

~Other Speakers G-L: William Law:

THE

THIRD ~ DIALOGUE

[Way-3-1] Academicus. If you please, Theophilus, pray go on, just where you left off at our last Meeting. For this Mystery seems to be at Daybreak with me; and the Approach of its Light leaves me no Power to be content without it.

[Way-3-2] Theophilus. You have seen, that all Nature begins and stands in a magic Birth; and is only a large Display of its working Power in every kind of Creature. You now want to see farther into this Mystery, how Eternal Nature begins; and how God, the first, hidden, imperceptible Cause of all After-Things, manifests himself in the Properties of a visible and working Nature. Now I would, to the best of my Power, gladly assist you in this Matter, if I could find out a Way of doing it, by opening in your Heart a Knowledge of God, of Nature, and yourself, without helping you to a mere Opinion, or increasing your Thirst after Ideal Speculation. Tell me, therefore, what you propose by the Gratification of this Desire; or what Effect you expect from such Knowledge, as you here seek.

[Way-3-3] Academicus. All that I desire by it is, to strengthen and confirm the Ground on which I stand; that, seeing the true Philosophy of Religion, I may have nothing to fear from all that Variety of Attacks which now, more than ever, are made upon it by infidel Reason. I hope, therefore, it is no vain Curiosity, to desire to enter into the Depth of this Mystery, since I only desire thereby Strength to resist all the Enemies of Religion.

[Way-3-4] Theophilus. All this is right, and very well; provided you do but know who, and what, are the great and powerful Enemies of Religion. But this, perhaps, you do not so well apprehend, as you may imagine. Your own Reason, born, and bred, and governed, by your own Flesh and Blood, is the most powerful Enemy of Religion that you have to do with, and whom you have the most to fear from.

[Way-3-5] The Men of speculative Reason, whom you seem most to apprehend, are powerless Enemies, that cannot strike at your Religion with the Strength of a Straw. Did you but rightly see what their Power is, you would see it as ridiculous, as that of a few Water-Engines trying to quench the fiery Globe of the Sun: For Reason stands in the same Inability to touch the Truth of Religion, as the water-engine to affect the Sun. Nay, its Inability is much greater; for could the Water, thrown from the Engine, be made to reach the Sun, it would have some, though an insignificant, Effect upon it; but Reason can no more affect the Truth of Religion, than Nothing can affect Something. If Reason seems to have any Power against Religion, it is only where Religion is become a dead Form, has lost its true State, and is dwindled into Opinion; and when this is the Case, that Religion stands only as a well-grounded Opinion, then indeed it is always liable to be shaken; either by having its own Credibility lessened, or that of a contrary Opinion increased. But when Religion is that which it should be, not a Notion or Opinion, but a real Life growing up in God, then Reason has just as much power to stop its Course, as the barking Dog to stop the Course of the Moon. For true and genuine Religion is Nature, is Life, and the Working of Life; and therefore, where-ever it is, Reason has no more Power over it, than over the Roots that grow secretly in the Earth, or the Life that is working in the highest Heavens. If therefore you are afraid of Reason hurting your Religion, it is a Sign, that your Religion is not yet as it should be, is not a self-evident Growth of Nature and Life within you, but has much of mere Opinion in it.

[Way-3-6] Observe the Word self-evident; for there lies the Truth of the Matter; for you have no more of the Truth of Religion than what is self-evident in you. A blind Man may be rich in Notions and Opinions about the Nature, Power, and Good, of Light; and in this Case, one blind Man may perplex another, and unsettle his Notions; but when the Light manifests itself, and is become self-evident, then he is at once delivered from all Uncertainty about it. Now Religion is Light and Life; but Light and Life can only manifest themselves, and can nowhere be known, but where they are self-evident.

[Way-3-7] You can know nothing of God, of Nature, of Heaven, or Hell, or yourself, but so far as all these Things are self-evident in you. Neither could any of these Things be of any Concern to you, but because they can all of them be self-evident in you. For the bare History, or Heresay of any one thing, signifies no more to you, than the Hearsay of any other thing. And if God and Heaven, Hell and the Devil, the World and the Flesh, were not all of them self-evident in you, you could have no more Good or Hurt from any Hearsay about them, than from the Hearsay of pleasant Gardens, and dismal Prisons, in the World of the Moon.

[Way-3-8] Let it be supposed, that your ingenious Reason should suggest to you, that there are no Devils or Hell, and therefore no Occasion to believe that Revelation that gives an Account of them: in this Case, do but turn to that which is sensible and self-evident in you, and then you must know, in the same Certainty as you know yourself to be alive, that there is Wrath, Self-torment, Envy, Malice, Evil-will, Pride, Cruelty, Revenge, &c. Now say, if you please, there are no other Devils but these, and that Men have no other Devils to resist; and then you will have said Truth enough, have owned Devils enough, and enough confessed, that you are in the Midst of them; that you are every-where tempted by them; and that Flesh and Blood is too weak to resist them, and therefore wants some kind of Saviour, of so contrary a Nature, as has Power to destroy these Works of the Devil in you

[Way-3-9] Now this is the only Knowledge that you can possibly have of an outward Hell, and outward Devils; and this Knowledge is as self-evident in you as your own Thoughts, and is as near to you as your own Life. But to see and know an outward Hell, or outward Devils, that are outward living Creatures, can never be your own Case, till all that is Divine and human in you is extinguished; and then you will have Knowledge enough, how Hell is a Place, and how the Devils of Rage, Wrath, Envy, and Pride &c., are living Creatures.

[Way-3-10] Again, let it be supposed, that your sceptic Reason had brought you into Doubt about the Being and Providence of God in you: you have no Occasion to consult the Demonstrations which heathen Philosophers, School Divines, Deists, or Atheists, have produced about it, from the Existence of Things; all concluding, as well Christians, as Deists and Atheists, that there must be some eternal first Cause from which all has proceeded.

[Way-3-11] For what a God is this, that is only proved to be, because something now is, and therefore something must always have been, an infinite, eternal Something, with infinite Power to bring forth all that is come into Being? What a God, I say, is this, which the Arian, the Deist, and the Atheist, is as willing to own as the Christian; and which is as serviceable to the Cause of Arianism, Deism, Idolatry, and Atheism, as it is to Christianity? For the Atheist has his omnipotent, eternal, first Cause, as well as all the Disputers for a God.

