The Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy

ANNE CONWAY
1631–1679

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The 1692 text

Rendered into modern English with AI (Claude) and edited



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The Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy · Anne Conway (1631–1679)

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INTRODUCTION

Anne Conway (1631–1679) was one of the most original philosophers of seventeenth-century England. Largely self-taught and in pain for most of her adult life from crippling headaches, she studied with the Cambridge Platonist Henry More and later with the physician and Kabbalist Francis Mercury van Helmont, and she wrote this short treatise in her notebooks in the 1670s. After her death van Helmont had it translated into Latin and published in Amsterdam in 1690; her English original is lost. The text here is the English version of 1692, translated back from that Latin, which is the form in which English readers first met it. We use it because no clean, openly licensed transcription of the 1690 Latin exists, while the 1692 English has been carefully transcribed by the Text Creation Partnership and placed in the public domain.

Conway recognizes only three kinds of being: God, who is unchangeable; Christ, a middle nature between God and creatures (the Adam Kadmon of the Kabbalah); and creatures, which are always changing. Against Descartes she denies that mind and matter are two different substances: spirit and body are one created substance in different degrees, body being spirit that has grown dense, and every body having life and perception. Each creature contains infinitely many smaller ones down to what she calls "monads," a word Leibniz, who read her book, would soon make famous. Creatures can pass from one species into another, and all punishment is medicinal: in the end even the fallen will return to goodness.

The last chapters argue that this philosophy is neither Cartesian nor, despite appearances, the materialism of Hobbes and Spinoza, which she thinks it refutes better than their critics had. The right-hand column is Conway in modern English; the left is the 1692 text.

Chapter I

Of God and his attributes
God is spirit, light and life, without time or change; how the Trinity can be understood as God, his Wisdom (Idea, Word) and his Will.

1.1 God is a spirit, light, and life. He is infinitely wise, good, just, and mighty, omniscient, omnipresent, and omnipotent, the creator and maker of all things visible and invisible. See *Adumbratio Kabbalae Christianae*, chap. 2, §§ 2–7, *Kabbala denudata*, vol. 2, part 3.[1]

1.2 In God there is no time, no change, no composition, and no division into parts. He is wholly and universally one in himself and of himself, without any kind of variety or mixture. There is no darkness or corporeality of any kind in him, and so, consequently, no form or shape of any kind whatever. See *Philosophiae Kabbalisticae dissertatio*, chap. 3, in *Kabbala denudata*, vol. 1, part 3.

1.3 He is also, in a proper and real sense, a substance or essence distinct from his creatures, although he is not divided or separated from them. On the contrary, he is present in them all most strictly and in the highest degree intimately. Yet he is present in such a way that they are not parts of him, and they cannot be changed into him, nor he into them. He is also, in a true and proper sense, the creator of all things. He gives them not only their form and shape but also their being, life, body,

1 *Kabbala denudata* ("The Kabbalah Unveiled," 1677–84) is Christian Knorr von Rosenroth's Latin anthology of kabbalistic texts. The *Adumbratio Kabbalae Christianae* ("Sketch of a Christian Kabbalah") is a treatise printed in its second volume.

and whatever else they have that is good. See *Kabbala denudata*, vol. 1, part 2, pp. 30, 332.

1.4 Since, then, there is no time and no mutability in him, there can be no new knowledge or will in him. His knowledge and will are eternal, outside or above time. See *Philosophiae Kabbalisticae dissertatio* 3, chap. 1, in *Kabbala denudata*, vol. 1, part 3, and ibid., chap. 6.

1.5 Likewise there can be no passion in God. Passion, properly speaking, comes from his creatures, for every passion is something temporal, which has its beginning and end with time.

1.6 In God there is an *idea*, which is the image of himself, or a word existing within him. In substance or essence it is one and the same with him. By it he knows not only himself but all other things, and all things were made and created according to this *idea* or word, and indeed by it.

1.7 For the same reason there is in God a spirit or will that proceeds from him and yet, as to substance or essence, is one with him. By it creatures receive their being and activity. For creatures have their being and existence simply and solely from him, because God willed them to be, and his will accords with his most infinite knowledge. Thus wisdom and will in God are not a substance or being distinct from him. They are only distinct modes or properties of one and the same substance. And this is what some of the wisest and most judicious Christians understand by the word Trinity. Suppose we now set aside the phrase "three distinct persons." It is a stumbling block to Jews as well as Muslims and other peoples, it has in itself no sound reason behind it, and it is found nowhere in Scripture. Then everyone would easily agree on this point, for they cannot deny that God has wisdom, an essential *idea*, and a word within himself by which he knows all things. And when they grant that he gives all things their being, they will be forced to acknowledge that there is a will in him. By this will he can accomplish and bring into act what was hidden in the *idea*: that is, he can produce it and make from it a distinct essential substance. And this alone is what it is to create, namely, to produce the essence of a

creature. Yet the *idea* alone does not give being to the creature; the will joined with the *idea* does. When a master builder conceives in his mind the *idea* of a house, he does not build that house by the *idea* alone. His will is joined with the *idea* and works together with it.

Chapter II

Creation and time
Creatures are not coeternal with God, yet God has always been a Creator; what time is, and why it cannot be in God.

2.1 All creatures are and exist simply and solely from him, because God willed them to be. His will is infinitely powerful, and his command alone, without any instrument or instrumental cause, is enough to give being to his creatures. Since the will of God is eternal, or from eternity, it necessarily follows that creation must immediately follow that will, without any interval of time. It cannot be said that creatures, considered in themselves, are coeternal with God, because then eternity and time would be confused with each other. Nevertheless, creatures and the will that created them are so present to each other, and follow each other so immediately, that nothing can be said to come between them. It is as if two circles were to touch each other immediately. Nor can we assign any other beginning to creatures than God himself and his eternal will, which accords with his eternal *idea* or wisdom. From this it follows by natural consequence that the times since the creation are infinite and beyond all number, which no created intellect can conceive. For how could anything be finite or measured that had no other beginning than eternity itself?

2.2 But suppose someone says that times are finite. Then let us suppose their measure from the beginning to be about 6,000 years, as some think that the whole age of this world since the beginning is no longer than that. Or, with others who think that before this world there was another, invisible world from which

this visible world proceeded, let us suppose the duration of this world to be 600,000 years, or any other number of years, as great as can be conceived by any reasoning. Now I ask: could the world have been created before this time? If they deny it, they limit the power of God to a certain number of years. If they affirm it, they allow that there was time before all time, which is a manifest contradiction.

2.3 With these points established, it will be easy to answer the question that has so greatly perplexed so many people: was creation made, or could it have been made, from eternity, or from everlasting? If by "eternity" and "everlasting" they mean an infinite number of times, then in this sense creation was made from everlasting. But they may mean the kind of eternity that God himself has, so that creatures are equal or coeternal with God and have no beginning in time. In that case the claim is false. For both creatures and times had a beginning, and that beginning is God, or the eternal will of God. (Times are nothing but the successive motions and operations of created beings.) And why should it seem strange to anyone that times, taken as a whole collection or totality, may be said to be infinite, when the smallest part of time that can be conceived contains a kind of infinity in itself? For just as no time is so great that a greater cannot be conceived, so no time is so small that there cannot be a smaller. The sixtieth part of a minute may be divided into sixty other parts, and these again into others, and so *ad infinitum*.

2.4 The infinity of times since the beginning of creation can also be demonstrated from the goodness of God. For God is infinitely good, loving, and generous. Indeed, he is goodness and charity itself, an infinite fountain and father of goodness, charity, and generosity. How then could this fountain not always flow abundantly and send forth living waters from itself? And will this ocean not perpetually overflow with its own outpouring to produce creatures, and that in a steady, continuous stream? For the goodness of God, by its own proper nature, communicates and multiplies itself. Nothing is lacking in him, and nothing can be added to him, because of his absolute fullness

and surpassing fruitfulness. For the same reason he cannot multiply himself, since that would amount to imagining that there were more gods than one, which is contradictory. It therefore necessarily follows that he gave being to his creatures from everlasting, or through times without number. Otherwise this communicative goodness of God, which is his essential attribute, would be something finite, and its duration would consist of a certain number of years. Nothing is more absurd than that.

2.5 It is an essential attribute of God to be a creator. Consequently God always was a creator and always will be a creator, since otherwise he would be changed. Therefore creatures always were and always will be. But the eternity of creatures is nothing but an infinity of times, in which they always were and always will be, without end. Nor is this infinity of times equal to the infinity of God's eternity, because the eternity of God himself has no times in it. Nothing in it can be said to be past or to come; the whole is always present. He is indeed in times, but not encompassed by them. The Hebrews seem to speak somewhat differently on this point, as appears in *Kabbala denudata*, vol. 1, part 2, pp. 29, 30, and in *Philosophiae Kabbalisticae dissertatio* 3, chaps. 6, 7, in *Kabbala denudata*, vol. 1, part 3. Yet they do not contradict this opinion, because they allow an indefinite duration of times. Compare *Adumbratio Kabbalae Christianae*, chap. 7, §§ 4, 5, 7, in *Kabbala denudata*, vol. 2, last treatise.

2.6 The reason for this is plain. Time is nothing but the successive motion or operation of creatures. If this motion or operation were to cease, time would also cease, and the creatures themselves would cease along with time. Hence it is the nature of every creature to be in motion, or to have some motion by which it advances and grows toward further perfection. But in God there is no successive motion or operation toward further perfection, because he is most absolutely perfect. Hence there are no times in God or in his eternity.

Moreover, because there are no parts in God, there are also no times in him. For all times have their parts, and are indeed infinitely divisible, as was said before.

Chapter III

God's freedom and the infinity of creatures
God acts freely and necessarily from his goodness; there are infinite worlds, and infinite creatures within the smallest creature.

3.1 Furthermore, consider duly the attributes of God mentioned above, especially these two, namely his wisdom and his goodness. Then the indifference of will that the Schoolmen and philosophers falsely so called have imagined to be in God will be utterly refuted and thrown out altogether. (They have also improperly called it free will.) The will of God is supremely free. Whatever he does on behalf of his creatures he does freely, without any external force or compulsion, and without any cause coming from them; whatever he does, he does of his own accord. Yet that indifference to acting or not acting can in no way be said to be in God. It would be an imperfection and would make God like corruptible creatures. For this indifference of will is the foundation of all change and corruptibility in creatures, so that there would be no evil in creatures if they were not changeable. Therefore, if this indifference were supposed to be in God, he would have to be supposed changeable. He would then be like corruptible man, who often does a thing out of his mere pleasure, not from true and solid reason or the guidance of wisdom. In this, man is like the cruel tyrants of the world, who rely on their power and do many things out of their mere will or pleasure, so that they can give no other reason for what they do than that it is their mere pleasure. A good man, by contrast, whenever he acts or is about to act, can give a fitting reason for

it. He can do so because he knows and understands that true goodness and wisdom have required him to do it. He therefore wills that it be done because it is just, so that if he did not do it he would neglect his duty.

3.2 For true justice or goodness has no latitude or indifference in it. It is like a straight line drawn from one point to another. It cannot be said that two or more lines can be drawn indifferently between two points and all be straight lines. Only one line can be straight. The rest will be crooked or bent, more or less as they depart or lie farther from that one straight line. Hence it is plain that this indifference of will has no place in God, since it is an imperfection. Though he is the freest agent, he is also, above all others, the most necessary agent. It is therefore impossible for him not to do whatever he does in or for his creatures, since his infinite wisdom, goodness, and justice are a law to him that he cannot transgress. *Philosophiae Kabbalisticae dissertatio* 3, chaps. 6, 7, in *Kabbala denudata*, vol. 1, part 3.

3.3 Hence it clearly follows that it was not a matter of indifference to God whether or not he gave being to his creatures. He made them out of an internal impulse of his divine wisdom and goodness, and so he created the world or creatures as soon as he could. For it is the nature of a necessary agent to do whatever it can. He could have created the world or creatures in infinite times before 6,000 years ago, or before 60,000, or 600,000 years ago, and so on, so it follows that he did so. For God can do anything that implies no contradiction. And it implies no contradiction to say that worlds or creatures have existed in infinite times before this moment, just as there are infinite times after this moment. If there is no contradiction in the latter, there is no contradiction in the former either.

INFINITE WORLDS

Since God does whatever he can, he has created infinitely many worlds and creatures.

3.4 When these attributes are duly considered, it follows that creatures were created in infinite numbers, or that God has made an infinity of worlds or creatures. For since God is infinitely powerful, no number of creatures can be so great that he cannot always make more. And since, as has already been proved, he does whatever he can do, his will, goodness, and generosity are surely as large and extensive as his power. From this it plainly follows that creatures are infinite and created in infinite ways, so that no number or measure can limit or bound them. For example, let us suppose the whole totality of creatures to be a circle. Let its radius contain as many diameters of the earth as there are grains of dust or sand in the whole globe of the earth. And let these be divided into atoms so small that 100,000 of them could fit into one poppy seed. Now who can deny that the infinite power of God could have made this number greater, and greater still, to infinite multiplication? For this infinite power can multiply the real beings of creatures more easily than a skilled arithmetician can make a number greater and greater. And no number can ever be so great that it cannot be increased *ad infinitum* by addition or multiplication. Further, it has already been demonstrated that God is a necessary agent and does whatever he can do. So he must multiply, and continue to multiply and increase, the essences of creatures *ad infinitum*. On infinity see *Philosophiae Kabbalisticae dissertatio* 1, chap. 6, and dissertation 3, chap. 1, in *Kabbala denudata*, vol. 1, part 3. Hence creatures are more properly called indefinite than infinite.

CREATURES WITHIN CREATURES

Every creature, however small, contains infinitely many smaller creatures, bodies and spirits alike.

3.5 A similar argument proves more than that the whole body or system of creatures, taken together, is infinite, or contains a kind of infinity in itself. It proves that every creature, even the smallest we can discern with our eyes or conceive in our minds, contains such an infinity of parts, or rather of whole creatures, that they cannot be counted. For it cannot be denied that God can place one creature within another. So he can place two as well as one, four as well as two, and eight as well as four. He could thus multiply them without end, always placing the smaller within the larger. No creature can be so small that there cannot always be a smaller, just as no creature is so great that there cannot always be a greater. It follows that infinitely many creatures may exist or be contained in the smallest creature. All of these may be bodies and, in a way, impenetrable to one another with respect to themselves. As for those creatures that are spirits and can penetrate one another, in every created spirit there may be a kind of infinity of spirits. All these spirits may be of equal extension, both with the spirit that contains them and with one another. For in this case the subtler and more ethereal spirits penetrate the denser and more corporeal ones. So there can be no lack of room that would force one to give way to another. More will be said about the nature of bodies and spirits in its proper place. This is enough to demonstrate that in every creature, whether spirit or body, there is an infinity of creatures. Each of these contains an infinity, and each of those again, and so *ad infinitum*.

3.6 All of this greatly exalts and displays the great power and goodness of God, for his eternity is clearly seen in the works of his hands, indeed in every creature he has made. Nor can it be objected that we make creatures equal to God. For just as one infinite can be greater than another, so God is still infinitely

greater than all his creatures, beyond any comparison. In this way, indeed, the invisible things of God are clearly seen, being understood by, or in, the things that are made. For the greater and more magnificent the works are, the more the greatness of the workman is seen. Some teach that the whole number of creatures is finite, consisting of so many individuals that they can be counted, and that the whole body of the universe takes up exactly so many acres or miles or diameters of the earth in length, breadth, and depth. Such people conceive of so great a majesty in too low and unworthy a way. The God they imagine for themselves is not the true God but an idol of their own imagination. They confine him to a dwelling as narrow as that of a few little bees shut up within the limits of a hive a few inches across. For what else is the world they suppose, compared with that truly great and universal world described above?

