

FORGOTTEN TEXTS
OF CHRISTIAN MYSTICISM

THE GERMAN THEOLOGY

Der Franckforter · Theologia Deutsch

A Reading Translation
German Text and Close Translation

Translation, notes and glossary
Priest Sergei Kouidy

LIFE FOR GOD CHURCH

2026

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COMPLETE ENGLISH EDITION

Part I. A Reading Translation

Part II. German Text and Close Translation

English edition 1.0 · Complete treatise

Translated from the medieval German, with notes and glossary

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Preface to the English Edition

To the Reader

The German Theology, also known as *Der Franckforter*, “The Frankfurter”, asks how we may relinquish our claim to being, goodness and a will of our own, and live Christ’s life. Its author is anonymous. The medieval prologue associates him with the house of the Teutonic Order at Frankfurt. This is not a textbook with definitions fixed once for all. Its thought returns to the same words, approaches them from different directions, asks unsettling questions and works through paradox.

This edition contains two complete English translations of the same German text. The first is intended for continuous reading; the second places a close translation beside the German. Both were translated directly from the medieval German, not through the Russian edition or an existing English translation. The completed Russian edition provides the model for the book’s structure and editorial material. In both English versions, readability must preserve the meaning: no negative, condition, comparison, repetition or qualification may be removed when the argument depends on it. Where the source is difficult, that difficulty is not concealed by confident paraphrase.

The Text Behind the Translation

No autograph of the author is known in the textual tradition used here. “Directly from the original” therefore means directly from a medieval German text established from surviving witnesses. Our basis is Wolfgang von Hinten’s critical edition, *Der Franckforter* (*Theologia Deutsch*), Munich and Zurich, 1982, pp. 67–154. A modern German rewriting has not been substituted for that basis.

The earliest dated witness included by Hinten, H of 1453, contains only Chapters 7–9. The earliest complete manuscript, E, is dated 1465. Hinten nevertheless bases his full text on D of 1477: in his comparison, D preserves an older linguistic layer and was copied appreciably more

carefully than E. A later manuscript date does not by itself prove a later origin for each reading. C, dated 1497, already represents a substantially expanded version.

The present book uses the complete critical text based on D, with the editor's corrections from other witnesses. It is neither a word-for-word transcription of a single manuscript nor a claim that D is the oldest surviving copy. H is consulted through its published readings, and its distinctive introduction is translated separately. We do not have a new complete transcription of H and do not label Chapters 7–9 as translations exclusively from it. The reference section distinguishes each source's date, extent and actual role.

This arrangement preserves the complete treatise and identifies the origin of difficult passages. Each chapter in Part II begins with its source and the printed pages of the critical edition. Notes explain significant readings, restorations and uncertainties. The critical editor's corrections already belong to the German text. Our two independent choices—the restored question in § 3.2 and the word adopted in § 16.7—are additionally enclosed in square brackets in the German and both English versions.

The critical edition has 53 chapters. What Pfeiffer numbers Chapter 54 corresponds to the end of Chapter 53, here §§ 53.7–53.8. Its earlier form and concluding prayer are translated in full. The medieval prologue also appears in both parts. The headings of the medieval contents list are translated at the chapters and form the basis of this book's contents; the same German list is not printed a second time.

How to Use This Book

Begin with Part I for continuous reading. Its sentences are divided and connected for readable English while preserving the German argument and its sequence. Paragraph divisions need not reproduce the source mechanically. A shorter English sentence is not permission to omit a part of the argument.

For detailed study, turn to the same chapter in Part II. The German heading is followed by alternating German passages and close English

translations. § 7.2 means the second passage of Chapter 7. These passage numbers belong to this edition, not to the manuscripts. Page numbers such as “pp. 78–79” beside a passage refer to Hinten's printed edition, not to this book. The contents and links between the two parts help locate corresponding passages.

The close translation follows the order of thought, repeated vocabulary and, where possible, the structure of the German sentence. It is not a mechanical substitution of one English word for each German word. Older grammar, multiple negatives and words with several meanings require contextual judgement. “Somethingness”, “I-ness” and “mineness” distinguish different German terms; the glossary explains them. The reading version often unfolds these meanings in ordinary words.

The notes following each chapter explain difficult meanings, manuscript readings and biblical references. They are editorial explanations, not a continuation of the author's words. Where a heading and its chapter do not fully agree, or a reading is internally contradictory, the notes say so. A possible interpretation is not presented as a certain correction.

The appendices present the early witness H and selected substantial additions from C. These later additions give access to the expanded form known through Pfeiffer's edition, while keeping its words distinct from the earlier main text. They are a selection of significant expansions and replacements, not every spelling or verbal difference in C. Chapter and passage labels identify where to compare them; the source description specifies whether a passage is added or replaces earlier wording.

The glossary explains the English equivalents used here and points to chapters in which the terms are developed. The numbering table helps readers consult an older edition with 54 chapters. The source list identifies the German basis and the principal historical dictionaries.

Language and Fidelity

The German retains the historical spelling of the adopted text. Letters such as v and u, i and j, and forms such as got, seyn and vnd have not been modernised. Printed line numbers, manuscript leaf references and apparatus

marks have been removed; spacing and quotation marks have been regularised for reading. These presentation changes do not replace the source's words.

Biblical passages are translated as the treatise quotes them. Its author sometimes combines verses, paraphrases them or gives them a different form. A familiar published English Bible version has therefore not replaced the German. If the source names the wrong biblical chapter, its reference remains, with the error explained in a note.

Conditional examples about angels, the devil, hell and heaven retain their “if”. Speeches of the false light are distinguished from the author's replies. Leiden is translated according to context as “undergo”, “suffer” or “bear”. Willingness to undergo God's action is not converted into a demand to seek pain. The treatise itself distinguishes undergoing from acting and expressly permits avoiding suffering without sin.

The English uses present-day grammar and British spelling, with the source's sharper or unfamiliar expressions retained where they matter. “Human being” usually renders Mensch in the close version; the reading version also uses “person”, “we” or “someone” where the general reference is unchanged. Capital letters in “the Good”, “the Perfect” and “the Eternal” sometimes identify divine names; they do not remove the distinctions made by the argument.

Square brackets mark the two stated textual choices, rather than every connecting word needed in English. Where uncertainty cannot be removed, read the two versions with the German and the note. The purpose is to make the source's thought accessible while preserving the limits of what can confidently be said about its wording.

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The table gives the page for each chapter in both parts. The headings follow the medieval contents list. In the electronic book, section names and page numbers are links.

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Part I

A Reading Translation

The complete text for continuous reading. The German passages, close translation and notes are in the corresponding chapters of Part II.

The Medieval Prologue

The almighty and eternal God spoke this little book through his friend, a wise, understanding, truthful and righteous man who was once a brother of the Teutonic Order, a priest and a custos in its house at Frankfurt. The book teaches many delightful distinctions within divine truth, especially how to recognise God's true and righteous friends and distinguish them from the unrighteous, false, free spirits who do great harm to the holy Church.

German text and notes in Part II, p. 91

Chapter 1¹

What the Perfect and the parts are, and how the parts are laid aside when the Perfect comes

Saint Paul says: “When the Perfect comes, the imperfect and the partial are brought to nothing.” Consider what the Perfect and the partial mean. The Perfect is being that contains and embraces all things within itself. Apart from it there is no true being, and in it all things have their being, for it is the being of all things. In itself it is unchanging and unmoved, yet it changes and moves everything else.

The partial or imperfect is whatever has come or comes forth from the Perfect, as radiance or light streams from the sun or from a lamp. It appears as something particular, this or that, and is called a creature. None of these partial things is the Perfect; nor is the Perfect any one of them. What is partial can be comprehended, known and expressed. The Perfect, however, is beyond the knowledge, comprehension and expression of all creatures insofar as they are creatures. It cannot be named, because it is none of these things. A creature as such cannot know or comprehend it, name it or conceive of it. Thus, when the Perfect comes, what is partial is set aside. When does it come? When, as far as possible, it is known, felt and tasted within the soul.

One might object: if no creature can know or comprehend it, and the soul is a creature, how can the soul know it? The answer lies in the qualification “insofar as it is a creature”. Considered in its creaturely, created condition, as a separate something with a self of its own, the soul cannot know the Perfect. In any creature in which the Perfect is to be known, creatureliness and createdness, the condition of being a separate something, and selfhood must be lost and brought to nothing. This is the meaning of Saint Paul's words, “When the Perfect comes”: when it is known, everything partial is rejected and regarded as nothing, including creatureliness, createdness, separate existence, selfhood and the claim that something is “mine”. As

1 Note. For the German text, close translation and notes to this chapter, see Part II, p. 92.

long as we make anything of these and cling to them, the Perfect remains unknown.

Another objection is possible: you say that nothing exists outside the Perfect or apart from it, yet you also say that something flows from it. Surely whatever has flowed from it is now outside it? The answer is that outside it or apart from it there is no true being. Whatever has flowed from it is not true being and has being only in the Perfect. It is an accident, a radiance or a shining, which is not itself being and has no being except in the fire from which it streams, or likewise in the sun or in a light.

Chapter 2²

What sin is, and why we should claim no good as our own, since it belongs to the true Good alone

Scripture, faith and truth tell us that sin consists in the creature turning away from the unchangeable Good towards what is changeable. It turns from the Perfect to what is partial and imperfect, above all to itself.

Whenever a creature claims any good as its own—being, life, knowledge, understanding, ability, or anything that can be called good—it turns away. It claims to be that good, to possess it, to have a right to it, or to be its source. What else did the devil do? What was his fall and his turning away, if not his claim that he too was something, that something was his and belonged to him? This appropriation, his “I”, “me”, “to me” and “mine”, was his turning away and his fall. And he is still the same.

2 Note. For the German text, close translation and notes to this chapter, see Part II, p. 96.

Chapter 3³

How the human fall and turning away must be remedied, as Adam's fall was

Adam did the very same thing. People say that he was lost, or fell, because he ate the apple. I say that it was because he claimed something as his own: because of his “I”, “mine”, “to me”, “me” and everything of that kind. Had he eaten seven apples without making such a claim, he would not have fallen. But the moment he did make it, he had fallen, even if he had never taken a bite of an apple.

I have fallen a hundred times deeper and turned much farther away than Adam, yet all humanity could not remedy Adam's fall or bring him back from his turning away. [How, then, can I remedy my own fall or restore what was lost?] How is my fall to be remedied? As Adam's was, by the same one and in the same way. Who brought about that remedy, and how? The human being could not accomplish it without God, and God was not to accomplish it without the human being. So God took human nature, humanity itself, upon himself and became human; and the human being was deified. This brought about the remedy.

My own fall must be remedied in the same way. I cannot accomplish this without God, and God should not, or will not, accomplish it without me. If it is to happen, God must also become human in me. He must take upon himself everything in me, inward and outward, so that nothing in me resists him or obstructs his works. Even if God took all human beings upon himself, became human in them, and deified them in himself, my fall and my turning away would never be remedied unless the same also happened in me.

In this restoration I can contribute nothing, have no power to contribute anything, and ought to contribute nothing, except to undergo God's action in utter simplicity and purity. God alone must act and work, while I undergo him, his works and his will. My refusal to undergo this—my “mine”, “I”, “to me” and “me”—hinders God from working alone and without obstruction. So my fall and my turning away remain unremedied. All this comes from my claim to make something my own.

3 Note. For the German text, close translation and notes to this chapter, see Part II, p. 98.

Chapter 4⁴

How, by claiming some good as our own, we fall and encroach upon God's honour

God says: "I will give my honour to no one." Honour and glory belong to God alone. Whenever I claim some good as my own—claiming to be it, to have the power or knowledge to accomplish it, to do it, to possess it, to be its source, or to have a right to it—I also claim some praise or honour for myself. In doing so, I commit two evils. First, I fall and turn away, as explained above. Second, I encroach upon God's honour by claiming what belongs to him alone. Everything that can be called good belongs solely to the eternal, true Good. Whoever claims it as their own does wrong and acts against God.

4 Note. For the German text, close translation and notes to this chapter, see Part II, p. 101.

Chapter 5⁵

How to understand that we should become without knowledge, will, love, desire, understanding and the like

Some say that we should give up knowing, willing, loving, desiring, understanding and the like. This does not mean that understanding should cease, or that God should no longer be known, loved, willed, desired, praised or honoured within us. That would be a great deficiency, reducing a human being to the condition of a beast or an ox. Rather, understanding must become so pure and perfect that we recognise that this very understanding belongs neither to us nor to creatures at all. It is the knowing of the Eternal, which is the eternal Word.

The human being, the creature, then steps aside and no longer claims it as their own. The less a creature claims this understanding, the more perfect it becomes. The same holds for will, love, desire and everything of that kind. The less we claim them as our own, the nobler, purer and more divine they become; the more we claim them, the coarser, more mixed and more imperfect they become. This is how we are to become free of them: by giving up our claim to them. Such freedom is the noblest and purest understanding possible in a human being, and the noblest and purest love and desire, because all of it then belongs to God alone.

It is better and nobler for these things to belong to God than to the creature. When I claim any good as my own, I do so because I imagine that it is mine, or that I myself am that good. If the truth were known within me, it would also be known that I am not that good, that it is neither mine nor from me; and my claim would fall away by itself. Yet it is better for God and what belongs to him to be known as far as possible, and for him to be loved, praised and honoured, even when someone imagines that they themselves are doing the praising or loving, than for God to remain wholly unpraised, unloved, unhonoured and unknown. When false supposition and ignorance give way to knowledge and understanding of the truth, the claim to ownership falls away. Then a person says: “Ah, what a poor fool I am! I thought it was I; now it is God, and truly was God all along.”

5 Note. For the German text, close translation and notes to this chapter, see Part II, p. 102.

Chapter 6⁶

Why we should love what is best and noblest above all, solely because it is best

A master named Boethius says: “Our failure to love what is best comes from a deficiency.” He speaks truly. What is best should be loved most. Such love should take no account of usefulness or uselessness, benefit or harm, gain or loss, honour or dishonour, praise or blame. What is truly noblest and best should be loved above all, simply because it is noblest and best.

We might order both our outward and our inward life by this principle. Outwardly, one creature is better than another according to how much the eternal Good shines and works in it. The best creature is the one in which the eternal Good shines, gives light and works most fully, and is most fully known and loved. Where this happens least, there is least goodness.

In our dealings with creatures, if we recognise this distinction, we should love the best creature most, hold to it and unite with it. Above all, we should unite with those things that we ascribe to God as his own: goodness, truth, peace, love, righteousness and the like. These should govern our outward life; whatever opposes them should be rejected and avoided.

But if the inner person were to leap beyond all this into the Perfect, they would discover and taste how immeasurably the Perfect surpasses everything imperfect and partial in nobility and goodness. The eternal surpasses the transitory, and the fountain and origin surpasses everything that flows or can flow from it. Then the imperfect and partial things would lose their savour and be brought to nothing. This must happen if what is noblest and best is to be loved.

6 Note. For the German text, close translation and notes to this chapter, see Part II, p. 105.

Chapter 7⁷

The two spiritual eyes with which we see into eternity and time, and how one hinders the other

We read, and it is said, that the soul of Christ had two eyes, a right and a left. From the moment it was created, it turned its right eye towards eternity and the Godhead. There it remained unmoving in perfect contemplation and enjoyment of divine being and perfection. Nothing that ever happened in Christ's outward humanity—no event or exertion, disturbance, suffering, torment or pain—could move or hinder it. With its left eye, the soul looked at creatures, recognising and distinguishing what was better or worse, nobler or less noble. This discernment governed Christ's outward life. Thus his inward humanity, through the soul's right eye, remained in perfect enjoyment of the divine nature, in perfect delight and joy. His outward humanity, together with the soul's left eye, experienced the fullness of suffering, misery and toil. Yet the inward life and the right eye remained unmoved, unhindered and untouched by all the toil, suffering and torment of the outward life.

It is said that while Christ was outwardly being scourged at the pillar or hanging on the cross, his soul, his inward humanity, enjoyed through the right eye the same perfect delight and joy as after the Ascension, or as now. Nor did the inward life ever hinder or diminish the work of his outward humanity, or of the soul through the left eye, in anything belonging to the outward life. Neither had to wait for the other. The created human soul also has two eyes. One is its capacity to look into eternity. The other looks into time and creatures, distinguishes among them as described above, and gives life, direction and governance to the body. But these two eyes of the human soul cannot work at the same time. If the soul is to look into eternity with its right eye, the left must give up all its activity and remain as though dead. If the left eye is to carry out its outward work of dealing with time and creatures, the right must be hindered in its own activity of contemplation.

7 Note. For the German text, close translation and notes to this chapter, see Part II, p. 108.

Chapter 8⁸

How the human soul, while it is in the body, may receive a foretaste of eternal blessedness

Can the soul, while still in the body, attain a glimpse of eternity and receive a foretaste of eternal life and blessedness? The common answer is no. This is true insofar as the soul keeps its gaze on the body and its concerns, on time and on creatures, filling itself with their images and dispersing itself among many things. In that condition it cannot attain such a glimpse. To do so, it must be pure and stripped of all images, detached from every creature, above all from itself. People mean that this cannot happen within time.

Saint Dionysius, however, considers it possible. So we understand the words he writes to Timothy: “To contemplate the divine mysteries, leave behind the senses, sensibility and everything the senses can grasp; leave reason, its activity and everything it can grasp and know, created and uncreated. Rise up, going out of yourself and unknowing all that has just been named, and enter into union with that which is above all being and knowledge.” If he did not think this possible in time, why would he teach it to someone living in time? A master commenting on these words of Saint Dionysius also says that it is possible. Indeed, it can happen so often that a person becomes accustomed to it and can look into eternity whenever they wish. Every such glimpse is dearer to God, nobler and worthier than all that creatures can accomplish as creatures.

8 Note. For the German text, close translation and notes to this chapter, see Part II, p. 111.

Chapter 9⁹

Why it is more useful and better to attend to what God wishes to work in us, or use us for, than to know all he has ever worked or will ever work in creatures; and why blessedness lies in God and his works alone, and not in the creature

We should recognise this as entirely true: all virtue and goodness, even the Good that is God himself, cannot make us virtuous, good or blessed while remaining outside the soul. The same holds for sin and wickedness. It is good to inquire and learn about the deeds and sufferings of good and holy people, their way of life, and what God has worked and willed in them and through them. Yet it would be a hundred times better to discover the nature and condition of our own life, what God is within us, what he wills and does there, and for what purpose he would or would not use us. Thus the saying remains true: no going out was ever so good that staying within would not have been better.

Eternal blessedness depends on one thing alone. If a person or soul is to be blessed or become blessed, this one thing alone seeks and must have its place in the soul. What is it? It is the Good, or what has become good; yet it is neither this particular good nor that, neither something we can name, know or point to, but all and above all. It need not come into the soul, because it is already there, though unknown. To say that we should come to it, or that it should come into the soul, means that we should seek it, feel it and taste it. Since it is one, unity and simplicity are better than multiplicity. Blessedness lies in the one and in oneness, not in the many or in their multitude.

Briefly, blessedness rests on no creature and no creature's work, but on God and his works alone. I should therefore attend solely to God and his work, letting go of all creatures and all their works, beginning with myself. None of the works and wonders that God has ever performed or could ever perform in or through creatures can make me blessed while remaining outside me. Nor can even God himself with all his goodness, insofar as he is and acts outside me. Blessedness comes only insofar as this is present and takes place within me, and is known, loved, felt and tasted there.

9 Note. For the German text, close translation and notes to this chapter, see Part II, p. 113.

Chapter 10¹⁰

How the perfect desire only to be to the eternal Good what a hand is to its owner, and have lost fear of hell and desire for the kingdom of heaven

Those enlightened by the true light recognise that everything they can desire or choose is nothing compared with all that creatures, as creatures, have ever desired, chosen or known. They therefore relinquish all desire and choice, entrusting and surrendering themselves and everything to the eternal Good. Yet one desire remains: that they themselves should pass away and draw nearer to the eternal Good in closer knowledge, more ardent love, clearer contentment, and complete submission and obedience. Each enlightened person can say: "I would gladly be to the eternal Good what a person's hand is to them." They always fear that they fall short of this, and they also desire blessedness for everyone. Yet they remain free even of this desire, making no claim to it, because they know that it belongs to the eternal Good, not to them. No one should claim any good as their own; it belongs to the eternal Good alone.

Their freedom also means that they have lost both fear of suffering or hell and hope of reward or the kingdom of heaven. They live in pure submission and obedience to the eternal Good, from a love that is free. This was fully present in Christ, and is present in his followers in differing degrees. How grievous it is that the eternal Good points us towards and draws us to what is noblest, yet we refuse it. What could be nobler than true spiritual poverty? But when it is offered, we do not want it. We want to be continually soothed, to find rich savour, sweetness and pleasure within ourselves. Then we would be content and would love God. When these are taken away, we become distressed, forget God and think ourselves lost. This is a grave deficiency and a bad sign. Someone who truly loves God, the eternal Good, loves him equally in possession and deprivation, sweetness and sourness. Let each of us examine ourselves in this.

10 Note. For the German text, close translation and notes to this chapter, see Part II, p. 116.

Chapter 11¹¹

How the righteous person is placed in hell within time and cannot be comforted there, then taken out and placed in heaven and cannot be troubled there

Christ's soul had to descend into hell before it came to heaven. The human soul must do the same. This happens when a person comes to know and examine themselves, finding themselves so evil and so unworthy of any good or comfort from God or creatures that nothing seems fitting except eternal condemnation and loss. They consider themselves unworthy even of that. They think themselves unworthy of all the suffering that can befall them in this life, yet believe it fitting and right that every creature should oppose them and inflict suffering and pain on them. Even this seems more than they deserve. They consider it right that they should be condemned eternally and serve as a footstool for every devil in hell, while still regarding themselves as unworthy of it all. They neither wish nor are able to seek comfort or deliverance from God or creatures, but willingly remain without either. Their condemnation and suffering do not grieve them: these seem fitting and right, in accordance with God's will, and they love that will and are content with it. Only their guilt and wickedness cause grief, because these are wrong and oppose God. These cause their anguish and distress of heart. This is true contrition for sin. Whoever enters hell in this way during this life enters the kingdom of heaven after this life and receives a foretaste of it even now, surpassing every pleasure and joy that temporal things have ever given or can give. While a person is in this hell, neither God nor any creature can comfort them, as it is written: "In hell there is no redemption." So someone said: "Perishing, dying, I live without comfort, condemned within and without; let no one pray for my deliverance."

But God does not leave the person in this hell. He takes them to himself, so that they care for nothing but the eternal Good. They recognise its overflowing well-being, its delight, peace and joy, its rest and sufficiency.

11 Note. For the German text, close translation and notes to this chapter, see Part II, p. 119.

When they care for and desire the eternal Good alone, seeking nothing for themselves, its peace, joy, delight and pleasure become theirs. They are then in the kingdom of heaven. This hell and this heaven are two good and sure paths in the present life. Happy is the person who finds them rightly and well, for this hell passes away, while the kingdom of heaven endures.

While in this hell, a person can find no comfort and cannot believe that comfort or deliverance will ever come. While in the kingdom of heaven, nothing can trouble them or take away their comfort, and they cannot believe that either could happen. Yet after hell they may be comforted and delivered, and after heaven they may again be troubled and deprived of comfort.

Both this hell and this heaven come upon a person without their knowing where they come from. Nothing they do or refrain from doing by their own power can make either come or go. They cannot give themselves either state or take it away, bring it about or undo it. As it is written: "The spirit breathes where it wills, and you hear its voice"—that is, when it is present—"but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes." A person in either of these states is rightly placed and can be as secure in hell as in heaven. During this life they may pass very often from one to the other, sometimes repeatedly within a single day and night, without bringing it about themselves. When in neither state, they occupy themselves with creatures, waver this way and that, and do not know where they stand. Yet their heart should never forget either state.

Chapter 12¹²

The true inward peace that Christ left to his disciples at the last

Many people complain that they have no peace or rest because they face so much adversity, temptation, oppression and suffering. But consider this truthfully: even the devil would be at peace if everything went according to his will and pleasure. We should therefore attend to the peace Christ left to his disciples at the last, when he said: “My peace I leave to you; my peace I give to you, not as the world gives it.” For the world deceives even in what it gives.

What peace does Christ mean? The inward peace that breaks through and penetrates every temptation and adversity, every oppression, suffering, misery and humiliation, enabling us to remain joyful and patient in the midst of them. So were his beloved disciples, and so were all God's chosen friends and Christ's true followers. Anyone who pursues this with love, diligence and earnestness may come to know, as far as a creature can, the true and eternal peace that is God.

12 Note. For the German text, close translation and notes to this chapter, see Part II, p. 123.

Chapter 13¹³

How we sometimes dismiss images too soon

Tauler says: “Some people dismiss images too soon”, before the truth has freed them from those images. Because they free themselves, they can scarcely attain the truth, if at all. We should therefore always attend carefully to God's works and to the ways he calls, urges and admonishes us.

13 Note. For the German text, close translation and notes to this chapter, see Part II, p. 125.

Chapter 14¹⁴

The three stages that lead us to perfection

No one can be enlightened without first being cleansed, purified and set free. Nor can anyone be united with God without first being enlightened. There are therefore three ways: purification, enlightenment and union.

14 Note. For the German text, close translation and notes to this chapter, see Part II, p. 126.

Chapter 15¹⁵

How all people died in Adam and became alive again in Christ; true obedience and disobedience

Everything that sank down and died in Adam rose again to life in Christ. Everything that rose to life in Adam sank down and died in Christ. What are these things? True obedience and disobedience.

What is true obedience? A person should be so completely free of self, of selfhood and “I”, that in everything they seek and intend themselves and their own interests as little as if they did not exist. They should be as little aware of themselves, and make as little of themselves and what is theirs, as if they did not exist; and they should make as little of all creatures as of themselves. What, then, truly is, and what should count for anything? Only the one called God. This is true obedience, and so it is in blessed eternity. Nothing but the one is sought, intended or loved, and nothing else is accounted anything.

This also shows us what disobedience means: making something of ourselves, imagining that we are something, know something and have some power of our own; seeking ourselves and what is ours in things, loving ourselves, and everything of that kind.

The human being was created, and remains created, for true obedience, and owes it to God. This obedience sank down and died in Adam, then rose again to life in Christ. Disobedience rose and lived in Adam, then died in Christ. Christ's humanity was so utterly free of itself and of all things as no creature had ever been. It was simply a house, a dwelling of God. It laid claim to none of what belonged to God there: neither its own being and life nor its being a dwelling of the Godhead. It did not claim the Godhead whose dwelling it was, nor anything the Godhead willed, did or left undone in it, nor anything that happened or was suffered in this humanity. There was no appropriation, no seeking or desire, except the sole desire to satisfy the Godhead; and it claimed no ownership even of this. Nothing more can be written or said here about this meaning. It is inexpressible. It has never been completely expressed to its very depth, nor ever will be. It cannot be put into speech or writing, even by the one who is it and knows it.