[Way-3-12] But now, if you turn from all these idle Debates and Demonstrations of Reason, to that which is sensible and self-evident in you, then you have a sensible, self-evident Proof of the true God of Life, and Light, and Love, and Goodness, as manifest to you as your own Life. For with the same self-evident Certainty, as you know that you think, and are alive, you know that there is Goodness, Love, Benevolence, Meekness, Compassion, Wisdom, Peace, Joy, &c. Now this is the self-evident God, that forces himself to be known, and found, and felt, in every Man, in the same Certainty of Self-evidence, as every Man feels and finds his own Thoughts and Life. And this is the God, whose Being and Providence, thus self-evident in us, calls for our Worship, and Love, and Adoration, and Obedience to him: and this Worship, and Love, and Adoration, and Conformity to the Divine Goodness, is our true Belief in, and sure Knowledge of, the self-evident God. And Atheism is not the Denial of a first omnipotent Cause, but is purely and solely nothing else but the disowning, forsaking, and renouncing the Goodness, Virtue, Benevolence, Meekness, &c. of the Divine Nature, that has made itself thus self-evident in us, as the true Object of our Worship, Conformity, Love, and Adoration. This is the one true God, or the Deity of Goodness, Virtue, and Love, &c., the Certainty of whose Being and Providence opens itself to you in the self-evident Sensibility of your own Nature; and inspires his Likeness, and Love of his Goodness, into you. And as this is the only true Knowledge that you can possibly have of God and the Divine Nature, so it is a Knowledge not to be debated or lessened by any Objections of Reason, but is as self-evident as your own Life. But to find or know God in Reality, by any outward Proofs, or by any thing but by God himself made manifest and self-evident in you, will never be your Case either here or hereafter. For neither God, nor Heaven, nor Hell, nor the Devil, nor the World, and the Flesh, can be any otherwise knowable in you, or by you, but by their own Existence and Manifestation in you. And all pretended Knowledge of any of these Things, beyond or without this self-evident Sensibility of their Birth within you, is only such Knowledge of them, as the blind Man hath of that Light, that never entered into him.

[Way-3-13] And as this is our only true Knowledge, so every Man is, by his Birth and Nature, brought into a certain and self-evident Sensibility of all these Things. And if we bring ourselves by Reasoning and Dispute into an Uncertainty about them, it is an Uncertainty that we have created for ourselves, and comes not from God and Nature. For God and Nature have made that which is our greatest Concern, to be our greatest Certainty; and to be known by us in the same Self-evidence, as our own Pain or Pleasure is. For nothing is Religion, or the Truth of Religion, nothing is good or bad to you, but that which is a self-evident Birth within you. So that if you call that only God, and Religion, and Goodness, which truly are so, and can only be known by their self-evident Powers and Life in you, then you are in the Truth, and the Truth will make you free from all Doubts; and you will no more Fear or regard any thing that talkative Reason can discourse against it, than against your own seeing, hearing, or sensible Life. But if you turn from Self-Evidence to Reason and Opinion, you turn from the Tree of

Life, and you give yourself up to certain Delusion.

[Way-3-14] Wonder not therefore, my Friend, that though the Mystery under Consideration contains the greatest of Truths, yet I am unwilling to help you to reason and speculate upon it; for if you attempt to go farther in it than Self-evidence leads you, you only go so far out of it, or from it. For the End of this Mystery is not to furnish new or better Matter for Reason and Opinion, but to bring Man home to that Sensibility, which is self-evident in himself, and to lead him only by self-evident Principles, to see, and find, and feel the Difference between true and false Religion in the same Degree of self-evident Certainty, as he sees and feels the Difference between Fire and Water. This, I say, is the great Intent of this Mystery, to bring Man into a Sensibility of God and Nature, to know and feel, that Good and Evil, Life and Death, are a self-evident Growth and Birth of Nature in Man, according as his Will enters into and works with that which is unchangeably good, or unchangeably evil, in the Working of Nature. Now as the Workings of Nature are unchangeable in their Effects, and that which is naturally good or evil, must always be so; and seeing Man's Life standeth in Nature, and must work with it, must have only that Good or Evil which is unchangeable in Nature; and seeing his State in Nature, whether good or evil, is, and can be, only that, which the sensible, self-evident Powers of his own Life manifest to him; then you see the Fitness and Necessity of your keeping steadily to that, which is self-evident in you, as the very Tree of Life, the Criterion of all that Truth and Goodness that belongs to you. Secondly, you see with what good Reason Jacob Behmen so often tells you, That all that he has written, was only to help Man to seek and find himself, to see and know his Place and State in Nature, and how to cooperate with God and Nature in generating a Birth of Heaven within himself. Thirdly, you may see how you and I should abuse this blessed Mystery, should we, instead of only and truly seeking and finding its Birth within us, make it a Matter of Reasoning and Opinion.

[Way-3-15] Academicus. I have neither Power nor Inclination to object to any thing that you have said. But still I must desire you to assist me in your own Way, and such as you judge to be suitable to the Intention of this Mystery. I plainly see, that the whole Ground of Religion lies in the Knowledge of what God is in himself, as distinct from Nature; what Nature is in itself; what I have from God, and what I am in and from Nature; and how I am to work with it, as God himself is and worketh in Nature. For if this Knowledge can be opened in me, then the Why, and the How, of every Mystery of Redemption must be seen to the Bottom.

[Way-3-16] Theophilus. By Nature are meant, all the working, stirring Properties of Life, or all the various Sensibilities which Life is capable of finding and feeling in itself. And therefore you need only look at the working Sensibilities of your own Life, the several Kinds and Ways of feeling and finding your own State, to know by a self-evident Certainty, what Nature is in itself. And thus also, in the same self-evident Certainty, you may know, that Nature is not God. For as you find, that Nature is opened in you; that all its Properties have their Existence in you; and yet that none of these Properties of Life are their own Happiness, or can make themselves to be happy, full of Peace, Delight, and Joy, and free from every Want; so you have a full self-evident Proof, that God is not Nature, but entirely distinct from, and superior to, Nature; and that, as considered in himself, he is That which alone can make Nature happy, free from Want, and full of all delightful Satisfaction. And thus you know, not from Hearsay, but from a self-evident Certainty in yourself, that God, considered as in himself, is the Happiness, the Rest, the Satisfaction, the Joy, the Fulfilling of all the Properties and Sensibilities of Nature; and also that Nature, in itself, is that working Life of various Properties and Sensibilities, which want to be made happy, which reach after something that they are not, and have not, and which cannot be happy or fulfilled, till something of an higher Nature than themselves be united with them, that is, the Working of Nature must be in Want, in Pain, and Dissatisfaction, till God (the Blessing and Fulfilling of Nature) is manifested, found, and enjoyed in it.

[Way-3-17] Now suppose you knew no more of what God is in himself, distinct from Nature, and what Nature is as thus distinguished from God, than is already opened in you, you would know enough to be a Key to all that which Jacob Behmen speaks of God, and of Nature; and enough also to show you how to cooperate with God and Nature, in bringing forth a New Birth of the Divine Life within you. For as soon as you know, that Nature in itself is only a working Life of various Sensibilities, which wants something distinct from itself, and higher than itself, to make it happy, then you have a self-evident Certainty of these following Truths; First, That God, considered as in himself, is the Blessing, the Satisfaction, the Heaven, and Happiness, of all and every Sensibility of Nature. Secondly, That therefore, as the Gospel teaches, only the Word, the Light, the Son of God, or Jesus Christ, can redeem fallen Nature, restore it to its first State of Blessedness in God. Thirdly, That therefore, as the Gospel teaches, you have but one Thing to do, and that one Thing absolutely necessary to be done; viz., to deny yourself; that is, to turn this fallen Nature from itself, from all its own Wills and Workings in the Vanity of this Life, to give up itself in Faith, in Hunger and Thirst after that Light, Word, Son, or Jesus Christ of God, who is the Fullness, the Satisfaction, the Joy, and Blessedness, of all Nature; who alone can turn every Working and Sensibility of Nature into a Participation of heavenly Satisfaction and Joy. Now what can you desire, or need you to know of God, of Nature, and the Mystery of Christian Redemption, more than this? And

yet all this is a self-evident Knowledge, born within you as soon as you turn to it.

