



Signature of All Things

Jakob Bohme

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a selection from 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 playfellow; 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 to bathe thy Theoy, 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 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."

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.

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