15 Note. For the German text, close translation and notes to this chapter, see Part II, p. 127.

Chapter 16¹⁶

What the old human being is, and what the new human being is

Consider what is meant by the old human being and the new. The old is Adam, disobedience, selfhood, “I-ness” and everything of that kind. The new is Christ and obedience. When we speak of dying and perishing, we mean that the old human being must come to nothing. Wherever this happens in the true divine light, the new human being is born again.

To say that we should die to ourselves means that our “I-ness” and selfhood should die. Saint Paul says: “Put off the old human being with his works, and put on the new, created and formed according to God.” Anyone who lives in selfhood, according to the old human being, is a child of Adam. This life may become so deeply and essentially their own that they are also the devil's child and brother. But whoever lives in obedience, in the new human being, is Christ's brother and God's child.

Where the old human being dies and the new is born, the second birth takes place. Christ said: “Unless you are born again, you do not enter the kingdom of God.” Saint Paul likewise says: “As all people die in Adam, so in Christ they all become alive again.” Everyone who follows Adam in disobedience is dead, and can become alive only in Christ. As long as a person is Adam or Adam's child, they are without God. Christ says: “Whoever is not with me is against me.” Whoever is against God is dead before God; thus all Adam's children are dead before God. Whoever is with Christ in obedience is with God and lives.

It is also written that sin is the creature's turning away from the Creator. This means the same thing, because whoever lives in disobedience lives in sin. Sin can be atoned for and remedied only by returning to obedience. As long as a person remains disobedient, nothing they do can remedy sin, for disobedience is itself sin. When they return to true obedience, all is remedied, atoned for and forgiven; otherwise it is not. This deserves attention. If the devil could enter into true obedience, he would become an angel, and all his sin and wickedness would be remedied, atoned for and

16 Note. For the German text, close translation and notes to this chapter, see Part II, p. 130.

wholly forgiven. If an angel could enter into disobedience, he would at once become a devil, even without doing anything else.

If someone could live in true obedience as utterly free of self and all things as Christ's humanity was, that person would be without sin, one with Christ, and by grace what Christ was by nature. People say this is impossible, and therefore say that no one is without sin. However that may be, one thing is true: the closer we come to obedience, the less sin there is; the farther we are from it, the more sin. Whether we are good, better or best, evil, worse or worst, sinful or blessed before God, depends entirely on obedience and disobedience. So it is written that more selfhood and "I-ness" mean more sin and wickedness, and less of the former means less of the latter. It is also written: the more my "I", my "I-ness" and selfhood, decreases, the more God's "I", God himself, increases within me.

If everyone lived in true obedience, there would be no sorrow or suffering, except perhaps bodily suffering, which would give no cause for lament. Everyone would be one, and no one would cause another sorrow or pain. Nor would anyone live or act against God. Where, then, could sorrow and suffering come from? But, alas, all people and the whole world are now disobedient. If someone lived in pure and complete obedience, as we believe Christ did—and indeed he did, or he would not have been Christ—everyone's disobedience would cause that person grievous and bitter suffering, because everyone would be against them. For in this obedience the person would be one with God, and God himself would indeed be that person.

Disobedience alone opposes God. No creature, no creature's work, nothing that can be named or conceived is against God or displeasing to him, except disobedience and the disobedient person. Everything that exists pleases God, apart from disobedience alone. The disobedient person displeases and opposes him so deeply, and causes him such grief, that where the human being is [capable of suffering] and can perceive and feel what opposes him, he would gladly suffer a hundred deaths to kill disobedience in a single person and bring his obedience to birth there again. Perhaps no one lives in this obedience as wholly and purely as Christ did. Yet a person can come so close to it that they are rightly called divine and deified. The nearer they come, the more divine and deified they become, the more deeply all disobedience, sin and unrighteousness grieve and hurt them, becoming a great and bitter suffering. Disobedience and sin are one: there is no sin except disobedience and what proceeds from it.

Chapter 17¹⁷

Why we should claim no good as our own, but acknowledge our guilt for the evil we have done

Some people, we are told, think and say that they have so completely died and gone out of themselves that they should now live beyond all suffering, untouched by anything. It is as though everyone lived in obedience, or no creature existed at all. So they enjoy an easy life and an easy mind, content with whatever happens. But this is certainly not how matters stand. The truth is as described above. Their claim would hold if everyone lived in obedience. Since that is not so, their claim does not hold either.

Someone may object: should we not be free of everything, claiming neither good nor evil as our own? I answer that no one should claim the good, because it belongs to God and his goodness. Yet approval, eternal reward and blessedness belong to the person who is fit and ready to become a house and dwelling of the eternal Good and Godhead, allowing its power, will and works to have their place within them without hindrance. If someone then tries to excuse themselves from responsibility for evil as well, laying it upon the devil and wickedness, I answer: disapproval, shame, harm, eternal misery and condemnation belong to the person who is fit and ready to become a dwelling for the devil, falsehood, lies or untruth and other wickedness, allowing their will, power, deeds and words to operate within them.

17 Note. For the German text, close translation and notes to this chapter, see Part II, p. 136.

Chapter 18¹⁸

Why Christ's life is the noblest and best life that ever was or can be, and the careless, falsely free life the worst

No life is as noble, as good or as dear to God as Christ's life. We should recognise, believe and know this. Yet to nature and selfhood it is the bitterest life of all. The careless life of supposed freedom is the sweetest and most pleasurable to nature, selfhood and "I-ness", but it is not the best or noblest. In some people it can become the worst. Christ's life, though the bitterest, is nevertheless the most beloved. Both truths must be held together.

There is a knowing through which the true and simple Good becomes known. This Good is neither this particular thing nor that. It is what Saint Paul speaks of when he says: "When the Perfect and the whole comes, all division and imperfection come to nothing." The Perfect as a whole surpasses every division, and every partial and imperfect thing is nothing beside it. Likewise, knowledge of the parts comes to nothing when the whole is known. Wherever the Good is known, it must also be desired and loved. Then the former love of self and other things comes wholly to nothing. This knowing also recognises what is best and noblest in everything, and loves it in the true Good, solely for the sake of that Good.

Where this knowing is present, Christ's life is recognised as the best and noblest. It therefore becomes the most beloved, gladly embraced and borne, without asking or caring whether it brings nature, or anyone at all, pleasure or pain, delight or grief.

Wherever the true Good is known in a human being, Christ's life must also be present and remain until bodily death. Anyone who thinks otherwise is deceived; anyone who says otherwise speaks falsely. Where Christ's life is absent, the true Good and truth have never been known.

18 Note. For the German text, close translation and notes to this chapter, see Part II, p. 138.

Chapter 19¹⁹

Why true light and Christ's life are reached through relinquishing self and all things, not through much questioning or reading, or lofty natural learning and reason

No one should suppose that much questioning, hearsay, reading or study can bring them to the true light, true knowledge or Christ's life. Nor can great learning and mastery, or the loftiest natural reason. I say more: as long as we hold on to anything particular, keeping it before us in our love, intention, desire or seeking—whether it is ourselves or anything else—we cannot attain this. Christ himself says: “If you would come after me, relinquish yourself and follow me. Whoever does not relinquish, leave and lose themselves and all things is not worthy of me and cannot be my disciple.” In other words, whoever does not leave and lose everything can never know me in truth or enter into my life. Even if no human mouth had ever said this, truth itself declares it, for this is how things truly are. As long as we love the parts and fragments, above all ourselves, occupying ourselves with them and making much of them, we remain and become so blind that we recognise no good except what is most useful, convenient and pleasurable for ourselves and our own concerns. That is what we judge best and love most.

19 Note. For the German text, close translation and notes to this chapter, see Part II, p. 141.

Chapter 20²⁰

Why nature refuses Christ's life as bitterest to itself and selfhood, and adopts the careless, false life as most comfortable and pleasurable

Christ's life is the bitterest of all to nature, selfhood and "I-ness", because in his true life all of these must be relinquished, lost and put to death. Nature therefore recoils from it, judging it evil, unjust and foolish. Instead, nature adopts a life that it finds comfortable and pleasurable, and in its blindness declares and believes that this is the best life of all.

Nothing is more comfortable or pleasurable to nature than the careless life of supposed freedom. Nature clings to it, enjoying itself, its selfhood, its private peace and ease, and everything it calls its own. This happens especially where natural reason is highly developed. Reason climbs so high within itself and its own light that it imagines itself to be the eternal, true light and presents itself as such. It deceives itself and also deceives others who know no better and share the same inclination.

20 Note. For the German text, close translation and notes to this chapter, see Part II, p. 143.

Chapter 21²¹

How a friend of Christ willingly carries out what must and ought to be done outwardly, and does not concern themselves with the rest

What is the condition of someone who comes as close as possible to the true light? It can never be adequately described. A person who has not become this cannot describe it; neither can someone who has become it and knows it. Whoever wishes to know must seek to become it. Yet I believe this much can be said of their outward conduct: it allows them to do whatever is necessary and right. What is neither necessary nor right, but merely something they want, cannot belong to it. We invent many false necessities and obligations for ourselves. Pride, greed or another vice prompts us to do something or refrain from it, and we say: "It must be done; it ought to be so." The desire for people's favour and friendship, or for bodily pleasure, draws us towards something or away from it, and again we say: "It must be done; it ought to be so." All this is false. If our only necessities and obligations were those to which God and truth direct and urge us, we would have rather less to manage and do than we have now.

21 Note. For the German text, close translation and notes to this chapter, see Part II, p. 145.

Chapter 22²²

How God's spirit sometimes possesses and governs a person, as also does the evil spirit

It is said that the devil or his spirit sometimes takes possession of a person, who then does not know what they do or leave undone and no longer governs themselves. The evil spirit governs them, doing whatever it wills in them, with them, through them and from within them. In one sense it is true that the whole world is possessed by the devil—that is, by lies, falsehood, wickedness and vice. All this is the devil, though the statement is also true in another sense. If, in the same way, God's spirit took possession of someone, so that they no longer knew what they did or left undone and no longer governed themselves, but God's will and spirit governed them and worked through them as it willed, that person would be among those of whom Saint Paul says: "Those directed and led by God's spirit are God's children and are not under the law." They would also be among those to whom Christ said: "It is not you who speak, but your Father's spirit speaks in you." Yet I fear that for every person possessed by God's spirit there are a hundred thousand, or countless others, possessed by the devil. People resemble the devil more than they resemble God. "I-ness" and selfhood belong to the devil; these make him a devil. A word or two can express all that these many words say: "Be purely and wholly without yourself." The many words, however, explain, substantiate and distinguish the meaning more fully.

Someone now says: "I am not prepared for any of this, so it cannot happen in me." In this way they find an excuse. The answer is that their failure to be or become prepared is indeed their own fault. If they attended to nothing else but becoming truly prepared in all things, God would surely prepare them. God brings the same diligence, love and earnestness to preparing them as to the pouring in that follows their preparation.

Certain practices help towards this. To learn an unfamiliar art, as the saying goes, four things are needed. First and most necessary are strong

22 Note. For the German text, close translation and notes to this chapter, see Part II, p. 147.

desire, diligence and constant earnestness to learn; without these, it never happens. Second, one must have something from which to learn. Third, one must observe the teacher closely, attend to them, trust them, obey and follow them. Fourth, one must take up the art and practise it. If any of these is missing, the art is never learnt or acquired.

The same applies to this preparation. Whoever has the first requirement—diligence and a constant, earnest desire for the goal—seeks and finds everything that contributes to it, serves it and helps to attain it. Whoever lacks earnestness, love and desire does not seek, and therefore does not find. They remain unprepared and never reach the goal.

Chapter 23²³

Whoever would undergo God and obey him must undergo all things—God, self and every creature—and obey them all by undergoing, and sometimes also by acting

Certain ways and preparations are also spoken of. We are told to undergo God's action, to obey him, surrender to him and be subject to him. This is true. Anyone who reached the goal attainable in this life would possess all this in its proper perfection. But whoever would undergo God must undergo everything: God, themselves and every creature, without exception. Whoever would obey God, surrender to him and be subject to him must also be surrendered, obedient and subject to all things in what they undergo, rather than in what they do. They should remain silently within the ground of their soul, bearing and undergoing everything secretly and inwardly. They should neither offer nor desire any defence, excuse, contradiction or revenge, but in loving, humble and true compassion say in all circumstances: "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do."

This would be a good way to what is best, and a preparation for the highest goal attainable in this life: the bodily life of Christ. In Christ's life these ways were followed completely, to the very end of his bodily life. No better way or preparation leads to the beloved and delightful life of Jesus Christ than that life itself, practised as fully as possible. Something has already been said about what it involves. Everything said or written here or elsewhere is a path, or an indication of a path, towards the true goal. No one can tell what that goal is. Whoever wishes to know it must take the right path towards it: this life.

23 Note. For the German text, close translation and notes to this chapter, see Part II, p. 151.

Chapter 24²⁴

Four things are needed for a person to become receptive to divine truth and possessed by the Holy Spirit

There are nevertheless ways to Christ's life, as already explained. Wherever and whenever God and the human being are united, it can be truly said—and truth itself attests it—that the one is both true and perfect God and true and perfect human being. Yet the human being yields so completely to God that God himself is the human being there. God himself is present, and this one continually acts, works and refrains from action without any “I”, “to me”, “mine” or anything of that kind. There is true Christ, and nowhere else.

Since the humanity here is true and perfect, so too are its feeling and experience of well-being and pain, delight and grief, and everything that can be felt inwardly or outwardly. Since God is this human being, he too can experience and feel delight and grief. A human being who is not God feels everything that brings pleasure or pain, especially whatever opposes them. The same is true where God and the human being are one, and God is the human being. Everything that opposes God and the human being is felt and experienced there. But just as the human being comes to nothing there and God is all, the same holds for what opposes the human being. Their suffering becomes nothing beside what opposes God and causes his suffering. This suffering from God must last as long as bodily, actual life lasts.

The one in which God and the human being are united is free of itself and all things, and is something. This is because of God, not because of the human being or the creature. It belongs to God to be free of this and that, selfhood, “I-ness” and the like. Creatures and nature, however, seek and desire themselves, their own, this and that, here and there, in everything they do or leave undone. Wherever the creature, the human being, loses and goes out of its ownness, its selfhood and itself, God enters with what is his own: his selfhood.

24 Note. For the German text, close translation and notes to this chapter, see Part II, p. 154.

Chapter 25²⁵

Two evil fruits growing from the evil spirit's seed, two sisters who like to dwell together: one called spiritual riches and pride, the other disordered, false freedom

A person may have followed every path that points towards truth, practised it with difficulty and endured so much for so long that they believe the work is finished. They think they have died, gone out of themselves and surrendered to God. Then the devil sows his seed within them. Two fruits grow from it: spiritual riches, or spiritual pride, and disordered, false freedom. These are two sisters, often and happily found together.

It happens like this. The devil breathes into the person the thought that they have reached the highest point and the closest approach, that they no longer need scripture or anything else, and have become entirely without need. Peace and great pleasure arise within them. Then they say: "Now I am above everyone and know and understand more than the whole world. It is therefore fitting and right that I should be the god of all creatures, and that all creatures, especially all people, should serve me, attend to me and obey me." They seek and desire this, gladly accepting it from every creature, above all from other people. They believe themselves fully worthy of it and entitled to it, regarding everyone else as asses or beasts. They also believe themselves entitled to everything that brings comfort, pleasure, entertainment or delight to their body, flesh and nature. They seek and take it wherever they can find it, considering everything done for them too little and themselves worthy of it all. Those who serve and obey them are praised as noble and faithful hearts, loving and loyal to truth and to poor people, even if they are thieves or murderers. Such people are sought out and followed wherever they may be. But anyone who fails to serve, attend to and obey these proud people receives no praise, and may even be reviled and shunned, though as holy as Saint Peter.

25 Note. For the German text, close translation and notes to this chapter, see Part II, p. 157.

Because this spiritually rich pride believes it has no need of scripture, teaching or anything similar, it treats the practices, ordinances, laws and commandments of the holy Church, and the sacraments, as worthless or even ridiculous. It treats in the same way anyone who observes or values them. This shows clearly that the two sisters live together. Since such pride also believes it knows and understands more than anyone else, it wants to chatter and speak more than everyone else. Only its own words are to receive attention and a hearing; everyone else's words are to be considered wrong, ridiculous or foolish.

Chapter 26²⁶

Poverty of spirit and true humility, and how to recognise the righteous, well-ordered and truly free, whom truth has freed

Spiritual poverty and true humility are very different. They arise from recognising that, of ourselves and from what is our own, we are nothing, can do nothing, possess nothing and are capable of nothing except deficiency, vice and wickedness. We then find ourselves wholly unworthy of anything that may come to us from God or creatures. We recognise our obligation to God and, in God's place, to all creatures: in what we undergo, and sometimes also in acting and serving. We can truly claim no right to anything. A humble heart says: "It is fitting and right that God and every creature should oppose me and have rights over me and claims upon me, while I oppose no one and claim no right to anything."

Such a person neither dares nor wishes to ask God or creatures for anything beyond bare necessity. Even that is sought with fear, as a gift of grace and never as a right. They allow their body and nature no comfort or pleasure beyond necessity, and permit no one to help or serve them except when necessary. All this is received with fear, since they have no right to it and consider themselves unworthy of it all.

They regard all their words as nothing and as foolishness. They therefore speak to teach or rebuke someone only when moved by divine love and fidelity. Even then, they do so with fear and say as little as possible.

Spiritual poverty and humility also recognise that all people are wholly inclined towards themselves, and towards vice and wickedness. Ordinances, practices, laws and commandments are therefore useful and necessary: they instruct blindness and restrain wickedness within order. Without them people would be far more wicked and disorderly than dogs or other beasts. Through these practices and ordinances, many people are also drawn and turned towards truth who would not otherwise be reached.

26 Note. For the German text, close translation and notes to this chapter, see Part II, p. 160.

Even the few who have attained truth began with ordinances and practices, following them while they knew no other or better way. Humble spirituality and spiritual poverty therefore do not despise or mock laws, commandments, ordinances and practices, or the people who observe them. Instead, with loving compassion, lament and shared suffering, they say: "God and truth, we lament before you, and you yourself lament, that human blindness, deficiency and wickedness make necessary and compulsory what in truth need not and should not be." They desire that people who know no other or better way to truth should understand why laws and ordinances exist. They join these people in their practices, helping them to persevere so that they do not turn to evil, and seeking to bring them nearer if possible.

Everything said here about poverty and humility is true, as Christ's life and words confirm. He practised and fulfilled every work of true humility. His life shows this, and he says: "Learn from me that I am good and humble in heart." He did not neglect or despise the law, its statutes or the people living under it. He did say that these were not enough and that one must go further, which is indeed the truth. Saint Paul also writes: "Christ took the law upon himself to deliver those under the law"—to bring them nearer and to something better. Christ also said: "I have not come to be served, but to serve." His words, deeds and life reveal true and pure humility and poverty throughout. Wherever God is the human being, wherever Christ is, these must necessarily be present. Where there are pride, spiritual wealth and an easy, unrestrained mind, neither Christ nor his true follower is present. Christ said: "My soul is troubled unto death." He means bodily death: this lasted from his birth of Mary until his bodily death, for the reason already explained. He says: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, that is, the truly humble, for God's kingdom is theirs." Truth likewise says, though it is not written: "Unblessed and accursed are the spiritually rich and proud, for the devil's kingdom is theirs." This is what we truly find where God is human. Wherever Christ and his true followers are, there must be genuine, deep and spiritual humility and poverty of spirit. Their disposition must be lowly and inwardly abiding, filled within with secret, hidden sorrow and suffering until bodily death. Anyone who thinks

otherwise is deceived and deceives others too. This is why nature and selfhood turn away from this life and cling instead to the false life of unrestrained freedom.

Now an Adam or a devil comes forward to defend and excuse himself: “People keep saying that Christ was without self. Yet he often spoke about himself and boasted of this and that.” The answer is that wherever truth is to act and will, its will, desire and work have only one purpose: that truth should be known and revealed. So it was in Christ. Words and deeds served that purpose. Whatever best and most usefully served it, and whatever was accomplished, he remained free of it all, as of everything else that happened.

“Then Christ still had a reason why,” you say. I answer: if the sun were asked why it shines, it would reply: “I must shine and cannot do otherwise. Shining is my property and belongs to me, yet I remain free of that property and of the shining itself.” So it is with God and Christ. Everything divine, everything belonging to God, wills, works and desires only good as good and for the sake of good. There is no other reason why.

Chapter 27²⁷

How to understand Christ's words that all things must be left and lost, and wherein union with the divine will consists

Consider the saying, spoken by Christ himself, that we must leave and lose all things. It does not mean that we should have nothing to do or concern ourselves with. As long as we live, there will be things to do and arrange. It means that union does not consist in our abilities, actions, omissions or knowledge, or indeed in those of all creatures.

What is union, then? It is to be purely, simply and wholly one with God's simple, eternal will. It is to have no separate will at all: the created will has flowed into the eternal will, melted away in it and become nothing, so that the eternal will alone wills, acts and refrains from acting there.

What can help or serve us towards this? No word, deed or practice can do so. Nor can the works, knowledge, powers, actions or omissions of any creature, or of all creatures together. This is the sense in which everything must be left and lost. We must not imagine that any deed, word, practice, art or mastery, or anything created, can help or serve us towards union. We must let all this be what it is and enter into union. Nevertheless, these things must still exist, and we must still act or refrain from action. As long as we live, we must sleep and wake, walk, stand, speak and remain silent, and do many other necessary things.

27 Note. For the German text, close translation and notes to this chapter, see Part II, p. 167.

Chapter 28²⁸

How, after union with the divine will, the inner human being stands unmoving while the outer human being is moved here and there

Where union takes place and becomes a reality, the inner person thereafter remains unmoving in that union. God allows the outer person to be moved here and there towards whatever must or ought to be or happen. The outer person can truthfully say: “I have no will to be or not to be, to live or die, to know or not to know, to act or refrain from acting. I obey whatever is necessary and right, whether by undergoing or by acting.” Their only purpose or aim is to satisfy the eternal will. They truly know that the inner person is to remain unmoving while the outer person must be moved. If the inner person has a purpose in this movement, it is simply the necessity and obligation ordained by the eternal will. So it is wherever God himself is the human being, as we see in Christ.

Where this arises within and from divine light, there is no spiritual pride, heedless freedom or unrestrained mind. There is deep humility: a lowly, inwardly sunken and sorrowful disposition. There must also be order, right conduct, fairness, truth and everything belonging to virtue, with peace and contentment on the person's part. Where it is otherwise, something is wrong, as explained more fully elsewhere. Just as no particular thing can help or serve towards this union, so nothing can hinder or obstruct it except the person themselves through their own will.

28 Note. For the German text, close translation and notes to this chapter, see Part II, p. 169.

Chapter 29²⁹

Why, before death, a person cannot become outwardly incapable of suffering and unmoving

Some have claimed that a person can and should become entirely incapable of suffering during this life, as Christ was after the resurrection. They have tried to prove it from his words, “I will go before you into Galilee; there you shall see me”, and, “A spirit has neither flesh nor bones as you see I have.” Their interpretation is this: just as you saw and followed me in a mortal body and life, you will see me again, and I will go before you and you will follow me into Galilee. You will experience and taste a state beyond suffering and movement, and live and remain in it before passing through bodily death. Just as you see that I have flesh and bones yet cannot suffer, you too, before death, will become incapable of suffering while still in your bodies and mortal humanity.

The first answer to this argument is that Christ did not mean we could or should attain that state without first passing through and suffering everything he passed through and suffered. He himself did not attain it before undergoing bodily death and all that belonged to it. No one, therefore, can or should attain it while still mortal and capable of suffering. If this were the noblest and best state, if it were possible and right to reach it during this life, Christ would have done so. His life was and is the noblest, best, worthiest and dearest to God that ever was or ever will be. Since this should not or could not happen in Christ, it cannot rightly happen in anyone else as something truly best and noblest. People may think or claim that it can, but it is not so.

29 Note. For the German text, close translation and notes to this chapter, see Part II, p. 172.

Chapter 30³⁰

In what sense we may come above practices, ordinances, laws, commandments and the like

It is also said that we can and should rise above all virtue, practices, ordinances, commandments, laws and right conduct, putting them aside and bringing them to nothing. This contains both truth and falsehood. Christ was above Christ's life, above every virtue, practice and ordinance. The devil is also above them, but in a different sense. Christ was and is above all these things because he had no need of the words, deeds, practices, actions, omissions, silence, speech or suffering that took place in him. They brought him no gain for himself. The same is true of every virtue, ordinance and form of right conduct: whatever could be attained through them was already fully present in Christ.

In this sense the saying is true, and so are Saint Paul's words: "Those directed, moved and led by God's spirit are God's children and are not under the law." One meaning is that they need no one to teach them what to do or leave undone, because their master, God's spirit, will teach them. Nor does anyone need to command them to do good and refrain from evil. The one who teaches them what is good or not good, best or otherwise, also directs them to remain with the best and leave the rest. They obey him. In this sense they need no law to teach or command them.

They also need no law as a means of attaining or gaining something for themselves, or securing their own advantage. Whatever can be attained or accomplished towards eternal life, along the eternal way, through these things or through all creatures' help, speech, words and works, they already possess. In this sense we can truly rise above all law and virtue, and above all the works, knowledge and powers of creatures.

30 Note. For the German text, close translation and notes to this chapter, see Part II, p. 174.

Chapter 31³¹

Why Christ's life must not be cast off, but practised and followed until death

But it is false to say that we should discard Christ's life along with all commandments, laws, practices and ordinances, disregarding, despising or mocking them. Someone may object: if neither Christ nor those others can gain anything through Christ's life or through these practices and ordinances, because they already possess what such things can bring, what further purpose do they serve? Why not leave them aside? Must they still be pursued and practised?

We must consider this carefully. There are two kinds of light, true and false. True light is either the eternal light, God, or a created yet divine light called grace. False light is nature, or natural light. Why is one true and the other false? This must be grasped more deeply than words or writing can express. God as Godhead has neither willing, knowing nor revealing, nor anything particular that can be named, spoken or thought. God as God, however, utters, knows and loves himself, revealing himself to himself within himself. All this is without creatures. In God, without creatures, it is one being, rather than an activity; in this self-utterance and self-revelation the distinction of Persons comes to be. But where God is human, where he lives in a divine or deified person, something belongs to him that is his alone, not the creatures'. In himself, apart from creatures, it exists originally and essentially, without definite form or enacted activity. God wills this to be enacted and practised, because that is its purpose. What else would it be for? If it remained idle, what use would it have? It would be just as good, or better, for it not to exist. What serves no use exists in vain, and neither God nor nature wills that.