[Way-3-18] Academicus. Oh! Sir, you quite transport me with this short, easy, and yet full Explication of so great a Matter, which has often perplexed me. But now I shall never be at a Loss how to understand the Distinction between God and Nature, and also the absolute Necessity of it; which, when rightly known, sets all the Doctrines and Mysteries of Christian Redemption upon such a Ground as cannot be removed. But still I must beg of you to help me to the same Self-evidence of the Birth and Generation of the Properties of Nature, as they are set forth by Jacob Behmen, especially of the Three first Forms, which I perceive to be the Ground of all; and yet their Birth and Generation, their Union with, and Distinction from, one another, I do not enough comprehend, as he sets them forth. Thus, the first Form of Nature is said to be Desire; which is the Ground and Foundation of all Things. This Desire (the first Property), he saith, is astringing, drawing, shutting up, compressing, hardening, &c. Now all this is evident enough; for I have a sufficient Sensibility, that this is the Nature of Desire; that, in its spiritual Way, it attracts, draws, compresses, and would shut up, or inclose, &c. But then, it is immediately said, that the Second Property is Attraction, Drawing, Sting, and Motion, &c. Now if the First is Attraction and Drawing, how can the Second be different from it, and yet be Attraction and Drawing?

[Way-3-19] Theophilus. The Desire is not one Property, but is in itself all the Properties of Nature; it is the Ground in which they all dwell, and the Mother out of which they are all born: So that all that is said of the Three First Forms of Nature, is only so much said of Three Forms or Properties of the Desire. For the Desire is not the first Property of Nature; but every Property hath all that it hath in and from the Desire. The First Property of the Desire, of that which is the Peculiarity of its Nature, as distinguished from the Second, is, to compress, inclose, shut up, &c., whence cometh Thickness, Darkness, Hardness, &c. But no sooner does the Desire begin to compress, shut up, but it brings forth its own greatest Enemy, and the highest Resistance to itself: For it cannot compress or thicken, but by drawing or attracting; but drawing and attracting is quite contrary to shutting up, or compressing; because drawing or attracting is Motion, and every Motion is contrary to shutting up or compressing together.

[Way-3-20] And thus your Difficulty is removed: Attraction or Drawing is rightly ascribed to the Desire, and rightly called its Second Property, because it is born of it; and yet is directly contrary to that which is the Desire's First Property or Intention; viz., to compress, to hold in Stillness, &c.

[Way-3-21] Now as these Two Properties are Two Resistances, not in Two different Things, but are one and the same Thing in this Contrariety in and to itself, as they are inseparable, generate each other, are equal in Strength, and can neither of them overcome the other, so as to go one Way, but each of them stops the other in the same Manner; and seeing this Desire cannot cease to be these Two contrary Things; viz. a Holding-fast, and Moving-away, a Shutting-in, and a Going-out, both in the same Degree of Strength; neither able to shut up, or to go out, nor able to cease from either; these Two Contrarieties become a whirling Anguish in itself, and so bring forth a Third Property of Nature. And in these Three Properties lies the true Ground of all Sensibility of Life, and also of every created Thing. Matter, Motion, Darkness, Fire, and every natural Power or Quality of any thing, has its Beginning from them. Considered in themselves, they are the working Powers of that great and strong creaturely Life, which cannot be broken, because it begets itself, and every Property is included in, and generates each other. It is a Band or Knot of Life, that can never be loosed; nor is capable of Annihilation, because it is a Birth of eternal Nature, which is as unchangeable as God himself. And as it arises from no outward Thing, but is generated in and from itself, its Work is eternal, and can never be made to cease. For as one Property has no Power over the other, but that of forcing it to exist; as one Property does not weary the other, but always gives Strength to it; so there can be no Cessation of their working, but they must do, as they do, to all Eternity.

[Way-3-22] Now the Life of these Three Properties is a Life of Three contrary Wills, equally strong and powerful against each other; and therefore is a Life of the highest Disquiet, Torment, and Anguish, full of the most horrible Sensibility. It is a Life that can feel nothing but its own tearing Contrariety, that reigns within it. And this is the Life of Nature separated from God; it is the Life of Hell, and the Devils; and is that Life of dark, raging Distraction, which every living Creature must be in, whose first Properties of Life are not softened and quieted, either by the Light of God, or the Light of this World, dwelling and making Peace in them. And he that will only seek to his Reason, to cool the Flame of these raging first Properties of Life, acts as wisely as he, whose House being on Fire, would only have it extinguished, by reading a Lecture upon the Nature of Water to it.

[Way-3-23] And now, Sir, you have seen plainly enough the Birth, Nature, and Difference, of these three first Properties. But let it be supposed, that you have no feeling, or inward Sensibility, of these Three Properties in the Manner they have been here described, according to Jacob Behmen; yet you have no Reason to be troubled at it, or put your Brain upon the Rack how to conceive it, or fear that you must want the Benefit of this

Knowledge, till you have it as above described; for you have in yourself a most self-evident Proof, that the Thing is really so; and that Desire hath all that in it which he so deeply declares, from its first Seed, or Root.

[Way-3-24] For it is a Thing self-evident to you, that every Desire, as such, is in itself a restless Torment; that it has Pain, Disquiet, and Anguish, in itself; and, as to itself, consists of nothing else. Now, whether you can, with Jacob Behmen, divide this restless, anguishing Desire into its Three essential Parts, of which it consists, matters not, as to the Reality of the Thing itself; for you have Sensibility enough, that the Desire is made up of Pain and Anguish, till the thing desired is obtained: and therefore you have all the Certainty and Benefit of this Knowledge; and it serves the same End, as if you knew the Ground of it with the same Exactness as he has set it forth.

[Way-3-25] You have yourself for a Proof, that Desire and Pain begin together; and this is a full Proof of what was said; viz. that Desire begins with Two Properties, that resist and strive against one another. Again, you have the same Evidence in yourself, that the Desire, left to itself, that is, without the least Glimpse of any Possibility of having that which it desires, is a Degree of Hell, and quite intolerable to itself: and this is a self-evident Proof of what was said; viz. that the Third and last Property of the Desire, is that whirling Anguish, brought forth by the Two first Properties: For these Three Properties are the Whole of the Desire; it has nothing more in it. And when your Desire cannot cease, and yet has nothing but itself, without the least Mixture or Feeling of Hope in it, then you have a full Self-evidence of all that which the Desire is, in its Three essential, inseparable Properties, and that strictly according to the Letter of Jacob Behmen.