3.7 They may say that they do not shut God up within this finite universe, but imagine him to exist in infinite imaginary spaces, outside it as well as within it. To this it may be answered: if those spaces are merely imaginary, then they are certainly nothing but foolish fictions of the brain. But if they are real beings, what can they be but creatures of God? Besides, either God works in those spaces or he does not. If he does not, then God is not there, for wherever he is, there he works. It is his nature to act in this way, just as it is the nature of fire to burn or of the sun to shine. For God works perpetually, and his work is to create, or give being to creatures, according to the eternal *idea* or wisdom that is in him. According to the Hebrews, God is infinite, and they call him Ein Sof. He is said to exist outside the space of the world, because the creature could not contain the immensity of his light. See what is said in the annotations on the first chapter.[1] Nor is he said to exist in imaginary spaces, because no place strictly applies to God. But he may be said to operate there by his simple activity. Whatever is done in and by

1 Ein Sof (printed "Aensoph"), Hebrew for "without end," is the kabbalistic name for God as infinite.

way of the creatures, however, is done by the Messiah, who is not as immense as Ein Sof himself.

3.8 But this continual action or operation of God, as it is in him, proceeds from him, or relates to him, is only one continual act or command of his will. It has no time or succession in it, and no first or latter. It is all at once and always present with God, so that nothing of him is either past or to come, because he has no parts. But insofar as he appears or terminates in creatures, he has time and succession of parts. This may seem very hard to grasp, but sound reason can sufficiently prove it. And will the following plain and common example not help our understanding a little here? Suppose a great circle or wheel is moved by its center, while the center always remains in one place. Some think the sun is moved around its center in this way over so many days, by some angel or spirit remaining in the center. Now although the center moves the whole wheel and causes great and continual motion in it, the center itself always rests and is not moved in the least. How much more is this true of God? He is the first mover in all his creatures, according to all their true and appointed motions, yet he is not moved by them. What in him has an analogy or correspondence with the motions or operations of creatures is the government of his will. Properly speaking, this is not motion, because every motion is successive and can have no place in God, as was demonstrated above.

INFINITE DIVISIBILITY

Conway answers the objection that matter must end in indivisible parts, and explains physical monads.

3.9 We have said that the smallest conceivable creature contains infinite creatures in itself. So the smallest particle of body or matter may be extended in infinite ways and divided into parts smaller, and still smaller, and smaller again. Against this someone may raise the following objection. "Whatever is actually divisible, as far as an actual division can in any way be

made, is divisible into indiscerpible parts. But matter or body (that is, matter that is whole or compound) is actually divisible as far as an actual division can in any way be made. Therefore, etc." I answer that this argument suffers from the fallacy that logicians call *compositiones non componendorum*. This is a joining of words or terms that implies a contradiction or absurdity. It appears in the term "actually divisible," which signifies that one and the same thing is divided and not divided.[2] For "actually" denotes division, while "divisible" denotes not division but only a capacity to be divided. This is as absurd and contradictory as saying *visibly blind*, *sensibly insensible*, or *livingly dead*. But perhaps by the term "actually divisible" they mean not two things but only one, namely that the thing is either really divided or only divisible. Then we shall easily uncover the fallacy. First, if by "actually divisible" they mean nothing but what is divided, then in this sense I grant the major premise. That is, I grant that what is really divided, as far as an actual division can in any way be made, is divisible into indiscerpible parts. But for the same reason the minor premise is false, namely that matter is divided as far as an actual division can possibly be made. Second, by what they call "actually divisible" they may mean a thing that is only divisible, or that has a power or capacity to be so divided. In that case I deny the major premise, namely that what is divisible, as far as division can be made, is divisible into indiscerpible parts. Moreover, in this sense the proposition is merely tautological, a needless repetition of the same thing. It would be just like this: "Whatever can be moved from its place, insofar as it can be moved, may be moved to some certain distance. But London or Rome may be moved from their place, insofar as they may be moved. Therefore, etc." By the same form of argument one could prove that the soul of man lasts only a finite number of years, in which it exists or has being, and consequently that it is mortal and has an end. It would go like this: "Whatever has a

2 "Discerpible" and "indiscerpible" (from Latin *discerpere*, to tear apart) are Henry More's terms for what can or cannot be divided into parts. Henry More (1614–1687), the Cambridge Platonist, was Conway's teacher and friend.

time or duration that is actually divisible, as far as an actual division can possibly be made, will have an end and is divisible into a finite number of years. But the time or duration of the soul is actually divisible, as far as an actual division can possibly be made. Therefore, etc." But suppose someone denies that the time of the soul would then have an end, if it came to such a division of years, and holds instead that the soul can take on another time after this first one, and so *ad infinitum*. Then I say the same thing: if matter came to such a division, it might indeed reach an end of that division, but it might still admit another division after this first one, and so *ad infinitum*. I say that the smallest particle of body, or of what is called matter, can always be divided into smaller parts *ad infinitum*, so that no actual division can be made in any matter that is not always further divisible, or capable of being divided into smaller parts, without end. It should be noted here, however, that I do not mean by this to determine what the absolute power of God will or can do, as some vainly and crudely dispute. I only suggest what the power of God probably may do, or will do, insofar as he operates in and with his creatures. That is, in all productions and generations, as well as in all dissolutions and divisions, in the nature of bodies, or of the creature, he never divides and never can divide any body into parts so small that each of them is not always capable of further division. For the body of no creature can ever be reduced to its smallest parts, meaning parts that cannot be reduced any further, whether by the subtlest operation of any creature or by any created power. This answer may suffice for our present purpose. For God makes no division in any body or matter except insofar as he cooperates with the creatures, and therefore he never reduces creatures to their smallest parts. If he did, all motion and operation in creatures would cease, since it is the nature of all motion to wear a thing down and divide it into subtler parts. To do this would be contrary to the wisdom and goodness of God. For if all motion and operation ceased in any particular creature, that creature would be altogether unprofitable and useless in the

creation, and so would be no better than a mere *non ens*, or nothing. But, as was said before, God cannot do what is contrary to his wisdom and goodness, or to any of his attributes. [Mathematical division of things never reaches *minima*. But things may be divided physically into their smallest parts, as when concrete matter is divided so far that it breaks up into physical monads, as it was in the first state of its materiality. On the production of matter, see *Kabbala denudata*, vol. 1, part 2, p. 310 and following, and vol. 2, the last treatise, p. 28, nos. 4, 5. Then it is fit once more to resume its activity and become a spirit, as happens in the food we eat.][3]

3.10 Moreover, the consideration of this infinite divisibility of everything into ever smaller parts is no unnecessary or useless theory but a matter of very great importance. By it we may understand the reasons and causes of things. We may also see how all creatures, from the highest to the lowest, are inseparably united with one another by means of subtler parts that pass between them. These are the emanations of one creature into another, and by them creatures also act on one another at the greatest distance. This is the foundation of all the sympathy and antipathy that occurs in creatures. Whoever understands these things well can easily see into the most secret and hidden causes of things, which ignorant people call occult qualities.

3 Conway uses the word "monads" before Leibniz's *Monadology* (1714). Leibniz read her book.

Chapter IV

Christ, the firstborn of all creatures
Whether God created everything at once or in succession; how all things consist in Christ.

4.1 From what has already been said, it is easy to answer that intricate question: did God create all creatures together, or one after another? If the word "create" refers to God himself, or to the internal command of his will, creation happens all at once. But if it refers to creatures, it happens successively. For just as it is the nature and essential attribute of God to be unchangeable and without succession, so it is the nature of creatures to be changeable and successive. But the word "create" may refer to the universals, seeds, and principles of all things. In subordination to God, who is the principal beginning of all things, these are, as it were, the springs and fountains from which creatures flowed in the order of their succession. In that sense it may be said that all creatures were created together. This is especially so if we consider the Messiah, or Christ, who is the First Begotten of all creatures, by whom all things are said to have been made, as John declares. And Paul expressly affirms that all things, both visible and invisible, were made by Jesus Christ.

4.2 "Jesus Christ" also signifies the whole Christ, who is God and man. As God, he is called λόγος ἐνδιάθετος, the essential Word of the Father. As man, he is called λόγος προφορικός, the Word expressed or brought forth. This Word brought forth is the perfect and substantial image of the Word that is in God, and it is eternally united with him, so that it is the vehicle and organ of that inner Word, as the body is in relation to the soul. This Word

brought forth, which is the wisdom of God, is mentioned in various places in both the New and the Old Testament, as in Proverbs 8:22–31, Proverbs 3:19, Psalm 33:6, Psalm 22:2, Psalm 110:1, John 1:[1] 1, 2, 3, etc., Ephesians 3:9, and Colossians 1:15, 16, 17. This last passage, Colossians 1:15–17, contains an explanation of the former ones. It shows that "Son," "Word," or "Wisdom" does not simply and nakedly mean God, or any of his attributes. For how could any of his attributes be called the image of the invisible God, since an attribute is just as invisible as God himself? Hence "image" denotes something brought into visibility, which in a special way reveals and represents the invisible God more than any creature does.

4.3 For the same reason Paul, in the passage cited above, calls him the First Begotten of all creatures. This signifies the relation he has to creatures. In their original state they were all, as it were, sons of God, and he is the First Begotten of all those sons. They, if I may put it so, are as it were the sons of this First Begotten Son of God. And therefore all things are said to consist, or have their existence, in him, because they arose from him as branches from the root, yet in such a way that they still remain in him in a certain manner.

4.4 This does not mean that they are equal to him or of the same nature as he is, for then none of them could ever have degenerated and been changed from good into evil. They are therefore of a nature far inferior to the First Begotten. Properly speaking, they can never be changed into him, nor can he be changed into the Father. The highest point they can reach is to become more like him, as Scripture declares. Hence our sonship, since we are mere creatures, is called adoption.

1 λόγος ἐνδιάθετος / λόγος προφορικός: the inner word and the uttered word, a distinction taken up by Philo and the Church Fathers.

Chapter V

Christ the middle nature
The Kabbalists' Adam Kadmon; why a being between God and creatures is as demonstrable as God; Christ, eternity and time.

5.0 In the preceding chapter we have already said a few things about the Son of God, who is the First Begotten of all creatures. More remains to be said on this matter, however, and it is very necessary for rightly understanding what follows. For this purpose we have devoted a separate chapter to it.

5.1 We Christians call the Son of God, the First Begotten of all creatures, by the name of Jesus Christ, according to the Scriptures, as declared above. By him is meant not only his divinity but also his humanity in eternal union with the divinity. That is, we mean his heavenly humanity as it was united with the divinity before the world was, and so, consequently, before he came in the flesh. The ancient Kabbalists have said many things about him, namely about the Son of God. They tell how he was created and how he exists in the order of nature before all creatures, and that all receive blessing and sanctification in him and through him. In their writings they also call him the Heavenly Adam, *Adam Kadmon*, or First Man, the Great Priest, and the Husband or Spouse of the Church, as Philo Judaeus calls the First Begotten Son of God.[1]

5.2 The Jewish teachers call this Son of God, the First Begotten of all creatures, the Heavenly Adam and Great Priest. He is properly a *medium* between God and the creatures. And it can be

1 Philo Judaeus (c. 20 BC–c. AD 50), Jewish philosopher of Alexandria, called the divine Logos God's "first-born son" and "high priest."

demonstrated that there is such a middle being as surely as it can be demonstrated that there is a God. By this is meant a being that in its own nature is indeed less than God, and yet greater and more excellent than all other creatures. Hence, because of his excellence, he is properly called the Son of God. On this Son of God, whom the Jews call *Adam Kadmon*, more may be found in *Kabbala denudata*, vol. 1, part 1, pp. 28, 30; part 2, p. 33 and following, and p. 37 and following; part 3, p. 31 to p. 64, pp. 37–78, etc.; and *Kabbala denudata*, vol. 2, part 2, p. 244; and the last treatise, pp. 6, 7–26.

5.3 To carry out this demonstration we must first consider the nature or being of God, the highest being. Then we must consider the nature and essence of creatures and compare the two with each other. From this the middle nature will immediately reveal itself to us. The nature and essence of God, as shown in the preceding chapters, is altogether unchangeable. Not only the Holy Scriptures but also the power of reason with which God has endowed our minds sufficiently declare this. For if there were any mutability in God, it would have to be toward some higher degree or measure of goodness, and then he would not be the highest good, which is contradictory. For if anything advances to a greater degree of goodness, this happens entirely because of some greater being, whose virtue and influence it shares. But there is no being greater than God. Consequently he is in no way improved and cannot become better than he is. Much less can he decline, which would imply an imperfection. It is therefore plain that God, or the highest being, is altogether unchangeable. Now the nature of creatures is really distinct from the nature of God, so that some attributes of God cannot be communicated to creatures, and immutability is counted among them. It necessarily follows that creatures are changeable, or else they would be God himself. Daily experience also teaches us that creatures are changeable and continually pass from one state to another. But there are two kinds of mutability. One has in it a power of changing itself either toward good or toward evil. This is common to all creatures, but not to the First Begot-

ten of all creatures. The other is only a power to proceed from goodness to goodness. Here, therefore, is a threefold class or rank of beings. The first is wholly unchangeable. The second is changeable only toward good, so that what is good in its own nature may become still better. The third was indeed good in its own nature, yet it could be changed indifferently, either toward good or from good into evil. The first and last of these are extremes, and the second is a natural *medium* between them, by which the extremes are united. This *medium* shares in both extremes and is therefore the most fitting and proper *medium*. From one extreme it takes mutability, namely change from good to a greater degree or measure of goodness. From the other extreme it takes the property of being altogether unchangeable from good into evil. Such a *medium* was necessarily required by the very nature of things. Otherwise there would remain a chasm or gap, and one extreme would be united with the other without a *medium*. That is impossible and contrary to the nature of things, as appears in the whole course of the universe. By the immutability of the Messiah we must here understand moral immutability, not natural immutability. Some object that if Christ was naturally unchangeable, he was tempted in vain. See Matthew 4:3; 17, 18; chap. 4:15. There are also further arguments of a purely philosophical kind. In *Philosophia Kabbalistica* (*Kabbala denudata*, vol. 1, part 3, dissertation 2, chap. 1), thirteen of them are urged to prove that from the First Beginning there flowed forth only one thing begun and perfected. This is also confirmed there by the authority of ancient and modern philosophers, together with an answer to the objections raised against it.

5.4 This middle being is not to be understood so crudely, as if it stood in a middle place between two extremes, as the trunk of the body is between the head and the feet. It is a *medium* with respect to its nature, as silver is between tin and gold, or water between air and earth, though these are only crude comparisons next to the thing itself. Nor may anyone suppose the Son to be such a *medium* between God and the creatures as though God

were not immediately present in all his creatures, and did not immediately fill all things; for he operates immediately in all things, in the proper sense. Rather, this is to be understood of the union and communion that creatures have with God. So although God operates immediately in all things, he uses this *medium* as an instrument through which he cooperates in his creatures, because by its nature it is nearer to them. And yet he is more excellent than all the other productions we call creatures, and that too by his own nature. This is why he is rightly called the First Begotten of all creatures, and the Son of God rather than a creature of God. It is also why his production is better called a generation, or emanation, from God than a creation, if that word is taken in its strict sense. In the broader sense and use of the word, however, he may be said to be created or formed, as Scripture says of him in one place. But if the thing itself is properly understood, there is no need to quarrel about words. Still, a man's son is said to be begotten by him rather than made or created by him. We do not call a house or a ship that a man has built or made his son, but his work, because his son is the living image and likeness of himself, which cannot be said of a house or a ship. In the same way, this first production of God *ad extra*, that is, outside himself, is more fittingly and properly called his Son than a creature, because it is the living image of himself, and is greater and more excellent than all creatures. Now it follows that the Son himself must be immediately present in all of these, so that he may bless and benefit them. And since he is that true *medium* between God and the creatures, he must exist within them, so that by his operation he may stir them up to union with himself. And since he is the most excellent production of God made *ad extra*, that is, outside himself, and the most perfect and exact image of him, he must be like God in all those of God's attributes that can be said, without contradiction, to be communicated to him. Consequently he must necessarily be omnipresent. Besides, if he were not present in all creatures, there would remain a *chasma*,

or wide gap, between God and the creatures where he was not, which is absurd.

CHRIST, ETERNITY AND TIME

Christ shares in both eternity and time, and in him there is no decay or death.

5.5 Moreover, just as he partakes of God's immutability and of the creatures' mutability, and so is a *medium* between what is altogether unchangeable and what is altogether changeable, sharing in both, so he may also be said to partake of eternity (which is proper to God) and of time (which is proper to creatures). It was said in the preceding chapters that nothing came between eternity and time, or between the creatures and the will of God that created them. But there "time" and "creatures" are to be taken in a broader sense, namely with respect to all God's productions made *ad extra*, so that this middle being is included there along with the rest. Nor can we conceive this middle being to come before creatures in time, but only in the order of nature. So, in fact, nothing of time, strictly taken, occurred between the creatures and the all-creating power and will of God that created them.

