

PREFACE TO THE READER

THIS book is a true mystical mirror of the highest wisdom. The best treasure that a man can attain unto in this world is true knowledge; even *the knowledge of himself*: For *man* is the great mystery of God, the *microcosm*, or the complete abridgment of the whole universe: He is the *mirandum Dei opus*, God's masterpiece, a living emblem and hieroglyphic of eternity and time; and therefore to know whence he is, and what his temporal and eternal being and well-being are, must needs be that ONE necessary thing, to which all our chief study should aim, and in comparison of which all the wealth of this world is but dross, and a loss to us.

Hence Solomon, the wisest of the kings of Israel, says: "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding; for the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold; she is more precious than rubies, and all things that can be desired are not to be compared unto her."

This is that wisdom which dwells in nothing, and yet possesses all things, and the humble resigned soul is its play-fellow; this is the divine alloquy, the inspiration of the Almighty, the breath of God, the holy unction, which sanctifies the soul to be the temple of the Holy Ghost, which instructs it aright in all things, and searches τὰ βάθη τοῦ Θεοῦ,¹ the depths of God.

This is the precious pearl, whose beauty is more glorious, and whose virtue more sovereign than the sun: It is a never-failing comfort in all afflictions, a balsam for all sores, a panacea for all diseases, a sure antidote against all poison, and death itself; it is that joyful and assured companion and guide, which never forsakes a man, but convoys him through this valley of misery and death into the blessed paradise of perfect bliss.

If you ask, What is the way to attain to this wisdom? Behold! Christ, who is the way, the truth, and the life, tells you plainly in these words; "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me;"² or as he

¹ 1 Cor. ii. 10.

² Luke ix. 23.

says elsewhere, "Unless you be born again, you cannot see the kingdom of heaven:" or as St. Paul says, "If any man seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool that he may be wise."¹

Herein lies that simple childlike way to the highest wisdom, which no sharp reason or worldly learning can reach unto; nay, it is foolishness to reason, and therefore so few go the way to find it: The proud sophisters and wiselings of this world have always trampled it under foot with scorn and contempt, and have called it enthusiasm, madness, melancholy, whimsy, fancy, etc., but wisdom is justified of her children.

Indeed, every one is not fit for or capable of the knowledge of the eternal and temporal nature in its mysterious operation, neither is the proud covetous world worthy to receive a clear manifestation of it; and therefore the only wise God (who giveth wisdom to every one that asketh it aright of him) has locked up the jewel in his blessed treasury, which none can open but those that have the key; which is this, viz., "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:" The Father will give the Spirit to them that ask him for it.

This is the true theosophic school wherein this author learned the first rudiments and principles of wisdom, and to which we must go if we would understand his deep writings: For we must know that the sons of Hermes, who have commenced in the high school of true magic and theosophy, have always spoken their hidden wisdom in a mystery; and have so couched it under shadows and figures, parables and similies, that none can understand their obscure, yet clear writings, but those who have had admittance into the same school, and have tasted of the Feast of Pentecost.

And this does not seem at all strange to the children of divine Mercury; for the mysteries of philosophy, divinity, and theosophy must not be profaned, and laid open to the view of the outward astral reason, which turns all to its selfish pride, covetousness, envy, wrath, and cunning hypocrisy; and therefore a parabolical or magical phrase or dialect is the best and plainest habit and dress that mysteries can have to travel in up and down this wicked world: And thus parable have a double and different respect and use; for as they conceal and hide secrets from the rude and vulgar sort, who are not able or

¹ 1 Cor. iii. 13.

patient to bear anything but what suits with their common conceits and opinions, so likewise they sweetly lead the mind of the true searcher into the depths of wisdom's council. They are as the cloudy pillar of Moses; they have a dark part, and they have a light part; they are dark to the Egyptians, the pharisaical sons of sophistry, but light to the true Israel, the children of the mystery.

And therefore whoever will be nurtured and trained up by Sophia, and learn to understand and speak the language of wisdom, must be born again of and in the Word of Wisdom, Christ Jesus, the Immortal Seed: The divine essence which God breathed into his paradisaical soul must be revived, and he must become one again with that which he was in God before he was a creature, and then his Eternal Spirit may enter into that which is within the veil, and see not only the literal, but the moral, allegorical, and anagogical meaning of the wise and their dark sayings: He then will be fit to enter, not only into Solomon's porch, the outer court of natural philosophy, sense and reason, but likewise into the inward court of holy and spiritual exercises, in divine understanding and knowledge; and so he may step into the most inward and holiest place of theosophical mysteries, into which none are admitted to come, but those who have received the high and holy unction.