[Way-3-26] Now all that is Nature, or natural Life within you, is only the working of Desire in this painful State; and that which can set this painful Life at Rest in you, is so much of God, or the Divine Nature, manifested in you, and changing your restless Properties of Life into Peace and Happiness. And as the working Properties of Desire are your natural Life, so the same working Properties are the Life of eternal Nature; from whence, as out of the Womb, your natural Life is brought forth, and hath neither more nor less in it than that which is in eternal Nature.

[Way-3-27] And if the working Properties, which constitute the life of eternal Nature, could be supposed to be without God in them, eternal Nature would be a mere eternal Hell: But as the eternal Desire, with all its working Properties, is brought forth by the magic Power of the Divine Will, only for this End, that the holy Deity may manifest a Heaven of Glory in them; so eternal Nature always was, and always must be, a Kingdom of Heaven, or the unchangeable Manifestation of the invisible God in an outward Sensibility of Life, Happiness, Glory, and Majesty.

[Way-3-28] Academicus. I am fully satisfied as to this Point; and all that you have said, has the Evidence of Light at Noon-day. And I hope you will now go on in the Birth of the Four remaining Properties; and show me, in the same Degree of Evidence, how these Three Properties bring forth the Four following ones, which turn Nature into a Kingdom of Heaven

Way-3-29] Theophilus. These Three Properties of Nature cannot bring forth the Four following ones. They can bring forth nothing but themselves to all Eternity, nor can ever be anything else in themselves, but what they were at first. Nature can rise no higher than this painful State; and its painful working Contrariety must always be the Ground of all Life, and all Sensibility of Life. For if (1.) This Shutting-up, or Compressing; and (2.) This Resistance to it; and (3.) This Whirling arising from both, was ever to cease, there Life, and all Sensibility, must cease with them; and therefore these Three Properties must always do as they do, as the only possible Ground of every Kind and Degree of creaturely Life, both in Heaven, and on Earth.

[Way-3-30] But if Life is to be happy, something else must come into them, not to destroy their natural Working, but to make every Contrariety in them a strife of Joy, and delightful Sensibilities. Thus, (1.) Compressing, or Shutting-up, must find itself only to compress and keep in Light and Love; (2.) the Attraction or Drawing-motion, must find itself to be the Drawing and Motion of Love; and, (3.) the whirling Anguish must whirl still, but as a Transport of Joy unavoidably brought forth from the Strife of Love in the Two Properties of which it is born. And thus Nature remains in its full Strength; it compresses, it attracts, and it whirls, as it did at first; and nothing is lost, or taken from it, but its Hatred, Wrath, and Misery. Now here you are to observe, that every Thing or Creature, either in Heaven, Hell, or this World, hath its Substance, or all that is Substantiality in it, solely from these Three First Properties of Nature. The creaturely Substance of an Angel, a Devil, or a dead Flint, all stand in these Three First Forms of Nature. And all the Difference betwixt high and low, spiritual and material, in the Creatures, arises from their different Participation of the Four following Forms of Nature. But the Four following Forms cannot exist, or manifest themselves, but in the Three first; and therefore the Three First are, and must be, as well in the highest as in the lowest of Creatures: They are the first Something, or

Substantiality of Nature, in which the Light, and Love, and Spirit of God could manifest itself; for Spirit cannot work without something to work in and upon, and in which it may be found; nor could Light shine, unless there was something in Nature thicker than itself, to receive and reflect it: and therefore, Thickness or Darkness is, and must be, as eternal as the visible or shining Light. Darkness is so far from being a mere Negation, or only an Absence, of the Light, that it is the first and only Substance, and the Ground of all the possible Substantiality in Nature, and the substantial Manifester of Light itself, which could have no Visibility, Shine, or Colour, but in and through, and by the Substantiality of Darkness or Thickness. This Darkness, Thickness, or Substantiality, is not co-existent with, or independent of, God, but is the compressing, astringing, thickening Work of the first Property of the Desire; which Desire comes eternally from God, only as a magic Birth from the Will of the Deity, which willetth to come out of its Hiddenness into an outward Visibility of a working Life. And therefore the Desire is the Beginning of Nature; it compresseth and thickeneth. But what does it compress and thicken? Why, Nothing but itself; viz. its own Three Properties. And these Three Properties thus brought forth, tied and bound in one another, are, from Eternity to Eternity, all the Substantiality and Thickness, that is or ever can be in Nature, or any Creature, from the Highest to the Lowest. And they are thus brought forth in this indissoluble Band in and by the Desire, that the invisible Light and Life of the hidden Deity may have its Something to move and shine in; his hidden Spirit have Something to work and manifest itself in; his hidden Love have Something into which it may give itself; and his hidden Life have Something in which it can open itself in a Variety of Births of Life. And this Something is the working compressing Desire, which includes in itself, (1.) A continual Thickening, which is Darkness and Substantiality: (2.) Motion or Resistance to this Thickening, which is the Ground of all Sensibility; And, (3.) A restless State of Whirling from these two Properties, which is the very Nature and Power of Life. And thus these three Properties of the Desire, are that sufficient Something, in which the Deity, by entering into it, can manifest his hidden Power in all the Substances and working Properties of Nature, by turning them all in their different Workings into an endless Variety of delightful Forms and Sensibilities of the creaturely Life.

[Way-3-31] Now this first Thickness, Darkness, or Substantiality, brought forth in the Desire, though it is not Matter, as Matter is seen and found in this World; yet these two Things must be affirmed of it; First, That it stands in the same Place, answers the same Ends, and is distinguished from Light and Spirit in the eternal World, just as Matter in this World stands distinguished from the Light and Spirit of this World. Secondly, That all the Darkness, Thickness, and Matter of every Kind in this World, is nothing else in itself, but the first Thickness, Darkness, and Substantiality in the Desire, brought down by various Steps into such Kinds of Materiality as are here to be seen. Look at what Kind of Materiality you will in this World; it is, in its whole Nature, nothing else but the Darkness or Thickness of the eternal World, brought into a farther Degree of Thickness and Compression. And now we are come to see the true Ground; (1.) How the Angels could destroy their Kingdom, or lose all the Light and Happiness of Heaven in it: And, (2.) How also, their wasted, spoiled, darkened Habitation in the divided Properties of Nature, could be turned, and created by God, as it is, into this new Form of a material World.