5.6 But if by time, in the common meaning of the word, we understand the successive increase or decrease of things, by which they grow and increase to a certain point or period and then decline from it again, until they die or are changed into another state or condition of life, then in this sense it may be firmly asserted that neither this middle being nor any creature perfectly united with it is subject to time or its laws. For the laws of time extend only to a certain period or age. When that period is complete, the things subject to time decay and are consumed, and so die and are changed into an entirely different species of things, as the poet's old saying has it:

> Tempus edax rerum, tuque invidiosa vetustas
> Omnia destruis.
> Which may be put into English thus: Thus spiteful age, and time that eats up things,
> Consumes all things, and to destruction brings.[2]

For this reason time is divided into four parts, corresponding to the ages of a man living in this world: infancy, youth, manhood, and old age, right up to death. So all things bounded by time are subject to death and corruption, or are changed into another species of things. We see water changed into stones, stones into earth, earth into trees, and trees into animals or living creatures. But in this most excellent middle being there is neither decay nor corruption, nor, properly speaking, does death have any place in him. He is a most powerful and effective balsam, which can preserve from death and corruption all things that are joined or united to him. So here all things are perpetually new, springing up fresh and green. Here is perpetual youth without old age, and here is the perfection of old age, namely a great increase of wisdom and experience without any of the imperfection of age. But when Christ came in the flesh, and in the body he brought with him from heaven (for every created spirit has some vehicle, either terrestrial, aerial, or ethereal, as this one was), he took on something of our nature, and consequently the nature of all things. For human nature contains in itself the nature of all creatures, which is also why man is called the *microcosm*. Having assumed this nature in flesh and blood, he sanctified it, so that through it he might sanctify all things. In this way he was like the little leaven that changed the whole lump. He then descended into time and, for a certain span or period, of his own accord subjected himself to the laws of time, so as to endure great torments, even death itself. But death did not hold him long, for on the third day he rose again. And this was the purpose of all his sufferings, even of his death and burial: that he might heal, cure, and redeem his

2 Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 15.234–236.

creatures from the death and corruption that came upon them through the Fall. In this way he would at last put an end to times and raise the creatures above times to himself, where he dwells, who is the same yesterday, today, from now on, and forever, without decay, death, or corruption. In the same way, in his spiritual and inward appearance in man, by which he intends to save, heal, and redeem the soul, he does in a certain manner subject himself to a kind of death and suffering. So for a certain span he submits himself to the laws of time, in order to raise the souls of men above time and corruptibility to himself. There they receive blessing and grow from one degree of goodness and virtue to another, *in infinitum*.

5.7 For the same reason, those who have come to a perfect union with Christ are raised up into a region or sphere of perfect tranquility, where nothing is seen or perceived to move or compel. The swiftest and most vehement motions exist there, but they move so uniformly, so evenly, and so harmoniously, without the least opposition or disorder, that they seem to be altogether at rest. Many examples of this can be given from external things. For there are in fact two kinds of motion that seem to our bodily sight to lack motion, namely the exceedingly quick and the exceedingly slow; only the middle kind is perceptible to us. Now under time and its laws may be included not only the earth and earthly things, but also the sun, moon, and stars, and the whole visible part of the world, together with more that is invisible. So after a long stretch of time all these things may be entirely changed into a quite different species of things. This happens by the same order and course of divine operation that God has placed in all creatures as a law of justice, by which in his divine wisdom he has resolved to reward every creature according to its works. Let this suffice for now concerning that most excellent middle being. Further mention may be made of him, as occasion arises, in the following pages.

Chapter VI

The changeability of creatures
Only three kinds of being: God, Christ and creatures; creatures change in manner of existence, not essence, and pass from species to species by God's justice.

6.1 That all creatures are changeable in their own nature is clearly shown by the distinction between God and creatures, properly considered, and it is confirmed by daily experience. Now if any creature is changeable in its own nature, it has this mutability insofar as it is a creature, and consequently all creatures will have it. This follows from the rule: whatever belongs to anything as placed under this or that species belongs to everything included under the same species. But mutability belongs to a creature (which is the most general name of the species under which all creatures are included). This is evident from the fact that otherwise there would be no distinction between God and creatures. For if any creature were unchangeable of itself and in its own nature, that creature would be God, because immutability is one of his incommunicable attributes.

6.2 Now let us consider how far this mutability may reach or extend. First, can one individual be changed into another of the same or of a different species? This, I say, is impossible, for then the very essences of things would be changed. That would create great confusion, not only in the creatures but in the wisdom of God, who made all things. For example, if this man could be changed into that one, namely Paul into Judas or Judas into Paul, then the one who sinned would not be punished for his sin, but another in his place who was virtuous and innocent. So a good

man would not receive the reward of his virtue, but a wicked man in his place. And if we suppose one good man changed into another, as Paul into Peter and Peter into Paul, then Paul would not receive his own proper reward but Peter's, and Peter would receive not his but Paul's. This would be confusion, and unworthy of the wisdom of God. Moreover, if the very individual essences of things could be changed into one another, it would follow that creatures were not true in themselves. Then we could not be sure of anything, or have any certain knowledge of anything. All the innate notions and dictates of truth that people generally find in themselves would be false, and consequently so would the conclusions drawn from them. For every true science, or certainty of knowledge, depends on the truth of its objects, which are commonly called *veritates objectivae*, or objective truths. If these objective truths were changed into one another, the truth of the propositions depending on them would certainly change as well. Then no proposition could be unchangeably true, not even the clearest and most obvious, such as these: the whole is greater than its part, and two halves make a whole.

6.3 The second thing to consider is whether one species of things can be changed into another. Here we must carefully observe how the species of things are distinguished from one another. Many things are commonly called species and yet do not differ from one another in substance or essence, but only in certain modes or properties. When those modes or properties are changed, the thing is said to have changed its species. The question is whether what is changed in such a case is a certain manner of existence, and not the essence or being of the thing itself. Take water. It is not changed in itself but remains the same when cold congeals what was fluid before. When water is changed into a stone, there is certainly no reason to suppose a greater change of its substance here than in the previous example of water turned into ice. And again, when a stone is changed into soft and tender earth, no change is made in its substance. So in all the other changes we observe in things, the sub-

stance or essence always remains the same, and there is only a change of mode or manner. When a thing ceases to exist in this manner, it begins to exist in another. And indeed the same reasons prove that one species essentially or substantially distinct from another cannot be changed into it, just as one individual cannot be changed into another. For the species of things are nothing but individuals gathered or comprehended under one general *idea* of the mind, or one common term of speech. Man, insofar as he is a species, comprehends under him all individual men, and horse is a species comprehending every individual horse. Now if one man cannot be changed into another, much less can this man be changed into an individual of a different species. For example, if Alexander cannot be changed into Darius, he cannot be changed into his own horse Bucephalus.

ONLY THREE KINDS OF BEING

God, Christ and creatures are the only substances; a fourth kind of being would be superfluous.

6.4 To know how far the changes of things can reach, we must examine how many species of things there are that are distinct from one another in substance or essence. If we inquire carefully, we shall find only three, as was said before, namely God, Christ, and the creatures. It has already been proved that these three are really distinct from one another in essence. But no reason can be given to prove that there is any fourth kind of being distinct from the other three. Indeed, a fourth kind of being seems wholly superfluous. All the phenomena in the whole universe can be adequately traced back to these three as to their proper and original causes, so there is no need to acknowledge any other, according to this rule (which, rightly understood, is entirely true and certain): beings are not to be multiplied without necessity. The three just mentioned exhaust all the specific differences in substance that can possibly be conceived in our minds, and so these alone fill that vast and infinite possibility of things. How, then, can room or place be found for

a fourth, fifth, sixth, or seventh being? That these three do this has already been demonstrated above. Whatever can in any way be called a being is either wholly unchangeable, and such is God, the supreme being; or wholly changeable, namely to good or to evil, and such is the creature, the lowest being; or partly unchangeable, namely with respect to evil, and partly changeable, namely with respect to good. By this last is meant Christ, the Son of God, that middle being between God and the creatures. Into what class or rank, then, shall we put some fourth, fifth, sixth, or seventh being, etc., which is neither wholly changeable nor wholly unchangeable, nor partly changeable and partly unchangeable? Besides, whoever supposes some fourth being, essentially or substantially distinct from the three mentioned, overthrows the most excellent order we find in the whole of things. For then there would be not just one *medium* between God and the creatures, but two, three, four, five, six, or as many as can be supposed between the first and the last. Moreover, it agrees well with sound reason, and also with the order of things, that the creature, or the whole creation, is only one single substance or essence in species. Just so, God is only one and has in him no two, three, or more distinct substances, and Christ is only one Christ and has in him no more distinct substances, insofar as he is the heavenly man and the very first Adam. The creation comprehends many individuals placed in their subordinate species, but these are distinct from one another in mode, not in substance or essence. And so what Paul says about man may likewise be understood of all creatures, namely that God made all nations, or armies, of creatures out of one blood. (In their original state, creatures were a certain species of man, so called because of their excellences, as will be shown later.) And certainly the reason is the same in both cases. For just as God made all nations out of one blood so that they might love one another, stand in mutual sympathy, and help one another,[1] so he has implanted a certain universal sympathy and mutual love in creatures, since they are all members of one

1 Acts 17:26.

body and (so to speak) brothers. They have one common Father, namely God in Christ, or the Word made flesh, and also one mother, namely that one substance or essence from which they came and of which they are real parts and members. And although sin has wonderfully impaired this love and sympathy, it has not destroyed it.

ERRORS ON EITHER SIDE

Conway rejects those who merge God and creatures, deny a middle being, or multiply species endlessly.

6.5 If these three distinct beings are granted, and no more, and they cannot at all be converted into one another, we shall walk a safe path along the middle way of truth. We will leave behind the great errors and confusions about being on the right hand and on the left. For, first, there are some who teach that there is only one being of all things, of which the creatures are real and proper parts. These confound God and the creatures together, as though both were one single essence, so that sin and devils would be nothing but parts, or at least modifications, of that divine being. Very dangerous consequences arise from this. I would not want this to be taken amiss by those who have fallen into this opinion unawares. But I would warn the reader, so that he may better consider where such principles lead, and avoid their absurdity. Again, there are others who allow only two species of things, namely God, the supreme being, wholly unchangeable, and the creature, the lowest being, wholly changeable. But these do not properly consider the excellent order described above, which is evident in all things. Otherwise they might perhaps have noticed that besides these two extremes there is a certain *medium* that partakes of both. This is Jesus the Christ. Not only the wiser Jews but also some among the so-called Gentiles have acknowledged him, maintaining that there is such a *medium*. They called it by various names, such as Logos, the Son of God, the First Begotten of God, Mind, Wisdom, the Heavenly Adam, etc., and some also call him the eternal

medium. If properly considered, these things could contribute not a little to spreading and furthering the true faith and the Christian religion among Jews as well as Muslims and other non-Christian peoples, that is, if it turns out that we can prove there is a mediator between God and man, and indeed between God and all creatures, by reasons as solid as those that prove God to be a creator. Those who believe this may then be said truly to believe in Christ Jesus, even if they have not yet known, or been convinced, that he came in the flesh. For if they grant the former, they will undoubtedly be compelled (if they are honest), whether they like it or not, to grant the latter. There are still others who multiply the specific beings of things almost infinitely, with their distinct essences and essential attributes. This entirely overturns the excellent order of things. It also greatly obscures and darkens the glory of the divine attributes, so that it cannot shine forth in the creatures with its due splendor and brightness. For in this way every creature is so tightly bounded, so strictly enclosed and imprisoned within the narrow limits of its own species, that the mutability of creatures is taken away entirely. Nor could any creature come to share more fully, in various ways, in the divine goodness, or be advanced or promoted to any further perfection.

CAN A HORSE BECOME A MAN?

Creatures can rise or fall from one species into another, as the example of the horse shows.

6.6 We shall demonstrate all this with one or two examples. First, let us take a horse. It is a creature endowed by its creator with various degrees of perfection: not only bodily strength, but (so to speak) a certain kind of knowledge of how it ought to serve its master, and moreover love, fear, courage, memory, and various other qualities that are in man. We may also observe these in a dog and many other animals. Now the divine power, goodness, and wisdom have created every creature good, and indeed in such a way that it might, through continual increase (in its mut-

ability), be advanced to a greater degree of goodness *ad infinitum*, so that the glory of those attributes shines forth more and more. And the nature of every creature is such that it is always in motion or operation, and this most certainly tends toward a higher degree of goodness as the reward and fruit of its labor, unless the creatures hinder that good by a voluntary transgression and by abusing the indifference of will that God placed in them at their creation. So now I ask: to what higher perfection and degree of goodness does the being or essence of a horse attain, or can it attain, after it has served its master well and so done its duty, and what is proper for such a creature? Is a horse, then, a mere machine or dead matter? Or does it have a spirit in it, having knowledge, sense, and love, and various other faculties and properties of a spirit? If it does, which cannot be denied, what becomes of this spirit when the horse dies? Suppose it is said that it passes into life again and takes on another horse's body, so that it becomes a horse as before, and this horse may be stronger and finer and have a more excellent spirit than before. Very well! But if it dies two, three, or four times, etc., will it always remain a horse, even though it becomes better and more excellent the more often its spirit revolves? Now I ask whether the spirit of a horse contains such infinite perfection that a horse may always become better and better *ad infinitum*, and yet still remain a horse.[2] For, as the commonly received opinion holds, this visible earth will not always remain in the same state, and this can be confirmed by undeniable reasons. It necessarily follows that the continual generation of animals in these dense bodies will also cease. For if the earth takes on another form and no longer brings forth grass, horses and other animals will cease to be what they were before. Since they will lack their proper nourishment, they cannot remain in the same species. Yet they are not annihilated, as may easily be understood. For how can anything be annihilated, since God's goodness toward his creatures always remains the same, and the preservation or continuation of creatures is a continued creation?

2 "Revolves": the kabbalistic "revolution" of souls, their return into new bodies.

This is generally granted, and it was demonstrated above that God is a perpetual creator, and that, as he is the freest agent, so he is also the most necessary one. But if it is denied that the earth is unchangeable, as was said before, then horses and other animals will be changed along with the earth, in due proportion. The earth, in the same proportion, will again produce nourishment or food suited to their changed condition. Then I ask whether they will always remain in the same species under such a change, or whether there will not be some difference between that state and this one, such as there is, for example, between a cow and a horse. That difference is commonly granted to be specific. Again, I ask whether the species of creatures so infinitely surpass one another that an individual of one particular species may keep advancing in perfection and approach nearer to another species, yet never get so far as to be changed into it. For instance, in various qualities and perfections a horse comes close to the nature and species of a man, more so than many other creatures do. Is the nature of a man, then, distant from the nature of a horse by infinite degrees, or only by finite ones? If by finite ones, then certainly a horse may in the course of time be changed in some measure into a man. I mean its spirit; as for its body, that is evident. If they are infinitely distant, then a certain infinite excellence in act may be attributed to any man, even one of the vilest and basest nature and disposition. Such excellence belongs only to God and Christ, and to no creature. For the highest excellence of a creature is to be infinite only *in potentia*, not *in actu*. That is, it is always capable of attaining greater perfection and excellence *ad infinitum*, though it can never reach this infinite. However far any finite being may advance, it is still finite, even though there are no limits to its progress. For example, if we could ever reach the smallest minute of eternity, or some such part of infinite duration, it would not be infinite but finite. Nor do we here contradict what was set out in the third chapter about the infinity of creatures. That was not meant of their infinite goodness and excellence, but only of their multitude and magnitude: the one cannot be

counted, nor the other measured, by the comprehension of any created intellect. Yet individual creatures are always only finitely good, and finitely distant *quoad species*, or as to species, and only potentially infinite; that is, they are always capable of further perfection without end. Suppose, for example, a ladder infinitely long, containing infinite steps. Those steps are not infinitely distant from one another, otherwise no one could climb up or down it. The steps (in this example) signify the various species of things, which cannot be infinitely distant from one another, or from those next to them. Indeed, daily experience teaches us that the species of various things are changed into one another, as earth into water, water into air, and air into fire or ether, and the reverse, as fire into air, air into water, etc. These are nevertheless distinct species of things. So also stones are changed into metals, and one metal into another. But lest anyone say these are only bare bodies and have no spirit, we shall observe the same not only in plants but also in animals. Barley and wheat, for instance, can be converted into each other, and in fact are often so changed. This is well enough known to householders in many regions, especially in Hungary, where if barley is sown, wheat springs up instead. But in other, more barren places, especially rocky places such as are found in Germany, if wheat is sown, barley comes up, and in other places barley turns into mere grass. And among animals, worms are changed into flies. Beasts, and fishes that feed on beasts and on fishes of a different kind, change them into their own nature and species. And does not a corrupted nature, or the body of earth and water, produce animals without any preceding seed of those animals? And in the creation of this world, did not the waters at God's command produce birds and fishes? And did not the earth, at the same command, bring forth beasts and creeping things, which for that reason were real and proper parts of the earth and waters? And just as they had their bodies from the earth, so they had their spirits or souls from it too. For the earth brought forth living souls, as the Hebrew text says, and not mere bodily shapes lacking life and soul. There is therefore a very remark-

able difference between human beings and brutes. Of man it is said that God made him in his own image and breathed into him the breath of life, and he became a living soul. So from this man received his life, that principal part of him (by which he has become a man), which is really distinct from the divine soul or spirit that God breathed into him.

