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## Of Unprofitable Opinions, and Strife about the Letter.

*By Jacob Boehme: The Way to Christ, Of Regeneration  
or the New Birth, Chapter 7.*

158. A true Christian, who is born a-new of the Spirit of Christ, is in the Simplicity of Christ, and hath no Strife or Contention with any Man about Religion. He hath Strife enough in himself, with his own Bestial evil Flesh and Blood. He continually thinketh himself a great Sinner, and is afraid of God: But the Love of Christ by degrees pierceth through, and expelleth that Fear, as the Day swalloweth up the Night.

159. But the Sins of the impenitent Man rest in the Sleep of Death, bud forth in the Pit, and produce their Fruit in Hell.

160. The Christiandom that is in Babel, striving about the Manner how Men ought to serve God, and glorify him; also how they are to know him, and what he is in his Essence and Will. And they preach positively, that whosoever is not one and the same with them in every Particular of Knowledge and Opinion, is no Christian, but a Heretick.

161. Now I would fain see how all their Sects can be brought to agree in that one which might be called a true Christian Church; when all of them are Scorners, every Party of them reviling the rest, and proclaiming them to be false.

162. But a Christian is of no Sect: He can dwell in the midst of Sects, and appear in their Services, without being attached or bound to any. He hath but one Knowledge, and that is, Christ in him. He seeketh but one Way, which is the Desire always to do and teach that which is right; and he putteth all his knowing and willing into the Life of Christ.

163. He sigheth and wisheth continually that the Will of God might be done in him, and that his Kingdom might be manifested in him. He daily and hourly killeth Sin in the Flesh; for the Seed of the Woman, viz., the inward Man in Christ, continually breaketh the Head of the Serpent, that is, the Power of the Devil, which is in Vanity.

164. His Faith is a Desire after God and Goodness; which he wrappeth up in a sure Hope, trusting to the Words of the Promise, and liveth and dieth therein; though as to the true Man, he never dieth.

165. For Christ saith, Whosoever believeth in me, shall never die, but hath pierced through from Death to Life; and Rivers of living Water shall flow from him, viz., good Doctrine and Works.

166. Therefore I say, that whatsoever fighteth and contendeth about the Letter, is all Babel. The Letters of the Word proceed from, and stand all in, one Root, which is the Spirit of God; as the various Flowers stand all in the Earth and grow about one another. They fight not with each other about their Difference of Colour, Smell, and Taste, but suffer the Earth, the Sun, the Rain, the Wind, the Heat and Cold, to do with them as they please; and yet every one of them groweth in its own peculiar Essence and Property.

167. Even so it is with the Children of God; they have various Gifts and Degrees of Knowledge, yet all from one Spirit. They all rejoice at the great Wonders of God, and give Thanks to the most High in His Wisdom. Why then should they contend about him in whom they live and have their Being, and of whose Substance they themselves are?

168. It is the greatest Folly that is in Babel for People to strive about Religion, as the Devil hath made the World to do; so that they contend vehemently about Opinions of their own forging, viz., about the Letter; when the Kingdom of God consisteth in no Opinion, but in Power and Love.

169. As Christ said to his Disciples, and left it with them at the last, saying, Love one another, as I have loved you; for thereby Men shall know, that ye are my Disciples. If Men would as fervently seek after Love and Righteousness as they do after Opinions, there would be no Strife on Earth, and we should be as Children of One Father, and should need no Law, or Ordinance.

170. For God is not served by any Law, but only by Obedience. Laws are for the Wicked, who will not embrace Love and Righteousness; they are, and must be, compelled and forced by Laws.

171. We all have but one only Order, Law, or Ordinance, which is to stand still to the Lord of all Beings, and resign our Wills up to him, and suffer His Spirit to play what Musick he will. And thus we give to him again as His own Fruits, that which he worketh and manifesteth in us.

172. Now if we did not contend about our different Fruits, Gifts, Kinds and Degrees of Knowledge, but did acknowledge them in one another, like Children of the Spirit of God, what could condemn us? For the Kingdom of God consisteth, not in our knowing and supposing, but in Power.

173. If we did not know half so much, and were more like Children, and had but a brotherly Mind and good Will, towards one another, and lived like Children of one Mother, and as Branches of one Tree, taking our Sap all from one Root, we should be far more holy than we are.

174. Knowledge serves only to this End, viz., to know that we have lost the Divine Power, in Adam, and are become now inclined to Sin; that we have evil Properties in us, and that doing Evil pleaseth not God; so that with our knowledge we might learn to do right. Now if we have the Power of God in us, and desire with all our Hearts to act and to live aright, then our Knowledge is but our Sport, or Matter of Pleasure, wherein we rejoice.

175. For true Knowledge is the Manifestation of the Spirit of God through the Eternal Wisdom. He knoweth what He will in His Children; He showeth his Wisdom and Wonders by his Children, as the Earth putteth forth its various Flowers.

176. Now if we dwell one with another, like humble Children, in the Spirit of Christ, one rejoicing at the Gift and Knowledge of another, who would judge or condemn us? Who judgeth or condemneth the Birds in the Woods, that praise the Lord of all Beings with various Voices, every one in its own Essence? Doth the Spirit of God reprove them for not bringing their Voices into one Harmony? Doth not the Melody of them all proceed from His power, and do they not sport before Him.

177. Those Men therefore that strive and wrangle about the Knowledge and Will of God, and despise one another on that Account, are more foolish than the Birds in the Woods, and the wild Beasts that have no true Understanding. They are more unprofitable in the Sight of the holy God than the Flowers of the Field, which stand still in quiet Submission to the Spirit of God, and suffer him to manifest the Divine Wisdom and Power through them. Yea, such Men are worse than Thistles and Thorns that grow among fair Flowers, for they at least stand still and are quiet, whereas those Wranglers are like the ravenous Beasts and Birds of Prey, which fright the other Birds from singing and praising God.

178. In short; they are the Issue, Branches or Sprouts of the Devil in the Anger of God, who, notwithstanding must by their very tormenting be made to serve the Lord; for by their plaguing and persecuting, they press out the Sap through the Essence in the Children of God, so that they move and stir themselves in the Spirit of God, with praying and continual sighing, in which Exercise of their Powers the Spirit of God moveth himself in them.

179. For thereby the Desire is exerted, and so the Children of God grow green, flourish, and bring forth Fruit; for the Children of God are manifested in Tribulation; as the Scripture saith, When thou chastisest them, they cry fervently to thee.

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