[Way-3-32] The first Three Properties of Nature were never to have been seen or known, as they are in themselves, by any Creature; their Thickness, Strife, and Darkness, were brought forth by God, in Union with the Light, and Glory, and Majesty of Heaven; and only for that End, that the holy Deity might be made manifest in them. And therefore their own Nature, as they are in themselves, without God in them, could only then be first known, when the Angels turned their Desire backwards to search and find the Ground and Original of Life, which could not be found, till these Properties were found, in which the original Ground of Life lay hid. This turning of their Desire into the Origin of Life, was their whole turning from the Light of God; and therefore they found themselves where they had turned their Desire; that is, in the Centre of Nature; viz. in the first Properties of Nature, which is the Dark Centre, or Ground of Life, which never should have been known or manifest to any Creature. For by the Centre of Nature, or the Dark Centre, you are always to understand these three first Properties; which, when without or separate from the Light and Goodness of the Deity in them, are in themselves only the Thickness, and Rage, and Darkness, of an omnipotent Compressing, and omnipotent Resistance to it, and omnipotent Whirling from these two omnipotent Contraries. I call them all omnipotent, because they cannot be stopped, but do all that they would; and though they are contrary to one another, yet each of them gives Strength to the other; so that the Omnipotence of the one, is the Omnipotence of the other. And this is the boundless, incessant, strong Rage, Darkness, and Strife, of the hellish Life, which only is that, which these Three properties of Nature, when left to themselves, can feel or find. Now the Angels, which turned their Desire into the Centre of Nature, fell into the Life and working Power of these Three Properties; they felt nothing else in themselves, but these Properties, they had no other Will or Power of Working, but as these Properties worked; and therefore, as living and active Creatures, they could only live, and act, and cooperate, or unite with that Ground of Nature without them, which was the same and one with their own Nature; and therefore, all that they could do, was to stir up, awaken, call forth, and act with that Thickness and Darkness, and Strife, that was hidden in Nature, just as the Toad, in a fine Garden, only sucks the Poison that is hid in a

good Herb. So the fallen Angels, though in Heaven, having only the Centre of Nature in themselves, could only find and work with that Centre and Root of Darkness, on which the heavenly Glory stood. But from this Power which they had of working in the Centre of Nature, hence came forth a dark, wrathful Substantiality, separated from the Light and Glory of the holy Deity; and thus a new Kind of Substantiality appeared in their Kingdom; and their outward Habitation was like their inward Life; viz. a Manifestation of Nature fallen from God. And here now, you clearly see, how the First Thickness or Compression of the First Property of Nature, which was only the hidden Substantiality of the Light and Glory of Heaven, came into a more outward State, and made its first Approach or Step towards Matter, as you now see it. For there was now a Thickness, a Darkness, and Hardness, which never had been before; for the Light being lost, then the First Property of Nature lost its beatified State of Meekness, Transparency, and spiritual Fluidity; and became stiff, rigid, dark, and hard; and this, as I said, was its first Step or Descent towards the Hardness and Darkness of the Matter of this World, till it came to be Earth and Stones, by the creating Power of God. And thus it came to pass, as Moses speaks, that Darkness was upon the Face of the Deep. A State, that had no Possibility of Existence, till the Sin of Angels had manifested the hidden Centre of Nature, in the Working of its Three Properties, without the Light of God in them.

[Way-3-33] Now as a new Thickness of Darkness, Hardness, or Substantiality, was manifested by the strong working Powers of the Angels in the Centre, or the first Properties of fallen Nature; so God, to manifest his Wisdom and Goodness towards this fallen Nature, took all these Properties in their own working Way; and made them in their own way of Working, to stop and overcome the Evil that was brought forth by them. For the Will of God, joining with the wrathful Astringency of the first compressing Property of Nature, became the Divine Fiat, which increased this compacting Property to such a Degree, as created or compacted the darkened Substantiality into a Globe of Earth and Stones. And this same Divine Fiat, or creating Power, which coagulated the Grossness into Earth and Stones, compressed or coagulated all that was substantial, or belonged to Substantiality through their whole Kingdom, as well the heavenly as the earthly Part of it; so that all their Kingdom, as to its Substantiality, lost its Spirituality, and entered into a new created or compacted State of Thickness, as well the spoiled as the unspoiled Part of their Kingdom. And as soon as this was done, the Angels lost all their Power in it, and over it. They could kindle no more Wrath in its heavenly Part, nor make any Use of that which they had spoiled, because all was shut up together in this new Compaction, with which the Spirituality of their Nature could have no Communication. And so they were left prisoners in their own Chains of Darkness, unable to stir up Wrath anywhere but in themselves. All this was done in the first Day of the Creation, when the Fiat of God compressed or created their whole Kingdom into a Heaven and Earth. Hence it is; viz. from a Compaction of their whole Kingdom into a new-created Heaven and Earth, that all Things in this World, all its Elements and Stars, are a Mixture of Good and Evil, have something of the Goodness of Heaven, and something of the Wrath and Evil of Hell in them. Hence is the great Variety of metallic Ores and precious Stones in the Earth; the good and bad Qualities in Fire, Air, and Water. It is because the Divine Fiat, or compacting Power, came at once in the utmost Swiftmess upon their whole Kingdom, as the Good and Evil stood in Strife against each other, and compressed all into a State of Cessation and Conjunction with one another, as in the Prison of this new-created Materiality. And thus the heavenly and hellish Part of their Kingdom, Light and Darkness, Fluidity and Hardness, Meekness and Wrath, Good and Evil, were all shut up together in the same sudden Compaction; in which they lay, as in a State of Death, till the Divine Fiat should awaken a Life in it.

[Way-3-34] Now the Three First Properties of Nature; the First, a Shutting up; the Second, a Running out; and the Third, a Whirling; were by the Divine Fiat, in the three first Days of the Creation, become the Ground of an earthly, a watery, and airy Materiality, all according to the working Nature of the Three Properties; and all of them having Something of an heavenly Nature shut up in them, which wanted to be delivered from its Bondage. Hence this threefold Materiality of Earth, Water, and Air, became a Subject fit for the Birth of the fourth Property of Nature. And therefore, on the fourth Day of the Creation, the Divine Fiat kindled in this anguishing Materiality, out of that very Fire and Light that was compacted and hid in it, the fourth Property of Nature (the eternal Fire), as a Globe of Fire and Light, which was to stand as an Out-birth of the eternal Fire, in the midst of this new-created Materiality, and become the Opener of all the astral Life and Light in this World. And as the eternal Fire, the fourth Property of eternal Nature, is not a movable Thing that can change its Place, but must be always in the Place of its Birth, standing forever, as a Birth, in the Midst of the seven Properties, forever changing the three first Properties of Nature into the three last Properties of the Kingdom of Heaven; so the Sun, the true Out-birth of the eternal Fire, and having the same Birth and Office in this material World, as the eternal Fire hath in eternal Nature, is not, cannot be, a movable Thing, or be in any other Place in this World, than where it is; but is, and must be, the Centre or Heart of this whole System, ever separating the three first Properties of this material World, from the three that follow, and ever changing the three first Forms of material Wrath into the three following Forms of terrestrial Life, Light, and all delightful Sensibilities; in strict Conformity to that, which the eternal Fire does in eternal Nature, changing the Root, or first Properties of Nature, into a Kingdom of God, and heavenly Glory. For the Sun is not a Body of Fire brought into the Place where it is; but the kindled Place is

its Body and Birth; and therefore it is as immovable as Place is, and must be as it is; viz. a Place giving forth Fire and Light till all material Nature is dissolved. The Place is kindled, not by any foreign Fire, but thus: In the first Compaction of the whole angelic Kingdom into this new Materiality, the good and bad Part, that is, the spoiled and unspoiled Substantiality of their whole Kingdom, was shut up in this new Compression or Materiality, in one and the same State of Death. Secondly, In the Beginning of the Creation, God, said, "Let there be Light," and there was Light; not a shining Light, for that came first from the Birth of the Sun, but a Power or Virtue of heavenly Light, not yet in a visible, material Shine, but as an uncreated Power of Light, entering into this whole Materiality, to stir up, and awaken the good Part of the heavenly Substantiality, that was shut up in the Compaction of this new Materiality.