Man's body was made from the earth, which (as has been proved) had various spirits in it and gave spirits to all brute beasts. No doubt, then, the earth entrusted to man the best and most excellent spirits, which he was to contain. But all these spirits were of a far inferior species compared to the spirit of man, which he received from above and not from the earth. And man's spirit was meant to have dominion over these spirits (which were all merely earthly), so as to subdue them to himself and raise them to a higher degree, namely into his own proper nature. That would have been his true increase and multiplication. Yet for all this, he allowed the earthly spirits existing within him to gain dominion over him, and so became like them. That is why it is said, "Earth you are, and to earth you shall return," which has a spiritual no less than a literal meaning.

JUSTICE IN TRANSMUTATION

God's justice raises the good and lowers the wicked into the species their lives resemble.

6.7 Now we see how gloriously the justice of God appears in this transmutation of things from one species into another. It is entirely certain that there is a justice that operates not only in men and angels but in all creatures, and whoever does not observe it may be called utterly blind. This justice appears in the ascent of creatures as well as in their descent, that is, both when they are changed for the better and when they are changed for the worse. When for the better, this justice gives them the reward and fruit of their good deeds. When for the worse, it punishes them with due punishments, according to the

nature and degree of the transgression. And the same justice has given a law to all creatures and written it on their natures. Any creature whatever that transgresses this law is punished for it, while a creature that observes and keeps it has this reward, namely to become better. So under the law God gave to the Jews, if a beast killed a man, that beast was to be killed; and the life of man is said to be required at the hand of every beast (Genesis 9:5). And if anyone lay with a beast, not only the man but also the beast was to be killed. So too, after their transgression, not only the woman and her husband received sentence and punishment from God, but also the serpent, which was the brutish part in man that he took from the earth. God has also placed the same instinct of justice in man toward beasts and the trees of the field. For whoever is a good and just man loves the beasts that serve him and takes care that they have their food and rest and whatever else they need. He does this not only for his own profit but out of a principle of true justice. If he were so cruel to them as to demand their labor and yet deny them their necessary food, he would certainly transgress the law that God has written on his heart; and if he kills any of them merely to satisfy his own pleasure, he acts unjustly, and the same measure will be measured out to him in return. So likewise, a man who has a fruitful tree in his orchard that thrives manures it and cleans it so that it may grow better and better. But if it is barren and cumbers the ground, he cuts it down with an axe and burns it. So there is a certain justice in all these. And in all the transmutation of things from one species into another, whether by ascending from the lower or baser to the nobler, or by descending the opposite way, the same justice may be found. For example, if a man on earth lives a pure and holy life, like the heavenly angels, is it not just and fair that after death he should be raised to angelic dignity and become like them? The angels also rejoice over such a man. But if a man here on earth lives so wickedly and perversely that he is more like a devil risen from hell than any other creature, and dies in that state without repentance, will not the same justice throw him down to hell? And will not

such people deservedly become like devils, just as those who led an angelic life are made equal to the angels? But suppose a man has lived neither an angelic nor a diabolical life on earth, but a brutish, or at least an animal or sensual, life, so that his spirit is more like the spirit of a beast than anything else. He has become a brute in spirit, since he has handed over the rule of his more excellent part to the brutish part and spirit within him. Will not the same justice most justly bring it about that he too should be changed (at least in his external form, in bodily shape) into the species of beasts he was inwardly most like in the qualities and dispositions of his mind? And since this brutish spirit has now become superior and predominant in him and holds the other captive, is it not very probable that when such a man dies, the very same brutish spirit will still have dominion in him? Will it not carry the human soul with it wherever it pleases and compel it to serve it? And that brutish spirit may return again into some body and now have dominion over that body, so that its plastic faculty is free to form a body according to its own *idea* and inclination (which it could not do before, in the human body). It then necessarily follows that the body this vital spirit forms will be brutal and not human. For the brutal spirit cannot produce and form any other shape. Its plastic faculty is governed by its imagination, by which it most strongly imagines to itself, or conceives, its own proper image, and the external body is therefore necessarily forced to assume that image.[3]

6.8 Here the justice of God appears marvelously, since he assigns to every kind and degree of transgression its due and proper punishment. Nor does he sentence every sin and transgression to hellfire and the punishment due to devils. Christ taught the opposite in the parable where he shows that only the third degree is condemned to infernal punishment, namely if someone says to his brother, "You fool!"[4]

What objection can be raised here against God's justice? Someone may say that it lessens and disparages the dignity and

3 Plastic faculty: the formative power by which a spirit shapes its body, a term Conway shares with the Cambridge Platonists.

nobility of human nature too much to suppose that it can be changed, in body and soul, into the nature of a beast. To this I answer with the common maxim, *Corruptio optimi fit pessima*, "the best things become the worst by corruption." By his voluntary transgression man has so greatly polluted his own nature (which was so noble), and brought it down into so much worse a state and condition, that it could grow as vile and base in spirit as the most unclean beast or animal. He has become as subject to earthly lusts and desires as any beast. Indeed, he has become worse than any beast. What injustice would it be, then, if God also compelled him to bear outwardly, in his body, the image into which he has inwardly transformed himself? Or which do you think is the worse degeneration: to bear the image of a beast in spirit, or in body? Certainly everyone will say that to be like a beast in spirit is by far the greater degeneration. There is no one endowed with true nobility of mind who will not admit that to be like a beast inwardly is worse than to be like one outwardly, for to be one with it in spirit is far worse than to be one with it in the external form and shape of the body. But suppose someone says that this punishment is too slight for a man who has lived a brutish life all his days, if after death he only returns to the state or condition of some beast; let such a person know that the most just Creator and Maker of all things is wiser than he, and knows best what punishment is due to every particular sin. He has also disposed all things so justly and wisely that no one who lives carnally, in the manner of beasts, can enter the kingdom of heaven. The teaching of Christ also expressly informs us that not all sins are to be punished with the pains of hell, and that "where the treasure is, there is the heart also," and the spirit of man. It also teaches that if a person is joined or united with anything, he becomes *unum quid*, or one, with it. He who cleaves to the Lord is one spirit with him, and he who cleaves to a prostitute is one flesh with her. Why then, by the same reasoning, does he who cleaves to a beast not become one with a beast? And so in all other cases. As Scripture says, whoever someone yields

4 Matthew 5:22.

himself to in obedience is his master, so far as he obeys him. It is also said, "With whatever measure you measure, the same shall be measured to you." This is as if to say that all kinds and degrees of sin have their proper punishments, and that all these punishments tend to the creature's benefit. Grace thus prevails over judgment, and judgment is turned into victory, to the salvation and restoration of the creature. For since the grace of God extends over all his works, why should we think God a more severe and rigid master to his creatures than he really is? For this wonderfully obscures and darkens the glory of the divine attributes. Nor does it beget in human hearts a love of God and an admiration of his goodness and justice, as it ought to. It does the very opposite.

AGAINST ENDLESS HELLFIRE

The idea that every sin earns endless torment makes God a tyrant; punishments fit and heal.

6.9 Consider the common notion of God's justice, that every sin, however small, shall be punished with hellfire, and that without any end. It begets in people a horrible idea or conception of God, namely, that he is a cruel tyrant toward all his creatures rather than a gracious father. Suppose instead that people knew the lovely image of God better, as he truly is and shows himself in all his dealings with his creatures. Suppose our souls could inwardly feel and taste him as he is, charity and goodness itself, and as he inwardly reveals himself in human hearts by the light and spirit of Christ Jesus our Lord. Then indeed, and not until then, would people come to love God above all things. They would acknowledge him to be, beyond all others, the most lovely, just, and merciful, one who cannot punish all sinners with the same punishment.

6.10 Moreover, why did he drown the old world with water, and why has he resolved to destroy this one with fire, as he did Sodom? Only to show that different kinds of sin call for different sorts of punishment. The old world was indeed wicked, but the

one to be destroyed by fire is worse, and for that reason will receive the greater judgment.

The different nature of these transgressions, for which those different punishments are prepared, seems to consist in this: the sins of the old world were more brutish and carnal. The word of God seems to indicate this when he says, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man, because he has become flesh." That is, he has become completely brutish or bestial by obeying the desires of the flesh. Unless this generation had been cut off, all mankind (except Noah and his family) would have become bestial in the next generation. God meant to prevent this evil by drowning them in the waters, so that by this punishment they might be brought back from the brutish nature to the nature of human beings. But the sins of this world, which like Sodom is to be destroyed with fire, seem in their own nature to resemble the sins of devils more than anything else, namely in their craft, deceit, malice, hostility, and cruelty. Their proper punishment is therefore fire, which is also the original principle of those noble spirits that have so greatly degenerated. So it is fitting that they should be restored and regenerated by fire. For what is fire but a kind of imperfect ethereal substance shut up in combustible bodies, as we see from the way it always rises upward and, because of its remarkable thinness, immediately vanishes? Angels as well as human beings have their origin from this ethereal substance *quoad spiritus*, that is, *as to their spirits*, just as the brutish nature has its origin from water. All the punishments God inflicts on his creatures bear some proportion to their sins. In the same way, all these punishments (the worst not excepted) tend to their good and restoration. They are medicinal, so that by them these diseased creatures may be cured and restored to a better condition than they enjoyed before.

HOW CREATURES ARE COMPOSED

Every creature has a body and a spirit, which are one substance differing only in degree.

6.11 Now, therefore, let us examine how every creature is composed, and how the parts of its composition may be converted into one another, since they originally have one and the same essence or being.

In every visible creature there is a body and a spirit, or *principium magis activum & magis passivum*, that is, *a more active and a more passive principle*. These may fitly be called male and female, because of the analogy between them and a husband and his wife. The ordinary generation of human beings requires the union and cooperation of male and female. In the same way, all generations and productions of whatever kind require a union and harmonious operation of these two principles, namely spirit and body. The spirit is an eye or light beholding its own image, and the body is an opacity or darkness that receives that image when the spirit looks into it, as when someone sees himself in a mirror; for he certainly cannot see himself this way in the transparent air, or in any diaphanous body, because the reflection of an image requires a certain opacity or darkness, which we call a body. Yet to be a body is not an essential property of anything, just as it is not a property of anything to be dark. Nothing is so dark that it cannot be made light. Indeed, darkness itself may become light, just as created light may be turned into darkness. The words of Christ fully show this when he says, "If the light that is in you is darkness," etc., where he means the eye or spirit in the body, which beholds the image of anything. Therefore, as every spirit needs a body in order to receive and reflect its image, it also requires a body in order to retain that image. Every body has this retentive nature in itself, to a greater or lesser degree. The more perfect a body is, that is, the more perfectly mixed, the more retentive it is. So water is more retentive than air, and earth is more retentive of some things than water.

But the seed of a female creature has a remarkable power of retention, because its mixture is so perfect, since it is the purest extract of the whole body. In this seed, as in a body, the male seed, which is the image and spirit of the male, is received and retained, together with other spirits that are in the female. Whatever spirit is strongest at that time and has the strongest image or *idea* in the seed prevails there. It may be the male spirit or the female, or some other spirit that either of them has received from outside. That spirit forms the body as closely as it can after its own image. And so every creature receives its external form. The internal productions of the mind, namely thoughts, are generated in the same way. According to their kind they are true creatures and have a true substance of their own. They are all our internal children, and all of them are male and female; that is, they have body and spirit. If they had no body, they could not be retained, and we could not reflect on our own thoughts. Every reflection is made by means of a certain opacity or darkness, and this is a body. So memory requires a body to retain the spirit of the thing thought of. Otherwise the thought would vanish like the image in a mirror, which disappears as soon as the object is removed. Likewise, when we remember someone, we see his image in us. This image is a spirit that came from him while we looked at him from outside. The image or spirit is retained in some body, which is the seed of our brain, and from it a kind of spiritual generation takes place in us. And so every spirit has its body, and every body its spirit. The body of a man or beast is nothing but an innumerable multitude of bodies compacted together into one and arranged in a certain order, and in the same way the spirit of a man or beast is an innumerable multitude of spirits united together in that body. They have their order and government, as is usual in an army of soldiers. One is captain or chief governor, another a lieutenant, another has some kind of command under him, and so on throughout the whole. This is why the creatures are called armies, and God the God of hosts. It is also why the devil that possessed the man was called Legion, because there were many

of them. So every man, indeed every creature, consists of many spirits and bodies. (The Hebrews call many of these spirits that exist in a human being *Nizzuzoth*, or *sparks*. See *Kabbala denudata*,[5] vol. 2, part 2, the treatise *De revolutionibus animarum*, chap. 2 and following, pp. 256, 268, etc.) Indeed every body is a spirit and nothing else. It differs from a spirit only in being darker. So the thicker and denser it has become, the further it is from the degree of a spirit. This distinction is therefore only one of mode and degree, not of essence or substance.

5 *Nizzuzoth* (nitzotzot): in Lurianic Kabbalah, the sparks or fragments into which souls are divided. The treatise on the revolutions of souls cited here comes from the school of Isaac Luria (1534–1572).

Chapter VII

Body and spirit are one substance
Every body can become spirit and every spirit body; the difference is one of degree; penetrability and impenetrability.

7.0 I now wish to show more clearly that every body is a spirit or life in its own nature, and an intelligent principle, having knowledge, sense, love, desire, joy, and grief as it is affected this way or that. It follows that it has activity and motion *per se*, of itself, so that it can move itself wherever it wishes to be. I mean in its own nature, in which it was originally created, and as it will be again when it is brought back to its original state and freed from the confusion and vanity to which it is subject because of sin. For this purpose I shall put forward the following reasons. (More on the nature of matter and spirit may be found in *Kabbala denudata*, vol. 1, part 2, pp. 308–312, and vol. 2, last treatise, pp. 6, 28, 29, 32.)

FIRST REASON: THE ORDER OF THINGS

Creatures can grow ever more spiritual but not endlessly bodily, so all must return to good.