God wills this to be enacted and practised, and this cannot happen without creatures. If there were no this or that, no particular thing, no work or activity, what would God himself be, or be for? What would it be? Whose God would he be? Here we must turn back and stop. We could creep so far down this path of thought that we would no longer know where we were, or how to find our way out.

31 Note. For the German text, close translation and notes to this chapter, see Part II, p. 177.

Chapter 32³²

How God is the true, simple, perfect Good, light, understanding and every virtue, and why the highest and best Good should be loved most

God, insofar as he is good, is good as such, neither this particular good nor that. Consider the distinction. Something that is somewhere, here or there, is not everywhere and beyond every place. Something that is at some time, today or tomorrow, is not always, at every time and beyond all time. Something that is a particular thing, this or that, is not all things and above all. If God were a particular something, he would not be all and above all, as he is, and would not be true perfection. God is, yet he is neither this nor that which a creature as such can know, name, conceive or express. If his goodness were one particular good, he would not be all good and above all good, and would not be the simple and perfect Good that he is.

God is also light and knowing. Light and knowing naturally give light, illuminate, shine and know. Because God is light and knowing, he must give light, illuminate and know. All this exists in God without creatures, as being and origin rather than as a work. To take place as an active work, it must take place in creatures. Wherever this knowing and light acts in a creature, it knows and teaches what it is: good. It is neither this particular thing nor that. It therefore does not know and teach a particular this or that, but makes known the one true, simple and perfect Good, which is no particular thing, but all good and above all good.

What does it teach about this one Good? Just as God is good, knowing and light, he is also will, love, righteousness, truth and every virtue. All these are one being in God. None can be enacted or practised without creatures: in God apart from creatures they are being and origin, not work. When this one, which is all of them, takes a creature to itself, governs it and fits it to itself, and it seems that it can recognise its own property there, then as will and love it receives teaching from itself as light and knowing. It is to will only the one that it is.

32 Note. For the German text, close translation and notes to this chapter, see Part II, p. 180.

Nothing is then willed or loved except good for its own sake, simply because it is good. It is not loved because it is this or that, or because it brings someone delight or grief, well-being or pain, sweetness or sourness. No attention is paid to such things, nor is love directed towards itself for its own sake or as itself. All selfhood, "I-ness", "I", "to me" and the like have been relinquished and have fallen away. Love no longer says, "I love myself", or "you", or "this", or "that". Asked what it loves, it answers, "Good." Asked why, it answers, "Because it is good, and for the sake of good." It is good and right to love it. If anything better than God existed, it would have to be loved before God. God therefore loves himself as good, rather than merely as himself. If something better than God existed and he knew it, he would love that instead of himself. "I-ness" and selfhood are so completely removed from God that they do not belong to him, except insofar as personhood requires them. This must be, and truly is, the case in a divine or truly deified person; otherwise the person would not be divine or deified.

Chapter 33³³

How love in a deified person is pure and unmixed, loving all creatures and willing to do what is best for them

Love in a deified person is therefore pure, unmixed and benevolent towards everyone and everything. Such a person must love all people and all things, willing, wishing and doing good to them without admixture. Whatever anyone does to them, whether pleasant or painful, welcome or grievous, this love remains. Even if someone killed them a hundred times and they returned to life, they would have to love the person who had killed them and done them so much wrong and evil. They would have to will, wish and desire that person's good, and do the very best for them, if they could accept and receive it.

Christ demonstrates and confirms this. He said to Judas, who betrayed him: "Friend, why have you come?" It is as though he said: "You hate me and are my enemy; I love you and am your friend. You wish and do me the worst you possibly can; I will and wish you the very best, and would gladly give it and do it for you, if you could accept it." It is as though God spoke from within his humanity: "I am pure and simple Good. I can will, desire, wish, do and give only good. If I repay your evil and wickedness, I must repay them with good, for I am and possess nothing else."

God in a deified person therefore neither desires, wills nor takes revenge for any evil that is or could be done to them. Again we see this in Christ: "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do."

It also belongs to God to compel no one by force to act or refrain from acting. He allows each person to do or leave undone what they will, whether good or evil, and wills to oppose no one. Christ likewise refused to resist or defend himself against his attackers. When Saint Peter tried to defend him, he said: "Peter, put your sword away. Neither I nor those who are mine are to resist, defend or compel by force." A deified person cannot burden or distress anyone. This means that they never will, desire or intend to act or refrain from acting, speak or remain silent, for the purpose of causing another grief or distress.

33 Note. For the German text, close translation and notes to this chapter, see Part II, p. 184.

Chapter 34³⁴

To attain the best, we must relinquish our own will; whoever helps us obtain our own will helps us towards the worst

Someone may say: if God wills, desires and does what is best for everyone, should he not help everyone obtain all they want—for instance, making one person pope and another bishop? Consider this: whoever helps us obtain our own will helps us towards the very worst. The more we follow and strengthen our own will, the farther we move from God and the true Good.

God would gladly help us towards what is best in itself, which is also best for us above all else. For this to happen, all self-will must be relinquished. God would gladly bring us to this and help us achieve it. As long as we seek our own best, we fail to seek our own best, and never find it. What is truly best for us is to seek and intend neither ourselves nor what is ours. This is what God teaches and says. Anyone who wants God's help towards the best, including what is best for them, must follow his word, teaching and commandment. In this way they receive help, and in no other.

God tells us to leave ourselves and all things and follow him. Whoever loves their soul—that is, themselves—and wishes to guard and preserve it, seeking themselves and their own in things, will lose it. But whoever ceases to concern themselves with their soul and loses themselves and all that is theirs will have their soul guarded and preserved unto eternal life.

34 Note. For the German text, close translation and notes to this chapter, see Part II, p. 187.

Chapter 35³⁵

The true, deep and essential humility and poverty of spirit present in a deified person

A deified person must also possess true humility, deep and essential. Without it, no one is deified. Christ taught it through his words, deeds and life. It arises from seeing in the true light what is actually so: being, life, understanding, knowledge, ability and everything of that kind belong to the true Good, not to creatures. A creature as such is and has nothing of itself. When it turns from the true Good in its will and works, nothing but wickedness is found there. It is therefore true that a creature, considered in itself as a creature, is worthy of nothing and has no right to anything. Neither God nor any creature owes it anything. It ought by right to be surrendered and subject to God.

This is the greatest and most significant point: whoever would be surrendered and subject to God must be subject to all things in what they undergo; otherwise the claim is false. True humility comes from this last point and from the earlier one as well. If this were not true, and were not best according to divine righteousness, Christ would not have taught it in words and fulfilled it in his life. A true acknowledgement arises here, corresponding to how things truly are.

Divine truth and righteousness require the creature to be subject to God and to every creature, while nothing is to be subject or surrendered to it. God and all creatures have rights over it and claims upon it; it has rights over nothing and claims to nothing. It owes a debt to all, and no one owes a debt to it. This applies to what it undergoes, and sometimes also to what it does. From this comes the poverty of spirit of which Christ said: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for God’s kingdom is theirs.” He taught all this in words and fulfilled it in his life.

35 Note. For the German text, close translation and notes to this chapter, see Part II, p. 189.

Chapter 36³⁶

Why nothing opposes God except sin, and what sin is

Consider again the statement that something can oppose God, grieve him or trouble him. No creature opposes or troubles God simply by existing, living, knowing or having power. None of this is against him. The existence and life of the devil or a human being are good and belong to God, because God is all these things in their essence and origin. He is the being of everything that exists, the life of everything alive, and the wisdom of all the wise. All things have their being, powers and life more truly in God than in themselves. Otherwise God would not be all good. These things are therefore good, and whatever is good is dear to God and willed by him. It does not oppose him.

What does oppose and grieve God? Sin alone. Sin is the creature willing something other than God wills, and willing against him. We can recognise this in ourselves: whoever wills otherwise than I do, or against me, is my enemy; whoever wills as I do is my friend and dear to me. The same applies to God. This opposition is sin, and it grieves and troubles him. When someone wills otherwise than I do, or against me, everything they do or refrain from doing, say or leave unsaid, opposes and burdens me. Likewise, when a person wills otherwise than God, or against him, everything they do, leave undone or concern themselves with opposes God and is sin. A will different from God's will is also a will against it. Christ says: "Whoever is not with me is against me." He means that whoever does not will with him, in unity of will, wills against him.

This shows us whether we are without sin, whether we commit sin, what sin is, and how it can and should be atoned for and remedied. Willing against God is disobedience. Adam, "I-ness", selfhood, self-will, sin, the old human being, turning away and separation from God all mean the same thing.

36 Note. For the German text, close translation and notes to this chapter, see Part II, p. 192.

Chapter 37³⁷

How grief, suffering, displeasure and the like cannot enter God as God, but are present in a deified person

Neither suffering, grief nor displeasure can enter God as God. Yet human sin grieves him. Since this cannot happen in God apart from creatures, it must happen where God is human, in a deified person. There sin grieves and troubles God so deeply that he would gladly undergo torment and bodily death to blot out a single person's sin. Asked whether he would rather live and let the sin remain, or die and blot it out by his death, he would choose death. One person's sin grieves and hurts God more than his own torment and death. If one person's sin pains him so deeply, how much pain is caused by everyone's sin?

This shows how we grieve God by our sins. Where God is human, in a deified person, only sin is lamented; there is no other grief. Everything that exists or happens without sin is something God wills to be. But lament and sorrow over sin must remain in the deified person until bodily death, even if they were to live until the Last Day or for ever. This was and is the source of Christ's secret suffering, of which no one speaks or knows except Christ himself. That is why it is secret, and is called so.

This is also a property of God that he wishes to possess in a human being and that pleases him there. It is truly God's own: it does not belong to the human being, who has no power to produce it. Wherever God can obtain it, he holds it worthiest and dearest, because it is the bitterest and hardest thing for the human being. The true light teaches everything said here about God's own property, which he wills to have enacted and practised within us. It also teaches us to claim that activity as little as if we did not exist, recognising that it is beyond our power and does not belong to us.

37 Note. For the German text, close translation and notes to this chapter, see Part II, p. 195.

Chapter 38³⁸

Why Christ's life should be embraced from love, not for reward, and never laid aside or cast off

Wherever a deified person lives, there is the best and noblest life, the worthiest to God, that ever was or ever will be. Eternal love loves good as good and for its own sake, and loves what is best and noblest in everything for the sake of good. Through this love, the true and noble life becomes so beloved that no one in whom it is present can ever abandon or cast it off, even if they lived until the Last Day. They would rather die a thousand deaths and bear all the suffering that could fall upon every creature than leave this noble life, even in exchange for an angel's life.

This answers the question of what purpose Christ's life would serve if it could bring us no further gain. We do not embrace it to gain or earn anything, but from love, because of its nobility and because it is so dear and worthy to God. Anyone who thinks or says that enough of it has been had, or that it should be put aside, has never known or tasted it. Once truly experienced and tasted, it can never be abandoned. Whoever adopts Christ's life in order to attain or earn something approaches it as a hireling, without love, and in fact does not possess it at all. Without love one does not possess it, however much one may think otherwise. Christ lived his life from love, not for reward. Love makes this life easy instead of burdensome, gladly embraced and willingly borne. Whoever pursues it for reward rather than love finds it bitter and longs to be rid of it. Every hireling wants the work to end; a true lover is wearied by neither work, time nor suffering. Thus it is written: "To serve God and to live is easy for the one who does it." This is true when it is done from love. When it is done for reward, it is hard. The same holds for every virtue, good work, ordinance and form of right conduct.

38 Note. For the German text, close translation and notes to this chapter, see Part II, p. 198.

Chapter 39³⁹

Why God wills order, form and measure in creatures, since he cannot have them without creatures; four kinds of people who observe ordinances, laws and practices

It is truly said that God is above and without every form, measure and order, yet gives all things form, order, measure and right conduct. He wills to have these, but cannot have them in himself apart from creatures. In God without creatures there is neither order nor disorder, form nor lack of form. He therefore wills them to exist where they can and should exist. Wherever there are words, deeds and dealings, there must be either order, form, measure and right conduct, or wrong conduct and disorder. The former are better and nobler.

Four kinds of people observe ordinances, laws and practices. Some do so only under compulsion, for neither God's sake nor any other purpose. They do as little as possible and find it bitter and burdensome. Others act for reward. Knowing no other way, they believe that observance alone can earn heaven and eternal life. They consider anyone who practises much of it holy, and anyone who neglects any part of it lost and belonging to the devil. They apply themselves earnestly and diligently, yet find it bitter. The third kind are evil, false spirits. They claim to be perfect, believe they no longer need such things and mock them. The fourth are people enlightened by the true light. They observe these things from love, seeking no reward or gain. They are not anxious to do as much as possible or to do it quickly, but to do what can be done well, peacefully and without haste. An unintentional omission does not mean that they are lost. They know that order and right conduct are better than their opposites and therefore observe them, while also knowing that blessedness does not depend on them. This frees them from the others' anxiety. Yet both the hirelings and the free spirits rebuke and judge them. The hirelings accuse them of complete negligence, sometimes calling them unrighteous; the free spirits mock their practices as crude and foolish. In fact, they hold to the middle and best

39 Note. For the German text, close translation and notes to this chapter, see Part II, p. 201.

way. One lover of God is better and dearer to God than a hundred thousand hirelings, and the same is true of their works.

God's commandments, word and teaching concern the inner person and union with God. Where union occurs, the inner person properly orders and teaches the outer, leaving no need for external commandments or instruction. Human commandments and laws concern the outer person. They are necessary wherever people know no better: without them they would not know what to do or refrain from doing, and would become like dogs or beasts.

Chapter 40⁴⁰

A careful distinction concerning the false light and its properties

We have also mentioned a false light. We should now explain what it is and what belongs to it. Everything opposed to the true light belongs to the false. The true light neither wills to deceive nor can will anyone to be deceived; nor can it itself be deceived. The false light is deceived and then deceives others in turn. God wills to deceive no one and cannot will anyone's deception. The same holds for the true light.

The true light is God or divine; the false light is nature or natural. God is no particular this or that, and in a deified person he seeks and desires no particular this or that, but good as good and solely for its own sake. So does the true light. A creature or nature, however, is something particular and seeks something particular. It does not seek good purely as good, for its own sake, but for the sake of this or that. God and the true light are free of “I-ness”, selfhood and self-seeking. Nature and the natural, false light are bound to “I”, “to me”, “me” and the like, seeking themselves and their own in everything more than good as good. This belongs to the false light and to every nature. Here is its first deception: instead of willing and choosing good for its own sake, it chooses itself and what belongs to or benefits itself as the best. That judgement is false.

It also imagines itself to be what it is not: God, when it is nature. Believing itself God, it claims what belongs to him—not to God as human, in a deified person, but to God without creatures in eternity. It hears that God is without need, free, inactive, unbound and above all; that he is unmoved, claims nothing as his own, has no consciousness of guilt, and does all things well. These statements are true. “That is how I too will be,” says the false light. “The more like God I am, the better. I will therefore be like God; indeed, I will be God, sit beside him and be his equal.” This is what Lucifer, the devil, did. God in eternity is without grief, suffering or distress and is burdened or grieved by nothing that exists or happens. Where God is human, in a deified person, matters are different. In brief,

40 Note. For the German text, close translation and notes to this chapter, see Part II, p. 204.

everything capable of deception must be deceived by the false light. All creatures and natures, everything that is neither God nor divine, can be deceived. Since the false light is itself nature, it too can be deceived, and so it deceives itself.

Why does it deceive everything susceptible to deception? Through its excessive cleverness. It is so clever, subtle and resourceful that it climbs to a height which it imagines nature and creatures could never reach. It therefore believes itself above nature and identifies itself with God. It claims everything belonging to God in eternity, rather than to God as human. It thinks itself above all deeds, words, practices and ordinances, and above the bodily life Christ lived in his humanity. It wishes to be untouched by any creature or creature's work. Good or evil, against God or otherwise, all are alike to it; it stands free of them, as God does in eternity. It claims all the other things that belong to God alone, believes itself worthy of everything, and considers it right that every creature should serve and obey it. No grief, suffering or distress over anything remains, apart from bodily and sensory feeling, which lasts until bodily death, and the suffering that arises from it. It claims to have risen above Christ's bodily life and to be, as it ought to be, incapable of suffering or being touched, like Christ after the resurrection. Many other strange and false errors arise from this.

Because the false light is nature, it follows nature's inclination to seek itself and its own in everything, pursuing whatever is most convenient, comfortable and pleasurable to it. In its deception it identifies what pleases and suits itself best with what is best without qualification. It teaches that everyone should seek and do what is best for themselves. It recognises no good beyond what it considers its own good. Tell it of the true and simple Good, neither this nor that, and it understands nothing and treats the matter as ridiculous. This follows naturally: nature as nature cannot attain this knowledge, and the false light is nothing but nature.

The false light also claims to have risen above conscience and awareness of guilt: everything it does is right. A false, free spirit caught in this error even said that killing ten people would cause him as little remorse as killing a dog. In brief, this deceived light flees whatever opposes or burdens

nature, as might be expected, since it is nature. Believing itself God, it would swear by all the saints that it knows what is best and directs all its intention and seeking towards it. Thus, like the devil, it cannot be turned or guided.

In claiming to be God, the false light is Lucifer, the devil. In rejecting Christ's life and the things of the true Good that Christ taught and lived, it is Antichrist, because it teaches and lives against Christ. Its own cleverness deceives it, and it in turn deceives whatever is neither God nor divine: all people whom the true light and its love have not enlightened. Those enlightened by the true light, wherever and whenever they may be, are never deceived. Anyone without that light who walks and dwells with the false light is deceived. All people without the true light are turned towards themselves and cling to themselves. They judge whatever benefits and suits them to be best. They follow as the best teacher whoever presents such things to them as best, helps them obtain them and teaches them how.

The false light teaches precisely these things. Everyone unacquainted with the true light therefore follows it, and they are deceived together. It is said that when Antichrist comes, those without God's mark will follow him, while those who bear it will not. This describes the same thing.

It is true that attaining what is best for oneself is best. But this does not happen while we seek or intend our own best. To find and attain it, we must lose it, as already explained. If we relinquish our own best merely in order to find it again, that too is false. This is why scarcely anyone can enter this way, as Christ himself also says, as noted above.

The false light argues that we should be free of conscience, and that concern with it is foolish and crude. It appeals to Christ, who had no consciousness of guilt. The answer is that the devil has none either, and is no better for that. We must understand what conscience means here: recognising that our will has turned or turns away from God—which is sin—and that the guilt is ours, not God's, for God is innocent of sin. Who knows themselves innocent except Christ, and a few others? Whoever lacks this consciousness of guilt, then, is Christ or devil.

Where the true light is present, there is a true and righteous life, worthy and dear to God. Even if it is not Christ's life in its fullness, it is directed and shaped by that life. It loves Christ's life and everything belonging to right conduct, order and virtue. Selfhood, "I", "mine" and the like are relinquished and lost. Only good as good, for its own sake, is sought and intended. The false light produces disregard for Christ's life and every virtue, pursuing whatever comforts and pleases nature instead. This gives rise to false, disordered freedom and a careless disregard of this and that. The true light is God's seed and bears God's fruit. The false light is the devil's seed: where it is sown, the devil's fruit grows, and the devil himself. The foregoing words and distinctions make this clear.

Chapter 41⁴¹

How a person illuminated by divine light and kindled by eternal, divine love is called and is deified, and why light and knowledge avail nothing without love

Who is a divine or deified person? Someone illuminated and made radiant throughout by the eternal, divine light, and set aflame by eternal, divine love. We have already said something about the light.

Light and knowledge, however, are worthless without love. Someone may know perfectly well what virtue and vice are, yet remain without virtue because they do not love it. They follow vice instead. If they love virtue, they follow it, and their love makes them so opposed to vice that they cannot practise it and hate it wherever it appears. They love virtue so deeply that they practise it whenever possible, seeking no reward and having no reason beyond love of virtue itself. Virtue becomes their reward and fully satisfies them. They would exchange it for no treasure or possession. Such a person is virtuous, and would refuse the whole world if the price were to become vicious; they would rather suffer a grievous death.

The same applies to righteousness. Many know right from wrong yet remain unrighteous, because they do not love righteousness. They therefore practise wrongdoing. If they loved righteousness, they could not do wrong. They would oppose unrighteousness so deeply that, wherever they found it in someone, they would willingly do or suffer great things to remove it and make the person righteous. They would rather die than do wrong, solely from love of righteousness. Righteousness would itself be their reward and reward them with itself. Such a person is righteous, and would prefer a hundred deaths to an unrighteous life.

So too with truth. We may know much about what is true, false or a lie, but without loving truth we are not truthful. Love brings about the same change as with righteousness. Speaking of righteousness, Isaiah says in the sixth chapter: “Woe, woe to all who have a double spirit.” These are people

41 Note. For the German text, close translation and notes to this chapter, see Part II, p. 213.

who appear good outwardly but are inwardly full of lies, with falsehood in their mouths. Knowledge without love is therefore worthless. The devil too knows good and evil, right and wrong. He does not become good because he does not love the good he knows. If he loved truth and the other good and virtues known to him, he would become good. Knowledge must indeed direct and teach love, but nothing comes of it unless love follows.

The same holds for God and what belongs to him. Knowing much about God and his properties, even believing that we know what God is, does not make us divine or deified without love. If true love accompanies this knowledge, we must cling to God and relinquish whatever is neither God nor his. We become opposed to everything of that kind; it conflicts with us and causes us suffering. This love unites us with God so that we are never again separated from him.

Chapter 42⁴²

Whether God can be known without being loved, and the two kinds of light and love, true and false

A reasonable question now arises. We have said that knowing God without loving him cannot make us blessed. This seems to imply that we can know him without loving him. Yet elsewhere we say that wherever God is known he is loved, and whoever knows him must love him. How can both be true? We have distinguished two lights, true and false. We must likewise distinguish true and false love. Every love is taught and directed by some light or knowledge. True light produces true love; false light produces false love. Whatever the light judges best, it presents to love as best and tells love to love it. Love follows and obeys.

The false light, as explained, is natural: it is nature. It therefore shares nature's properties and concerns—"I", "mine", "to me", this and that and what belongs to this one or that. And yet the best and all is "I", "mine", "to me" and the like. It must therefore be false and self-deceived. No "I" or "mine" has ever reached true light and knowledge undeceived, with the sole exception of the divine Persons. To reach knowledge of simple truth, all these things must fall away and be lost.

Natural light especially delights in knowing much. It wants to know all it can, taking pleasure, joy and pride in its knowledge. It therefore continually seeks more knowledge, never resting or finding enough. The more it knows, and the higher its knowledge, the greater its pleasure and pride. When it imagines that it knows all things and what is above all things, its delight and self-glory reach their height. It judges knowing to be the best and noblest thing and teaches love to value it above all. Knowledge is then loved more than what is known: natural, false light loves its own knowing, which is itself, more than the object of that knowledge. Even if it could know God and simple truth as they truly are, it would not relinquish its own property, itself and its own. In this sense knowledge can exist without love

42 Note. For the German text, close translation and notes to this chapter, see Part II, p. 217.

of what is known. This light climbs so high that it imagines it knows God and pure, simple truth; it then loves God within itself.

But only God knows God. Imagining that it knows him, the false light therefore imagines that it is God. It presents itself as God and wants to be regarded as such: worthy of everything, entitled to everything, above everything, even virtue, Christ and Christ's life. These all become objects of mockery. It wants to be God in eternity, not Christ. Christ and his life oppose and burden nature, which refuses them. Being God eternally without being human, or being Christ after the resurrection, seems easy, pleasant and comfortable to nature. It therefore judges this best because it considers it best for itself. Thus the false light and its deceived love know something without loving it, loving their own knowing more than what they know.

There is another supposed knowledge that is not knowledge. Through hearsay, reading or extensive learning in writings, people think they know a great deal. They call it knowledge and say: "I know this or that." Asked how they know, they reply: "I read it in a text." They call this knowing, but it is belief rather than knowledge. In this way too, much can be known about without being loved.

Another kind of love is wholly false: loving something for reward. One may love righteousness for what it brings, rather than for righteousness itself. A creature may love another for something that belongs to the other, or love God for the sake of obtaining something. All such love is false and belongs to nature. Nature as nature knows and can exercise no other love; rightly observed, it loves only itself. Here too, something can be recognised as good without being loved.

True love, however, is taught and directed by true light and knowledge. The true, eternal and divine light teaches love to love only the true, simple and perfect Good, solely because it is good. It seeks neither the Good as a reward nor anything from it, but loves it for its own sake and because it rightly deserves love. Whatever is known in this way through the true light must be loved by true love. The perfect Good called God can be known only through the true light; therefore, wherever he is known, he must also be loved.

Chapter 43⁴³

How to recognise a truly deified person, what belongs to such a person, and what belongs to a false light or false, free spirit

Wherever true light and true love are present, including within a human being, the perfect Good knows and loves itself. Yet it does not love itself merely as itself, from itself for itself. The true, simple Good, the Perfect, can and will love only the one true Good. Since it is that Good, it must love itself, but precisely as the one true Good loving the one true and perfect Good, and as the one true and perfect Good loved by that same Good.

In this sense we can truly say that God does not love himself merely as himself. If something better than God existed, he would love that instead. In this true light and love, no “I”, “mine”, “to me”, “you”, “yours” or anything of that kind remains. The light knows one Good, which is all good and above all good. All good things are one in essence within it, and apart from it there is no good. Love therefore intends neither this nor that, neither me nor you, but only the one beyond every “I” and “you”, this and that. All good is loved in it as one Good: all in one as one, and one in all as all. The one and every good are loved through the one, in the one and for its sake, from love for the one. All “I-ness”, the claim of “mine”, and selfhood must be relinquished and lost here. This freedom belongs to God, except insofar as personhood requires otherwise.

Whatever a truly deified person does or undergoes happens within this light and love, comes from them, passes through them and returns to them. There is contentment and stillness, with no desire to know more or less, to possess, live, die, exist or cease to exist. All these become alike and one.