I will now endeavour briefly to hint to the reader what this book contains, though in it the spirit of wisdom cannot be delineated with pen and ink, no more than a sound can be painted, or the wind grasped in the hollow of the hand: But know, that in it he deciphers and represents in a lively manner the Signature of all Things, and gives you the contents of eternity and time, and glances at all mysteries.

Herein the author sets forth fundamentally the birth, sympathy, and antipathy of all beings; how all beings originally arise out of one eternal mystery, and how that same mystery begets itself in itself from eternity to eternity; and likewise how all things, which take their original out of this eternal mystery, may be changed into evil, and again out of evil into good; with a clear and manifest demonstration how man has turned himself out of the good into the evil, and how his transmutation is again out of the evil into the good: Moreover, herein is declared the outward cure of the body; how the outward life may be freed from sickness by its likeness or assimilate, and be again introduced into its first essence; where also, by way

of parable and similitude, the Philosopher's Stone is with great life described for the temporal cure; and along with it the holy Corner Stone, Christ alone, for the everlasting cure, regeneration, and perfect restitution of all the true, faithful, eternal souls. In a word, his intent is to let you know the inward power and property by the outward sign; for nature has given marks and notes to everything, whereby it may be known; and this is the Language of Nature, which signifies for what everything is good and profitable: And herein lies the mystery, or central science of the high philosophical work in the true spagiric art, which consummates the cure, not only for the body, but for the soul.

But let the reader know that the sharp speculation of his own reason will never pry into the depth of this book, but rather bring him into a maze of doubtful notions, wherein he will bewilder himself, and think the author's phrase tedious and strange; and therefore the understanding lies only in the manifestation of that Spirit, which in the Day of Pentecost gave forth the true sense and meaning of all languages in one: Now if that Spirit rules and dwells in you, then you may understand this author in the deepest ground, according to your creaturely constellation, both in the eternal and temporal nature; but if not, these things will be but as a relation of trifles and chimeras to you. And therefore if you be of a saturnine property, dull and dark, shut up in the house of Luna, soar not too high with your censure and scorn, or with a critical speculation of your outward reason, lest you fall indeed into the deep abyss of darkness; but wait patiently, till the divine Sol shall shine again in your dark and selfish Saturn, and give you some beams and glimpses of his eternal light, and then your angry Mars will be changed into pure love-zeal, and your prating, pharisaical and hypocritical Mercury into a meek, mild, and Christian speaking of God's works and wonders in the dispensation of his wisdom; and your doubtful, unsettled Jupiter will be turned into a plerophory, or most full assurance of true joy and saving comfort in your religion; your earthly Venus into heavenly love, and your eclipsed mutable Luna into the pure, perfect, and crystalline streams of light, life, and glory.

But the proud scorner that will take no warning is of Lucifer's regiment, who saw the mystery of God's kingdom to stand in meekness, simplicity, and deep humility, and therefore out of his pride would aspire to be above the divine love, and harmony

of obedience to God's will, and so fell into the abyss of the dark world, into the outmost darkness of the first principle, which we call Hell, where he and his legions are captives; from which the Almighty God of Love deliver us.

I will end with the words of the author at the conclusion of the book, where he says thus; "I have faithfully, with all true admonition, represented to the reader what the Lord of all beings has given me; he may behold himself in this looking-glass¹ within and without, and so he shall find what and who he is: Every reader, be he good or bad, will find his profit and benefit therein: It is a very clear gate of the great mystery of all beings: By glosses, commentaries, curiosity and self-wit, none shall be able to reach or apprehend it in his own ground; but it may very well meet and embrace the true *seeker*, and create him much profit and joy; yea be helpful to him in all natural things, provided he applies himself to it aright, and seeks in the fear of God, seeing it is now a time of seeking; for a lily blossoms upon the mountains and valleys in all the ends of the earth: 'He that seeketh findeth.'" And so I commend the reader to the grace and love of Jesus Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

¹ Mirror.