7.1 The first of these reasons comes from the order of things mentioned earlier. I have already proved that there are only three kinds of being: God, the supreme or highest; Christ, the *medium* or middle; and the creature, the lowest in order. As has been shown above, the creature is only one essence or substance as to its nature or essence. It differs only *secundum modos existendi*, that is, *according to its manners of existence*. One of these is cor-

poreality, of which there are also many degrees, so that a thing may come more or less close to the state and condition of a body or of a spirit, or move further from it. But of the two, spirit is the more excellent in the natural order of things. The more a creature is spirit (provided at least that it does not degenerate in some other way), the nearer it comes to God, who is the highest spirit. Hence a body may always become more and more spiritual, *ad infinitum*, because God, who is the first and supreme spirit, is infinite, and does not and cannot share in the least corporeality. So the nature of a creature, unless it degenerates, is such that it always draws nearer and nearer to God in likeness. But there is no being that is in every way contrary to God (that is, there is no being that is infinitely and unchangeably evil, as God is infinitely and unchangeably good; nothing infinitely dark, as God is infinitely light; nor anything infinitely body, having nothing of spirit, as God is infinitely spirit, having nothing of body). Hence it is clear that no creature can become more and more a body *ad infinitum*, although it may become more and more a spirit *ad infinitum*. Nothing can become infinitely darker, though it may become infinitely lighter. For the same reason nothing can be evil *ad infinitum*, although it may become more and more good *ad infinitum*. So in the very nature of things there are limits or bounds to evil, but none to good. In the same way every degree of sin or evil has its punishment, pain, and chastisement attached to it in the very nature of the thing, and by this the evil is changed back into good. The creature does not perceive this punishment or correction at once when it sins. Yet it is stored up in the very sins it commits, and will appear in due time; and then every sin will have its punishment, and the creature will feel the pain and chastisement. By this the creature will be restored to its former state of goodness, in which it was created. It can no longer fall or slip from that state, because through its great chastisement it has gained greater strength and perfection. It has risen so far above its former indifference of will toward good or evil that it wills only what is good, and is no longer capable of willing any evil. See *Kabbala denudata*, vol.

2, last treatise, p. 61, § 9; p. 69, § 21; and p. 70, § 5; and *ibid.*, treatise 2, p. 157.

From this it may be inferred that all God's creatures that once degenerated and fell from their original goodness must, after certain periods, be converted and restored. They will be restored not only to as good a state as the one in which they were created, but to a better one. For divine operation cannot cease. Hence it is the nature of every creature to be always in motion and always changing: from good to good, or from good to evil, or from evil back to good. And because it cannot proceed infinitely toward evil, since there is no infinite pattern of evil, it must necessarily either return or sink into eternal silence, which is contrary to its nature. But if it is said that it goes into eternal torments, I answer as follows. If by "eternal" you mean an infinity of ages that will never end, that is impossible. Every pain and torment arouses or stirs up an operating spirit and life in everything that suffers. We see this by constant experience, and reason teaches us that it must necessarily be so. Through pain and the enduring of it, every kind of density or coarseness contracted in spirit or body is thinned. So the spirit held captive in that density is set free, and through suffering it is made more spiritual, and consequently more active and operative. Now a creature cannot proceed infinitely toward evil, nor sink into inactivity or silence, nor yet into mere eternal suffering. It follows incontestably that it must at length return to good, and the greater its sufferings, the sooner it will return and be restored. And so we see how a thing may be marvelously changed with respect to its manners of existence while the same substance still remains. A holy and blessed spirit, or angel of light, could by its voluntary action become a wicked and cursed spirit of darkness. This change or metamorphosis is certainly as great as if a spirit were changed into a body. It may be asked here whether those spirits became more corporeal through their transgression than they were in their original state before they fell. I answer: yes. But, as I have already shown, a spirit is capable of corporeality *secundum majus & minus*, more and less, not

infinitely, but in many degrees. Hence for many ages they could remain without anything of such corporeal density as things in this visible world have, such as hard stones or metals, or the bodies of men and women. For certainly the bodies of the worst spirits do not have the density of any visible body. And yet all the density of visible bodies came from the fall of spirits from their first state. So after long and varied periods the spirits could contract this density to themselves. But they could not fall into a universal density all at once, at one and the same time, so that the whole body of a fallen spirit would be equally dense in all its parts; rather, some parts become denser and denser, while the other corporeal parts of this spirit keep a certain thinness or subtlety. These are its immediate vehicle, and it is most intimately united with them. Without this subtlety the spirit could not be as mobile and active as it otherwise would be. With these subtler and thinner parts of the body, the principal spirit departs from the denser parts, together with as many of its ministering spirits as it can gather. It leaves the denser parts behind like so many corpses, no longer fit to serve those spirits in the operations they perform in their present state.

We may observe this departure of the subtler and stronger spirits, out of the harder and denser parts of a body into the softer and thinner parts, in a certain spirituous liquor frozen by great cold. The stronger spirits abandon the harder parts, which are on the outside and most exposed to the cold, and gather themselves into the middle part of the body, which always stays subtle and thin. So a single drop of that liquor (which is not frozen, but remains liquid in the innermost part of the frozen body) contains the concentrated strength of all the parts that are frozen. So there is a twofold density and hardness of bodies. One is palpable and visible to our external senses. The other is invisible and impalpable, yet just as dense as the first, and often denser and harder. The internal senses may truly perceive it, even though the external senses cannot. For the invisible and impalpable density or hardness is the one proper to bodies so small that our external senses cannot perceive them. Yet these

bodies are in fact extremely hard, harder even than any flint or metal we can handle with our hands. Visible waters are for the most part composed of these small, hard bodies. They seem to us very soft, fluid, and thin because of the great abundance of certain other subtle bodies that constantly agitate and move those hard particles. So to our coarse senses water seems to be one homogeneous, simple, and uniform thing. In fact it consists of many heterogeneous, dissimilar, or differing parts, more than many other bodies do. Many of these parts are extremely hard and stony. From them comes the gravel that bubbles forth, and all the other little sands and stones that have their origin and birth from the waters springing from the depths of the earth. When these little stones, or stony particles of water, grow into visible sand and stones, after some time they lose this hardness again and become softer and thinner than when they belonged to the waters. For stones rot and turn into soft earth, and animals arise from this earth. Stones also often become water again as they decay. But this water is of another species than the former, for the one petrifies and the other softens; thus it has been observed that two kinds of water flow from a single mountain in Switzerland. Drinking one of them breeds stones in the body, and the other is a proper remedy against them. So one water is changed into stone, and the other comes from that stone while it is decaying, and so alters and loses its former hardness. From what has been said, we can better understand how the heart and spirit of a wicked person may be said to be hard and stony. His spirit really does have a hardness in it, like the hardness of those little stony particles in certain waters. The spirits of good people, on the contrary, are soft and tender. We can also really feel this internal softness and hardness of spirits. Every good person perceives it as sensibly as outward touch discerns the external hardness of dense bodies. But those who are dead in their sins have no sense of the hardness or softness of good or evil spirits. So they call these merely metaphorical expressions, when in fact the things are really so, in the proper sense and without any figure of speech.

SECOND REASON: THE DIVINE ATTRIBUTES

A living, good God cannot create dead matter, which would share none of his attributes.

7.2 The second reason, that created spirits are convertible into bodies and bodies into spirits, I shall draw from a serious and proper consideration of the divine attributes. From them, as from a treasury of instruction, the truth of all things may be made clear. God is infinitely good and communicates his goodness in infinite ways to his creatures, so that there is no creature that does not receive something of his goodness, and that very generously. And the goodness of God is a living goodness, which has life, power, love, and knowledge in it, and he communicates these to his creatures. How then can any dead thing come from him or be created by him? Yet such a thing is mere body or matter, according to the hypothesis of those who claim that it can never be converted to any degree of life or knowledge. It was truly said by someone that God did not make death, and it is just as true that he made no dead thing. For how can a dead thing depend on him who is infinitely life and charity? He is so infinitely generous and good. How then can any creature receive from him so vile and diminished an essence that it would share nothing of life or knowledge, and never be able to aspire to it, not even in the least degree? Has not God created all his creatures for this end, that they might be blessed in him and enjoy his divine goodness in their various states and conditions? But how can this happen without life or sense?[1] Or how can anything that lacks life enjoy divine goodness? But let us press this argument a little further. The divine attributes are commonly and rightly divided into communicable and incommunicable. The incommunicable attributes are that God is a being subsisting by himself, independent, unchangeable, absolutely infinite, and most perfect. The communicable attributes are that he is spirit, life, and light, and that he is good, holy, just, wise, etc.

1 "God made not death": Wisdom of Solomon 1:13.

Now every one of these communicable attributes is living, indeed life itself. And every creature shares with God in some of his attributes. So I ask: in which attribute does dead matter share, or a body that is forever incapable of life and sense? Someone may say that it agrees with God in entity, that is, in being an essence. I answer that in God there is no dead being of which he is or could be a partaker. Where, then, would matter get its dead essence? Moreover, the entity or being of a thing is not properly an attribute of it. An attribute is properly *tale quid*, something that is predicated or affirmed of that being. Now what attributes or perfections can be ascribed to dead matter that correspond analogically to those in God? If we inquire carefully, we shall find none at all, for all his attributes are living, indeed life itself. Moreover, God's creatures, insofar as they are creatures, must necessarily resemble their Creator in some things. So I ask: in what is dead matter like God? If they say again that it is like him in bare entity, I answer that there is no such thing in God or in his creatures. So it is a mere *non ens*, or nothing.

As for the other attributes of matter, namely impenetrability, capacity for shape, and mobility, certainly none of these has any place in God. So they are not among his communicable attributes. They are rather essential differences, or attributes of diversity, by which the creature as such is distinguished from God. Mutability too is one of these differential attributes, so it cannot be said that mutability is among the communicable attributes of God. In the same way, impenetrability, capacity for shape, and mobility do not belong to the communicable attributes of God, but only to those in which the creatures differ from him. Dead matter, then, shares in none of the communicable attributes of God. We must certainly conclude that it is a mere *non ens*, or nothing, a false fiction or chimera, and so an impossible thing. They may say that it has a metaphysical goodness and truth, just as every being is good and true. I ask again: what is that goodness and truth? If it has no share in any of the communicable attributes of God, it will be neither good nor

true, and so a mere fiction, as was said before. Moreover, no one can say in what way dead matter shares in divine goodness at all. Still less can anyone show how it could always acquire greater perfection *ad infinitum*. Yet this is the nature of all creatures, namely to grow and advance infinitely toward further perfection, as was shown before. But what further progress in goodness or perfection does dead matter have? For after it has undergone infinite changes of motion and shape, it must always remain dead, as before. If motion and shape contribute nothing to its receiving life, then it is certainly none the better for them. Indeed, it is not advanced in goodness in the least degree. Suppose this dead matter had passed through all forms and been transformed into every kind of shape, even the most regular and exact. What good does this do the matter or body, since it lacks all life and sense? Or suppose it has undergone infinite kinds of motion, from slowness to swiftness. In what way, then, is it better by way of intrinsic improvement? For the argument speaks of intrinsic improvement, that is, such an improvement as the nature of the thing itself requires, and which that nature brings about. But mere dead body or matter requires no kind of motion or shape. In itself it is not perfected more by one motion or shape than by another. It is equally indifferent to all motions and shapes whatever, and consequently is not perfected or improved by any of them. What advantage, then, will it gain from all these aids, if it always remains a dead thing, incapable of being affected?

THIRD REASON: THE SOUL'S LOVE OF THE BODY

The soul's love for its body shows that the two share one nature.

7.3 My third reason is drawn from the great love and desire that spirits or souls have toward bodies, especially toward those with which they are united and in which they dwell. Now the foundation of all love or desire by which one thing is drawn to another lies in this. Either the two things are of the same nature and substance, or they are like each other, or both; or else one has its

being from the other. We have an example of this in all living creatures that bring forth young, and likewise in human beings, who love what is born of them. Even wicked men and women (unless they are extremely perverse and devoid of parental love) love their children and cherish them with natural affection. The cause of this is certainly that their children are of the same nature and substance, as though they were parts of them; and if the children resemble them in body, spirit, or manners, their love grows all the more. We also see that animals of one species love one another more than those of a different species. This is why cattle of one kind graze together, birds of a kind flock together, and fish of a kind swim together. And so human beings prefer to keep company with human beings rather than with any other creatures. But besides this particular love, something of a universal love still remains in all creatures toward one another, apart from the great confusion that has since arisen because of transgression. This must certainly come from the same foundation. In their first substance and essence they were all one and the same thing, and as it were parts and members of one body. Moreover, in every species of animals we see how the male and female love one another, and in all their propagations (those that are not monstrous and contrary to nature) they are drawn to each other. This comes not only from their unity of nature but also from a striking similarity or likeness between them. Both these foundations of love between a man and a woman are expressly mentioned in Genesis. What Adam said about his wife, "This is bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh," etc., concerns the unity of nature. She was taken out of him and was a part of him, and therefore he loved her. Concerning likeness, it is said that no helper was found for him, or "before his face," as the Hebrew has it. That is, among all the creatures he saw none like himself with whom he wished to keep company, until Eve was made for him. But there is yet another cause of love. It applies when beings that love each other are not one substance, but one gave being to the other and is its proper and real cause. This is how it stands between God and creatures. He

gave being, life, and motion to all, and therefore he loves all creatures, and he cannot fail to love them. Even when he seems to hate them and be angry with them, his anger and what comes from it, namely punishments and judgments, turn to their good, because he sees that they need them. Conversely, the creatures that have not wholly degenerated and lost all sense of God love him. This is a divine law and instinct that he has placed in all rational creatures, so that they should love him, which is the fulfilling of the whole law. But the creatures that come nearest to God in likeness love him the more, and are the more loved by him. Someone may think there is another principal cause of love, namely goodness, which is its most vehement or powerful magnet. This is why God is to be loved above all: he is the best. And this goodness is present to some degree in creatures, either really or apparently, and this is why their fellow creatures love them. I answer that it must indeed be granted that goodness is a great cause of love, indeed the greatest, and its proper object. But this goodness is not a cause distinct from those set out above. It is included in them. Why do we call a thing good? Only because it pleases us, really or apparently, on account of the unity it has with us, or we with it. Hence good people love good people, and not otherwise. Good people cannot love evil, nor can evil people love good people as such, for there is no greater likeness than that between good and good. The reason we call or consider a thing good is that it benefits us and we are made partakers of its goodness. So here the first cause, likeness, is still at work. Likewise, when one thing gives being to another, there is a certain likeness, as when God and Christ give being to creatures (for every true essence has proceeded from them). It is impossible that creatures should not resemble their Creator in some things and agree with him in some attributes or perfections.

With this as a touchstone, let us now return to our subject, that is, to examining whether spirits and bodies are of one nature and substance, and so convertible into one another. So I ask: why does the spirit or soul love the body it is united with so

much, and leave it so unwillingly? It is well known that the souls of some people have stayed with their bodies, and been subject to them, after the body was dead, until it decayed and dissolved into dust. This love cannot come from the spirit or soul having given a distinct being to the body, or the body to the spirit. That would be creation in the strict sense, and giving being to things belongs only to God and Christ. So it must necessarily come from the likeness they have to each other, or from some affinity in their natures. Suppose it is said that there is a certain goodness in the body that moves the spirit to love it. Then this goodness must surely correspond to something in the soul that is like it; otherwise the soul could not be drawn to it. Indeed, let them tell us what that goodness in the body is, for which the soul loves it so fervently. Or let them tell us in what attributes or perfections a body is like a spirit, if a body is nothing but a dead trunk, a mass wholly incapable of any degree of life and perfection. Suppose they say that a body agrees with a spirit *ratione entis*, that is, in respect of being, meaning that as the one has being, so the other has the same. This has already been refuted in the previous argument. For if this being has no attributes or perfections in which it can agree with the being of a spirit, it is a mere fiction. God created no naked *ens*, or being, that would be mere being and have no attributes that could be predicated of it. Besides, *ens* is only a logical notion or term, which logicians call *genus generalissimum*, the most general kind. In its bare, abstract notion it is not in things themselves, but only in the conception of the human intellect. So every true being is a certain particular nature, of which such and such attributes can be affirmed. Now what are those attributes of body in which it resembles a spirit? Let us examine the principal attributes of body, as distinct from spirit, according to those who argue so hard that body and spirit are so infinitely distant in nature that one can never become the other. The attributes are these. A body is impenetrable by all other bodies, so that its parts cannot penetrate one another; and another attribute of body is to be discerpible, or divisible into parts. The attributes of spirit, on the other hand

(as they define it), are penetrability and indiscerpibility. So one spirit can penetrate another, and a thousand spirits can stand together, one within another, and yet take up no more space than one spirit. Moreover, a spirit is so simple and so one in itself that it cannot be torn apart, or actually divided into separate parts. If we now compare the attributes of body and spirit, they are far from being like one another, or from having any analogy of nature (and as was said before, the true foundation of love and unity lies in such an analogy). They are plainly contrary. Indeed, in the opinion of these men, nothing in the whole world can be conceived as so contrary to anything as body is to spirit. For here there is a pure and absolute contrariety in all their attributes. Penetrability and impenetrability are more contrary to each other than black and white, or hot and cold. What is black can become white, and what is hot can become cold; but (as they say) what is impenetrable cannot be made penetrable. Indeed, God and creatures do not differ in essence as infinitely from one another as these doctors make body differ from spirit. There are many attributes in which God and creatures agree, but we can find none in which a body can agree in any way with a spirit. Consequently it agrees in none with God either, who is the highest and purest of spirits. So a body in their sense can be no creature, but a mere non-entity or fiction. And just as body and spirit are contrary in the attributes of penetrability and impenetrability, they are no less contrary in discerpibility and indiscerpibility. But they may claim that body and spirit agree in some attributes, such as extension, mobility, and capacity for shape. On this view spirit has extension and can reach from one place to another; it can also move itself from place to place and form itself into whatever shape it pleases; and in these respects it agrees with body, and body with it. To this I answer as follows. Grant the first point, that a spirit can be extended (though many of them deny it, indeed most of those who teach that body and spirit are essentially distinct). Even so, the extension of body and the extension of spirit, as they understand them, differ enormously. For the extension of body is always impenetrable.

