have laid (with the spirit of our knowledge) a strong bolt before the understanding of folly, not to apprehend our meaning; seeing they wilfully and willingly serve Satan, and are not the children of God.

16. But we desire to be clearly and fundamentally understood by the children of God: and do heartily and readily communicate our knowledge given to us of God; seeing the time of such revelation is born: therefore let everyone see, and take heed, what sentence and censure he passeth: Everyone shall accordingly receive his reward, and we commend him into the grace of the meek and tender love of Jesus Christ. Amen.

*Sept. 11. Anno 1623.*