[Way-3-35] Without these two Things, material Nature must have continued in its Darkness, and no fourth Form of Fire could ever have come forth in it. But from these two Things, viz. the heavenly Substantiality, stirred up by the Power of Light entering into it, the three first Properties of Darkness were brought into a mere anguishing State; from whence, by the Divine Fiat, the fourth Form of material Nature kindled itself, as a Fire, and broke forth in the Place of the Sun, and must be ever burning and flaming in the Midst of the material System; because it is born of the three first Properties of Darkness, and brings forth the three last Properties of Light, and Life, and the Joy of Nature; and therefore must always be in the Midst of the six Properties of Nature, itself making the Number to be seven. And thus the Sun, as the fourth Form of Nature, must always stand in the Midst of the whole material System. And this proved, not as Copernicus has proved it, from reasonable Conjectures, and outward Arguments, but from the internal Nature of its Birth, the first Root from which it proceeds, and the absolute Impossibility of its being otherwise. And thus it is, that the Truth and Depth of Nature is opened by the Spirit of God, in the Mystery made known to our illiterate Shoemaker. And thus you have a short Sketch, how this World came to be as it is. It is descended as an Out-birth of the eternal World, and all the seven Properties of eternal Nature work in it, as they work in Eternity; and the Eternity is manifested in the temporary Working of a new World, which is only to stand in this State of Thickness or Compaction for a time, till the Goodness of God towards fallen Nature has been sufficiently manifested thereby.

[Way-3-36] For as this material System of Things may, in a good Sense, be said to be an unnatural State, occasioned by the Disorders which the Fall of Angels brought into Nature; and as it had no Beginning, but from the Will of God, commanding the first Property of Nature to coagulate and compress their disordered Kingdom into a new Thickness or Materiality, only as a Remedy to stop, remove, and overcome the Evil in Nature; so when this Remedy shall have had its Trial, and the Will of God shall no longer will this compressing together; then all that has been brought together by it, must fall back again into its first Eternity. And then, without any Possibility of being otherwise, every Birth in this World, that belongs to the Root or Centre of Nature, and has worked with it, must fall down into that eternal Abyss of Darkness, on which the Light of God forever stands, unknown to it. And every Life that is born of Heaven, and has worked with it, must ascend into the Kingdom of God, or Abyss of Divine Glory and Majesty.

[Way-3-37] Oh Academicus! Look now (whilst these Thoughts are alive in you) at worldly Greatness, fleshly Wisdom, and earthly Schemes of Happiness; and tell me, if you can, what a Nothingness, what a Folly and Delusion, there is in them? Look again at the Apostle's Pilgrim, abstaining from worldly Lusts, desiring to know nothing but Christ, and him crucified; living in the Spirit of Prayer, and Thirst after God; striving in every thing after the fullest Conformity to the Tempers, Spirit, Life, and Behaviour of Christ in this World; and then tell me, whether Heaven and Earth, God and Nature, and all that is great, and wise, and happy, does not call upon you to be this Pilgrim.

[Way-3-38] Academicus. Truly, Sir, I enough see, that all worldly Wisdom, and ambitious Views of a Glory of Life in the Things and Concerns of this World, are no better than vain Attempts to be blessed and happy from the Ruins of the angelic Kingdom. For this World is only a Thickness and Materiality of the bestial Life, built upon the Ground of Hell; that is, upon the first Properties of fallen Nature, brought into a harder, more compacted State of Existence than they have in Hell, and kindled into an astral, terrestrial, bestial Life, by the Power of the Sun. The bestial Life, therefore, is the highest Good and Happiness in it; and the Creatures of this World have nothing that they seek for further in it. But Man, being not created for it, but by Sin fallen into it, is the only Creature that makes an unnatural use of it, and seeks for that in it, and by it, which cannot be found in it. Man, having been wise, great, and happy in his Creation, though they are all lost, has yet some remaining Sensibility of them, though fallen into a World, that cannot help him to them. Hence it is, that he would be wise, and great, and happy in a World, that has no Happiness but for Beasts; and can only help Man to know, that he is poor and miserable, and banished from his true native Country.

[Way-3-39] But, instead of learning this one Lesson of Truth, from the World he is in, which is all the Wisdom, Greatness, and Happiness, that can be had from it; he gives himself up to a Wisdom that is Foolishness, a

Greatness that is all Meanness, and a Happiness that begins and ends in Torment and Delusion. Would you see all his Greatness, Wisdom and Happiness united, the Sum total of earthly Glory! It is, when he has in his Cap the Feathers of some Birds, wears a painted Ribband, laced Clothes, is called by some new Name, and drawn from Place to Place by a Number of Beasts. Now, poor, and mean, and unnatural as this Fiction of earthly Glory is; yet this is the powerful Idol, that carries all before it! that destroys all Sense of Goodness, and Divine Virtue! and keeps the Heart of Man so earnestly devoted to it, that he has no Sense of the Eternity that is in him; that Eternity brought him forth, and Eternity will take him again!

[Way-3-40] Theophilus. It is true, Academicus, that the highest Good of this World is its bestial Life; and therefore it has no more, or other, Happiness for a Man than for a Beast; can give no more to one, than to the other; viz. Food and Raiment; with which the bestial Life in Man ought to be content, as well as in the Beast. But seeing Man, in spite of the Nature of Things, will have an earthly Glory of Life; thence it is, that the Wisdom of this World is, and must be, Foolishness with God, and will be Foolishness with Man, as soon as he gets but a moderate Knowledge of himself. But give me leave just to observe, that though this material World has no higher Happiness than the bestial Life; yet God hath much higher Ends in creating it. For though the dark wrathful Properties of fallen Nature could only, in their Compaction, be made the Ground of a vegetable and bestial Life; yet you are to observe, that in the Creation of this World; viz. in the Compaction of the whole angelic Kingdom; the unspoiled heavenly Part thereof was shut up with that, in which the Wrath was kindled: And that for these two great Ends; First, That, by this Compaction, it might be taken out of the Power of the evil Angels, that they might not go on in kindling Wrath in it. Secondly, That this reserved good Part of their Kingdom might be the Foundation and Ground of an heavenly paradisiacal Life, and a new Host of heavenly Creatures, instead of the fallen Angels. Now, to do this, God created an human Angel, who was to call forth the paradisiacal Life out of the compacted heavenly Substantiality, as the Sun opened a vegetable bestial Life, out of the gross Substantiality of the material World.