Only sin is lamented. As already explained, sin means willing otherwise than the simple, perfect Good and the one eternal will: willing apart from and against them. It includes whatever follows from this, such as lies, deception, unrighteousness, falsehood and every vice. Everything called sin arises from willing otherwise than God and the true Good. If there were only the one will, sin would never occur. All self-will, and everything

43 Note. For the German text, close translation and notes to this chapter, see Part II, p. 223.

proceeding from it, can therefore be called sin; there is no other sin. This alone is lamented in a truly deified person. It causes such grief and pain that even a hundred shameful, agonising deaths would cause less. This sorrow must remain until bodily death. Where it is absent, there is certainly no truly divine or deified person.

In this light and love, all good is loved in the one, all as one, and the one in all and in everyone, as one and as all. Everything truly called good must therefore be loved: virtue, order, right conduct, righteousness, truth and the like. Whatever belongs to God as his own in the true Good is loved and praised. Whatever opposes it or is without it causes suffering and pain and is lamented as sin, because that is what it truly is.

Wherever someone loves in the true light and true love, there is the noblest, best and worthiest life that ever was or ever will be. It must therefore be loved and praised above every other life. This was and is fully perfected in Christ; otherwise he would not be Christ. The love that loves this noble life and all good makes everything that rightly and necessarily must be done or suffered willingly and gladly undertaken, however hard it is for nature. Thus Jesus says: "My yoke is sweet and my burden light." This comes from love of this noble life. We see it in the apostles and martyrs, who gladly and willingly endured whatever suffering befell them. They did not ask God to shorten, lighten or lessen their pain, but only to keep them steadfast. Everything belonging to divine love in a truly deified person is so utterly simple, right and plain that it has never been adequately distinguished in speech or writing, nor fully known beyond the fact that it is. Where it is absent, people cannot even believe it; how, then, could they know it?

Natural life presents the opposite. Its subtle, resourceful and clever nature becomes so entangled in multiplicity, finding so many evasions, falsehoods and deceptions for its own sake, that these too cannot all be told or written. All falsehood is deceived, and deception begins by deceiving itself. The same is true of this false light and life: whoever deceives is deceived. Everything belonging to the devil is so completely present in this life, light and love that no distinction remains. The false light is the devil, and the devil is this light.

The devil believes himself God, wants to be God or wants to be regarded as God. He is deceived in all this, so completely that he believes himself free of deception. The false light, its love and its life are the same. The devil would gladly deceive everyone, draw them towards himself and his own, and make them like him, using all his arts and devices. So would this light. No one can draw the devil away from what is his own, and the same holds here. Both devil and nature believe themselves undeceived and directed towards the highest good. This is the most wicked and harmful deception of all. Devil and nature are therefore one. Where nature is overcome, the devil is overcome; where nature remains unconquered, so does the devil. Whether directed towards worldly or spiritual life, it remains deceived and deceives others whenever it can.

What has been said lets us understand more fully the language used here. Adam, disobedience, the old human being, “I-ness”, own will, self-willedness, self-willing, “I”, “mine”, nature, falsehood, devil and sin all refer to the same thing. All stand against God and apart from God.

Chapter 44⁴⁴

Why only own will opposes God; why seeking our best as our own does not find it; and why we know and can do no good of ourselves

Is anything opposed to God and the true Good? No. Nor is anything apart from God, except willing otherwise than the eternal will, and what is willed against that will. The eternal will wills that only the true Good should be desired and loved. Anything else opposes it. In this sense, whoever is without God is against him. Yet in truth nothing stands against God or the true Good. Understand this as though God said: “Whoever wills apart from me, or otherwise than I do, wills against me. I will that no one should will otherwise than I or apart from me, and that there should be no will outside my will. Just as there is no being, life or particular thing without me, so there should be no will without me and my will. All beings are one in essence within perfect Being; all good is one in the one and cannot exist apart from it. Likewise, all wills should be one within the one perfect will, with no will apart from it.” Anything else is wrong, opposed to God and his will, and therefore sin. Thus every will apart from God's will—all self-will, and everything arising from it—is sin.

As long as we seek our own good and our best as something of our own, for ourselves and from ourselves, we never find it. We are not seeking our best, so how could we find it? We seek ourselves, imagining that we ourselves are best. Since we are not the best, seeking ourselves is not seeking the best. The Good is found where it is sought, loved and intended simply as good, for its own sake and solely from love of it, without “from me”, “I”, “mine”, “to me” or “for me”. This is the right way to seek it; every other way is false. This is how the true and perfect Good seeks, intends and loves itself, and therefore finds itself.

44 Note. For the German text, close translation and notes to this chapter, see Part II, p. 230.

It is great folly for a person or creature to believe they know or can do anything of themselves, especially some good by which to earn or attain much with God. Rightly understood, this dishonours God. Yet the true Good overlooks it in a simple, unlearned person who knows no better, letting all possible good come to them. God wishes them all the good they can receive. Nevertheless, as long as they remain in this condition, they do not find or receive it. Their “I-ness” must be relinquished; otherwise the Good cannot be found or received.

Chapter 45⁴⁵

Where Christ's life is, Christ is also; why his life is the best and noblest that ever was or can be

Whoever knows and recognises Christ's life knows Christ. Whoever does not know that life does not know him. To believe in Christ is to believe that his life is the noblest and best life of all. Without that belief, there is no belief in Christ. The more his life is present in someone, the more Christ is present; the less of one, the less of the other. Where his life is, he is; where it is absent, he is absent. Wherever Christ's life is present, Saint Paul's words can be spoken: "I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me." This is the noblest and best life, because God himself and all good are present and alive in it. What life could be better? Obedience, the new human being, the true light, true love and Christ's life are all one. Where one is present, all are; where one is missing, none is present, because they are truly and essentially one. We should cling only to whatever can bring this to birth and life within us, relinquishing and avoiding whatever hinders it. Whoever receives this in the holy sacrament truly and rightly receives Christ. The more of this is received, the more Christ; the less, the less Christ.

45 Note. For the German text, close translation and notes to this chapter, see Part II, p. 233.

Chapter 46⁴⁶

Why complete contentment and rest are in God alone, not in any creature; why obedience to God means obedience to all in undergoing, and love of God means loving all things in the one

It is truly said that whoever is satisfied with God has enough. Contentment with some particular this or that is not contentment with God. Whoever is satisfied with God is satisfied with nothing and with all: with what is neither this nor that, yet is all. God is one and must be one; he is all and must be all. What is not one is not God; what is not all and above all is not God. He is one and beyond one, all and beyond all. Contentment with God is therefore contentment with the one and with all in the one, as one. Unless all is one and one is all for us, and something and nothing are alike and one, we cannot be satisfied with God. Only there is true contentment.

Likewise, whoever would surrender wholly to God and obey him must be surrendered and obedient to all things in what they undergo, without resistance or self-defence. Without surrender and obedience to all things in the one and as one, there is no surrender or obedience to God. Christ shows this. To undergo God is to undergo all in the one as one, resisting no suffering. Again, this is Christ. Whoever resists suffering and defends themselves against it refuses or is unable to undergo God. Understand this as a refusal to oppose any thing or creature by force or conflict, whether in will or deed. One may nevertheless prevent suffering, avoid it or flee from it without sin.

Whoever would love God loves all in the one as one, and the one in all, with all united in the one. To love any particular thing apart from the one or for some other reason is not to love God, because one then loves something that is not God: something in addition to God. Whoever loves something besides God or alongside him does not love him as required, for God alone wills and ought to be loved. In truth nothing but God should be loved. Where the true light and true love are present, God alone is loved, as good and for good's sake, with all good loved as one and the one as all. For in God all truly is one, and one is all.

46 Note. For the German text, close translation and notes to this chapter, see Part II, p. 235.

Chapter 47⁴⁷

Whether sin too should be loved, if all things are to be loved

If we are to love everything, should we love sin? No. “Everything” here means good. Whatever exists is good insofar as it exists. Even the devil is good insofar as he has being; in that sense nothing is evil. Sin, however, means willing, desiring or loving otherwise than God. This willing is not being and is therefore not good. A thing is good only insofar as it is in God and with God.

All things have their essential being in God more truly than in themselves. They are therefore good in their being. Anything lacking its essential being in God would not be good. Willing and desiring against God are not in God, since he cannot will against himself or otherwise than himself. Such willing is therefore evil, not good, or indeed nothing at all.

God loves deeds, but not every deed. He loves those arising from the teaching and direction of the true light and from true love. Whatever comes from these and takes place within them happens in spirit and truth, belongs to God and pleases him. What arises from false light and false love is whatever it may be. In particular, anything done, left undone, enacted or suffered from a will, desire or love other than God's occurs apart from and against God. Yet it is not against God's works, and it is wholly sin.

47 Note. For the German text, close translation and notes to this chapter, see Part II, p. 238.

Chapter 48⁴⁸

Why some things of divine truth must first be believed before we come to true knowledge and experience

Christ said: “Whoever does not believe, or will not or cannot believe, is and becomes condemned and lost.” This is indeed true. A person born into time does not already possess knowledge and cannot attain it without first believing. Whoever demands knowledge before belief never reaches true knowledge. This does not refer to the articles of Christian faith, which Christians generally believe, whether sinful or blessed, evil or good. These are to be believed; one should not seek to arrive at knowledge of them. The point here concerns truths that can become known and experienced. They must first be believed, before they can be known or experienced. Without this, true knowledge is never attained. This is the belief Christ means.

48 Note. For the German text, close translation and notes to this chapter, see Part II, p. 240.

Chapter 49⁴⁹

Own will, and how Lucifer and Adam fell from God through it

It is said that nothing is so plentiful in hell as self-will. This is true: nothing else is there. Without self-will there would be neither hell nor devil. Lucifer's fall from heaven and turning away from God mean that he wanted his own will, refusing unity with the eternal will. The same was true of Adam in paradise. Self-will here means willing something other than the simple and eternal will wills.

49 Note. For the German text, close translation and notes to this chapter, see Part II, p. 242.

Chapter 50⁵⁰

How this present time is a paradise and a forecourt of heaven, with only one forbidden tree: own will

What is paradise? Everything that exists. All that exists is good and delightful, delightful even to God, and can rightly be called paradise. Paradise is also called the outer court or surrounding quarter of the kingdom of heaven. Everything that exists can thus be understood as an approach to the Eternal, to eternity—especially whatever we can discern of God and eternity through time, temporal things and creatures. Creatures point the way to God and eternity. All this is therefore an outer court and approach to eternity, rightly called paradise. Everything within this paradise is permitted except one tree and its fruit. In all that exists, only one thing is forbidden and opposes God: self-will, willing otherwise than the eternal will.

Understand it in this way. God says to Adam, and so to every person: “Whatever you are, do, leave undone or experience is permitted, provided that it comes from and follows my will, rather than your own. Whatever comes from your own will opposes the eternal will.” The point is not that all such deeds themselves oppose the eternal will, but that they arise from another will rather than from it.

50 Note. For the German text, close translation and notes to this chapter, see Part II, p. 243.

Chapter 51⁵¹

Why God created own will, if it is so opposed to him

If this tree, self-will, so opposes God and the eternal will, why did God create it and place it in paradise? Whoever seeks to discover God's secret counsel and will by finding out why he does or permits this or that desires what Adam and the devil desired. As long as that desire remains, God's secret is never known, and the person remains like Adam or the devil. Such a desire seldom seeks anything beyond pleasure and pride in the knowledge itself. That is true pride. A humble, enlightened person does not demand God's secrets or ask why he acts or permits things as he does. They desire only to become nothing in themselves, free of their own will, so that the eternal will may live and govern within them without obstruction, finding satisfaction in and through them.

Another answer is nevertheless possible. Knowing or reason, together with will, are the noblest and most delightful things in creatures. They belong together: wherever one is present, so is the other. Without them there would be no rational creatures, only beasts and animal life. This would be a great deficiency. God could nowhere obtain what is his own in an active form, although, as explained above, that activity ought to exist and belongs to perfection.

Knowing and reason were therefore created and given together with will. Knowing should teach both will and itself that neither originates in itself or belongs to itself. Neither owes itself anything or should will anything for itself; neither should use or enjoy itself for its own sake. They belong to the one from whom they come. To him they should be surrendered and into him flow back, becoming nothing in themselves, in their selfhood.

Consider will more closely. The eternal will exists in God originally and essentially, without work or activity. That same will acts and wills in the human being or creature. Will's proper work is to will; what else would it be for? Without any work it would exist in vain. This work cannot take place without creatures. God therefore wills creatures to exist, so that the

51 Note. For the German text, close translation and notes to this chapter, see Part II, p. 245.

will which in him is and must be without activity may perform its proper work in them. The will within a creature, called created will, belongs just as fully to God as the eternal will does. It is not the creature's. Since God cannot will with active movement apart from creatures, he wills to do so in and with them. The creature should therefore not wield this will as its own. God should actively will through the will present in the person, which belongs to God. Wherever this happens wholly and purely, God wills, not the person. There is no self-will and no willing otherwise than God wills. The will is one with the eternal will, having flowed into it. Delight and grief, well-being and pain still remain in the person, because wherever will actively wills there is delight or grief. What accords with it brings delight; what wills against it brings grief. But these belong to God, not the person, because delight and grief belong to the one whose will it is.

The will belongs to God, so its delight and grief belong to him too. Only what opposes him is lamented, and joy comes only from God and what is his. The same holds for knowing, reason, ability, love and everything within us: all belong to God. If the will were completely surrendered, everything else would be surrendered with it. God would possess all that is his, and will would cease to be self-will. Thus God created will, but did not create it to be privately claimed.

The devil and Adam, false nature, then take this will, claim it as their own and use it for themselves and their own purposes. This is the harm and wrong, the bite Adam took from the apple, the forbidden act that opposes God. Wherever self-will remains, there can be no true contentment, peace or rest. Human beings and the devil show this. Where will is appropriated and made one's own, there is no true blessedness, in time or eternity. If this appropriation is carried beyond time without being relinquished, it is to be expected that it may never be relinquished; then no true contentment, peace, rest or blessedness will be found there. Again, the devil shows this. Yet without reason and will in creatures, God would remain unknown, unloved, unpraised and unhonoured. Every creature would be worthless and of no use to him. This answers the question. If these many, lengthy words could lead someone to improve—and they are short and useful in God—that would be dear to him.

What is free belongs to no one as their own. To appropriate it is wrong. Nothing is freer than will. Whoever claims it, depriving it of its noble freedom, free nobility and free nature, does wrong, as do the devil, Adam and their followers. Whoever leaves it in its noble freedom does right, as do Christ and his followers. To seize will as one's own brings its own reward: care, anxiety, discontent, unrest and every misery, lasting as long as the appropriation lasts, in time and eternity. Leaving will in its free nature brings contentment, peace, rest and blessedness. Where will remains unclaimed in its noble freedom, a person becomes truly free and unbound. Christ says: "The truth shall make you free", and soon afterwards, "Whomever the Son makes free is truly free."

Where will enjoys its freedom, it performs its proper work of willing, unhindered. It wills what is noblest and best in everything. Whatever is not noble and good opposes it and causes sorrow and lament. The freer it is, the more deeply evil, wrong, wickedness, vice and every sin hurt it. Christ shows this. His will was freer, less hindered and less appropriated than any human will ever was or will be. His humanity was the freest and most unbound creature. Yet it bore the greatest sorrow, lament and suffering over sin—over everything opposed to God—that any creature can bear.

Some claim a freedom without sorrow over sin or anything opposed to God, demanding indifference to everything and a life already like Christ's after the resurrection. This is no true divine freedom arising from divine light. It is the devil's natural, unrighteous, false and deceived freedom, arising from a natural, false and deceived light. Without self-will there would be no appropriation. Nothing is privately claimed in heaven, so contentment, true peace and every blessedness are there. If someone in heaven laid claim to something as their own, they would have to leave it for hell and become a devil. In hell everyone wants their own will, so misery and the absence of blessedness prevail. The same is true in this life. If someone in hell became free of self-will and appropriation, they would leave hell for heaven.

During this life we stand between heaven and hell and can turn towards either. More appropriation means more hell and misery; less self-will means less hell and a nearer approach to heaven. Someone made wholly

free of self-will and appropriation through the true divine light, and remaining so in their very being, would be assured of heaven. Whoever possesses or wants something of their own is themselves owned. Whoever neither possesses nor wants anything of their own is free, unbound and no one's possession.

Christ taught all that is written here through a long life of thirty-three and a half years and the brief words, "Follow me." Following him requires leaving everything, because in him everything was relinquished as completely as it ever was or can be in a creature. Following him also means taking up the cross. That cross is Christ's life, bitter to all nature. He says: "Whoever does not leave everything and take up the cross is not worthy of me, is not my disciple and does not follow me." False nature imagines itself free and believes it has left everything, but refuses the cross, claiming to have had enough and to need it no longer. It is deceived. Had it ever tasted the cross, it could never have abandoned it. Whoever believes in Christ must believe everything written here. Amen.

Chapter 52⁵²

How to understand Christ's two sayings: "No one comes to the Father except through me", and "No one comes to me unless the Father draws them"

Christ says: "No one comes to the Father except through me." How do we come through him? We must attend to ourselves and all that concerns us, inwardly and outwardly. As far as possible, we must guard against any will, desire, love, intention, thought or pleasure arising or remaining within us except what would belong and be fitting to God if he himself were this person. As soon as anything else appears, something unworthy of God or not belonging to him, we should resist and remove it as promptly and well as we can. The same care must govern our outward life: actions and omissions, speech and silence, waking and sleeping, and every way we conduct ourselves alone or with others. Nothing should happen in or through us, and nothing should be allowed to arise or remain within us, except what would properly belong and be fitting to God if he himself were this person.

Where this is so, everything inward and outward belongs to God. The person follows Christ's life, as far as we can understand and describe it. Whoever lives in this way comes through Christ as his follower, and with him and through him comes to the Father. Such a person truly serves Christ, who says: "Whoever would serve me, let them follow me." It is as though he said that whoever does not follow him does not serve him. Whoever follows and serves him comes to where he is: to the Father. Christ himself says: "Father, I will that where I am, my servant should also be there."

52 Note. For the German text, close translation and notes to this chapter, see Part II, p. 255.

Whoever takes this way enters the sheepfold through the door: they enter eternal life, and the gatekeeper opens to them. Anyone who takes another way, imagining they can reach the Father or eternal blessedness otherwise than through Christ, is deceived. They follow neither the right path nor the right door. It is therefore not opened to them; they are a thief and a murderer, as Christ says.

Now consider whether disordered freedom, unrestrained conduct and indifference to virtue and vice, order and disorder, amount to taking the right path and entering the right door. This indifference was never in Christ, nor is it in any true follower of his.

Chapter 53⁵³

The second saying: “No one comes to me unless the Father draws them”

Christ also says: “No one comes to me unless the Father draws them.” By the Father I understand the perfect and simple Good, which is all and above all. Apart from it there is no true being or true good, and no true good work ever has or ever can take place. Since it is all, it must be in all and above all. It cannot be any particular thing a creature as such can comprehend or understand. Whatever a creature understands through its creaturely capacity is a particular something, this or that, and is itself creaturely. If the simple and Perfect were one such thing, it would not be all or in all, and would not be perfect. It is therefore also called nothing: none of the things a creature can grasp, know, conceive or name through its creatureliness. When this unnamed Perfect flows into a begetting Person, in whom it begets its only-begotten Son and itself within him, it is called Father.

How does the Father draw us to Christ? When something of the perfect Good is disclosed to the soul, perhaps in a glimpse or a sudden rapture, a desire is born to draw near and unite with it. As desire grows, more is revealed; as more is revealed, desire and attraction grow. This attraction towards union with the eternal Good is the Father's drawing. The very Good that draws us teaches us that union is reached only through Christ's life. We therefore embrace the life described above. This explains his two sayings. “No one comes to the Father except through me” means through my life. “No one comes to me unless the Father draws them” means that no one embraces this life and follows me without being touched and drawn by the simple and perfect Good. Of this Good Saint Paul says: “When the Perfect comes, all that is partial is destroyed.” Whoever knows, experiences and tastes the Perfect as far as possible in this life regards every created thing as nothing beside it. This is indeed true: apart from the Perfect there is no true good or true being. Whoever possesses, knows or loves it possesses and knows all things and all good. What more could they need?

53 Note. For the German text, close translation and notes to this chapter, see Part II, p. 258.

What use would the parts be, when all the parts are united in the Perfect in one being?

All that has been said here concerns outward life as a path and approach to true inward life. The inward begins afterwards. As we taste the Perfect, everything created becomes nothing for us, including ourselves. Recognising that the Perfect alone is all and above all necessarily leads us to ascribe every good to it alone, never to a creature: being, life, understanding, knowledge, ability and the like. We then claim nothing as our own, neither life, being, power or knowledge, nor action, omission or anything called good. We become utterly poor and nothing in ourselves; with us, every particular something, every created thing, becomes nothing. Only then does true inward life begin. God himself becomes the human being, with nothing remaining that is not God or his, and nothing that claims anything for itself. God alone—the eternal, one Perfect—is, lives, knows, has power, loves, wills, acts and refrains from action. This is how things should truly be. Wherever they are otherwise, they could be better and more rightly ordered.

Another good approach is to ensure that we love what is best above all, choose it, cling to it and unite with it, beginning among creatures. What is best there? Whatever most fully allows the eternal, perfect Good and what belongs to it to shine, work, be known and be loved. What belongs to God? Everything rightly and truly called good. If we remain faithful to the best we can recognise in creatures without turning backwards, we advance to something better, and better still, until we know and taste how immeasurably the eternal, one Perfect surpasses all created good.

If the best is to be loved most, this leads us to love the eternal, one Good alone and above all, clinging and uniting to it as far as possible. We must rightly ascribe every good to it, including the beginning of the path, its progress and its completion. We must also ascribe to it the very act of ascribing these things to it, leaving nothing to ourselves or any creature. This is how it should truly be, whatever anyone may say or sing. In this way too we would enter true inward life. No one can tell or sing what follows, what is revealed or how life is lived there. No mouth has spoken it and no heart has conceived or known it as it truly is.

The whole long discourse can be put briefly. God and the Godhead alone, the eternal, one and perfect Good, should will, desire, love and intend within us. Nothing else there should claim anything or act in these ways. Anything in us that makes a claim or wills, intends or desires something other than, or in addition to, the eternal Good is too much and is a deficiency.

One more brief word: if we can become to God what a person's hand is to them, let that satisfy us. This is how it truly ought to be. Every creature owes this to God, especially every rational creature, and most of all the human being. The example given above illustrates this.

When someone thinks they have reached this state, they must beware lest the devil sow ashes into it. Nature may seek its own ease, rest, peace and well-being there, turning towards a foolish, disordered freedom and indifference wholly foreign to true divine life. This happens when someone refuses the right path and the right door, Christ, imagining that another way can lead to the highest truth, or that they may already have reached it. They truly have not. Christ confirms this: "Whoever enters otherwise than through me never enters rightly or reaches the highest truth, but is a thief and a murderer." May he who surrendered his will to his heavenly Father help us to leave ourselves, die to our own will, and live to God and his will alone. He lives and reigns with God the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit, in perfect Trinity for ever. Amen.

Part II

German Text and Close Translation

Each German passage is followed by a close English translation. The page references beside passages refer to Hinten's critical edition. Its principal manuscript is D (1477), corrected by the editor from other witnesses. Significant readings and our own restorations are explained in the chapter notes.

The Medieval Prologue

Hinten's critical text, p. 67, based on D (1477). This prologue belongs to the medieval transmission of the work; it is not the English translators' preface. In *wie vnd wo methē* ("how and by what"), the critical edition retains *vnd wo* from another branch; D/C omit those two words. Only the manuscript leaf reference and marks directing readers to the printed apparatus have been removed.

German text · p. 67

Dİß büchlein hat der almechtige, ewige got auß gesprochen durch eynen weißen, vorstanden, worhafftigen, gerechten menschen, seynen frunt, der do vor czeiten gewest ist eyn deutschir herre, eyn prister vnd eyn custos yn der deutschen herren hauß zu franckfurt, vnnd leret manchen liplichen vnderscheit gotlicher warheit vnd besundern, wie vnd wo methē man irkennen moge die warhafftigen, gerechten gotis frundt vnnd auch die vngerechten, falschen, freyen geiste, dy der heiligen kirchen gar schedelich synt.

Close translation

The almighty, eternal God has spoken this little book through a wise, understanding, truthful, righteous human being, his friend, who in former times was a brother of the Teutonic Order, a priest and a custos in the house of the Teutonic Order at Frankfurt; and it teaches many delightful distinctions of divine truth, especially how and by what one may recognise God's true, righteous friends, and also the unrighteous, false, free spirits who are very harmful to the holy Church.

Notes

Deutscher Herr is a member of the Teutonic Order. Custos means keeper or custodian, an office in a church or religious house. The prologue alone does not establish the full duties of the person named.

The claim that God spoke the book belongs to the medieval prologue and is translated as part of the source. The author's name is not given.

Liplich means dear, pleasing or delightful here; it describes the distinctions taught, not bodily existence. "Free spirits" is used in a negative, polemical sense.

Chapter 1

What the Perfect and the parts are, and how the parts are laid aside when the Perfect comes

Source: manuscript D (1477), as edited in Wolfgang von Hinten, *Der Franckforter* (1982), pp. 71–72. Throughout this book, D means the text of that manuscript as presented in the critical edition, including the editor's adopted corrections; it does not mean a fresh transcription of the manuscript by the present translators.

Reading translation in Part I, p. 13

Later manuscript additions: p. 269

Czum erstin: Waz das volkomen sey vnd die teyl, vnnd wie man hin legit die teil, so das vollkommen kumpt.

§ 1.1 · German text · p. 71

SANctus Paulus spricht: »Wan das vollkommende kumpt, so vornicht man daz vnvolkommende vnd das geteilte«. Nu mercke: Was ist das vollkommende vnd das geteilte? Das vollkommende ist eyn weßen, das yn ym vnnd yn seynem weßen alles begriffen vnd beschlossen hat, vnnd an das vnd vßwendig dem keine wares weßen ist, vnnd yn dem alle dingk yr weßen han, wanne eß ist aller dinck weßen vnnd ist yn ym selber vnwandelbare vnnd vnbeweglich vnd wandelt vnd beweget alle ander dingk.

Close translation

Saint Paul says: “When the Perfect comes, one brings to nothing the imperfect and the divided.” Now observe: what are the Perfect and the divided? The Perfect is a being that has comprehended and enclosed all things in itself and in its being, and without which and outside which there is no true being, and in which all things have their being; for it is the being of all things, and is in itself unchangeable and unmoving, and changes and moves all other things.