Indeed, being extended and being impenetrable, as they belong to body, are a single real attribute presented under two mental and logical notions, or ways of speaking. For what is extension, unless the body, wherever it is, is impenetrable by its own parts? Remove this attribute of impenetrability from a body, and it can no longer be conceived as extended. Moreover, on their view the extension of body and the extension of spirit differ infinitely. Whatever extension a body has is so necessary and essential to it that it cannot possibly be more or less extended, whereas a spirit, as they affirm, can be more or less extended. Being movable and being shapeable are only consequences of extension, and a spirit is movable and shapeable in a very different way from a body, since a spirit can move and shape itself as a body cannot. So the same reasoning that holds against the one holds against the others too.

PENETRABILITY COMES IN DEGREES

Bodies and spirits are both more or less penetrable; only God and Christ are intrinsically present.

7.4 But, second, how can they prove that impenetrability is an essential attribute of body, or penetrability an essential attribute of spirit? Why may not body be more or less impenetrable, and spirit more or less penetrable? This can happen, and indeed does happen, with all other attributes. For example, a body can be more or less heavy or light, dense or rarefied, solid or liquid, hot or cold. Then why can it not also be more or less penetrable or impenetrable? It may be said that in all these other changes we always observe that a body remains impenetrable, as iron still remains impenetrable when it is heated red-hot. I answer that I grant it may remain impenetrable by any other body of equal density. Yet it can be, and is, entirely penetrated by a subtler body, namely the fire. The fire has entered into it and penetrated all its parts, and this is what makes it so soft; and if the fire is stronger, the iron begins to melt completely. Against this they may object that the entry of fire into iron is not penet-

ration in the philosophical sense, or as they understand it. It is not as though the fire and the iron occupied one and the same place, so that the one could be intrinsically present in the other. On the contrary, it is plain that when iron is made glowing hot it swells and takes on a greater bulk than when it is cold, and as it cools again it returns to its former size. To this I answer that they may mean the kind of penetration we call intrinsic presence. On that view one homogeneous substance enters into another, both of equal dimensions, and yet the bulk or quantity does not increase. If that is what they mean, it seems wholly irrational. It would be a sheer impossibility and contradiction to grant such intimate presence to creatures. It belongs only to God and Christ as creators, whose prerogative it is to be intrinsically present in creatures. No creature can have that intrinsic presence in a fellow creature. If it did, it would cease to be a creature and would acquire one of the incommunicable attributes of God and Christ, namely intrinsic presence. This, I say, is to be attributed primarily to God, and secondarily to Christ, insofar as he is *medium quid*, a certain medium between God and creatures. Just as he partakes of mutability and immutability, of eternity and time, so he may be said to partake of body and spirit, and consequently of place and extension. His body is of another substance than the bodies of all other creatures, since he is the beginning of them nearest to God. So it can truly be said that he is intrinsically present in them, yet not so as to be confounded with them. For suppose one creature is intrinsically present in another, so as to be mingled and most perfectly united with it, and yet its quantity or extension does not increase. That confounds creatures and makes two or more into one. Indeed, on this hypothesis it could be said that the whole creation could be reduced to the size of the smallest grain of dust. Every part would be supposed to penetrate every other, and no greater extension would result than that of one part. But it may be said that this proves only that spirits could be reduced into so small a space, and not bodies, because bodies are impenetrable. I answer that this is merely begging the question. They have not

yet proved that body and spirit are distinct substances, and unless they are, it follows that neither nature is more penetrable than the other in their sense. And indeed what follows seems very consistent with reason. Each time is so extended into its proper measure and extension that it cannot exceed those bounds, and so different times cannot be intrinsically present to one another. For example, the first day of the week cannot be present with the second day of the same week, nor the first hour of the day with the second, nor the first minute of an hour with the second minute. The reason is that the nature and essence of time is to be successive, and to have *partes extra partes*, parts outside one another. Yet God is really and intrinsically present in all times and is not changed. This cannot be said of the creature, namely that it is present in all times, or in several, and is not changed. For the creature is perpetually changed with the times, since times are nothing but the motion or change of the creature from one state or condition into another. And as it is with time, and with creatures that are in time, so it is also with place, bulk, or quantity. As there is no time in God, so there is no bulk or corporeal quantity in him either. But in creatures there is both time and corporeal quantity, since otherwise they would be either God or nothing, which is impossible. For whatever quantity, bulk, or extension a creature has, it retains as something belonging to its own essence. In the same way it is the essence of time to consist of several parts, and these again of several more, and so on *ad infinitum*. It is easy to conceive how a shorter time is in a longer one. For example, so many minutes are in an hour, and so many hours in a day; and one hour directly touches the next but cannot be present in it. The same is to be understood of creatures with regard to their quantity or bulk. One creature can indeed directly touch another, but cannot be present in all its parts. Only a smaller can be in a larger, and a subtler in a denser. And this is more properly penetration, and it belongs to bodies as well as to spirits. A body that is less dense can penetrate another that is denser, but two bodies of equal density cannot penetrate each other. The same can be said of

spirits, which have their degrees of greater or lesser density, as bodies do. Nor is there any other difference between body and spirit than this: body is the denser part of a thing, and spirit the subtler. (Here body is not taken in the sense of those who teach that it is something merely dead, void of life or of any capacity for it. It is taken in its proper sense, as an excellent creature that has life and sense, which belong to it either actually or potentially.) This is also why spirit takes its name from the air, which is the subtlest nature in this visible world. In *Kabbala denudata*, vol. 2, last treatise, p. 6, § 13, spirit is rather defined as a central nature that has the faculty of sending out a sphere full of light and of enlarging or contracting it. This seems to be, properly, Aristotle's ἐντελέχεια. And in the same place, p. 28, § 4,[2] matter is defined as a bare center, or a point lacking radiation, which is what Aristotle meant by privation. From this we must conclude that the impenetrability of these creatures is to be understood of their centers. For the Hebrew word רוח, which means spirit, also means air. And because air moves very swiftly, all swiftness of motion in a moved body is ascribed to the spirit in it. Hence, out of popular ignorance, when people perceived no motion in certain bodies, they called them dead, lacking both life and spirit. But in fact there is no body anywhere that lacks motion, and consequently none that lacks life and spirit.[3] So every creature has its proper quantity or extension. It cannot exceed this, and it cannot be diminished below it.

Nor is this contradicted by what we observe when some very small body is extended into a space a thousand times greater than it had. Gunpowder, for instance, expands astonishingly when it is set on fire. All this extension comes about by the division of parts into parts, smaller and smaller. These parts do not in fact fill all that space as fully as it seems, and meanwhile each part has neither more nor less extension than it had before. Given this, we must conclude that all created spirits present in

2 ἐντελέχεια (entelechy) is Aristotle's term for the actuality or active realization of a thing.

3 רוח (ruach): "spirit, breath, air."

bodies are in one of three situations. They are either in the pores of those bodies, or in certain cavities made there, as moles make in the earth. Or else they cause those bodies to swell up and acquire a greater extension, as fire markedly swells and expands iron when it enters it abundantly. This swelling of bodies cannot always be observed by our external senses, but it cannot be denied on that account. For a body may grow considerably in its dimensions and become greater as a whole, and yet this increase in size may escape all outward observation. Indeed, it may be so subtle that it cannot be expressed in numbers. For example, suppose a body whose solidity, or cube, contains 64 parts, and another whose solidity contains 100. The root of the first body, whose cube is 64, is 4, so that the side of that body contains four lengths of the parts so divided. But the side or root of the other body, whose cube is 100, can be expressed by no number. It is greater than 4 and less than 5, and no fraction can determine it. So, as was said, bodies can be considerably swollen or puffed up if more spirits or subtler bodies enter into them, and yet our coarse senses may judge them to be no larger at all. Now let us come to the other attribute that is said to belong to body but not to spirit, namely discerpibility. They may understand it to mean that a single body, even the smallest that can be conceived (if any such body can be conceived), can be divided. That is certainly impossible, for it is a contradiction in terms: it supposes that even the smallest body is discerpible into smaller parts. But if body is taken individually, for one single body only, it is indiscerpible. What we call the discerpibility of body means only this: we can divide one body from another by placing some third body between them. In this sense spirits are no less discerpible than bodies. One single spirit cannot become two or more spirits, but several spirits coexisting in one body are no less separable from one another than bodies are. Yet however bodies or spirits may be divided or separated from one another in the whole universe, they still remain united in this separation. The whole creation is still only one substance or entity, and there is no vacuum in it. How then can anything be

separated from itself? I mean, how can it be separated from what is its proper nature, considered originally, that is, in its beginning or first being? And just as there is a general unity of all creatures with one another, so that none can be separated from its fellow creatures, so there is a more special and particular unity between the parts of one particular species. Suppose a body is divided or torn apart, and its members are moved a certain distance from one another. As long as these members have not decayed and changed into another species, they still send certain subtle particles to one another and to the body they came from, and the body sends the like to them. (We call them spirits, or bodies, for they are either.) By means of these particles the parts and members, though apparently separated, still keep a certain real unity and sympathy. This is clear from various examples, and especially from the following two. The first is this. A man who lacked a nose had one made for him out of another man's flesh, and it was vitally joined on, as a scion or graft is united with the trunk of the tree it is set into. When the other man died and his body decayed, this nose decayed too and fell off the body of the living man. The second example is of a man whose leg had been cut off. The leg had been taken some considerable distance from the rest of the body, and when a surgeon cut into it, the man complained of pain and showed in what part the leg was wounded. This clearly proves that there is a certain union of parts even when they are separated by a great distance. So also individuals of one species, or those with a special affinity in species, have a union with one another even when they are distant in place. This is still more evident in humankind. If two people love each other wholly, this love unites them so closely that no distance of place can divide or separate them, for they are present to one another in spirit, so that a continual efflux, or emanation, of spirits passes from the one to the other, by which they are bound together and united as if with chains. So whatever a person loves, whether a human being or an animal, a tree, or silver or gold, he is united with it, and his spirit passes into that very thing. And it should be noted

here that the spirit of a human being is usually spoken of in the singular, as though it were one thing. Yet that spirit is in fact a composite of many, indeed innumerable, spirits. The body is a composite of many bodies and has a certain order and government in all its parts. Much more so the spirit, which is a great army of spirits, with distinct offices under one governing spirit. So it appears from this that impenetrability and indiscerpibility are no more essential attributes of body than of spirit. In one sense they belong to both, and in another sense to neither.

But against this infinity of spirits in every spirit, and infinity of bodies in every body, someone may cite the saying: God made all things in number, weight, and measure. So, the objection runs, there cannot be an infinite multitude of spirits in one human being, nor an innumerable multitude of bodies in one body. I answer that the infinity or innumerability of spirits and bodies is to be understood only with respect to the understanding of creatures. They cannot be counted by any creature, and no creature's knowledge can measure the outward extension that body and spirit may take on. But I freely grant that God has perfectly known the number and measure of all creatures.[4] And if God made all things in number, weight, and measure, then surely every creature will have its number, weight, and measure. Consequently we cannot say of any creature that it is only one single thing, because it is a number, and a number is a multitude, or more than one. And indeed the nature of a creature is such that it cannot be merely one single thing, if it is to act or do anything, and so enjoy the good its Creator has prepared for it. For example, suppose a single atom separated from its fellow creatures. What could it do to perfect itself, or to make itself greater or better? What could it see, hear, taste, or feel, either from within or from without? It cannot have internal motion, because every motion has at least two terms or extremes, namely *terminus à quo* and *terminus ad quem*, the term from which and the term to which. Since this is only one atom or center, it surely cannot have any motion within itself *è termino à quo*

4 The saying is from Wisdom of Solomon 11:20.

et ad quem. Consequently it cannot hear, see, taste, or feel *ab intra*, from within, and so it cannot get this from other creatures *ab extra*, from without either. For to see, hear, feel, or taste any other creature, it must receive the image of that creature within itself. This it cannot do, because it is an atom, and an atom is so small that it can receive nothing within it. For as the organs of the external senses are composed of many parts, so are the organs of the internal senses. Consequently all knowledge requires variety or multitude as its subject or receptacle. I mean all created knowledge, in which knowledge is received or stirred up from known things or objects. (God's knowledge, by contrast, is not received or stirred up by creatures, but is originally in and from himself.) The objects of our knowledge, then, are various, and every object sends its image into us, and that image is a real being. It follows that we have many images in us. These cannot all be received in an atom, but need their distinct places in us, in their distinct forms and shapes. Otherwise confusion would follow. Worse, many things would be present with one another without any extension, which is contrary to the nature of a creature. The objects of our knowledge are many, and so I, for example, who receive so many images from those objects, am manifold. Yet it does not follow that because I who know something am manifold, I must see one object as if it were many, so that in seeing one man I would see many. When many people look at one man, they do not see him as many men but as one man only. So when I look up and see something with both my eyes (unless perhaps there is some disorder in my sight), it does not seem to me to be two things but one. And if I could see something with ten thousand eyes as I do with two, that thing, whether a horse or a man, would surely seem to me to be only one. This shows us a great distinction between God and creatures. He is one, and this is his perfection, that he needs nothing outside himself. But a creature needs the help of its fellow creatures, and so it must be manifold in order to receive this help. For what receives something is nourished by it, and the thing received becomes part of it. So the creature is no longer

one but many: as many as the things it has received, and indeed of a still greater multiplicity. So there is a certain society or fellowship among creatures in giving and receiving, by which they subsist through one another, so that one cannot live without another. For what creature in the whole world can be found that has no need of its fellow creature? Certainly none. Consequently every creature that has life, sense, or motion must be a number or a multiplicity. Indeed, it must be a number without number, or infinite with respect to any created intellect. But it may be asked whether the central or governing spirit must not be only one single atom. Otherwise how can it be called a center, and the chief spirit, ruling over the rest? I answer no. This center itself, the chief and governing spirit, is manifold, for the reasons given above. But it is called a center because all the other spirits converge on it, as lines from all parts of the circumference meet at the center and go out from it again. And indeed the unity of the spirits that make up this center, or governing spirit, is firmer and more tenacious than that of all the other spirits. These others are, as it were, the angels or ministering spirits of their prince or captain. In a human being this central unity is so great that nothing can dissolve it, although the unity of the great mass of ministering spirits, which do not belong to the composition of this center, can be dissolved. Hence the soul of every human being will remain a whole, everlasting soul, of endless duration, so that it may receive the proper fruit of its labor. The universal law of justice, which is written on everything, requires this, and it acts as a very strong and indissoluble bond that preserves this unity. For what is more fitting to this infinite justice and wisdom than this? Those who have joined together and agreed to work either good or evil should together receive their due reward or punishment. This could not happen if they were dispersed or separated from one another. The same reasoning proves that the central spirits of all other creatures also remain indissoluble. New central spirits are continually formed in the production of things, yet no central spirit is dissolved. Instead, each is

advanced further, or at least diminished, according to its present worth or unworthiness, capacity or incapacity.