[Way-3-41] God breathed the Triune Spirit of the holy Deity into a Body taken out of the Earth, that is, into a Body of that Heavenly Substantiality, that was shut up in the Earth, as well as in every other part of this material System; and therefore his Body is rightly said to be taken or formed out of the Earth; because it was formed of that Substantiality, that was shut up in the Earth.

[Way-3-42] But when his wandering Eye had raised a longing Desire to know what the earthly Life was in its Good and Evil, and took the certain Means of knowing it; then, as his Soul lost the Light and Spirit of God, so it lost also that heavenly luminous Body, in which the Light and Spirit of God could dwell, as it dwelleth in Heaven. And when this heavenly luminous Corporeity was lost, and shut up again in that earthly Bondage and Compaction, in which it lay, before it was his Body; then the poor fallen Soul was only clothed with the gross Corruptibility of bestial Flesh and Blood. You are to understand this Matter thus: when his Body was formed out of that heavenly Substantiality, that was in the Compaction of the Earth, it was not entirely separated from all earthly Materiality (because he was to have a Body of this World, as well as of the heavenly World); but its State in the earthly Materiality was entirely changed; it was till then shut up in the earthly Compaction, but now it is called out of that earthly Death into a State of Life; it is set free from the Power of the Earth, in a Superiority over it, to be its Happiness, and open its own Glory in it, and through it.

[Way-3-43] And thus you see the Possibility, the Truth, and the Manner of the Thing; how his heavenly Body was taken out of the Earth at his Creation, set in Freedom from it, and in a living Superiority over it; how, at the Fall, it was swallowed up, or compacted again in its own first Earth; viz. the earthly Body, or Materiality of Adam: For as it was not separated from this earthly Materiality, but only brought to Life in it, and Superiority over it; so when the Divine Light, which was the Life of this Body, was lost, it then fell again into a State of Death in that gross Materiality, under which it lay before. And thus, in the strictest Truth, the Body of Adam returned again to that very Earth, or Dust, from whence it was taken.

[Way-3-44] Now, when this happened, the fallen Angels entered again into some Power in their lost Kingdom. There was then something found, with which they could work, and join their own Power. For as the Soul of Man had lost the Light and Spirit of Heaven, so the same dark Centre of Nature, or the Three first wrathful Properties, were opened in it, as are opened in the fallen Angels. And thus they got Entrance into the awakened Hell in Man, and can work in it. For as often as Man stirred, followed, or worked with his Will according to these Properties, the Devil could enter into, and work with him; and so the first Son of fallen Man was made a Murderer. And hence it is, that Sin and Wickedness have known no Bounds; it is because it is the joint Work of fallen Angels, and fallen Man.

[Way-3-45] Stay a while, Sir, in View of these Truths: Here you see the Seat and Ground, the Birth and Growth of all Sin and Evil; it lies in these Three dark, selfish, self-willed, wrathful, hellish Properties of the fallen Soul. This

is the dark Centre of Nature, in which the Devils have all their own Power in themselves, and all their Power in you; and till you resist this Hell within you, till you live in Contrariety to it, the Devils will not flee from you.

[Way-3-46] Here also you see, in a self-evident Light, the deep Ground, and absolute Necessity, of that one Redemption, which is called, and is, the Meekness and heavenly Blood of the Lamb of God. For these Words in their true Ground mean only the Changing of the Three first dark wrathful Properties of fallen Nature, into the Three last Properties of the heavenly Life, Light, and Love, which is the Life of God restored to the Soul, or the Light, and Spirit, or Word of God born again in it. Let me only add this one Word; Turn from Wrath of every Kind, as you would flee from the most horrid Devil; for it is his, it is he, and his Strength in you. Whether you look at Rage and Anger in a Tempest, a Beast, or a Man, it is but one and the same Thing, from one and the same Cause; and therefore your own Wrath is to be turned from, as the same with that of Hell; and which has its Birth and Strength from that Hell or Centre of Nature, which the Fall of Angels hath made known; and which only worketh thus differently, whether it be in a Man, a Beast, or the Elements of this World. And this must be, till the Centre of Nature is again in its Place of Hiddenness, by being wholly overcome by Heaven. Embrace therefore every Meekness of Love and Humility with the same Eagerness as you would fall down at the Feet of Jesus Christ; for it is his, it is he, and his Power of Salvation in you. Enter into no Strife, or Self-defence against any one, that either reproaches you, or your Doctrine; but remember, that if you are to join with Christ in doing Good, your Sword of natural Wrath must be locked up in its own Sheath; no Weapons of the Flesh are to be used; but you must work only in the Meekness, the Sweetness, the Humility, the Love and Patience of the Lamb of God; who, as such, is the only Doer of Good, the only Overcomer of Wrath, and the one Redemption of fallen Nature. If you are reproached as an Enthusiast, do not take Comfort in thinking, that it is the Truth of your own Piety, or the Want of it in others, that gives Occasion to the Charge; for though both of these should happen to be the Case, yet they are not proper Reflections for you; and if you take your Peace from them, it is not the peace of God in you: But as in good Report, you are to be as though you heard it not, ascribe nothing to yourself from it; so in evil Report, Self is just as much to be forgotten; and both of them are to be used, only as an Occasion to generate Humility, Meekness, Love, and the Spirit of the Lamb of God, both in yourself, and all that speak either well or ill of you. For this is the Will and Working of Heaven; it has but one Will, and one Work; and that is, to change all the Wrath, Evil, and Disorder of Nature, into a Kingdom of God. And therefore he that would be a Servant of God, and work with Heaven, must will all that he willeth, do all that he doth, and bear all that he beareth, in that one Spirit, and one Will, with which Heaven ruleth over all the Earth.

[Way-3-47] You rejoice to think, that you know the true Ground of your Redemption; how Heaven comes again into the fallen Soul, when that Property of Light and Love, which is called the Fifth Property of Nature, is generated in it. It is indeed a blessed Knowledge; but its Blessedness is only then yours, when yourself are this Fifth Property, that is, when your Life is a Life of this fifth Property; when, whatever you do, wherever you go, or whatever you meet, you only do as this Fifth Property doth, give nothing but that which it giveth; viz. its gentle Light and Love to every Man, and every Thing, whether it be good or bad. For this Property hath nothing else to give, and yet is always giving; its Nature is, to communicate and impart itself, not here or there, but always and every-where; it has no other Will. When therefore this Property (the Christ of God, and the Life of Heaven) is born in you, Friend and Foe will have the same from you; you will have lost all Resentment; you will love your Enemies; bless them that curse you; pray for them that spitefully use you; and have but one Will towards every Man, and that is, that Light and Love may do that for him, which they have done for you.