§ 1.2 · German text · p. 71–72

Abir das geteilte adder das vnvolkommende ist das, das vß dißem vollkommende gevr sprungt ist ader wirt, recht als eyn glantz ader eyn scheyne vß flusset auß der sonne ader vß eynem lichte vnnd schynet etwas, diß ader das, vnnd heißet creatur. Vnde aller disser geteilten ist keynes das volkumen. Also ist auch das vollkommende der geteylten keinß. Die geteilten synnt begrifflich, bekentlich vnd sprechentlich. Das vollkommende ist allen creaturen vnbekentlich, vnbegrifflich vnd vnsprechlich yn dem als creatur. Dar vmmb

nennet man das vollkommende nicht, wann eß ist disßer keyns. Die creatur als creatur magk diß nicht bekennen noch begriffen, genennen noch gedencken. Nu dar wan das volkomende kommet, so vorsmehet man das geteilte. Wan kumpt eß aber? Ich sprech: Wanne eß, also verre als möglich ist, bekant vnnd empfunden vnnd gesmeckt wirt yn der sele.

Close translation

But the divided or the imperfect is that which has proceeded or proceeds from this Perfect, just as a radiance or a shining flows out from the sun or from a light, and appears as something, this or that, and is called a creature. And none of all these divided things is the Perfect. Likewise the Perfect is not any of the divided things. The divided things can be comprehended, known and spoken of. The Perfect cannot be known, comprehended or spoken of by any creatures insofar as they are creatures. Therefore one does not name the Perfect, for it is none of these things. The creature as creature cannot know or comprehend it, name or think it. Now, when the Perfect comes, one rejects the divided. But when does it come? I say: when, as far as is possible, it is known and felt and tasted in the soul.

§ 1.3 · German text · p. 72

Nu mocht man sprechen: Seint eß vnbekentlich vnd vnbegreifflich ist von allen creaturn vnd die sele nu creatur ist, wie mag eß denne yn der sele bekant werde? Antwort: Dar vmmb spricht man: yn dem als creatur, das meynet also vil, als creatur yn yr creaturlichkeit vnd geschaffenheit; von yr ichtheit vnnd selbheit ist eß yr vnmöglich. Wan yn welcher creatur diß volkomen bekant sal werden, da muß creaturlichkeit, geschaffenheit, ichtheit, selbheit verloren werden vnd zu nichte. Diß meynt das wort sant Paulus: »wann das vollkommen kompt«, das ist, wan eß bekant wirt, ßo wirt das geteilte, das ist creaturlichkeit, geschaffenheit, ichtheit, selbheit, meinheit, alles vorsmehet vnd vor nichtnitz gehalten. Alle die weile man von dißem icht heldet vnd dar an hanget, so bleibet das vollkommen vnbekant.

Close translation

Now one might say: since it cannot be known or comprehended by any creatures, and the soul is a creature, how can it be known in the soul? Answer: that is why one says “insofar as it is a creature”; this means as a creature in its creatureliness and createdness; from its somethingness and selfhood this is impossible for it. For in whichever creature this Perfect is to be known, creatureliness, createdness, somethingness and selfhood must be lost and come to nothing. This is what Saint Paul's word means: “When

the Perfect comes”, that is, when it is known, then the divided, that is, creatureliness, createdness, somethingness, selfhood and mineness, is all rejected and held to be nothing. As long as one holds any of this to be something and clings to it, the Perfect remains unknown.

§ 1.4 · German text · p. 72

Nu mocht man auch sprechen: Du sprichst: außwendig dissem vollkommen ader an eß ist nichts, vnnd sprichst doch, auß ym flisse etwas. Was nu vß geflossen ist, das ist vßwendig ym. Antwort: Dar vmmb spricht man; vßwendig ym ader an eß ist nicht war weßen. Waz nu auß geflossen ist, daz ist nicht war besßen vnd hat keyn weßen anders danne yn dem volkommende, sunder eß ist eyn czufal ader eyn glantz vnd eyn scheyn, der nicht weßen ist ader nicht weßen hat anders danne yn dem fure, da der glantz vß flußet also yn der sonnen ader yn eym lichte.

Close translation

Now one might also say: you say that outside this Perfect or without it there is nothing, and yet you say that something flows out of it. But what has flowed out is outside it. Answer: that is why one says that outside it or without it there is no true being. What has flowed out is not true being and has no being except in the Perfect; rather, it is an accident, or a radiance and a shining, which is not being or has no being except in the fire from which the radiance flows out, likewise in the sun or in a light.

Notes

“When the Perfect comes”: 1 Corinthians 13:10 as the author renders it. The English follows the German wording rather than substituting a published English Bible translation.

Ichtheit, from Middle High German iht, “something”, means being a particular something. It is distinct from icheit, “I-ness”. The close translation uses “somethingness”. Meinheit, “mineness”, is the claim that something is one’s own. The literary version explains these expressions in ordinary words.

In § 1.3, von (“from”) follows the critical edition; D reads vor. The point is that the Perfect cannot be known from the creature’s own separate existence and selfhood. In § 1.2, eyn before scheyne is supplied by the critical editor from B, E, F and C; it is absent from D.

After the words about tasting in the soul (§ 1.2), the later manuscript C (1497) adds the comparison with the sun, a blind person and a cleansed eye. That passage appears in “Additions from the Later Manuscript”. It is absent from the earlier main text.

“Accident” translates czufal in its philosophical sense: something dependent on another for its being, rather than an accidental event.

Chapter 2

What sin is, and why we should claim no good as our own, since it belongs to the true Good alone

Source: D (1477), in Hinten, p. 73. The opening *ab keret* follows other witnesses in place of D's *ab kere*.

Reading translation in Part I, p. 15

Was da sunde sey vnd wie man sich keynes guthen an sal nemen, wanne eß alleyne dem waren gute zcu gehort.

§ 2.1 · German text · p. 73

Die schrifft vnnd gloube vnd warheit spricht, sunde sie nicht anders, danne das sich die creatur *ab keret* von dem vnwandelhafftigen gute vnd *keret* sich zu dem wandelberen, das ist, das sie sich *keret* von dem volkomen czu dem geteilten vnd vnuolkomen vnde aller meist czu yr selbir.

Close translation

Scripture and faith and truth say that sin is nothing other than the creature's turning away from the unchangeable Good and turning towards the changeable: that is, it turns from the Perfect towards the divided and imperfect, and most of all towards itself.

§ 2.2 · German text · p. 73

Nu mercke: Wan die creatur sich an nympt etwas guts als weißens, lebens, wissens, bekennens, vormugens vnd kurtzlich alles des, das man gut nennen sal, das sie das sey ader das eß yr sey ader yr czu gehore ader von yr sey, ßo *keret* sie sich abe. Was thet der teufel anders, ader was waß seyn fal ader seyn abekeren anders, wan das er sich an name, er were auch etwas vnd etwas were seyn vnd ym gehoret auch etwas czu. Diß annemen vnd seyne ich vnd sein mich vnd seyn mir vnd seyne myne, das was seyne abkeren vnd seyn fal. Also ist er noch.

Close translation

Now observe: when the creature appropriates something good to itself, such as being, life, knowing, understanding, ability, and, in brief, everything that should be called good, as though it were that, or that were its own, or belonged to it, or came from it, then it turns away. What else did the devil do, or what else was his fall or his turning away, but that he

appropriated to himself that he too was something, and something was his, and something belonged to him too? This appropriation and his “I” and his “me” and his “to me” and his “mine”: that was his turning away and his fall. Such he still is.

Notes

The final sentence in D and C reads er, “he”, referring to the devil. Another branch of the transmission reads es, “it”. The translation therefore says “Such he still is”, rather than making a general statement that this still happens.

Sich annehmen means to claim or appropriate a good as one’s own. Its scope includes being, knowledge and the power to act, as well as possessions.

Chapter 3

How the human fall and turning away must be remedied, as Adam's fall was

Source: D (1477), in Hinten, pp. 73–74. The question in square brackets in § 3.2 is supplied from F, as quoted in the apparatus to p. 73, line 9. The critical editor identifies a probable loss before Ader. The brackets mark our supplementation exactly; the repeated question has been retained.

Reading translation in Part I, p. 16

Wie deß menschen fal vnd abkeren muß gebessert werden als Adams fal.

§ 3.1 · German text · p. 73

Was thet Adam anderß dan das selb. Man spricht: Dar vmmb das Adam den appfel aß, were er vorlorn ader gefallen. Ich sprech: Eß was vmmb seyn annemen vnd vmmbe seyn ich, myne, mir, mich vnd vmmb des gleich. Hette er siben eppfel geßsen vnde were das annemen nicht geweßen, er were nicht gefallen. Aber do das annemen geschach, do was er gefallen, vnd hette er nye keyns appfels entpissen.

Close translation

What else did Adam do but the same thing? People say that because Adam ate the apple, he was lost or had fallen. I say: it was because of his appropriation and because of his “I”, “mine”, “to me”, “me” and the like. If he had eaten seven apples and there had been no appropriation, he would not have fallen. But when the appropriation occurred, he had fallen, even if he had never bitten into an apple.

§ 3.2 · German text · p. 73–74

Nu dar, ich bin hundert mal tiffer gefallen vnd verrer ab gekeret dan Adam, vnnd Adams fal vnd seyn abkeren mochten alle menschen nicht gepessern ader wider brengen. [wie sol ich dan mein vall pessern oder wider pringen] Ader wie sal mein fal gepessert werden? Er muß gebessert werde also Adams vnd von dem selbigen, da von Adams fal gebessert wart vnd yn der selben weiße. Von wem ader yn welcher weiße geschach die besserunge? Der mensch mocht nicht an got vnnd got sold nicht an menschen. Dar vmmbe nam got menschlich natur ader menschheit an sich vnd wart vormensch vnd der mensch wart vorgötet. Alda geschach die besserunge.

Close translation

Now, I have fallen a hundred times deeper and turned away farther than Adam, and all human beings could not remedy or restore Adam's fall and his turning away. [How, then, shall I remedy or restore my fall?] Or how shall my fall be remedied? It must be remedied as Adam's was, and by the very same by which Adam's fall was remedied, and in the same manner. By whom, or in what manner, did the remedy come about? The human being could not do it without God, and God was not to do it without the human being. Therefore God took human nature or humanity upon himself and became human, and the human being became deified. There the remedy came about.

§ 3.3 · German text · p. 74

Also muß auch meyn fal gebessert werden. Ich vormag seyn nicht an got vnd got sal ader enwel nicht an mich. Denne sal eß gescheen, so muß got auch yn mir vormenscht werden, also das got an sich neme alles das, das yn mir ist, von ynnen vnd von vsßen, das nichts nicht yn mir sey, das got wider strebe ader seyne werck hindere. Das got alle menschen an sich neme, die da synt, vnd yn en vormenscht wurde vnnd sie yn ym vorgotet, vnd gesche eß nicht yn mir, meyn fal vnd meyn abkeren wurde nummer gebessert, eß gesche dann auch yn mir.

Close translation

So must my fall also be remedied. I cannot accomplish it without God, and God should not or will not accomplish it without me. For if it is to happen, God must also become human in me, so that God takes upon himself everything that is in me, within and without, so that there is nothing at all in me that resists God or hinders his works. If God took upon himself all human beings who exist, and became human in them, and they were deified in him, but this did not happen in me, my fall and my turning away would never be remedied unless it also happened in me.

§ 3.4 · German text · p. 74

Vnnd yn disser widerbringunge vnd besserunge enkan ich ader enmagk ader ensal nichts nicht zu dem thun, sundern eyn bloß, luter leiden, also das got alleyne thu vnd wircke vnd ich leide yn vnd seyne werck vnd seynen willen. Vnd dar vmmb das ich das nicht leiden wil, sundern meyn vnd ich vnd mir vnd mich, das hindert got, das er nicht alleyne vnnd an hinderniß gewirkken magk.

Dar vmmb bleibet auch meyn fal vnd meyn abkeren vngebessert. Sich, diß thut alles meyn annemen.

Close translation

And in this restoration and remedy I cannot, or am not able to, or ought not to contribute anything at all, but only a bare, pure undergoing, so that God alone does and works, and I undergo him and his works and his will. And because I will not undergo this, but “mine” and “I” and “to me” and “me”, this hinders God, so that he cannot work alone and unhindered. Therefore my fall and my turning away also remain unremedied. See, my appropriation does all this.

Notes

Hundert mal tiffer means “a hundred times deeper”: the comparison concerns the depth of the fall.

Vormenscht and vorgotet mean “made human” and “deified”. The author applies the language of incarnation to the inward restoration of the human being. Both translations retain this bold formulation.

Leiden here means to undergo or allow God’s action, not simply to experience pain. The close translation deliberately retains the uneven sequence “mine”, “I”, “to me”, “me” in § 3.4. C gives a fuller explanation involving Eigenschaft, appropriation.

Chapter 4

How, by claiming some good as our own, we fall and encroach upon God's honour

Source: D (1477), in Hinten, pp. 74–75.

Reading translation in Part I, p. 17

Wie der mensch durch das annemen, das er sich etwas guts an nympt, thut eynen fal vnd greifft got yn seyne ere.

§ 4.1 • German text • p. 74–75

Got spricht: »Ich wil meyn ere nymants geben«, das meynet also vil, das ere vnd glorie gehoret nymans czu dan alleyn gote. Wanne ich mich nu etwas gutes an neme, also das ich eß sey ader vormagk ader wiße ader thu ader das eß meyn sey ader von mir ader das eß mir czu gehore ader mir solle ader des gleich, ßo neme ich mich auch etwas rumes ader eren an vnd thu czwei vbil. Czum ersten eynen fal vnnd eyn abkeren, also vor gesprochen ist. Czum andern mal griffe ich gote yn seyne ere vnd nym mich des an, das gote alleyn czu gehoret. Wanne alles das, das man gut nennen sal, das gehoret nymande czu danne allein der ewigen, waren gute, vnd wer sich des an nympt, der thut vnrecht vnnd wider gote.

Close translation

God says: “I will give my honour to no one.” This means that honour and glory belong to no one but God alone. Now, when I appropriate something good to myself, as though I were it, or could accomplish it, or knew it, or did it, or it were mine or from me, or belonged to me or were due to me, or the like, then I also appropriate some praise or honour to myself and do two evils. First, a fall and a turning away, as has been said above. Second, I encroach upon God's honour and appropriate to myself what belongs to God alone. For everything that should be called good belongs to no one but the eternal, true Good alone, and whoever appropriates it does wrong and acts against God.

Notes

The opening recalls Isaiah 42:8 and 48:11. Ere is translated “honour” to preserve the connection between the quotation and the argument that follows. Ere vnd glorie gives two words, “honour and glory”.

Chapter 5

How to understand that we should become without knowledge, will, love, desire, understanding and the like

Source: D (1477), in Hinten, pp. 75–76. Wißselos in the opening refers to knowing; the chapter heading gives the same sequence of relinquishments.

Reading translation in Part I, p. 18

Later manuscript additions: p. 269

Wie man das vorstehen sal, das man weißloß, willos, liplos vnd begerdloß vnnd bekentloß vnd des gleichen werden sal.

§ 5.1 · German text · p. 75

Etliche menschen sprechen, man solle wißselos, willelos vnd libelos vnd begerelos vnd bekennelos vnd des gleichen werden. Das ist nicht also, das yn dem menschen keyne bekentniß sey ader got yn ym nicht bekant werde ader gelibet ader gewollet werde ader begeret ader gelobet ader geeret werde, wanne das were eyn groß gebroch vnd der mensche were als eyn vihe ader als eyn rint. Sunder eß sal da von kummen, das das bekentniß also luter vnd vollkommen sey, das do bekant werde, das daz selbe bekentniße des menschen ader ioch der creaturen nicht enist, sunder eß ist des ewigen bekentniß, das daz ewige wort ist.

Close translation

Some people say that one should become without knowing, without will, without love, without desire, without understanding and the like. This does not mean that there should be no understanding in the human being, or that God should not be known in the human being, or loved or willed or desired or praised or honoured; for that would be a great deficiency, and the human being would be like a beast or an ox. Rather, it should come about because the understanding is so pure and perfect that it is known that this very understanding is not the human being's, nor indeed the creatures', but is the knowing of the Eternal, which is the eternal Word.

§ 5.2 · German text · p. 75–76

Sich, ßo gehet der mensch ader die creatur hin dan vnd nympt sich des nicht an. Vnde ßo sich des bekentniß die creature ye mynner an nympt, ßo eß ye vollkommer wirt. Also ist eß auch vmmb den willen vnd die liebe vnd

begerunge vnd waz des ist. Wanne ðo man sich disser mynner an nympt, ðo sie edeler vnd luter vnd gotlicher werden, vnd so man sich yr ye meher an nympt, ðo sie ye grober vnd vormengter vnd vnvolkommener werden. Sich, also sal man dißer loß werden, das ist des annemens. Wan man dißer also loß wirt, das ist das edelste vnd das leuterste bekentniß, das yn dem menschen geseyn magk, vnd auch die edelste, leuterste libe vnd begerunge, wanne diß ist danne alles gotes allein.

Close translation

See, then the human being or the creature steps aside and does not appropriate it. And the less the creature appropriates this understanding, the more perfect it becomes. So it is also with will and love and desire and whatever is of that kind. For the less one appropriates these, the nobler and purer and more divine they become, and the more one appropriates them, the coarser and more mixed and more imperfect they become. See, so should one become free of these things: that is, of their appropriation. When one becomes free of them in this way, this is the noblest and purest understanding that can be in the human being, and also the noblest, purest love and desire; for then all this is God's alone.

§ 5.3 · German text · p. 76

Eß ist besser vnd edeler, eß sey gotis wan der creaturen. Das ich mich icht gutis an neme, das kumpt von wane, eß sey meyn ader ich sey eß. Were die warheit yn mir bekant, so wurde auch bekant, das ich eß nicht enbyn ader meyn nicht ist noch von mir vnnd des gleich, vnd ðo file das annemen selber abe. Eß ist beßer, got werde bekant ader des seynen, also vil es muglich ist, vnnd gelibet vnd gelobet vnd geeret, vnnd das doch der mensche wene, er lobe ader liebe got, wanne das got zumal vngelobet, vngelibet, vngeeret vnd vnbekant were. Wanne so der wane vnd vnwissenheit zu eynem wissen vnd bekentniß der warheit wirt, so fellet das annemen abe. So spricht der mensche: Ach, ich armer thore, ich wente, ich were eß; nu ist eß vnd was werlich got.

Close translation

It is better and nobler that it should be God's than the creature's. That I appropriate any good to myself comes from the supposition that it is mine or that I am it. If the truth were known in me, it would also be known that I am not it, and that it is not mine nor from me, and the like, and then appropriation would fall away of itself. It is better that God or what is his

should be known, as far as is possible, and loved and praised and honoured, even though the human being supposes that it is they who praise or love God, than that God should be altogether unpraised, unloved, unhonoured and unknown. For when supposition and ignorance become a knowing and understanding of the truth, appropriation falls away. Then the human being says: ah, what a poor fool I am! I supposed that I was it; now it is, and truly was, God.

Notes

“The knowing of the Eternal” translates *des ewigen bekentniß* and preserves its relation to God. The passage does not merely describe a human knowledge whose object is God: it denies that the knowing itself belongs to the creature.

Wahn means a mistaken supposition or conviction, here the belief that the good is “mine”.

In C, the explanation about the knowing of the Eternal and the eternal Word is replaced by a much longer passage with biblical quotations. It is given in “Additions from the Later Manuscript”; it does not replace the earlier formulation in the main text.

Chapter 6

Why we should love what is best and noblest above all, solely because it is best

Source: D (1477), in Hinten, pp. 76–77. In § 6.4, *zergenclich* (“transitory”) follows the critical edition’s reading from other witnesses; D has *czu gencklich*.

Reading translation in Part I, p. 19

Wie man das beste vnd das edelste aller libst sal haben, allein dar vmmb, das eß daz beste ist.

§ 6.1 · German text · p. 76

Eyn meister, Bohetius genant, spricht: »Das wir nicht das beste lib han, das ist von gebrechen«. Er hat war gesait: Das beste solde das libste seyn, vnd yn disser libe solde nicht an gesehen werden nutz ader vnnutz, frum ader schade, gewynne ader vorluste, ere ader vnere, lob ader vnlob ader dißer keins. Sunder was yn der warheit das edelst vnd das beste ist, das solde das libste seyn vnde nicht anders dann vmmb das, das eß das beste vnd das edelste ist.

Close translation

A master called Boethius says: “That we do not love the best comes from deficiency.” He has spoken truly: the best should be the most beloved, and in this love no regard should be had to usefulness or uselessness, benefit or harm, gain or loss, honour or dishonour, praise or dispraise, or any of these things. Rather, what is in truth the noblest and best should be the most beloved, and for no other reason than that it is the best and noblest.

§ 6.2 · German text · p. 76–77

Hir noch mochte eyn mensch seyn leben richten von vßen vnd von ynnen. Von vßen: Wanne vnder den creaturen ist eyne besser dan das ander, dar nach das daz ewige gut yn eyne mer ader mynner scheynet vnd wircket dan yn dem andern. In welchem nu das ewige gute aller meist scheint vnd lucht vnd wirckt vnd bekant vnd gelibet wirt, das ist auch das beßte vnder den creaturen, vnnd yn welchem aller mynst, das ist auch das mynste gut.

Close translation

By this a human being might order their life outwardly and inwardly. Outwardly: for among creatures one is better than another, according as the eternal Good shines and works more or less in one than in another. In whichever the eternal Good shines and gives light and works and is known

and loved most, that is also the best among creatures; and in whichever it does so least, that is also the least good.

§ 6.3 · German text · p. 77

So nu der mensche die creatur handelt vnd da mit vmmb gehet vnd dißen vnderscheit bekennet, ßo sal ym die beste creatur die libste sein vnd sal sich zu yr halden vnd sich voreynigen, vnd aller meist mit den, die man got zu eygent, das sie got czu gehoren ader gotis seynt, als gute vnd warheit, frede, libe, gerechtikeit vnnd des gleich. Hir nach sold sich der vßer mensche richten, vnd was disßem wider were, das sold man vorsmehen vnd flihen.

Close translation

Now, when a human being deals with creatures and has dealings with them and recognises this distinction, the best creature should be the most beloved to them, and they should hold to it and unite with it, and most of all with those things that one attributes to God as belonging to God or being God's, such as goodness and truth, peace, love, righteousness and the like. By this the outer human being should be ordered, and whatever is contrary to this should be rejected and fled.

§ 6.4 · German text · p. 77

Aber ßo der ynner mensch eynen vbirsprung thet vnd sprunge yn das vollkommen, ßo funde man vnd smeckte, das das vollkommen an maß vnd an ende vnd czal edeler vnnd beßer ist vbir alle vnvolkommen vnd geteilte, vnd das ewig vbir das zergencklich vnd der borne vnd der orsprung vbir alles, das dar vß flußet ader gefliße mag. So wurden die vnvolkommen vnde die teile abesmeckig vnd vornicht. Das mercke: Sal das edelste vnd das beste gelibet seyn, so muß diß gescheen.

Close translation

But if the inner human being made a leap beyond and leapt into the Perfect, then one would find and taste that the Perfect is, without measure and without end or number, nobler and better than all imperfect and divided things; and the eternal above the transitory, and the fountain and the origin above everything that flows or can flow from it. Then the imperfect things and the parts would become tasteless and be brought to nothing. Observe this: if the noblest and best is to be loved, this must happen.

Notes

The treatise itself attributes the opening statement to Boethius. It is a free rendering of a thought, not an established word-for-word quotation; compare *The Consolation of Philosophy*, III, prose 2.

The list in § 6.3 names goodness, truth, peace, love and righteousness. *Übersprung* in later spelling means a leap or passage beyond; it does not in itself designate a separate stage or method of spiritual ascent.

Chapter 7

The two spiritual eyes with which we see into eternity and time, and how one hinders the other

Source: D (1477), in Hinten, pp. 77–79. In § 7.1, *menschen* after *vßern* (“outer human being”), and in § 7.2, *aug* (“eye”), are restored in the critical edition from other witnesses; both are absent from D.

Reading translation in Part I, p. 20

Later manuscript additions: p. 270

Von czweien geistlichen augen, mit den der mensch sith yn die ewikeit vnd yn dy czeit, vnd wie eyns von dem andern gehindert wirt.

§ 7.1 · German text · p. 77–78

Man sal mercken, das man lißet vnd spricht, die sele Cristi hette czwei augen: eyn recht auge vnd eyn linck auge. In dem anbegynne, do sie geschaffen wart, kert sie das recht auge yn die ewikeit vnnd yn die gotheit vnd stunt da yn vollkommener beschauwunge vnd gebrauchunge gotlichs weißens vnd gotlicher vollkommenheit vnbeweglich vnd bleib do vnbeweget vnde vngehindert von allen den czufellen vnd erbeite vnnd bewegunge, leidens, marter, pyne, die yn dem vßern menschen ye geschachen. Mit dem lincken auge sach sie yn die creatur vnd erkant do vnnd nām do vnderscheid yn den creaturenn, was do besser ader vnbesser, edeler ader vnedeler were, vnd dar nach wart der vßer mensch Cristi gericht. Also stundt der jnner mensch Cristi noch dem rechten auge der sele yn vollkommen gebruchen gotlicher nature, yn vollkommener wunne vnd freude. Aber der vßer mensch vnd das lincke auge der sele stunt mit ym yn volkummen leiden vnd jamer vnd erbeite. Vnde diß geschach alßo, das das inwendigk vnnd das rechte auge vnbeweget vnnd vngehindert vnd vnberuret bleib von aller der erbeite vnd leiden vnd marter, das yn dem vßern menschen geschach.

Close translation

One should observe that one reads and says that the soul of Christ had two eyes: a right eye and a left eye. In the beginning, when it was created, it turned the right eye into eternity and into the Godhead, and stood there unmoving in perfect contemplation and enjoyment of divine being and divine perfection, and remained there unmoved and unhindered by all the occurrences and labour and movement, suffering, torment and pain that

ever took place in the outer human being. With the left eye it looked into the creatures, and knew there and discerned among the creatures what was better or less good, nobler or less noble, and by this Christ's outer human being was ordered. Thus Christ's inner human being, according to the soul's right eye, stood in perfect enjoyment of divine nature, in perfect delight and joy. But the outer human being, and the soul's left eye with it, stood in complete suffering and misery and labour. And this happened in such a way that the inward and the right eye remained unmoved and unhindered and untouched by all the labour and suffering and torment that took place in the outer human being.