Chapter VIII

Further proofs, and the union of soul and body
How the soul moves the body and feels its pains; food turned into spirits; good and bad angels; Scripture.

8.1 To prove that spirit and body do not differ in essence but in degree, I shall draw my fourth argument from the intimate bond or union that exists between bodies and spirits. By means of this union, spirits rule over the bodies they are united with; they move them from place to place and use them as instruments in their various operations. Now suppose spirit and body are so contrary to each other that a spirit is only life, or a living and sensing substance, and a body a mass that is merely dead; and suppose a spirit is penetrable and indiscerpible, and a body impenetrable and discerpible, which are all contrary attributes. What, I ask, is it that joins or unites them together? Or what are the links or chains by which they are so firmly connected, and for so long a time? Moreover, when the spirit or soul is separated from the body, so that it no longer has control or power over it to move it as before, what is the cause of this separation? It may be said that the vital agreement the soul has with the body is the cause of their union, and that when the body decays this vital agreement ceases. I answer that we must first ask what this vital agreement consists in. If they cannot tell us, they are merely trifling with empty words, which make a sound but lack meaning. And certainly, in the sense in which they take body and spirit, there is no agreement at all between them. For a body is always a dead thing, void of life and sense, no less when the spirit is in it than when it has left it. So there is no agreement at all between

them. And if there is any agreement, it will surely remain the same both when the body is sound and when it is decayed. They may deny this on the ground that a spirit requires an organized body. By means of it the spirit performs the vital acts of the external senses and moves and carries the body from place to place, and this organic action ceases when the body decays. This certainly does nothing to resolve the difficulty. For why does the spirit require such an organized body? For example, why does it require a bodily eye, so wonderfully formed and organized, for me to see with? Why does it need corporeal light in order to see corporeal objects? Or why must the image of the object be sent to it through the eye in order for it to see it? If the spirit were entirely nothing but spirit, and in no way corporeal, why would it need so many different corporeal organs, so far removed from its nature? Furthermore, how can a spirit move its body, or any of its members, if a spirit (as they claim) is of such a nature that no part of its body can resist it in the least? One body usually resists another that moves it, because of its impenetrability, but on their view the body offers the spirit no such resistance. For if a spirit could penetrate all bodies so easily, why does it not leave the body behind when it moves from place to place, since it can pass out of it so easily without the least resistance? For surely this is the cause of all the motions we see in the world where one thing moves another: both are impenetrable in the sense described. Without this impenetrability one creature could not move another, because the one would not oppose the other or resist it at all. We have an example of this in the sails of a ship, by which the wind drives the ship. It drives it all the more forcefully, the fewer holes, vents, and openings it finds in the sails it blows against. If, on the contrary, nets were spread instead of sails, the wind would pass through them more freely, and the ship would surely be moved very little by them, however violently the wind blew. From this we see how impenetrability causes resistance, and resistance produces motion. But if there were no impenetrability, as in the case of body and spirit on

their view, there could be no resistance. Consequently the spirit could produce no motion in the body.

HOW GOD MOVES BODIES

God gives motion itself, while the soul only directs it, and sin is disordered motion.

8.2 It may be objected that God is wholly incorporeal and intrinsically present in all bodies, and yet moves bodies wherever he pleases and is the first mover of all things, though nothing is impenetrable to him. I answer that the motion by which God moves a body differs enormously from the way the soul moves the body. The will of God, which gave being to bodies, also gave them motion, so that motion itself is from God, and all motion happens by his will. For just as a creature cannot give being to itself, neither can it move itself; "for in him we live, and move, and have our being." So motion and essence come from the same cause, namely God the Creator, who remains unmoved in himself. Nor is he carried from place to place, since he is equally present everywhere and gives being to creatures.[1] But the case is very different when the soul moves the body. The soul is not the author of motion, but only determines it toward this or that particular thing. And the soul itself is moved from place to place along with the body. If the body is imprisoned or held in chains, the soul cannot free or release itself from the prison or the chains. So it would be a very unfit comparison to illustrate the motion the soul produces in the body by the example of God moving his creatures. Indeed, the difference is as great as if someone set out to show how a carpenter builds a ship or a house by the example of God creating the first matter or substance. There is certainly just as great a disparity or disproportion there. God gave being to creatures, but a carpenter does not give being to the wood from which he builds a ship.

But no one should conclude, from my saying that all the motion of creatures is from God, that he is or can be the author

1 Acts 17:28.

or cause of sin. The power of moving is from God, but sin is not in the least from God. It is from the creature, which has abused this power and determined it to some other end than it should. So sin is ἀταξία: a disordered determination of motion, or of the power of moving, away from its proper place, state, or condition to some other. For[2] example, a ship is moved by the wind but steered by the sailor, so that it goes to this or that place. The sailor is not the author or cause of the wind; but when the wind blows, he makes either good or bad use of it. Either he brings the ship to the intended place and is praised for it, or he handles her so badly that she is shipwrecked, for which he is blamed and deserves punishment.

Moreover, why is the spirit or soul so susceptible to bodily pains? If it has nothing of corporeality, or bodily nature, when it is united with the body, why is it grieved or wounded when the body is wounded, which is of an entirely different nature? For since the soul can penetrate the body so easily, how can anything corporeal hurt it? If it is said that only the body feels the pain, and not the soul, this is contrary to their own principles, since they maintain that the body has neither life nor sense. Suppose instead it is granted that the soul is of one nature and substance with the body, although it is many degrees more excellent in life and spirituality, as well as in swiftness of motion, penetrability, and various other perfections. Then all the difficulties mentioned vanish. It will be easy to conceive how body and soul are united, how the soul moves the body, and how it suffers by it or with it. The opinion of the Hebrews appears from a passage in *Kabbala denudata*, vol. 1, part 3, dissertation 8, chap. 13, p. 171 and following.

8.3 For we can easily understand how one body is united with another, through the true agreement that one has with another in its own nature. In this way the subtlest and most spiritual body can be united with a body that is very dense and thick. It happens by means of certain bodies that share in subtlety and

2 ἀταξία (ataxia): disorder, lack of order.

density in various degrees and lie between the two extremes. These middle bodies are indeed the links and chains by which the soul, which is so subtle and spiritual, is joined to so dense a body. If these middle spirits cease or are absent, the union is broken or dissolved. On the same foundation we can easily understand how the soul moves the body: namely, as one subtle body can move another body that is dense and thick. And since body itself is a sensible life, or an intellectual substance, it is no less clearly evident how one body can wound, grieve, gratify, or please another. Things of one nature, or of a like nature, can easily affect each other. Similar difficulties can be settled by the same argument: namely, how spirits move spirits, and how some spirits strive and contend with other spirits; and also the unity, concord, and friendship that good spirits honor among themselves. For if all spirits could be intrinsically present with one another, how could they dispute or contend about place? And how could one expel or drive out another? Yet some few who have been acquainted with their own hearts have known from experience that there is such an expulsion and conflict of spirits, especially of the good against the evil. Someone may say that the Spirit of God and of Christ is intrinsically present in all things, and yet contends and makes war against the devil and his spirit in the human heart. I answer that this too is a very unfit comparison, since here God and creatures are compared in their operations, and his ways are infinitely superior to ours. Nevertheless, even in this case a strong objection still remains. For when the Spirits of God and Christ strive against the devil and the evil spirits in the human heart, they unite themselves with certain good spirits, which they have sanctified and prepared for this union. By these, as by a vehicle or a triumphal chariot, they contend against and engage those malignant and wicked spirits. And insofar as these evil spirits contend against those good spirits in the human heart, they contend against God and Christ; and these good spirits are the spirits of this faithful and pious person, who has become good although before he was evil. For God and Christ help every pious person to prevail over

the evil spirits in this conflict, but allow the wicked and unfaithful to be taken captive and overcome. God helps none but those who fear, love, and obey him, and trust in his power, goodness, and truth. With such people he is united, and their good spirits are like so many swords and darts, by which those dark and unclean spirits are wounded and driven back. But suppose it is asked how the human soul can be united with God, even in a state of the highest purity, since he is pure spirit, while the soul, even in its greatest purity, always shares in corporeality. I answer: this is done by Jesus Christ, who is the true and proper *medium* between the two. For Christ and the soul can be united without a *medium*, because of the great affinity and likeness between them. Those doctors who say that spirit and body are of natures so contrary to each other cannot demonstrate any such affinity between spirit and body.

FIFTH REASON: SPIRITS IN EVERY BODY

Earth and water are full of spirits, so body is condensed spirit and spirit subtle body.

8.4 I shall draw a fifth argument from what we observe in all visible bodies, such as earth, water, stones, wood, and so on. What an abundance of spirits there is in all these things! For earth and water continually produce animals, as they have done from the beginning. A pond filled with water can produce fish, though none were ever put there to multiply or breed. And since all other things come more originally from earth and water, it necessarily follows that the spirits of all animals were in the water. That is why it is said in Genesis that the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters: namely, so that from them he might produce whatever was created afterward.

8.5 But it may be said that this argument does not prove that all spirits are bodies. It proves only that all bodies have in them the spirits of all animals, so that every body has a spirit in it, and so contains both a spirit and a body. On this view, although the two are united in this way, they still remain different in nature

from each other, and so cannot be changed into one another. To this I answer: suppose every body, even the smallest, has in it the spirits of all animals and of other things, just as matter is said to have all forms in it. I now ask: does a body have all those spirits in it actually, or only potentially? If actually, how is it possible that so many spirits, essentially distinct from body, can actually exist in their distinct essences in so small a body (even the smallest that can be conceived), unless by intrinsic presence? But intrinsic presence cannot be communicated to any creature, as has already been proved. Again, if all kinds of spirits are in any body, even the smallest, how is it that this animal is produced from this body, and not another? Indeed, how is it that all kinds of animals are not produced immediately out of one and the same body? Experience denies this. For we see that nature keeps her order in all her operations. So one animal is formed from another, and one species proceeds from another, both when it ascends to a further perfection and when it descends to a baser state and condition. But suppose they say that all spirits are contained in any body not actually, in their distinct essences, but only potentially, as they put it. Then it must be granted that the body and all those spirits are one and the same thing, that is, that a body can be turned into them. So when we say that wood is potentially fire, we mean that it can be turned into fire; and that water is potentially air, we mean that it can be changed into air.

Moreover, if spirits and bodies are so inseparably united that no body can exist without a spirit, indeed without many spirits, this is certainly a strong argument that they are of one original nature and substance. Otherwise we could not conceive why, in so many varied and wonderful dissolutions and separations of things, they are never finally separated from one another, as we see that subtler things can be separated from denser ones. And how is it that when a body is finally corrupted, another species of things is generated out of this corruption? So animals come from corrupted earth and water. Indeed, stones, if they putrefy or rot, pass into animals. So too dung, or other putrefied matter,

generates animals, all of which have spirits. But how does the corruption or dissolution of a body lead to a new generation, and of animals at that? It may be said that the spirits of those animals are, as it were, loosed from their bonds and set at liberty by this dissolution, and that they can then form or fashion a new body for themselves out of that matter by virtue of their plastic faculty. To this I reply: how did the original body hold them captive? Was it because it was so hard and thick? If so, it will be evident that those spirits are nothing but subtle bodies, since the hardness and density of a body could imprison them so that they could not pass out. For if a spirit could penetrate the hardest body as easily as the softest and most fluid, it could pass out of the one as easily as out of the other, and there would be no need of death and corruption for a new life or generation. So this kind of captivity of spirits in certain hard bodies, and their release from it when the bodies become soft, gives us a clear argument that spirit and body are originally of one nature and substance. A body is nothing but a fixed and condensed spirit, and a spirit nothing but a subtle and volatile body.

Here it should be noted that in all hard bodies there exist many spirits that are, as it were, imprisoned in those dense bodies and united with them. This holds for stones, whether common or precious, and likewise for metals, herbs, trees, and animals, indeed for all human bodies. These spirits therefore cannot flow forth or fly out into other bodies until they have passed through death or dissolution. But there are also many other very subtle spirits that continually flow out of such bodies. Because of their subtlety, the hardness of the body in which they lay hidden cannot hold them back. These spirits are the subtler productions, or offspring, of the denser spirits held in the body;[3] for although those denser spirits are held there, they are not idle in their prison. Their bodies are, as it were, workshops in which they work out those subtler spirits, which afterward flow out as colors, sounds, smells, tastes, and various other

3 The 1692 text reads “Sutures”. The mother-and-children image in the next sentence shows that “offspring” is meant.

powers and virtues. So the dense body and the spirits contained in it are, as it were, the mother of those subtler spirits, which take the place of children. For nature always works toward a further perfection of subtlety and spirituality, since this is the most natural property of all motion and operation. All motion wears down and divides, and so makes a thing subtle and spiritual. It is the same in the human body. Food and drink are first changed into chyle, then into blood, and afterward into spirits, which are nothing but blood brought to perfection. And these spirits, whether good or bad, keep advancing to greater subtlety or spirituality. By these spirits that come from the blood we see, hear, smell, taste, feel, and think. Indeed, by them we meditate, love, hate, and do everything whatsoever that we do. From them also comes the seed by which humankind is propagated. And from them especially comes the voice and speech of a human being, which is full of spirits (formed in the heart), either good or evil, as Christ has taught: "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks," and "a good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things," etc. Also: "what goes into a man does not defile him, but what comes out of him." For in the same way as they come out of him, so they will return into him again.

8.6 And these are a person's own angels, or ministering spirits (although there are other angels as well, both good and evil, that come to people). Christ speaks of these angels when he speaks of those little ones who believe in him: "Their angels," he says, "always behold the face of my heavenly Father." These are the angels of those believers who become, as it were, like little children.

SIXTH REASON: SCRIPTURE

Biblical texts show that all things have life in some degree.

8.7 I shall draw my sixth and last argument from certain texts of Scripture, from both the Old and the New Testament, which prove in plain and express words that all things have life and truly live in some degree or measure. In Acts 17:27 it is said, "He

gives life to all things." Again, in 1 Timothy 6:13 it is said of God "that he quickens all things." And in Luke 20:38 he is called "not the God of the dead, but of the living." Though this is meant chiefly of human beings, it is also to be understood generally of all other creatures: he is the God of all those things that have their regeneration and resurrection in their kind, no less than human beings have in theirs. For death is not the annihilation of these things but a change from one kind and degree of life to another. That is also why the Apostle proves and illustrates the resurrection of the dead by a grain of wheat, which falls into the ground, dies, and rises again exceedingly fruitful.

Chapter IX

Against Descartes, Hobbes and Spinoza
Why this philosophy is neither Cartesian nor Hobbesian nor Spinozist; life and perception belong to body; motion and vital action.

9.1 From what has just been said, and from the various reasons given to show that spirit and body are originally, in their first substance, one and the same thing, it plainly appears that the so-called philosophers who have taught otherwise, whether ancient or modern, have generally erred. They laid a bad foundation at the very beginning. As a result the whole house and superstructure is so feeble, and indeed so useless, that the entire edifice must in time decay. From this absurd foundation have arisen very many gross and dangerous errors, not only in philosophy but also in so-called theology. They have done great harm to humankind, hindered true piety, and brought contempt on God's most glorious name. This will easily appear, both from what has already been said and from what will be said in this chapter.

NEITHER DESCARTES NOR HOBBES

Conway distinguishes her philosophy from Descartes's dead matter and from Hobbes's and Spinoza's merging of God and creatures.

9.2 No one can object that all this philosophy is nothing but that of Descartes or Hobbes in a new mask. For, first, as regards the Cartesian philosophy: it says that every body is a mere dead mass, not only empty of every kind of life and sense but utterly

incapable of them for all eternity. This great error must also be charged to all those who affirm that body and spirit are contrary things, not convertible into one another, so that they deny body all life and sense. This is quite contrary to the foundations of our philosophy.[1] So far is it from being a Cartesian principle in a new mask that it may truly be called anti-Cartesian with respect to their fundamental principles. Yet it cannot be denied that Descartes taught many excellent and ingenious things about the mechanical part of natural operations, and about how all natural motions proceed according to mechanical rules and laws. Indeed, nature herself, that is, the creature, has in itself an excellent mechanical skill and wisdom (given to it by God, who is the fountain of all wisdom), by which it operates. But nature and her operations are far more than merely mechanical. Nature is not a mere organic body, like a clock, in which there is no vital principle of motion. It is a living body, having life and sense, and such a body is far more sublime than a mere mechanism or mechanical motion.