[Way-3-48] Academicus. Oh! Theophilus, you have given me more than I know how to contain; and yet have increased my Thirst after more still. You have so touched the Cord of Love within me, that all my Nature stands in a trembling Desire after it; I would fain feel nothing else but the gentle godlike Power of Love, living in my Heart. Pray therefore, of all Things, help me to understand how the Fire, the Fourth Property of Nature, is born; and how it turns the first Three wrathful Forms into the Three following Forms of heavenly Joy, Triumph, and Happiness; the First of which Three Forms, is this Fifth of Light and Love: therefore, help me here, I beseech you.

[Way-3-49] Theophilus. What a Therefore have you here drawn? That therefore, of all Things, I must need help you to an Opinion, or notional Knowledge, how the Fire is born, and how it turns Nature into a Kingdom of God. For was I to join with you in forming Notions of this How, I should only help you to lose all, by being content with the Shadow, instead of the Substance.

[Way-3-50] You say, that your Nature stands in a trembling Desire after the Birth of this Light and Love: if so, you stand in the very Place of its Birth, and must stand there till it is born in you. It can be born nowhere else, nor in any other Manner; and all that Jacob Behmen has written, is only to direct and bring you to this Place of its Birth. He himself has given you all the hearsay Knowledge that you can have of it; for he can give you no more from the plainest Words. And therefore, to help anyone to work with his Brain for clear Notions, and

rational Conceptions, of what he has written, is helping him to do and be that, which all his Works, from the beginning to the End, absolutely declare against, as contrary to the whole Nature and End of them. Which speak, as he saith, with the Sound of a Trumpet; and chiefly to awaken Man out of the Dream and Death of rational, notional, and hearsay Knowledge; and to show him, that his own inward Hunger and Thirst after God, is that alone which can and must open the Fountain of Light and Divine Knowledge in him.

[Way-3-51] But to speak a Word or Two of the Fire, whose Birth you want to know. You know already, better than any Words can tell you, from a self-evident Knowledge, that Nature is in you; that it is not God, but is that which wants God, or its true Good; and must be an Emptiness, a Pain, and Want, till God is manifested in it. If you ask why Nature is only a State of Want and Disquiet, and unable to be content with itself; it is because the eternal, uncreated, incomprehensible Light, which no Creature can enter into, is that which gave Birth to all Nature, and from whence all Nature hath its Hungering, and State of Want. For Nature had never come into Being, but that the eternal, incomprehensible Light longed to be manifested in an outspoken Life of Nature and Creatures, and in a Visibility and Shine of Glory: therefore, as Nature came forth from this first Longing of the Light to be manifested in it, so Nature is in itself only a Want and Hungering, which the Light alone has raised, and can only satisfy.

[Way-3-52] Now from this Longing on both Sides, Nature wanting God, and God wanting to be manifested in Nature, the Union of both is effected, which is the Birth of that eternal Fire, or Fourth Form of Nature, which is always burning in the same Degree, that is, always doing the same Thing; viz. always overcoming and shutting up the Three first Forms of Nature, and making them to be the hidden Root and Centre of Nature; and always bringing forth out of them the Three following Properties of Light and Love, and every joyful Sensibility of Life; that is, changing Nature into a Kingdom of Heaven. Now that which makes this Change in the Properties of Nature is, and is rightly called, Fire, in the strictest literal Meaning of the Word; because all that we can conceive as Fire in this World, hath its whole Nature, Power, and Existence, from it. Not only the Fire of Life in Animals and Vegetables, but the Fire in the Kitchen, and the Candle, are each of them kindled as it is kindled, and doth all that it doth from this Fourth Property, or Fire of eternal Nature. The Thickness and Darkness in the Wood, and the Candle, have Fire kindled in them, and Light from that Fire, in no other Way, than as the Fourth Property is a Fire from the Thickness and Darkness of Nature, kindled by the Light of God entering into Union with it. Had the Wood, and the Candle, no Water or Oil in them, neither of them could give forth Fire and Light. Now Water and Oil have the Properties of Light in them: when therefore the Properties of Nature in the Wood, and the Candle, are put into Strife, and begin to work in Blackness and Darkness(which is the Beginning of every Fire), they by this Strife open an Entrance for the Properties of Light in the Water, and the Oil, to mix and unite with them; and by this Union of Darkness and Light, that Fire is kindled, which turns the Darkness of the Wood and Candle into a Shining and Light. And thus does every Fire kindled in this World bear an infallible Witness to the Kindling, the Nature, and Power, of that eternal Fire, which, kindled by the Oil of Divine Light, changes the first dark Properties of Nature into the Light and Majesty of Heaven. Now what would you know more of Fire, or its Birth, than that it is, and only can be, kindled by the Light of God entering into, and uniting with, the first Properties of Nature in the Soul? Leave off therefore all Working with your Reason in the Way of Notions; empty your Heart of all vain Satisfaction in earthly Things, that so the first Properties of Nature in your Soul, finding their Misery, and Want of God, may make you to be all Hunger, and Faith, and Desire of him. And then the Fire must kindle, nothing can hinder it; God will then infallibly come as a Fire and Light into your Soul, changing all the wanting, empty, restless Properties of your natural Life, into a sweetness of a new Birth of Rest and Peace in him.

[Way-3-53] For nothing works either in God, or Nature, or Creature, but Desire. And as God created Angels and Men out of eternal Nature, only through a longing Desire of manifesting his own Goodness and Happiness in them, so every Angel and Man must find God, as a life of Happiness and Goodness in him, as soon as Nature, either in Angel or Man, is become a Hunger after God. For Hunger does all in all Worlds, and finds all that it wants, and hungers after. Every Thing had its Beginning in it, and from it; and every Thing is led by it to all its Happiness.

[Way-3-54] Academicus. I am quite satisfied in all my Demands, and will ask for no more Help, as to the Use I am to make of our Author's Writings. Only tell me when they will all come forth in a new Edition, or which will be published first; for I want several of them, which I could never get.

[Way-3-55] Theophilus. If you have but Two or Three of his Books, it is enough; for every one of them has all in it that you need be taught, and sufficiently opens the Ground of the whole Mystery of the Christian Redemption. He himself thought his Books to be too numerous; and expressed his Wish, that they were all reduced into one. As he wrote without any Art, and had no Knowledge of Regularity of Composition; so whatever particular Matter he occasionally entered upon, he always began again afresh from the same first Ground, and full Opening of

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the Mystery of Nature, from whence he explained and determined the Matter he was upon. And it was this frequent, and almost constant, Repetition of one and the same Ground that swelled his Writings into so many Volumes; though it may be said, that there is nothing separately in any of his Books, but what is to be found in almost every other, though not so largely set forth. You have no need therefore to run with eagerness through all his Books; but the Thing that you are to intend and look for, is the Ground and Foundation on which all his Doctrines are built, which contains the true Philo