§ 7.2 · German text · p. 78–79

Man spricht: Do Cristus an der sule gegeischelt wart ader an dem creucze hing nach dem vßern menschen, do stunt die sele ader der jnner mensche nach dem rechten auge yn also volkummen gebruchunge, wunne vnd freuden alßo nach der hymmelfart ader also ynczunt. So wart auch der vßer mensche ader die sele nach dem lincken auge yn yren wercken yn allem dem, das yr czu gehoret czu der vßwendikeit, nye gehindert ader gemynnert von dem inwendigen; yr keynes wartet auff das ander. Nu hat die geschaffen sele des menschen auch czwei augen. Das eyn ist muglicheit zu sehen yn die ewikeit, das ander zu sehen yn die czeit vnd yn die creaturen, dar ynne vnderscheid zu erkennen, als vor gesprochen ist, vnd dem leibe leben czu geben vnnd den czu richten vnd czu regiren. Aber diße czwei augen der sele des menschen mugen nicht gleich mitenander yre werck gevben. Sunder sal die sele mit dem rechten auge yn die ewikeit sehen, so muß sich das lincke auge aller seyner werck vorczihen vnd sich halden, als ab eß tod sey. Vnnd sal das lincke aug seyne werck vbin noch der vßwendikeit, das ist die czite vnd die creature handeln, ßo muß das recht auge gehindert werde an seynen werck, das ist an seyner beschaubunge.

Close translation

One says: when Christ was scourged at the pillar or hung upon the cross according to the outer human being, the soul or the inner human being, according to the right eye, stood in enjoyment, delight and joy as perfect as after the Ascension or as now. So too the outer human being, or the soul according to the left eye, was never hindered or diminished by the inward in its works, in everything that belonged to it outwardly; neither waited upon the other. Now the created soul of the human being also has two eyes.

The one is a capacity to see into eternity; the other, to see into time and into creatures, to recognise distinctions there, as was said above, and to give life to the body and order and govern it. But these two eyes of the human soul cannot perform their works at the same time. Rather, if the soul is to look into eternity with the right eye, the left eye must relinquish all its works and hold itself as though it were dead. And if the left eye is to perform its works outwardly, that is, to deal with time and creatures, then the right eye must be hindered in its work, that is, in its contemplation.

Notes

Chapters 7–9 also survive in H (1453), the earliest dated witness included in the critical edition. This chapter follows the common basis of the present book. H's introduction and significant differences are presented in "The Early Witness of 1453", using published readings, not a new complete transcription of H.

The author distinguishes the simultaneous activity of the soul's two orientations in Christ from their mutual obstruction in an ordinary human soul. Both English versions retain this distinction.

Gebrauchung / *Gebruchen* here means experienced enjoyment or fruition of divine being, rather than merely making use of something. The translation consistently uses "enjoyment" in this passage.

The conclusion about wanting one thing and being unable to serve two masters is added in C. It is absent from the earlier main text.

Chapter 8

How the human soul, while it is in the body, may receive a foretaste of eternal blessedness

Source: D (1477), in Hinten, pp. 79–80. Geschehen (“take place”) in § 8.1 and lernet (“teaches”) in § 8.2 are critical readings adopted from other witnesses; D has *sehen* and *lernte* respectively.

Reading translation in Part I, p. 21

Later manuscript additions: p. 270

Wie die sele des menschen, die weile sie yn dem leibe ist, magk entphaen eyn vorsmagk ewiger selikeit.

§ 8.1 · German text · p. 79

Man fraget, ab eß möglich sey, das die sele, die weile sie yn dem leibe ist, muge dar czu kommen, das sie thu eynen blick yn dy ewikeit vnd do emphae eyn vorsmack ewiges lebens vnnd ewiger selikeit. Man spricht gemeyniglich: neyn, vnnd das ist war yn dem synne, alle die weile die sele eyn sehen hat uff den leip vnd die dinck, die dem leip czu gehören, vnd uff die czeit vnd sust uff dij creature vnnd sich do methe vorbildet vnnd vormangfaldiget, ßo mag eß nicht geseyn. Wanne sal die sele da hin kommen, ßo muß sie luter vnnd bloß seyn von allen bilden vnnd ab gescheiden von allen creaturen vnnd czu vorderst von yr selber. Vnd diß meynt man, eß sey nicht czu geschehen yn der czeit.

Close translation

One asks whether it is possible for the soul, while it is in the body, to come to this: to cast a glance into eternity and there receive a foretaste of eternal life and eternal blessedness. People commonly say no; and this is true in the sense that, as long as the soul has its gaze upon the body and the things that belong to the body, and upon time and otherwise upon creatures, and fills itself with images and multiplies itself through these, it cannot be. For if the soul is to come there, it must be pure and bare of all images and detached from all creatures, and first of all from itself. And this, people mean, cannot take place in time.

§ 8.2 · German text · p. 79–80

Abir sanctus Dyonisius, der wil eß muglichen. Das meynt man vß seynen wortten, die er schreibet czu Thimotheo: »Czu der schaubunge gotlicher heymlikeit saltu laßen synne vnd synnelickeyt vnd alles, das synne begriffen

mugen, vnd vornunfft, vornunfftliche wirckunge vnnd alles, das vornunfft begriffen vnd bekennen magk, geschaffen vnd vngeschaffen, vnnd stant uff yn eyne vßgange dein selbs vnnd yn eyne vnwissen alles diß vorgesprouchen, vnnd kume yn die eynunge des, das do ist vbir alle weßen vnd bekentniß«. Hilde er diß nicht vor muglich yn der czite, bor vmmb lernet er eß ader redet dicz czu eynem menschen yn der czeit? Auch sal man wissen, das eyn meister spricht vbir sant Dyonisius worte, das eß moglich sey vnd das eß joch eyne menschen also dicke geschee, das er dar ynne wirt forwenet, das er dor luget, also dicke er wil. Vnd der blicke ist keyner, er sey gote liber vnnd edeler vnd wirdiger dan alles das, das alle creatur geleisten mugen als creatur.

Close translation

But Saint Dionysius holds it to be possible. This is understood from his words, which he writes to Timothy: “For the contemplation of divine mysteries you shall leave senses and sensibility and everything that senses can comprehend, and reason, rational activity and everything that reason can comprehend and know, created and uncreated; and rise up in a going out of yourself and in an unknowing of all these things aforesaid, and come into union with that which is above all being and knowledge.” If he did not hold this possible in time, why would he teach it or say this to a human being in time? One should also know that a master says about Saint Dionysius’s words that it is possible, and indeed that it happens to a human being so often that they become accustomed to it, so that they look there as often as they will. And there is none of these glances that is not dearer to God and nobler and worthier than everything that all creatures can accomplish as creatures.

Notes

The quotation comes from the opening of the *Mystical Theology* by the author known as Dionysius the Areopagite. We translate the treatise’s German rendering. “Unknowing” means going beyond the modes of knowledge listed here, rather than cultivating everyday ignorance.

The “master” who comments on Dionysius is not named in this passage; no identification has been added to the translation.

After “as often as they will”, C adds a passage about persistent practice; after the final sentence it adds one about repeated inward turning and union a thousand times in one day. Both appear separately among the later additions.

Chapter 9

Why it is more useful and better to attend to what God wishes to work in us, or use us for, than to know all he has ever worked or will ever work in creatures; and why blessedness lies in God and his works alone, and not in the creature

Source: D (1477), in Hinten, pp. 80–82. In § 9.1, *nutzen* (“use”) follows other witnesses in place of D’s *machen*. In § 9.2, *werden* (“become”) replaces *weisen*, and *es* replaces *das*.

Reading translation in Part I, p. 22

Later manuscript additions: p. 271

Wie das dem menschen nutzer vnd besser sey, das er war neme, was got mit ym wircken wolte, adder wor czu en got nutzen wil, denne ab er wuste, was got mit allen creaturen ye gewurcht hat adder ymmer wircken wil, vnd wie zelickeit alleyne leyt an gote vnd an seynen werckenn vnnd nicht an der creature.

§ 9.1 · German text · p. 80–81

Man sal mercken vnd wissen yn gantzer warheit, das alle togent vnd güte vnd ioch das gute, das got selber ist, machen den menschen nymmer tugentsam, gut ader selig, die weile es vßwendig der sele ist. In glicher weiß ist eß auch vmmb die sunde ader boßheit. Dar vmmb wie wol eß gut ist, das man fraget vnd erferet vnd joch bekennet wirt, was gute vnd heilige menschen gethan ader gelyden haben, vnnd wie sie gelebt haben, vnd joch was got yn en vnd durch sie gewirckt habe vnd gewolt. Doch were eß hundertfeldigk besser, das der mensche erfure vnd erkennet wurde, was vnd wie seyn eygen leben were, vnd auch was got yn ym were vnd wolde vnd wirckte, vnd wo czu yn got nützen wulde ader nicht. Dar vmmb ist eß noch ware, wann man spricht: Eß wart nye außgang ßo gut, yn bliben were besser.

Close translation

One should observe and know in full truth that all virtue and goodness, and indeed the Good that is God himself, never make a human being virtuous, good or blessed as long as this is outside the soul. In the same way it is also with sin or wickedness. Therefore, although it is good to inquire and learn, and indeed to come to know, what good and holy people have done or suffered, and how they have lived, and indeed what God has worked and willed in them and through them, yet it would be a hundredfold better for a

human being to learn and come to know what and how their own life is, and also what God is in them and wills and works, and for what God would use them or not. Therefore it is still true when one says: there was never a going out so good that remaining within would not be better.

§ 9.2 · German text · p. 81–82

Auch ist zu wissen, das ewige selikeit an eyne allein leit vnd an nicht anderß. Vnd sal der mensche ader die sele selig seyn ader werden, ßo wil vnnd muß das eyne alleyn yn der sele seyn. Nu mocht man fragen: Was ist aber das eyne? Ich sprich: Eß ist gut ader gut geworden, vnd doch wider diß gut noch das, das man genennen, bekennen ader geczeigen kan, sunder alle vnd vbir alle. Auch darff das nicht yn die sele kommen, wann esbereite dar jnne ist. Eß ist aber vn bekant. Wann man spricht, man sal dar czu kommen ader eß sal yn die sele kommen, das ist also vil, man sal eß suchen, enpfinden vnd smecken, vnd synt eß nu eyne ist, so ist auch besßer eyneikeit vnd einfeldikeit dan manigfeldikeit, wan selikeit leit nicht an vil ader vilikeit, sunder an eyne vnd eyneikeit.

Close translation

One should also know that eternal blessedness lies in one thing alone and in nothing else. And if the human being or the soul is to be or become blessed, this one alone will and must be in the soul. Now one might ask: but what is this one? I say: it is the Good or what has become good, and yet neither this good nor that which one can name, know or point to, but all and above all. Nor does it need to come into the soul, for it is already within it. But it is unknown. When one says that one should come to it, or that it should come into the soul, this means that one should seek it, feel it and taste it. And since it is one, unity and simplicity are also better than multiplicity, for blessedness does not lie in many or in manyness, but in one and in oneness.

§ 9.3 · German text · p. 82

Auch leit selikeit, kurtzlich czu sprechen, an keyner creatur ader creatur werck, sunder allein an got vnnd an seynen wercken. Dar vmmb solde ich alleine gotis vnd seynes werckes warten vnd laßen alle creatur mit allen yren wercken vnd czu vorderst mich selber. Auch alle die werck vnd wunder, die got ye gewirckit hat ader ymmer meher gewircken mag yn ader durch alle creaturen ader joch got selber mit aller seyner gute, als ferre als eß vßwendigk mir ist vnd geschit, so macht eß mich nicht selick, sunder also vil als eß yn mir ist vnd geschit vnd bekennet vnd lib gehabt wirt vnd empfunden vnd gesmackt wirt.

Close translation

Also, to speak briefly, blessedness lies in no creature or creaturely work, but in God and in his works alone. Therefore I should attend to God and his work alone and leave all creatures with all their works, and first of all myself. Furthermore, all the works and wonders that God has ever worked or can ever work in or through all creatures, or indeed God himself with all his goodness, insofar as this is and takes place outside me, does not make me blessed, but only insofar as it is and takes place in me, and is known and loved and felt and tasted.

Notes

The main text reads *hundertfeldig*, “a hundredfold”, not “a thousand times”. C’s extended comparison of self-knowledge with astronomy and knowledge of nature is given separately.

Gut ader gut geworden literally means “the Good or what has become good”. The critical edition retains this difficult reading. The translation does not replace it with a confident theological interpretation or present a conjectured corruption as an established correction.

The opening statement about sin is retained in its brief early form. C’s explanation about consent to sin is a separate addition.

Chapter 10

How the perfect desire only to be to the eternal Good what a hand is to its owner, and have lost fear of hell and desire for the kingdom of heaven

Source: D (1477), in Hinten, pp. 82–83. In § 10.1, *beheglicheit* (“contentment”) and *stent* (“stand”) follow readings adopted by the critical editor from other witnesses, in place of D’s *behelicheit* and *schent*.

Reading translation in Part I, p. 23

Later manuscript additions: p. 271

Wie die vollkommen menschen anders nicht begern, denne das sie dem ewigen gute mochten geseyn als dem menschen seyne hant ist, vnd wie sie vorlorn haben vorcht der hellen vnd begerunge des hymmelrichs.

§ 10.1 · German text · p. 82–83

Nv sal man mercken, wo erleuchte menschen synt mit dem waren licht, die bekennen, das alles, das sie begerenn mugen ader erwelen mugen, nichts ist gein dem, das von allen creaturen yn dem als creatur ye begeret ader erwelet ader bekant wart. Dar vmmb laßen sie alle begerunge vnd erbelunge vnd befelen vnd laßen sich vnd alle dem ewigen gute. Den noch bleibt yn yn eyn begerung yn selbs czu eynem vorgangk vnd nehunge czu dem ewigen gute, das ist, czu eyner nehern bekentniß vnd hitziger liebe vnd clarer beheglicheit vnnd gantzer vnderthenikeit vnde gehorsams, also das eyn itlich erluchte mensch mag sprechen: ich were gern dem ewigen gute also dem menschen seyne hant vnd furchtent alle czeit, das sie dem nicht genug seyn, vnnd begerent auch aller menschen selikeit. Vnd disßer begerung stent sie ledig vnd nemen sich der nicht an, wanne disße menschen bekennen wol, das diße begerung des menschen nicht ist, sundern der ewigen gute, wanne alles, das gut ist, des sal sich nymant an nemen, sundern der ewigen gute gehort eß alleyne czu.

Close translation

Now one should observe: where people are enlightened with the true light, they know that everything they can desire or choose is nothing compared with what was ever desired or chosen or known by all creatures insofar as they are creatures. Therefore they leave all desiring and choosing, and commit and surrender themselves and all things to the eternal Good. Yet there remains in them one desire for themselves to pass away and draw

near to the eternal Good: that is, to a nearer knowledge and a more ardent love and a clearer contentment and complete subjection and obedience, so that each enlightened human being may say: I would gladly be to the eternal Good as a human being's hand is to them. And they fear at all times that they do not suffice for this, and also desire the blessedness of all human beings. And they stand free of this desire and do not appropriate it, for these people know well that this desire is not the human being's but the eternal Good's; for no one should appropriate anything that is good, but it belongs to the eternal Good alone.

§ 10.2 · German text · p. 83

Auch stehen disse menschen yn eyner freiheit, also das sie vorlorn haben forchte der peyne ader helle vnde auch hoffnungen lones ader hymmelrichs, sundern sie leben yn luter vnderthenikeit vnd gehorsam der ewigen gute auß eyner freyen libe. Das ist ynCristo geweßen yn volkommenheit vnd yn seynen nochvolgern, yn dem eynen mer, yn dem andern mynder. Eß ist jamer, das vns das ewige gut auff das aller edelst weißet vnd reizet, vnd wir das nicht woln. Was ist edeler, wanne ware, geistlich armut? Vnd wan vns das vor gehalden wirt, so wollen wir seyn nicht. Wir wollen als gestrichen seyn, also das wir yn vns großen smack vnd susßikeit vnd luste yn vns finden; ßo were vns wol vnd hetten got lib. Wanne vns aber das entpfellet, ßo ist vns we vnd vorgessen gotis vnd wenen, wir seyn vorlorn. Das ist großer gebrech vnd eyn boße czeichen, wanne eyn ware liphabender mensche hat got ader das ewige gut glich lib yn haben vnd yn darben, yn susße vnd yn seure und des gleich. Hir ynne mercke sich eyn iglich mensch.

Close translation

These people also stand in a freedom such that they have lost fear of pain or hell, and also hope of reward or the kingdom of heaven; rather, they live in pure subjection and obedience to the eternal Good out of a free love. This was in Christ in perfection, and in his followers, in one more, in another less. It is a misery that the eternal Good shows and draws us to the very noblest, and we do not will it. What is nobler than true spiritual poverty? And when this is set before us, we do not want it. We want always to be stroked, so that we find great savour and sweetness and pleasure within ourselves; then we would be well and would love God. But when this falls away from us, we are in distress and forget God and suppose that

we are lost. This is a great deficiency and an evil sign, for a truly loving human being loves God or the eternal Good equally in having and in lacking, in sweetness and in sourness, and the like. Let each human being examine themselves in this.

Notes

The opening comparison is difficult: the enlightened person's desire is called nothing "compared with" what creatures have desired or known. The direction of the comparison is retained in the German and both English versions; a conjectured alternative meaning has not been substituted.

Wir wollen als gestrichen seyn means that we always want to be stroked or soothed. C's fuller image of sweetness smeared around the mouth, and its further explanation of the withdrawal of consolations, appear separately.

The relinquishment of hope for reward is opposed here to self-interested service. It does not exclude the desire for everyone's blessedness explicitly mentioned in the preceding paragraph.

Chapter 11

How the righteous person is placed in hell within time and cannot be comforted there, then taken out and placed in heaven and cannot be troubled there

Source: D (1477), in Hinten, pp. 84–86. In § 11.2, gut (“good”) is restored by the critical editor from B, E, I, A and C; it is absent from D and F. Wackelt (“wavers”) in § 11.4 follows other witnesses in place of D’s wurcket.

Reading translation in Part I, p. 24

Later manuscript additions: p. 272

Wie der gerechte mensche yn der czeit yn die helle wirt gesatzet vnd magk dar ynne nicht getrost werden, vnd wie er auß der helle wirt genomen vnde wirt yn das hymmelrich gesatzet vnde magk dar ynne nicht betruet werden.

§ 11.1 · German text · p. 84–85

Cristus sele musset yn die helle, ee dan sie czu hymmel qwam. Also muß auch des menschen sele. Aber wie das geschee, das mercket: Wanne sich der mensche selber bekennet vnd an syhet vnd findet sich selber also boße vnd vnwardig alles des gutes vnnd trostes, das ym von got ader von den creaturen gescheen mag, sundern nicht anders danne eyne ewig vordammen vnd verloren seyn vnd düncket sich auch des selben vnwardigk seyn. Ja er dunckt sich vnwardigk alles leidens, das ym yn der czeit gescheen kan, vnnd das eß willich vnd recht sey, das alle creatur wider yn seyn vnd thun ym leyden vnnd pyne an, vnd ist des alles vnwardigk. Auch dunckt yn recht, das er ewiclichen vordampft sal seyn vnd ioch eyne fußschemel sold seyn aller teufele yn der helle, vnd diß alles noch vnwardig, vnd wil ader mag keynes trostes ader erlöunge begern wider von gote noch von creaturen, sundern er wil gerne vngetrost vnd vnerlost seyn, vnd ym ist nicht leit seyn vordampniß vnd leiden, wan eß billich vnde recht ist vnd ist nicht wider got, sundern eß ist der wille gotis, vnd das ist ym lieb vnd ist ym wol do mit. Ym ist alleine leit seyne schult vnd boßheit, wanne das ist vnrecht vnnd wider got, vnd do mit ist ym we vnd vbil czu mute. Vnd diß ist vnd heißet ware ruwe vmmb die sunde. Vnde wer also yn der czite yn die helle kumpt, der kumpt noch der czite yn das hymmelrich vnd gewynnet seyn yn der czeit eyne vorsmack, der vbirtrifft allen lusten vnnd freude, die yn der czite von czitlichen dingen ye gewart ader geworden magk. Vnde die weile der mensche also yn der helle ist, so mag yn nymant getrosten, wider got noch creatur, als geschriben stet: In der helle ist keyn erlöunge. Da von sprach

eyn mensch: »Vorderben, sterben, ich lebe an trost, vßen vnd ynnen vordampt, nymant bite, das ich werde erloßt«.

Close translation

Christ's soul had to go into hell before it came to heaven. So too must the human soul. But observe how this happens: when a human being knows and looks upon themselves and finds themselves so evil and unworthy of all the good and comfort that can come to them from God or from creatures, but of nothing other than an eternal condemnation and being lost, and considers themselves unworthy even of this. Indeed, they consider themselves unworthy of all the suffering that can befall them in time, and that it is fitting and right that all creatures should be against them and inflict suffering and pain upon them, and they are unworthy of all this. They also consider it right that they should be eternally condemned and indeed be a footstool for all the devils in hell, and still unworthy of all this, and will not or cannot desire any comfort or deliverance either from God or from creatures, but gladly will to be un comforted and undelivered. And their condemnation and suffering do not grieve them, for this is fitting and right and is not against God, but is God's will, and this is dear to them and they are well content with it. Only their guilt and wickedness grieve them, for that is wrong and against God, and because of that they are in pain and ill at heart. And this is, and is called, true contrition for sin. And whoever comes into hell in this way within time comes into the kingdom of heaven after time and gains a foretaste of it within time that surpasses all the pleasures and joy that ever came or can come within time from temporal things. And while a human being is thus in hell, no one can comfort them, neither God nor creature, as it stands written: in hell there is no redemption. Of this a person said: "Perishing, dying, I live without comfort, condemned outwardly and inwardly; let no one pray that I may be delivered."

§ 11.2 · German text · p. 85

Nu lesset got den menschen nicht yn disßer helle, sunder er nympt yn an sich, also das der mensche nichts enrucht danne allein des ewigenn gutis vnd bekennet, das dem ewigenn gute als vberwol ist, vnde seyne wunne, fride vnd freude, rue vnnd genuge. Vnd wanne den der mensche nicht anders enrucht noch begert dann das ewige gut vnd ym selbes nicht, ßo wirt des ewigen gutis frede vnd freude vnd wunne vnde luste, vnd was des ist, alles des menschen, vnd so ist der mensche ym hymmelrich. Disse helle vnd diß hymmelrich seyn

czwen gut, sicher wege dem menschen yn der czite, vnd wol ym, der sie recht vnd wol findet, wanne diße helle vorgehet, das hymmelrich bestet.

Close translation

Now God does not leave the human being in this hell, but takes them to himself, so that the human being cares for nothing but the eternal Good alone, and knows that it is superabundantly well with the eternal Good, and its delight, peace and joy, rest and sufficiency. And when the human being cares for and desires nothing but the eternal Good, and nothing for themselves, then the eternal Good's peace and joy and delight and pleasure, and everything of that kind, all become the human being's, and thus the human being is in the kingdom of heaven. This hell and this kingdom of heaven are two good, sure ways for a human being within time, and well is it for the one who finds them rightly and well, for this hell passes away; the kingdom of heaven endures.

§ 11.3 · German text · p. 85

Auch sal der mensch mercken, wanne er yn dißer helle ist, so mag yn nichts getrosten vnd er kan nicht glouben, das er ymmer erlost ader getrost werde. Aber wan er yn dem hymmelrich ist, so mag yn nichts betruben ader vngetrosten vnd gloubet nicht, das er betrubit ader vngetrost magk werden, wie wal er noch der helle mag getrost vnd erloßt werden, vnd noch dem hymmelrich betrubit vnd vngetrost.

Close translation

The human being should also observe: when they are in this hell, nothing can comfort them, and they cannot believe that they will ever be delivered or comforted. But when they are in the kingdom of heaven, nothing can trouble them or deprive them of comfort, and they do not believe that they can be troubled or deprived of comfort, although after hell they can be comforted and delivered, and after the kingdom of heaven troubled and deprived of comfort.

§ 11.4 · German text · p. 85–86

Auch kumpt dem menschen diße helle vnd diß hymmelrich, das er nicht weiß, wo von eß her kompt, vnnd der mensche kan wider gethun noch gelaßen ader nicht von dem seynen, da von eß kume ader fare. Vnnd der mensche kan ym selber disser keynes gegeben oder genemen, gemachen ader entmachen, sundern als geschriben ist: »Der geist geistet, wo er wil, vnd du horest seyne stymme«, das meynet man yn der geynwertikeit, »aber du weist nicht, wo von

er kommet ader wo hin er ghet«. Vnd wanne der mensche yn disser czvier eynem ist, so ist ym recht vnnd er mag yn der helle also sicher seyn also yn dem hymmelrich. Vnd alle die wile der mensche yn der czeit ist, ßo magk er gar dicke auß eynem yn das ander fallen, ja vnder tage vnd nacht etwen dicke vnd alles an sich selber. Wanne abir der mensche yn disser keynem ist, so gehet er mit den creatures vmmb vnnd wackelt her vnnd dar vnd weiß nicht, wo er dar an ist. Doch solde er disser beider nymmer vorgesßen yn seynem herten.

Close translation

This hell and this kingdom of heaven also come to the human being without their knowing from where they come, and the human being can neither do nor leave undone anything of their own by which they would come or go. And the human being cannot give themselves or take from themselves either of these, make or unmake it, but, as it is written: “The spirit breathes where it wills, and you hear its voice”—this is understood in its presence—“but you do not know from where it comes or where it goes.” And when a human being is in either of these two, it is right with them, and they can be as secure in hell as in the kingdom of heaven. And as long as the human being is within time, they can fall very often from one into the other, indeed sometimes often within a day and a night, and all without themselves. But when the human being is in neither of these, they deal with creatures and waver here and there and do not know where they stand. Yet they should never forget either of these in their heart.

Notes

The text distinguishes “within time” from “after time”. The literary version renders the latter as “after this life”. The foretaste of heaven is expressly assigned to the present life.

In § 11.2, the statement about the eternal Good’s superabundant well-being passes into a grammatically uneven list. The close translation preserves the unevenness. The words about no one being able to comprehend or express this belong to C, not to the earlier main text.

“The spirit breathes”: John 3:8 as rendered by the author. The German verb *geistet* is formed from *Geist*, “spirit”; English “breathes” conveys the action but cannot reproduce that word formation.

The chapter describes a consciousness of guilt and abandonment before God, followed by comfort. Its paradoxical statements about personal unworthiness have been retained; they have not been turned into advice to seek outward punishment.

Chapter 12

The true inward peace that Christ left to his disciples at the last

Source: D (1477), in Hinten, pp. 86–87. In § 12.1, den follows other witnesses in place of D's das; in § 12.2, sie ("they") replaces the repeated seyn jungern alleyne.