9.3 But, second, Hobbes's opinion is even more contrary to our philosophy than that of Descartes. For Descartes acknowledged God to be plainly immaterial, an incorporeal spirit. Hobbes affirms that God himself is material and corporeal, indeed nothing but matter and body. So he confounds God and the creatures in their essences and denies that there is any essential distinction between them. These, and many more of the worst consequences, are the dictates of Hobbes's philosophy. To it may be added that of Spinoza, for Spinoza also confounds God and the creatures and makes a single being of both. All of this is diametrically opposed to the philosophy we present here.[2]

9.4 But some who have undertaken to refute the so-called philosophy of Hobbes and Spinoza have worked from false and feeble principles. This has given those two a greater advantage

1 René Descartes (1596–1650), French philosopher who divided created things into thinking mind and extended matter. Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679), English philosopher and materialist, author of *Leviathan* (1651).

2 Baruch (Benedict) de Spinoza (1632–1677), Dutch philosopher whose *Ethics* (1677) holds that there is only one substance, "God or Nature."

over their critics. In effect the critics have not refuted them at all, and have instead exposed themselves all the more to contempt and laughter.

But suppose it is objected that our philosophy seems at least very like that of Hobbes. First, he taught that all creatures were originally one substance, from the lowest and most ignoble to the highest and noblest: from the smallest worm, insect, or fly to the most glorious angel, indeed from the least grain of dust or sand to the most excellent of all creatures. Second, he taught that every creature is material and corporeal, indeed matter and body itself. It would follow that its noblest actions are either material and corporeal, or take place in a certain corporeal manner. I answer the first point as follows. I grant that all creatures are originally one substance, from the lowest to the highest, and are therefore convertible or changeable from one of their natures into another. Hobbes says the same, but that does not count against its truth. The same holds for other parts of that philosophy where Hobbes affirms something true: that does not make it a Hobbism, or an opinion of Hobbes alone.

9.5 Moreover, this principle is so far from defending them in their errors that nothing refutes them more strongly. For example, the Hobbists argue that all things are one, because we see that all visible things can be changed into one another. Indeed, all visible things can be changed into invisible ones. Water becomes air, and wood, when burned, is (for the most part) changed into a certain invisible substance so subtle that it escapes all observation by our senses. In addition, all invisible things can become visible, as when water comes from air, etc. From this he concludes that nothing is so low that it cannot rise to the highest.

Now, in answering this argument, his adversaries generally deny the antecedent and affirm, on the contrary, that no species of things is convertible into another. When wood is burned, many say that wood is composed of two substances, namely matter and form. The matter, they say, remains the same, while the form of the wood is destroyed or annihilated, and a new

form of fire is produced in this matter. So according to them there is a continual annihilation of real substances, and production of new ones, in this world. But this is so frivolous that many others reject it in the case of wood changed into fire and afterward into smoke and ashes. Yet they still persist in the same error in other transmutations, as when wood is changed into an animal, for we often see living creatures generated from rotten wood, and from dung too. Here they deny that the wood is changed into an animal. They say that wood is nothing but matter, and matter has no life, nor any capacity for life or sense. Therefore this animal, which has life and sense, must have them from elsewhere. It must have a spirit or soul in it that is not part of its body and does not proceed from it, but is sent into it from outside.

But ask them where this spirit is sent from, and who sends it, and also why a spirit of this species is sent rather than one of another. Here they are at a loss and give in to their adversaries.

Our philosophy set out above therefore contributes more strongly to refuting the Hobbesian and Spinozist philosophy. It holds that all kinds of creatures can be changed into one another, so that the lowest can become the highest, and the highest (considered originally in its own proper nature) can become the lowest. This happens according to the course and succession that divine wisdom has ordained, so that one change follows another in a certain order. Thus *A* must first be turned into *B* before it can be turned into *C*, and must be turned into *C* before it can be changed into *D*, etc.

But we deny the consequence, namely that God and creatures are one substance.

Creatures pass from one species into another in all their transmutations: from a stone into earth, from earth into grass, from grass into a sheep, from a sheep into human flesh, from human flesh into the humblest spirits of a human being, and from these into his noblest spirits. But in none of these can there ever be a progression or ascent to God. He is the highest of all beings, and his nature always infinitely surpasses a creature

raised to its highest perfection. For the nature of God is in every way unchangeable, so that it does not admit the least shadow of change. But it is the nature of a creature to be changeable.

WHAT BODY REALLY IS

Body has life, perception and spirit as attributes, not only extension and shape.

9.6 Second, it may be objected that according to this philosophy every creature is material and corporeal, indeed body and matter itself, as Hobbes teaches. I answer that by material and corporeal, and by matter and body, something is understood here far different from what Hobbes understood. It is something that was never revealed to Hobbes or Descartes except in a dream. For what do they understand by matter and body? What attributes do they ascribe to them? Certainly none but extension and impenetrability, which are nevertheless only one attribute. Capacity for shape and mobility may also be referred to it. But suppose these are distinct attributes. That certainly accomplishes nothing and will never help us understand what that excellent substance is which they call body and matter. For they never got beyond the husk or shell, nor ever reached the kernel. They touch only the surface and never discern the center. They were plainly ignorant of the noblest and most excellent attributes of that substance which they call body and matter, and understood nothing of them. But if it is asked what those more excellent attributes are, I answer: spirit, or life, and light. Under these I include a capacity for every kind of feeling, sense and knowledge, love, joy and fruition, and every kind of power and virtue that the noblest creatures have or can have. So even the basest and most contemptible creature, indeed dust and sand, can be capable of all those perfections. It becomes capable of them through various successive transmutations from one thing into another. According to the natural order of things, these require long periods of time to be completed. The absolute power of God, had it pleased him, could indeed have accelerated

or hastened all things and accomplished it in a single moment. But the wisdom of God saw it to be more fitting that all things should proceed in their natural order and course. In this way the fertility or fruitfulness with which he has endowed every being can appear. The creatures have time, by working, to keep advancing themselves to greater perfection, as instruments of the divine wisdom, goodness, and power that operates in and with them. For the creature has the greater joy when it possesses what it has as the fruit of its own labor.

But this capacity for the perfections just mentioned, life and understanding or knowledge, is an attribute quite distinct from the former ones, namely extension and figure. In the same way a vital action is plainly distinct from local or mechanical motion. Yet it is not, and cannot be, separated from local motion, and in all its concourse with the creatures it always uses local motion, at least as its instrument.[3]

9.7 I say that life and figure are distinct attributes of one substance. One and the same body can be transformed into all kinds of figures, and the more perfect figure includes the more imperfect. In the same way one and the same body can be transformed from one degree of life to another more perfect one, and the more perfect always includes the lower in itself. We have an example of figure in a triangular prism. This is the first figure of all rectilinear solid bodies into which a body can be converted. From this it can be turned into a cube, which is a more perfect figure and includes a prism in itself. From a cube it can be turned into a more perfect figure that comes nearer to a sphere, and from this into another that is nearer still. And so it ascends from one more imperfect figure to another more perfect, *ad infinitum*. For there are no bounds here, and it can never be said that this body cannot be changed into a more perfect figure. What is meant is that the body is made of plane, straight-lined sides; such a body can always be changed into a more perfect figure, yet it can never reach the perfection of a sphere,

3 The 1692 English is garbled here. The sense, confirmed in 9.7, is that life and knowledge are distinct from extension and figure.

although it always comes nearer to it. The case is the same with the various degrees of life, which indeed have a beginning but no end. So the creature is always capable of a further and more perfect degree of life, *ad infinitum*, and yet can never come to be equal with God. For he is always infinitely more perfect than a creature at its highest elevation or perfection. In the same way a sphere is the most perfect of all figures, and none of the others can reach it.

9.8 Thus life and figure are distinct but not contrary attributes of one and the same substance, and figure serves the operations of life. We see this in the body of a human being or an animal. The figure of the eye serves sight, and the figure of the ear serves hearing. The figure of the mouth, teeth, lips, and tongue serves speech. The figure of the hands and fingers serves work, and the figure of the feet serves walking. In the same way the figures of all the other members have their use and contribute greatly to the vital operations that the spirit performs in these members. Indeed, the figure of the whole body is better suited to the proper operations of human life than any other figure that exists or could be made. So life and figure fit very well together in one body or substance, where figure is an instrument of life, without which no vital operation can be performed.

VITAL ACTION AND LOCAL MOTION

Vital action is distinct from mechanical motion but uses it as its instrument across distances.

9.9 Likewise, local and mechanical motion (that is, the carrying of a body from place to place) is a mode or operation distinct from vital action or operation. Yet the two are inseparable. A vital action can in no way exist without all local motion, because local motion is its instrument. So the eye cannot see unless light enters it. Light is a motion, and it stirs up a vital action in the eye, which is seeing. And so it is in all the other vital operations throughout the body. But an action of life is a far nobler and more divine manner of operation than local motion.

Yet both belong to one substance and fit well together. For as the eye receives into itself the light from the object it sees outside, so it also sends the same light to the object. In this spirit and life there is a vital action, which unites the object and the sight.

Therefore Hobbes, and all who side with him, err gravely when they teach that sense and knowledge are nothing but a reaction of corporeal particles on one another. By reaction he means nothing but local and mechanical motion. But in truth sense and knowledge are something far nobler and more divine than any local or mechanical motion of any particles whatsoever. They are the motion or action of life, which uses local motion as its instrument. The service of that instrument consists in stirring up a vital action in the subject or percipient. And a vital action, like local motion, can be transmitted through various bodies, even when they are very far apart. Those bodies are thereby united, and this happens without any new passage of body or matter. For example, if a very long wooden beam is moved at one end from north to south, the other end will necessarily move too. The action is transmitted through the whole beam without any particles of matter being sent from one end to the other to promote the motion, because the beam itself is sufficient to transmit it. In the same way a vital action can pass, together with local motion, from one thing to another, even at a great distance, where there is an apt and fit *medium* to transmit it. And here we can observe a kind of divine spirituality or subtlety in every motion, and so in every action of life, of which no created body or substance is capable, namely intrinsic presence. As was proved before, this belongs to no created substance, and yet it belongs to every motion or action whatsoever. For motion or action is not some matter or substance, but only a manner of its being. It is therefore intrinsically present in the subject whose *modus*, or mode, it is. It can pass from body to body at a great distance if it finds a fit *medium* to transmit it, and the stronger the motion, the farther it reaches. So when a stone is thrown into still water, it causes a motion in every direction from the center to the circumference. It forms ever larger

circles, reaching farther the longer it lasts, until at last it vanishes from our sight. Then, without doubt, it goes on making invisible circles for a longer space of time, which our dull senses cannot perceive. This motion is transmitted from the center to the circumference. It is not carried there by any body or substance that brings this motion with it from the stone. The same holds for external light. Since it is an action or motion stirred up by some luminous body, it can be transmitted through glass, crystal, or any other transparent body. No substance, body, or matter need be carried from the luminous body from which that action proceeded. Not that I would deny that an abundance of subtle matter continually flows from all luminous bodies, so that the whole substance of a burning candle is spent in such emanations. This matter has in it the motion or action we call light. But this motion or action can be increased, for example by crystal, where those subtle emanations of bodies can be held back, so that they cannot pass through, at least not in such abundance as would suffice to communicate the whole light. For crystal, which transmits light so easily, is so hard and solid. How could it receive so many bodies and transmit them so easily through itself, when other bodies that are neither so hard nor so solid hinder or resist them? For wood is neither so hard nor so solid as crystal, and yet crystal is transparent and wood is not. And wood is certainly more porous than crystal, because it is less solid. Consequently the light does not enter through the pores of the crystal but through its very substance, yet without adhering to it or causing any swelling or increase in quantity. It enters by a certain intrinsic presence, because it is not a body or substance but a mere action or motion. Now crystal is a fitter *medium* than wood for receiving this motion we call light, and that is why light passes through the one and not the other. And as the motions and operations of bodies are very diverse, so every motion requires its own proper *medium* to transmit it. It is therefore clear that motion can be transmitted through various bodies by a different kind of penetration from any that body or matter, however subtle, is able to make, namely by intrinsic

presence. And if mere local or mechanical motion can do this, then a vital action, which is a nobler kind of motion, can certainly do the same. And if it can penetrate those bodies and passes through them by intrinsic presence, then it can be transmitted from one body to another in a single moment, or rather requires no time at all. I mean that motion or action itself does not require the least time for its transmission. The body in which the motion is carried from place to place, however, must take some time, greater or less, according to the quality of the body and the force of the motion that carries it.

So we see how every motion and action, considered in the abstract, has a wonderful subtlety or spirituality beyond all created substances whatsoever, so that neither time nor place can limit it. And yet motions and actions are nothing but modes or manners of created substances, namely their strength, power, and virtue. By these they can extend into great substances, beyond what the substance itself can make. And so we can divide extension into material and virtual, and every creature has this twofold extension. Material extension is what matter, body, or substance has when considered apart from all motion or action. This extension, properly speaking, is neither greater nor less, because it always remains the same. Virtual extension is a motion or action that a creature has, whether given immediately by God or received immediately from a fellow creature. What is given immediately by God (from whom the creature also has its being), and is the natural and proper effect of its essence, is, more properly speaking, the creature's own motion, proceeding from its innermost parts. It may therefore be called internal motion. External motion, by contrast, comes only from another, and so in that respect may be called foreign. And when this external motion tries to carry a body, or anything else, to a place to which it has no proper natural inclination, it is preternatural and violent, as when a stone is thrown up into the air. This motion, being preternatural and violent, is purely local and mechanical and in no way vital, because it does not proceed from the life of the thing so moved. But every motion that pro-

ceeds from the creature's own life and will is vital. This I call a motion of life. It is not purely local and mechanical like the other, but has life and vital virtue in it. And this is the virtual extension of a creature, which is greater or less according to the kind or degree of life with which the creature is endowed. For when a creature arrives at a nobler kind and degree of life, it receives greater power and virtue to move itself and to transmit its vital motions to the greatest distance.

But for many people it is a matter of great debate how motion or action can be transmitted from one body to another. Motion is not a body or substance. And if it is only a motion of body, how can it properly pass with its own subject into another? For the very being of a *modus*, or mode, consists in existing or inhering in its own body. The answer to this objection that seems best to me is this. Motion is not propagated from one body to another by local motion, because motion itself is not moved. It only moves the body in which it is. For if motion could be propagated by local motion, this motion would be propagated by another, and that one again by another, and so *ad infinitum*, which is absurd. Therefore this propagation takes place, as it were, by real production or creation. Only God and Christ can create the substance of a thing, and no creature can create or give being to any substance, not even as an instrument. But a creature, acting not of itself but in subordination to God as his instrument, can give existence to motion and vital action. In this way the motion in one creature can produce motion in another. And this is all a creature can do toward moving itself or its fellow creatures, as the instrument of God. By these motions no new substance is created, but only new species of things, so that creatures can be multiplied in their kinds while one acts on and moves another. And this is the whole work of the creature, or of creation, as the instrument of God. But if it moves against the will of him whose instrument it is, it sins and is punished for it. Yet God, as was said before, is not the cause of sin. For when a creature sins, it abuses the power God has granted it. So the creature is to blame, and God is entirely free of every spot or blemish of it. Let us

therefore apply what has already been said about the attributes of a body. A body has not only quantity and figure but also life. It is movable not only locally and mechanically but also vitally, and it can transmit its vital action wherever it pleases, provided it has a suitably disposed *medium*. If it has none, it can extend itself by the subtle emanation of its parts, which is its fittest and most proper *medium* for receiving and transmitting its vital action. Once this is applied, it will be easy to answer all the arguments by which some try to prove that a body is wholly incapable of sense and knowledge. It can also easily be demonstrated how a given body can advance by degrees to such perfection that it becomes capable not only of the sense and knowledge that animals have, but of every kind of perfection whatsoever that can be found in any human being or angel. In this way we can understand the words of Christ, "from stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham," without resorting to some strained metaphor. And if anyone were to deny this omnipotence of God, namely that "God is able from stones to raise up children to Abraham," that would certainly be the greatest presumption.