Reading translation in Part I, p. 26

Later manuscript additions: p. 272

Was rechter, warer, ynnerlicher frede sey, den Cristus seynen jungern zcu letzt gelaßen hat.

§ 12.1 · German text · p. 86–87

Eß sprechen vil leute, sie haben nicht frede ader ruwe, sie haben vil widerwertikeit vnd anfechtunge vnd druckes vnde lyden. Der nu diß yn der warheit wil an ßen vnd mercken: so hette der teufel auch fryde, wenne eß ym ginge nach seynem willenn vnd wolgefallen. Vnd dar vmmb so sullen wir mercken vnd war nemen des frides, den Cristus seynen jungern czu letze ließ, do er sprach: »Meynen fride den laß ich uch, meynen fride den geb ich uch, nicht als yn die werlt gibt«, wanne die werlt betruget yn yren gaben.

Close translation

Many people say that they have no peace or rest, that they have much adversity and temptation and oppression and suffering. Now, whoever will look at and observe this in truth: the devil too would have peace if things went according to his will and pleasure. And therefore we should observe and attend to the peace that Christ left to his disciples at the last, when he said: "My peace I leave to you; my peace I give to you, not as the world gives it"; for the world deceives in its gifts.

§ 12.2 · German text · p. 87

Was frides meynet Cristus? Er meynet den jnnerlichen fride, der da durch brech vnd durch drunge durch alle anfechtunge vnd widirwertikeit, druckes, lidens, elendes ader smacheit, ader was des ist, das man dar ynne frolich vnd geduldig were, also seynen liben jungern gewest synt vnd nicht sie allein, sundern alle vßerwelten frunde gotis vnd ware nachvolger Cristi. Sich vnd nym ware, wer nu libe, fleiß vnd ernst hir czu hette, der mocht wol bekennen werden den waren, ewigen fride, der do got ist, noch mugelikeyt der creature.

Close translation

What peace does Christ mean? He means the inward peace that would break through and penetrate all temptation and adversity, oppression, suffering, misery or humiliation, or whatever is of that kind, so that one would be joyful and patient within it, as his beloved disciples were, and not they alone, but all God's chosen friends and Christ's true followers. See and attend: whoever now had love, diligence and earnestness for this might well come to know the true, eternal peace that is God, according to the creature's capacity.

Notes

The quotation is John 14:27 as rendered in the treatise.

Smacheit means humiliation or dishonour; compare the entry *smâcheit* in the Benecke–Müller–Zarncke dictionary.

C's longer explanations of outward peace, successive temptations and sweetness replacing bitterness are given among the later additions. The earlier chapter's brevity is preserved.

Chapter 13

How we sometimes dismiss images too soon

Source: D (1477), in Hinten, pp. 87–88. D names Tauler explicitly; I and Luther's 1516 printing, A, read "a master".

Reading translation in Part I, p. 27

Later manuscript additions: p. 273

Wie der mensch den bilden etwan czu frue vrlaub gibt.

§ 13.1 · German text · p. 87–88

Eß spricht der Tauler: »Eß synt menschen yn der czite, die den bilden czu frue orlaup geben«, ee sie die warheit do von gelößen, vnnd dar vmmb das sie sich selber lösen, so mugen sie kume ader nicht czu der warheit gereichen. Vnnd dar vmmb solde man alle czeit mit fleiße war nemen der werck gotis vnnd seyner heischunge, tribunge vnnd vormanunge des menschen.

Close translation

Tauler says: "There are people within time who dismiss images too soon", before the truth has released them from them; and because they release themselves, they can scarcely or not at all attain the truth. Therefore one should at all times diligently attend to God's works and his calling, urging and admonishing of the human being.

Notes

"Release themselves" closely follows sich selber lösen. In context it means a premature, self-directed abandonment of images, rather than freedom already attained in God.

Images are sensory and mental representations through which a person is still learning truth. The author cautions against dismissing them prematurely; he does not require that they be retained for ever.

C's extensive continuation appears in the later additions. The early chapter ends with the call to attend to God's works and admonitions.

Chapter 14

The three stages that lead us to perfection

Source: D (1477), in Hinten, p. 88. The whole main chapter consists of this single brief paragraph.

Reading translation in Part I, p. 28

Later manuscript additions: p. 274

Von dreyen graden, die den menschen furen czu volkommenheit.

§ 14.1 · German text · p. 88

Nv sal man wissen, das nymant erlucht mag werden, er sey denne vor gereyniget, geluttert vnnd gelediget. Auch mag nymant mit got voreyniget werden, er sey danne vor erluchte. Vnd dar vmmb seynt drey wege: zum ersten die reynigunge, czum andern die erluchtunge, czum drittin die voreynunge.

Close translation

Now one should know that no one can be enlightened unless they have first been cleansed, purified and freed. Nor can anyone be united with God unless they have first been enlightened. And therefore there are three ways: first, purification; second, enlightenment; third, union.

Notes

The heading calls these “stages”; the body calls them “ways”. C adds the detailed allocation to beginners, those progressing and the perfect, with three practices for each way. Those details are not part of the early paragraph.

Chapter 15

How all people died in Adam and became alive again in Christ; true obedience and disobedience

Source: D (1477), in Hinten, pp. 89–90. Near the beginning, Was (“what”) follows the critical edition’s reading from other witnesses in place of D’s das; the final sentence reads es in place of er.

Reading translation in Part I, p. 29

Later manuscript additions: p. 274

Wie alle menschen yn Adam synt gestorben vnnd yn Cristo widder lebendig worden, vnd von waren gehorsam vnd vngehorsam.

§ 15.1 • German text • p. 89

Alles, das yn Adam vnder ging vnd starb, das stunt yn Cristo wider auff vnnd wart lebendig. Alles, das yn Adam auff stunt vnd lebendig wart, das ging yn Cristo vnder vnd starp. Was was vnd ist aber daß? Ich sprech: war gehorsam vnd vngehorsam.

Close translation

Everything that went down and died in Adam rose again and became alive in Christ. Everything that rose up and became alive in Adam went down and died in Christ. But what was and is this? I say: true obedience and disobedience.

§ 15.2 • German text • p. 89

Was ist aber war gehorsam? Ich sprech: Der mensch solde also gar an sich selber steen vnd seyn, das ist, an selbheit vnd icheit, das er sich vnd das seyne also wenig suchte vnd meynete yn allen dingen, also ab er nicht were, noch seyne selbs als wenig entpfinden vnd von ym selbir vnd dem seynen also cleyne halten, also er nicht were, vnd als wenig von ym selber alß wenig von allen creaturen. Was ist danne das, daz do ist vnd da von zu halten ist? Ich sprich: alleyne eynes, das man got nennet. Sich, das ist war gehorsam yn der warheit vnd also ist eß yn der seligen ewikeit. Danne wirt nicht gesucht noch gemeynet ader gelibt danne das eyne, so wirt auch von nichte gehalten denne von dem eynen.

Close translation

But what is true obedience? I say: the human being should stand and be so wholly without themselves, that is, without selfhood and I-ness, that they seek and intend themselves and what is theirs in all things as little as if they did not exist; and likewise feel themselves as little, and hold as little of themselves and what is theirs, as if they did not exist, and as little of all creatures as of themselves. What, then, is that which is, and of which account is to be taken? I say: one alone, which is called God. See, that is true obedience in truth, and so it is in blessed eternity. There nothing is sought or intended or loved but the one, and nothing is accounted anything but the one.

§ 15.3 · German text · p. 89

Hie bie magk man mercken, was vngehorsam sey. Das ist, das der mensche von ym selber etwas heldet vnd wenet, er sey vnd wisse vnd vormuge etwas, vnd sich selbir vnnd das seyne suchte yn den dingen vnde sich selbir lip hat vnd disßen glich.

Close translation

By this one can observe what disobedience is. It is that the human being holds themselves to be something and supposes that they are and know and can accomplish something, and seeks themselves and what is theirs in things, and loves themselves, and the like.

§ 15.4 · German text · p. 89–90

Czu dem waren gehorsam was vnd ist der mensch geschaffen vnd ist den got schuldig. Vnde der gehorsam ist yn Adam vnder gegangen vnd gestorben vnnd ist yn Cristo auff gestanden vnd lebendig worden, vnnd vngehorsam ist yn Adam auff erstanden vnnd hat gelebet vnd yn Cristo gestorben. Ja die menscheit Cristi was vnd stunt also gar an sich selber vnd an all also ye kein creatur, vnd waz nicht anders dan eyne huß ader eyne wonung gotis. Vnd alles, das da got czu gehoret vnd das die selbe menscheit waz vnd lebte vnd eyne wonunge was der gotheit, des nam sie sich alles nicht an. Sie nam sich auch der selben gotheit nicht an, der wonunge sie was, noch alles deß, das die selbige gotheit yn yr wulde, thet ader ließ, noch alles deß, das yn der selben menscheit ye geschach ader geliden wart; sundern yn der menscheit was wider annemen noch gesuch ader begirde, sundern alleyne eyne gesuche vnnd begirde, wie der gotheit genug geschee, vnd des selben nam sie sich nicht an. Von

dissem synne kan man hie nu nicht mere geschriben ader gesprechen. Er ist vnaußsprechlich, er wart noch nye czu grunde gar auß gesprochen noch nymmer wirt, wan er wil sich wider sprechen noch schriben lan weder von dem, der es ist vnd weyß.

Close translation

For true obedience the human being was and is created, and owes it to God. And this obedience went down and died in Adam, and rose up and became alive in Christ; and disobedience rose up and lived in Adam and died in Christ. Indeed, Christ's humanity was and stood so wholly without itself and without all things as no creature ever did, and was nothing other than a house or a dwelling of God. And everything that belonged there to God, and that this same humanity was and lived and was a dwelling of the Godhead, it appropriated none of this. Nor did it appropriate the Godhead itself, whose dwelling it was, or everything that this same Godhead willed, did or left undone in it, or everything that ever happened or was suffered in this same humanity; rather, in this humanity there was neither appropriation nor seeking nor desire, but only one seeking and desire: how the Godhead might be satisfied; and it did not appropriate even this. Of this meaning nothing more can now be written or spoken here. It is inexpressible; it has never yet been spoken out wholly to the ground, nor ever will be, for it will not allow itself to be spoken or written even by the one who is it and knows it.

Notes

Icheit here is “I-ness”, centredness on one’s own “I”. It must be distinguished from ichtheit, “somethingness”, in Chapter 1.

“As no creature ever did” describes Christ’s humanity in this comparison. C instead has freedom from all creatures as no human being ever had. Both English versions follow the earlier wording.

The final sentence does not explicitly name God. It speaks of the one who is and knows this meaning. C adds “that is, God himself, who can do all things”; that later explanation has not been inserted into the main text.

Chapter 16

What the old human being is, and what the new human being is

Source: D (1477), in Hinten, pp. 90–93, except for the bracketed word in § 16.7, which we adopt from B (1518). In § 16.6, *nit Christus* (“not Christ”) is the critical edition’s correction from other witnesses of D’s *mit Cristo*. In § 16.7, the editor adopts *vngerechtheit* (“unrighteousness”) in place of D’s *gerechtheit* (“righteousness”) and restores *menschen* from other witnesses.

Reading translation in Part I, p. 30

Later manuscript additions: p. 274

Was do sey der alde mensche vnnd auch was da sey der newe mensche.

§ 16.1 · German text · p. 90

Auch sal man mercken, wan man spricht von eynem menschen, das da ist alt, vnde von eynem nuwen menschen. Sich, der alt ist Adam vnd vngehorsam vnd selbheit vnd icheit vnd des gleich. Aber der nuwe mensch ist Cristus vnd gehorsam. Wanne man auch spricht von sterben vnd von vorterbenn vnd des gleich, so meynet man, das der alde mensch solde czu nicht werde, vnnd wan vnd wo das geschiet yn eynem waren, gotlichen lichte, ßo wirt der nuwe mensch wider geborn.

Close translation

One should also observe when people speak of an old human being and of a new human being. See, the old is Adam and disobedience and selfhood and I-ness and the like. But the new human being is Christ and obedience. When people also speak of dying and perishing and the like, they mean that the old human being should come to nothing; and when and where this happens in a true, divine light, the new human being is born again.

§ 16.2 · German text · p. 90–91

Man spricht auch, der mensch solde an ym selbir sterben, das ist, des menschen icheit und selbheit soll sterben. Hie von spricht sanctus Paulus: »Leget abe den alden menschen mit seynen wercken vnd czihet an eyn nuwen menschen, der nach got geschaffen vnd gebildet ist«. Wer yn seyner selbheit vnd nach dem alden menschen lebet, der heißet vnde ist Adams kint. Er mag also ferre vnd also weßenlich dar jnne leben, er ist auch des teufels kint vnd bruder. Wer aber yn dem gehorsam vnd yn dem nuwen menschen lebet, der ist Cristus bruder vnd gotis kint.

Close translation

People also say that the human being should die to themselves: that is, the human being's I-ness and selfhood should die. Of this Saint Paul says: "Put off the old human being with his works, and put on a new human being, created and formed according to God." Whoever lives in their selfhood and according to the old human being is called, and is, Adam's child. They can live in it so far and so essentially that they are also the devil's child and brother. But whoever lives in obedience and in the new human being is Christ's brother and God's child.

§ 16.3 · German text · p. 91

Sich, wo der ald mensch stirbet vnd der nuwe geborn wirt, da geschiet die ander geburt. Da von Cristus sprach: »Ir werdet dann anderwert geborn, so kumpt yr yn das reich gotis nicht«. Auch spricht sanctus Paulus: »Als alle menschen yn Adam ersterben, also werden sie yn Cristo alle wider lebendig«. Das spricht also vil: alle, die Adam noch volgen yn dem vngehorsam, die seyn tod vnd werden nymmer lebendig den yn Cristo. Das ist dar vmmb, wanne alle die wil das der mensche Adam ist ader seyn kint, so ist er an got. Cristus spricht: »Wer nicht mit mir ist, der ist wider mich«. Wer nu wider got ist, der ist tod vor got. Hie nach volget, das alle Adams kint tod synt vor got. Aber wer mit Cristo yn dem gehorsam ist, der ist mit got vnd lebet.

Close translation

See, where the old human being dies and the new is born, there the second birth takes place. Of this Christ said: "Unless you are born again, you do not come into the kingdom of God." Saint Paul also says: "As all human beings die in Adam, so in Christ they all become alive again." This means: all who follow Adam in disobedience are dead and never become alive except in Christ. This is because, as long as the human being is Adam or his child, they are without God. Christ says: "Whoever is not with me is against me." Now, whoever is against God is dead before God. From this it follows that all Adam's children are dead before God. But whoever is with Christ in obedience is with God and lives.

§ 16.4 · German text · p. 91–92

Auch ist geschriben: Sunde ist, das sich die creatur ab kert von dem schepfer. Das ist abir dissem gleich vnd ist das selb, wan wer yn vngehorsam ist, der ist yn sunden, vnde die sunde wirt nymmer gebusset noch gebessert danne mit

eyme widerkeren yn den gehorsam. Vnnd alle die wile der mensche yn deme vngehorsam ist, ßo wirt die sunde nymmer gebessert, er thu, was er thu. Das merck man, wan der vngehorsam ist selber die sunde. Vnnd kumpt er wider yn den waren gehorsam, so ist eß alles gebessert vnd gebußet vnd vorgeben vnd anders nicht. Diß ist mercklich. Vnd mochte der teufel czu dem waren gehorsam kommen, er wurde eyn engel vnd alle syne sunde vnd bößheit were gebessert vnd gebusset vnd were czu mal vorgeben. Vnd mochte eyn engel czu dem vngehorsam kommen, er were als balde eyn teufel, vnd ab er anders nicht meher thete.

Close translation

It is also written: sin is the creature's turning away from the Creator. This is equivalent to what has been said and is the same thing; for whoever is in disobedience is in sin, and sin is never atoned for or remedied except by a return into obedience. And as long as the human being is in disobedience, sin is never remedied, whatever they do. Let this be observed, for disobedience is itself sin. And if they return into true obedience, it is all remedied and atoned for and forgiven, and not otherwise. This is to be observed. And if the devil could come into true obedience, he would become an angel, and all his sin and wickedness would be remedied and atoned for and wholly forgiven. And if an angel could come into disobedience, he would immediately be a devil, even if he did nothing else.

§ 16.5 · German text · p. 92

Were eß möglich, das eyn mensch also gar vnd luterlich an sich selbir vnd an alle yn dem waren gehorsam were, als Cristus menscheit was, der mensche were an sunde vnd ioch eyns mit Cristo, vnd das selbe von gnaden, das Cristus was von natur. Aber man spricht, eß muge nicht seyn. Dar vmmb spricht man auch, nymant sey ane sunde. Aber wie daz sey, also sey eß. Doch ist das ware, so man dissem gehorsam nehir ist, so ye mynner sunde, so man ye verrer ist, ßo ye meher sunde. Kurtzlich ab der mensch gut, besser ader aller beßt sey, böß, bößer ader aller bößt, sundig ader selig vor gote, das liet alczumal an dißem gehorsam vnd vngehorsam. Dar vmmb ist auch geschriben: So ye meher selbheit vnd icheit, ßo ye mer sunde vnd bößheit, ßo diß mynder, ßo auch des mynder. Auch ist geschriben: So meyn ich, das ist icheit vnd selbheit, mer ab nympt, ßo gotis ich, das ist got selber, mer zu nympt yn mir.

Close translation

If it were possible for a human being to be as wholly and purely without themselves and without all things in true obedience as Christ's humanity was, that human being would be without sin and indeed one with Christ, and the same by grace as Christ was by nature. But people say that this cannot be. Therefore they also say that no one is without sin. But however this may be, let it be so. Yet this is true: the nearer one is to this obedience, the less sin; the farther one is, the more sin. In brief, whether the human being is good, better or best, evil, more evil or most evil, sinful or blessed before God, depends entirely on this obedience and disobedience. Therefore it is also written: the more selfhood and I-ness, the more sin and wickedness; the less of these, the less of those. It is also written: the more my "I", that is, I-ness and selfhood, decreases, the more God's "I", that is, God himself, increases in me.

§ 16.6 · German text · p. 92–93

Sich, weren alle menschen yn dem waren gehorsam, ßo were kein leyd noch leiden, sundern lichte, synneliche leiden; das were aber nicht czu clagen. Das merck man: Wanne were ym also, ßo wern alle menschen eyns vnd nymant thet dem andern leid noch leiden an. So lebete vnd thete auch nymant wider got. Wo von sold danne leid vnd leiden komme? Abir nu leider synt alle menschen vnd alle die werlt yn vngehorsam. Wer nu eyn mensch luterlich vnd gentzlich yn dem gehorsam, also wir gleuben, das Cristus were vnd ioch was, er were anders nit Christus geweßen, ym were aller menschen vngehorsam eyn jemmerlich, bittirlich leiden, wanne alle menschen weren wider yn. Das merck man: Wanne der mensch yn dißem gehorsam wer eyns mit got, vnd got were selber ioch do der mensch.

Close translation

See, if all human beings were in true obedience, there would be no sorrow or suffering, except perhaps bodily suffering; but there would be no cause to lament that. Let this be observed: for if it were so, all human beings would be one, and no one would inflict sorrow or suffering upon another. Nor would anyone live or act against God. From where, then, should sorrow and suffering come? But now, alas, all human beings and the whole world are in disobedience. If there were a human being purely and wholly in obedience, as we believe Christ was, and indeed he was, otherwise he

would not have been Christ, all human beings' disobedience would be a grievous, bitter suffering to that person, for all human beings would be against them. Let this be observed: for the human being in this obedience would be one with God, and God himself would indeed be that human being there.

§ 16.7 · German text · p. 93

Sich, nu ist alle vngehorsam wider got vnd anders nichts. In der warheit got ist nicht wider noch keyne creatur ader creaturen werck ader alles, das man genennen ader erdencken kan, ist nicht wider got ader got vnbehegliche danne alleyne der vngehorsam vnd der vngehorsam mensche. Kurtzlich alles, das do ist, behaget vnd gefellet got wol an alleyne der vngehorsam. Vnnd der vngehorsam mensche behaget ym also vbel vnd ist ym also gar wider vnd claget also ßere do von, das an der stat, do der mensche [leidenlich] vnd des befintlich vnd fullich ist, das ym wider ist, gerner hundert tode wulde leiden, uff das er den vngehorsam yn eyne menschen ertodet vnd seynen gehorsam da wider geberen mochte. Sich, alleyn nu lichte keyn mensche also gar vnnd luterlich yn dißem gehorsam ist, also Cristus was, nu ist doch moglich eynem menschen, also nahe dar czu vnd bey czu kommen, das er gotlich vnd vorgotet heiße vnnd ist. Vnnd so der mensche dissem ye nehir kumpt vnnd gotlich vnd vorgotet wirt, ßo ym alle vngehorsam, sunde vnd vngerechtigkeite leit ist vnnd wirßer thut vnd groß, bitter liden ist. Vngehorsam vnd sunde ist eyns. Eß ist keyn sunde den vngehorsam vnnd was auß vngehorsam geschiet.

Close translation

See, now all disobedience is against God, and nothing else. In truth, nothing is against God, nor is any creature or creaturely work, or anything that can be named or thought, against God or displeasing to God except disobedience alone and the disobedient human being. In brief, everything that is pleases God and is well pleasing to him, except disobedience alone. And the disobedient human being displeases him so much and is so wholly against him, and he grieves so greatly over this, that in the place where the human being is [capable of suffering] and aware of and sensitive to what is against him, he would more gladly suffer a hundred deaths so that he might put disobedience to death in one human being and give birth to his obedience there again. See, although perhaps no human being is as wholly and purely in this obedience as Christ was, yet it is possible for a human

being to come so near and close to it that they are called, and are, divine and deified. And the nearer the human being comes to this and becomes divine and deified, the more all disobedience, sin and unrighteousness grieve and hurt them and are a great, bitter suffering. Disobedience and sin are one. There is no sin except disobedience and what comes about from disobedience.

Notes

D and Hinten's main text read *unlidenlich* in § 16.7, admitting "incapable of suffering" or "unbearable". We adopt B's attested *leidenlich*, "capable of suffering"; A (1516) has the similar *leydlich*. Square brackets in the German and both translations mark exactly this substitution. The passage continues the account of God's grief as experienced in a human being; compare Chapters 7 and 37. This is our choice among attested readings, not an unmarked correction attributed to Hinten.

Lichte in § 16.6 means "perhaps"; the qualification concerning bodily suffering must be retained. In § 16.7 the author again says "perhaps no human being", rather than asserting impossibility without qualification.

The examples of an angel and the devil are conditional. They have not been turned into claims that such a conversion has occurred or must occur.

Quotations and allusions: Ephesians 4:22, 24; compare Colossians 3:9–10; John 3:3; 1 Corinthians 15:22; Matthew 12:30. Their wording is translated from the treatise's German.

"Atoned for" renders *gebußet*, connected with repentance and the making good of sin; it stands beside *gebessert*, "remedied". The vocabulary does not by itself establish a separate theory of mechanically compensating for sin.

Where the early text says that everyone would be against the obedient person, C instead explains that nothing could shake or grieve that person. The main translation retains the earlier words and their connection with suffering over disobedience.

Chapter 17

Why we should claim no good as our own, but acknowledge our guilt for the evil we have done

Source: D (1477), in Hinten, p. 94. In § 17.2, oder (“or”) between lügen and vnwarheit follows the critical editor’s reading from other witnesses in place of D’s vnd.

Reading translation in Part I, p. 33

Later manuscript additions: p. 275

Wie man sich dez gutten nicht an nemen sal vnd sal sich des boßen schuldig geben, das man getan hodt.

§ 17.1 · German text · p. 94

Sich, nu saget man, eß seyn etliche menschen, die wenen vnd sprechen, sie seyn also gar erstorben vnd yr selbs außgegangen, das sie sollen steen vnd leben yn eyne vnvalidende vnd von nicht beruret werden, recht ab alle menschen yn dissem gehorsam weren ader ab keyn creatur were, vnde leben also yn eynem guthen, lichten leben vnd gemute vnd laßen yn mit allen dingen wol seyn, eß sey diß ader das. Neyn czwar, ym ist nicht also; ym ist, als vor geschriben ist; ym were wol also, weren alle menschen yn dem gehorsam. Aber nu ist eß nicht also, dar vmmb ist auch diß nicht alßo.

Close translation

See, now it is said that there are some people who suppose and say that they have so wholly died and gone out of themselves that they should stand and live in a state incapable of suffering and be touched by nothing, just as if all human beings were in this obedience or as if there were no creature. And so they live in a good, easy life and disposition, and let themselves be well with all things, be it this or that. No, certainly, it is not so; it is as was written above. It would indeed be so if all human beings were in obedience. But now this is not so; therefore neither is that so.

§ 17.2 · German text · p. 94

Sich, nu mochte man sprechen: Nu sal doch der mensche alles ledig steen vnd sich nichts an nemen wider boß noch guts. Ich sprich: Deß guthen sal sich nymant an nemen, wan eß ist gotis vnd der güte gotis. Aber danck habe der mensch vnd ewigen lone vnd selikeit, der da czu taug vnnd bereit ist vnde gestattet, das er eyn huß vnd eyn wonunge ist der ewigen gute vnd gotheit, das

sie yren gewalt, willen vnd wercke yn ym gehalten magk an hindersal. Wil man sich dann entschuldigen vnd des bößen auch nicht an nemen vnd wil eß deme teufel vnd der bößheit uff tragen, so sprich ich: Vndang, schande vnd schade vnd ewig vnglücke vnd vordampniß habe der mensche, das er dar czu taug vnd bereit ist vnde gestatet, das der teufel vnd falscheit vnd lügen oder vnwarheit vnd ander bößheit yren willen vnd gewalt, werck vnd wort yn ym haben mogen, vnnd das er yr huß vnd yr wonunge ist.

Close translation

See, now one might say: surely the human being should stand free of everything and appropriate nothing, neither evil nor good. I say: no one should appropriate the good, for it is God's and belongs to God's goodness. But let the human being have approval and eternal reward and blessedness who is fit and ready for this and permits it: to be a house and a dwelling of the eternal Good and Godhead, so that it may have its power, will and works in them without hindrance. If, then, someone wishes to excuse themselves and not acknowledge the evil as theirs either, but wishes to lay it upon the devil and wickedness, I say: let the human being have disapproval, shame and harm and eternal misery and condemnation for being fit and ready for this and permitting it: that the devil and falsehood and lies or untruth and other wickedness may have their will and power, works and words in them, and that they are their house and dwelling.

Notes

Vnlidende in § 17.1 means a condition incapable of suffering. The author rejects a claim to that condition; translating it simply as being undisturbed would obscure the connection with suffering.

Dank and Undank form a deliberate pair: thanks or approval, and its opposite. “Approval” and “disapproval” preserve the opposition in English.

The account of Adam and Eve shifting blame, and the statement that no one lives without sin, are additions in C.

Chapter 18

Why Christ's life is the noblest and best life that ever was or can be, and the careless, falsely free life the worst

Source: D (1477), in Hinten, pp. 95–96. In § 18.2, *vnvolkomenheit* (“imperfection”) follows C, B, E, I and A in place of D and F’s *vnvolkommen*; the pronoun *es* is also restored from other witnesses.

Reading translation in Part I, p. 34

Wie das leben Cristi sey das edelste vnd beste leben, das ye wart vnd vmmer werden magk, vnd das ruchloße, falsch, frey leben das aller boßte leben.

§ 18.1 · German text · p. 95

Auch sal man mercken vnd gleuben vnd wissen, das kein also edel vnd gut vnnd got also lip leben ist als das leben Cristi, vnd ist aller natur vnd aller selbheit das bittirst leben. Aber das ruchloß, frey leben ist aller natur, selbheit vnd icheit das sußte vnd das lustigiste leben, eß ist aber nicht das beste vnd das edelste. Eß mag yn etlichen menschen das boßte werden. Aber wie wol Cristus leben das bitterst sey, ßo ist eß doch das aller libste; das sal man do bey mercken.

Close translation

One should also observe and believe and know that no life is as noble and good and dear to God as Christ's life, and it is the bitterest life to all nature and all selfhood. But the careless, free life is the sweetest and most pleasurable life to all nature, selfhood and I-ness; yet it is not the best and noblest. In some people it can become the worst. But although Christ's life is the bitterest, yet it is the most beloved; this should be observed together with that.

§ 18.2 · German text · p. 95

Eß ist eyne bekentniß, da von wirt bekant das war, eynefeldig gut, vnd das gut ist wider diß noch das, sunder eß ist, do von sant Paul sprach: »Wann das vollkommen vnd das gantze kumpt, ßo wirt alle teilunge vnd vnvolkomenheit czu nichte.« Das meynet also, das das gantze vollkommen alle teilunge vbirtrifft vnd alle teil vnd vnvolkommen nichts synt geyn dem vollkommen. Also wirt auch alle bekentniß der teyl czu nichte, wanne das gantz bekant wirt. Vnd wo das gut bekant wirt, do muß es auch begeret vnnd gelibet werden, also das ander libe, da mit der mensche sich selber vnd ander ding hat lib gehabet,

czu mal czu nicht wirt. Vnd die bekentniß bekennet auch das beste vnnd das edelste yn allen dingen vnd hat eß lip yn dem waren gute vnnd nicht anders dann vmmb das ware gut.

Close translation

There is a knowing through which the true, simple Good is known, and the Good is neither this nor that, but is that of which Saint Paul said: "When the Perfect and the whole comes, all division and imperfection come to nothing." This means that the whole Perfect surpasses all division, and all parts and imperfect things are nothing compared with the Perfect. So too all knowledge of the parts comes to nothing when the whole is known. And where the Good is known, it must also be desired and loved, so that the other love, with which a human being has loved themselves and other things, comes wholly to nothing. And this knowing also knows the best and noblest in all things, and loves it in the true Good and for no other reason than the true Good.

§ 18.3 • German text • p. 95

Sich, wo die bekentniß ist, do wirt bekant, das Cristus leben das beste vnd das edelste ist, vnd da von ist eß auch das aller libste vnd wirt gerne gehabt vnd getragenn vnd wirt nicht gefraget ader gerucht, ab eß der nature ader joch ymant wal ader we thu, lib ader leid sey.

Close translation

See, where this knowing is, there it is known that Christ's life is the best and noblest, and therefore it is also the most beloved, and is gladly had and borne, and no question is asked and no care taken whether it does nature, or indeed anyone, well or ill, whether it is dear or grievous.

§ 18.4 • German text • p. 95–96

Auch sal man mercken, in welchen menschen diß war gut bekant wirt, do muß auch daz leben Cristi seyn vnd bleiben biß yn den leiplichen tod. Vnd wer anders wenet, der ist betrogen, vnd wer anders spricht, der luget. Vnd yn welchem menschen das leben Cristi nicht ist, da wart auch das ware gut vnnd die warheit nye bekant.

Close translation

One should also observe: in whichever human beings this true Good is known, there Christ's life must also be and remain until bodily death. And

whoever supposes otherwise is deceived, and whoever says otherwise lies. And in whichever human being Christ's life is not, there the true Good and truth have never been known.

Notes

Aller libste means “most beloved”, rather than merely most worthy of love. The author describes a transformation of love itself through knowledge of the Good.

The final sentence is in the past tense: where Christ's life is absent, the true Good and truth “have never been known”.

The allusion to 1 Corinthians 13:10 returns to the theme of Chapter 1. The English retains the vocabulary of the Perfect, the whole and the parts.

Chapter 19

Why true light and Christ's life are reached through relinquishing self and all things, not through much questioning or reading, or lofty natural learning and reason

Source: D (1477), in Hinten, p. 96. In the middle of the chapter, the critical edition adopts mich yn ("me in") from B in place of D's nicht. Hence "know me in truth", not "know me, the eternal Truth"; the latter belongs to C's mich ewige warheit.

Reading translation in Part I, p. 35

Later manuscript additions: p. 275

Wie man zcu dem waren lichte vnd zu Cristus leben nicht kommen magk mit vil fragens adder leßens adder mit hoher, naturlicher kunst vnd vornunfft, sundern mit eynem vorczeyen seyns selbst vnnd aller dingk.

§ 19.1 · German text · p. 96

Nymant gedenckt, das er czu dissien warem lichte vnd warem bekentniß kumme ader czu Cristus leben mit vil fragen ader von hore sagen ader mit leßen ader studiren noch mit großen, hohen kunsten vnd meisterschafft ader mit hoer, naturlicher vornunfft. Ich sprich: mer, alle die wile der mensch von icht etwas beheldet ader icht yn seyner libe ader meynunge ader yn begirde ader gesuch handelt ader vorhanden hat, das diß ader das ist, eß sey der mensch selber ader sey, was das sey, so kumpt er hie czu nicht. Diß hat Cristus selber gesprochen. Er spricht: »Wiltu noch mir kommen, ßo vorczuch dyn selbs vnd volge mir nach; vnd wer nicht seyn selbs vnd alle vorzücht vnd leßet vnd vorlüßet, der ist meyn nicht würdig noch mag meyn junger nicht seyn«. Diß meynet also: Wer nicht alle ding lesßit vnnd vorleußt, der mag mich yn warheit nummer bekennen noch czu meynem leben kommen. Vnd wer diß durch menschen munt nye gesprochen, ßo spricht eß die warheit yn er selber. Wann eß ist yn der warheit also. Aber die weile der mensch die teile vnd die stücke vnd aller meist sich selbir lip hat vnd do mit vmmb gehet vnd do von heldet, so ist er vnd wirt also blint, das er von keynem guten weiß, danne das ym czu ym selber vnd czu dem synen aller nutzist vnd aller beqwemlichst vnnd aller lustigist ist. Das hat er vor das beste vnnd ist ym das liebste.

Close translation

Let no one think that they come to this true light and true knowledge, or to Christ's life, by much questioning or from hearsay, or by reading or studying, or by great, lofty arts and mastery, or by high natural reason. I say more: as long as the human being retains anything of anything, or deals with or has before them in their love or intention or desire or seeking anything that is this or that, whether it is the human being themselves or whatever it may be, they do not come to this. Christ himself has said this. He says: "If you will come after me, relinquish yourself and follow me; and whoever does not relinquish and leave and lose themselves and all things is not worthy of me and cannot be my disciple." This means: whoever does not leave and lose all things can never know me in truth or come to my life. And if this had never been spoken by a human mouth, truth itself speaks it in itself. For in truth it is so. But as long as the human being loves the parts and the pieces, and above all themselves, and deals with these and makes something of them, they are and become so blind that they know of no good except what is most useful, convenient and pleasurable to themselves and to what is theirs. This they hold to be the best, and it is their most beloved.

Notes

The opening has *warem bekentniß*, "true knowledge", not "perfect knowledge". At the end, the editor adopts *liebste* ("most beloved") from other witnesses in place of *D's beste*.

Christ's words combine several Gospel formulations: compare Matthew 16:24; Luke 14:26, 33; Matthew 10:37–38. Their combined form in the treatise has been preserved.

The early chapter ends with what the person judges best and loves most. The conclusion that they therefore never reach truth is added in C.

Chapter 20

Why nature refuses Christ's life as bitterest to itself and selfhood, and adopts the careless, false life as most comfortable and pleasurable

Source: D (1477), in Hinten, p. 97.

Reading translation in Part I, p. 36

Synt dem das das leben Cristi aller natur vnde selbischeit das aller bittirst ist, dar vmmb wil es die natur nicht an sich nemen vnnd nympt an sich das ruchlos, falsch leben, wie eß yr das aller beqwemlichst vnd lustigist ist.

§ 20.1 • German text • p. 97

Syder nu das leben Cristi aller natur, selbheit vnd icheit das bittirst ist, wann czu dem warenn leben Cristi muß alle selbheit vnd icheit vnd natur gelaßen vnd verloren werden vnd sterben. Dar vmmb graubt eyner itlichen natur vor dem leben vnd dunckt sie boße vnd vngerecht vnd eyn thorheit; vnd nympt an sich eyn leben, das yr beqwemlich vnd lustig ist, vnd spricht vnde wenet von yrer blintheit, eß sey das aller beste.

Close translation

Since Christ's life is now the bitterest to all nature, selfhood and I-ness—for in the true life of Christ all selfhood and I-ness and nature must be left and lost and die—therefore every nature recoils from this life, and it seems to it evil and unjust and a folly; and it takes upon itself a life that is comfortable and pleasurable to it, and in its blindness says and supposes that this is the very best.

§ 20.2 • German text • p. 97

Sich, nu ist keyn leben der natur also beqweme vnd als lustig also das frey, ruchlaß leben. Dar vmmb held sie sich an das selbe vnd gebruechet sich yr selbes vnd yrer selbheit vnd yres eyniges frides vnd gemachs vnd alles des yren alda selbes vnnd diß geschiet aller meist, da hoch, natürlich vornunfft ist. Wanne die clymmet also hoch yn yrem eygen lichte vnd yn yr selber, das sie selber wenet, das sie das ewige, ware licht sey, vnd gibt sich da vor das selbe vnd ist betrogen an yr selbir vnd betruget ander mit yr, die nicht bessers wissen vnd auch dar czu geneiget seyn.

Close translation

See, now no life is as comfortable and pleasurable to nature as the free, careless life. Therefore it holds to that life and there enjoys itself and its selfhood and its own peace and ease and everything of its own; and this happens most of all where there is high natural reason. For that climbs so high in its own light and in itself that it supposes itself to be the eternal, true light, and passes itself off as that light, and is deceived in itself and deceives others with it who know no better and are also inclined to this.

Notes

Gebrauchen is translated “enjoy” here, as in Chapter 7. Here, however, its object is oneself and one’s own ease. The same verb can express opposite orientations of life.

“Free”, when paired here with “careless”, describes the self-directed life rejected by the author. It differs from the free love and freedom from appropriation described in Chapters 5 and 10.

Chapter 21

How a friend of Christ willingly carries out what must and ought to be done outwardly, and does not concern themselves with the rest

Source: D (1477), in Hinten, pp. 97–98. The opening stet is supplied in the critical edition from other witnesses; it is absent from D.

Reading translation in Part I, p. 37

Later manuscript additions: p. 275

Wie eyn frunt Cristi von außen williglichen volbrengt mit den wercken die ding, die da mußen vnd sullen seyn, vnd mit dem obrigen bekommert er sich nicht.

§ 21.1 • German text • p. 97–98

Nv mochte man fragen: Wie stet eß vmmbe dißsen menschen, der noch mugelikeit dißem waren lichte etwan noch kumpt? Ich sprich werlich: Yß wirt nummer recht gesaget. War vmmbe? Der eß nicht ist, der kan eß nicht gesagen, vnd der eß ist vnd weiß, der kan eß auch nicht gesagen. Danne wer eß wissen wil, der warte, das er eß werde. Doch gleub ich, das seyn außer wandel vnd weiße also stee: Was seyn muß vnd sal seyn, das muge wol da mit besteen, aber was nicht muß vnd sal seyn, sundern eyn luter wellen seyn, das mag do mit nicht besteen. Aber der mensch macht ym selber vil sal vnd muß seyn, das doch falsch ist. Tribet den menschen seyne hoffart, girikeit vnd ander vntogent vnd boßheit czu thun ader czu laßen, ßo spricht er: Eß muß vnd sal seyn. Tribet yn der leute gunst vnd fruntschafft ader seynes leibes luste irgent czu ader abe, so spricht er: Eß muß und sal seyn. Sich, diß ist alles falsch. Hette der mensch keyne ander muß oder sal seyn, denne dar czu yn got vnnd die warheit weißet vnd tribet, er hette etwan mynder czu schicken vnd czu thun denne nu.

Close translation

Now one might ask: how does it stand with this human being who, according to what is possible, comes somewhat near to this true light? I say truly: it will never be rightly told. Why? The one who is not this cannot tell it, and the one who is this and knows it cannot tell it either. Then whoever wishes to know it should attend to becoming it. Yet I believe that their outward conduct and manner stand thus: what must and ought to be can well coexist with it; but what does not have to be and ought not to be, but is a mere willing, cannot coexist with it. But the human being makes many an

“ought” and “must” for themselves that is nevertheless false. If their pride, greed and other vice and wickedness drive them to do or leave something undone, they say: it must and ought to be. If people's favour and friendship, or their body's pleasure, drive them towards anything or away from it, they say: it must and ought to be. See, this is all false. If the human being had no other “must” or “ought” than that to which God and truth direct and drive them, they would have somewhat less to arrange and do than now.

Notes

In the early text, both the person who does not know and the person who knows cannot “tell” it. C changes the first to an inability to understand and know, then adds an explanation of inexpressibility. The earlier repetition is retained.

Muß and sal express necessity and obligation, distinguished here from mere wanting.

The final sentence reads “less” in D, E, F and C, but “more” in B and A, and “never more” in I. The translation follows the “less” of the principal manuscript and critical text.

Chapter 22

How God's spirit sometimes possesses and governs a person, as also does the evil spirit

Source: D (1477), in Hinten, pp. 98–100. In § 22.1, vnd ander follows other witnesses in place of D's ader. In § 22.3, hab and nach follow the critical edition; D has hat and omits nach.

Reading translation in Part I, p. 38

Wie der geist gotis etwan eynen menschen besitzt vnd seyn gewaldig ist vnd auch der boße geist.

§ 22.1 • German text • p. 98–99

Man spricht, der tufel vnd seyn geist habe etwan eynen menschen besessen vnnd behafft, das der mensch nicht weiß, was er thut ader leßet, vnd er ist seyn selbs vngewaldig, sunder der boße geist ist seyn gewaldig vnd thut vnd lesset yn dem menschen vnd mit ym vnd durch vnde auß ym, was er wil. Eß ist was yn eyne synne, das alle die werlt behafft vnd besessen ist mit dem teufel, dar meynet man mit lügen vnd mit falscheit und ander boßheit vnd vntogent. Das ist alles der tufel, wie das eß auch yn eyne andern synne ist. Der nu besessen vnd begriffen were mit dem geist gotis, das er nicht wessete, was er thete ader lisse, vnd seyn selbs vngewaldig were vnd der wille vnd der geist gotis were seyn gewaldig vnd wirckte vnd thete vnd lisse mit ym vnd auß ym, was vnd wie er wolde. Das were der menschen eyner, da von sant Paul spricht: »Die von gotis geiste gerichtet vnd gefuret werden, die synt gotis kint vnnd synt nicht vnder der ee«. Vnnd czu den Cristus sprach: »Ir seyt nicht, die da reden, sunder der geist euwers vaters redet yn euch«. Aber ich furchte, hundert thusent ader an czale synt mit dem tufel besessen, da eins mit gotis geiste besessen ist. Das ist da von, das die menschen haben mer gleicheit mit dem tufel dan mit gote. Icheit vnd selbheit, das gehoret alles dem teufel czu, vnd des halben ist er eyn teufel. Sich, eyn eyniges wort ader czwei sprechen alles, das diße vil wort sprechen; das ist: Biß luterlich vnd gentzlich an dich selbir. Aber diße vil wort haben eß mer vnd baß ercleret vnd beweret vnd vndirscheiden.

Close translation

It is said that the devil and his spirit have sometimes possessed and seized a human being, so that the human being does not know what they do or leave

undone and is not master of themselves; rather, the evil spirit is master of them and does and leaves undone in the human being and with them and through and out of them whatever it wills. It is true in one sense that the whole world is seized and possessed by the devil: by this is meant by lies and falsehood and other wickedness and vice. This is all the devil, although it is so also in another sense. Now if someone were possessed and taken hold of by God's spirit, so that they did not know what they did or left undone and were not master of themselves, and God's will and spirit were master of them and worked and did and left undone with them and out of them what and as it willed, that would be one of those human beings of whom Saint Paul says: "Those who are directed and led by God's spirit are God's children and are not under the law"; and to whom Christ said: "It is not you who speak, but your Father's spirit speaks in you." But I fear that a hundred thousand, or beyond number, are possessed by the devil where one is possessed by God's spirit. This comes from human beings having more likeness to the devil than to God. I-ness and selfhood all belong to the devil, and on that account he is a devil. See, a single word or two says everything that these many words say: be purely and wholly without yourself. But these many words have explained and established and distinguished it more and better.

§ 22.2 · German text · p. 100

Nv spricht man: Ich bin czu dissem allen sampt nicht bereite, dar vmmb mag eß yn mir nicht gescheen. Vnd also gewynnet vnd findet man eyen entschuldigung. So antwart man den vnd spricht, das der mensche nicht bereite ist ader wirt, das ist werlich seyne schult. Vnd hette der mensch anders nicht czu warten vnd czu schicken, den das er der bereitung ware neme yn allen dingen, vnnd wie er bereitet wurde yn der warheit. Got solde yn wol bereiten. Vnd got hat also großen fleiß vnd libe vnd ernst czu der bereitung, also czu dem yngiessen, wen er bereitet were.

Close translation

Now one says: I am not prepared for all this together; therefore it cannot happen in me. And so one gains and finds an excuse. Then one answers and says that the human being is not, or does not become, prepared truly through their own fault. And if the human being had nothing else to attend to and arrange but to attend to preparation in all things, and to how they

might be prepared in truth, God would well prepare them. And God has as great diligence and love and earnestness for the preparation as for the pouring in when they are prepared.

§ 22.3 · German text · p. 100

Doch synt etliche werck hir czu, als man spricht: Wer eyne kunst lernen wil, die er nicht kan, da geharen vier ding czu. Das erst, das aller nötest ist, das ist groß begirde vnnd fleiß vnd steter ernst, wie diß geschee. Vnnd wo diß nicht ist, da geschiet yß nymmer. Das ander, das man etwas hab, dar an man gelernen mag. Das dritte, das man dem lerer eben vnd wol czu sehe vnd czu warte vnd ym gleube vnnd gehorsam sey vnd ym nach folge. Das virde, das man eß an greiffe vnnd vbe. Wo disser eyns gebricht, da wirt dij kunst nymmer gelernet ader vbirkommen.

Close translation

Yet there are certain works for this, as people say: whoever wishes to learn an art they do not know needs four things. The first, which is most necessary, is great desire and diligence and constant earnestness that this should happen. And where this is absent, it never happens. The second is to have something from which one may learn. The third is to look closely and well at the teacher and attend to them, and believe and obey them and follow them. The fourth is to take it up and practise it. Where one of these is lacking, the art is never learnt or acquired.

§ 22.4 · German text · p. 100

Sich, also ist eß auch yn dißer bereitung. Vnd wer das erste hat, das ist fließ vnnd stete, ernstliche begirde czu dem ende, der sucht vnd findet alles das, das dar czu gehoret vnd dar czu dynet vnd nutz ist. Wer aber den ernst vnd libe vnd begirde nicht hat, der sucht auch nicht. So findet er auch nicht vnd bleibet vnberitet vnd kommet nummer czu dem ende.

Close translation

See, so it is also in this preparation. And whoever has the first, that is, diligence and a constant, earnest desire for the end, seeks and finds everything that belongs to it and serves it and is useful for it. But whoever does not have earnestness and love and desire does not seek either. So neither do they find, and they remain unprepared and never come to the end.

Notes

The same German verb, *besitzen*, is used for possession by the evil spirit and by God's spirit. Both English versions retain this shared image and its opposition.

The author combines Romans 8:14 and Galatians 5:18 in the Pauline quotation. Christ's words are from Matthew 10:20. The combined quotation has not been divided into separate sayings.

Ingiessen means pouring in or infusion. The author does not specify here what is poured in; "Spirit" has not been added as its object.

The second requirement in the early text is simply to have something from which to learn. C is more specific: *form oder exemplar*, a pattern or exemplar.

In § 22.1 the printed German reads *Eß ist was yn eyne synne*. In context, *was* is understood in the translation as *war*, "true". The printed German word has been retained; the note identifies the interpretation rather than hiding a change to the source.

Chapter 23

Whoever would undergo God and obey him must undergo all things—God, self and every creature—and obey them all by undergoing, and sometimes also by acting

Source: D (1477), in Hinten, pp. 101–102. At the beginning, *sol* follows other witnesses in place of *solde*; near the end, *möglich* replaces *möglichen*, and *da* replaces *das*.

Reading translation in Part I, p. 40

Later manuscript additions: p. 276

Wer got leiden sal vnd gehorsam wil seyn, der muß alle dingk leiden, das ist got, sich selber vnd alle creatur, vnnd muß yn allen gehorsam seyn yn leidender weiße vnnd auch etwan yn thunder weiß.

§ 23.1 • German text • p. 101

Auch saget man von etlichen wegen vnd bereitung dar czu. Man spricht, man sol got liden, ym gehorsam vnd gelassen vnd vnderthan seyn. Das ist war. Wanne wer czu dem ende keme, das man yn der czit gehabt vnd vberkommen mag, yn dem selben were diß alles yn rechter vollkommenheit. Aber wer got liden sal vnd wil, der muß vnd sal alle liden, das ist got vnd sich selber vnd alle creatur, nichts vß genommen. Vnnd wer got gehorsam gelaßen vnd vnderthan sal vnd wil seyn, der muß vnd sal allen gelassen, gehorsam vnd vnderthan syn yn lidender wiße vnd nicht yn thunder wiße, vnd diß alczumal yn eyne swigende ynbliben yn syme grunde seyner sele vnnd yn eyne heymlichen, vorborgen liden, alles czu tragen vnd czu liden, vnd yn allem dissem keyn behelffunge noch entschuldigunge noch widerrede noch rachunge czu thun ader czu begeren, sundern yn allem yn eyner liblichen, demutigen, waren erbarmunge sprechen: »Vater, vorgib yn, wan sie wissen nicht, was sie thun«.

Close translation

People also speak of certain ways and preparations for this. They say that one should undergo God, be obedient and surrendered and subject to him. This is true. For whoever came to the end that can be had and attained within time would have all this in right perfection. But whoever should and will undergo God must and should undergo all: that is, God and themselves and every creature, nothing excepted. And whoever should and will be obedient, surrendered and subject to God must and should be surrendered, obedient and subject to all in a manner of undergoing and not in a manner

of acting, and all this in a silent remaining within, in the ground of their soul, and in a secret, hidden undergoing, bearing and undergoing everything. And in all this they should neither make nor desire any defence or excuse or contradiction or revenge, but in everything say in a loving, humble, true compassion: “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.”

§ 23.2 · German text · p. 101–102

Sich, diß were eyn gut weg czu dem besten vnd bereitunge czu dem letzten ende, das der mensche yn der czeit vbirkummen mag; das ist das lipliche leben Cristi, wanne yn dem leben Cristi synt vnd worden die vor genanten wege behalden volliclich, gentzlich biß yn das ende des liplichen lebens. Dar vmmb czu dem liben, wonniclichen leben Jesu Cristi ist keyn ander besser weg ader bereytunge dan das selbe leben, vnd sich dar ynne gevbet, also vil als moglich ist. Vnde was dar czu gehoret, da von ist etwas vor gesaget. Vnd alles das, das hie ader anders wo gesprochen vnd geschriben ist, das ist alles weg ader wegeweisse czu dem waren ende. Aber was das ende sey, da weiß nymandes von czu sagen. Aber wer eß gerne wißte, der gehe den rechten weg dar czu. Das ist diß leben.

Close translation

See, this would be a good way to the best and a preparation for the last end that a human being can attain within time: that is, Christ's bodily life; for in Christ's life the aforesaid ways were and came to be observed fully, wholly, until the end of bodily life. Therefore there is no better way or preparation for the dear, delightful life of Jesus Christ than that same life and practising oneself in it as much as possible. And something has been said above about what belongs to it. And everything said and written here or elsewhere is all a way or a showing of the way to the true end. But what the end is, no one knows how to tell. Yet whoever would gladly know it should take the right way to it. That is this life.

Notes

The heading allows obedience through action on some occasions, while the body stresses obedience through undergoing. This difference belongs to the source and has not been removed by rewriting the heading. Compare Chapter 26.

Erbarmunge is compassion or mercy, a distinct term beside humility.

Obedience to all things through undergoing is not a command to perform every action demanded of one: the passage expressly distinguishes undergoing from acting.

"Father, forgive them": Luke 23:34. C's fuller ending about perseverance and the salvation of the one who endures appears separately.

Chapter 24

Four things are needed for a person to become receptive to divine truth and possessed by the Holy Spirit

Source: D (1477), in Hinten, pp. 102–103. In D this text continues Chapter 23 without a separate paragraph. The critical edition distinguishes Chapter 24 following other witnesses. Our Chapter 25 is D's Chapter 24, and our Chapter 26 is D's Chapter 25; the numbering agrees again from Chapter 27.

Reading translation in Part I, p. 41

Vier dingk gehorn dar czu, das der mensch entpfenglich werde gotlicher warheit vnd besesßen werde mit dem heiligen geiste.

§ 24.1 · German text · p. 102

Aber doch synt auch wege czu dem leben Cristi, also vor gesaget ist. Wo vnd wanne got vnd mensch voreyniget wurden synt, also das man yn der warheit spricht vnd sine die warheit vorgehet, das eyns ist ware, vollkommen got vnd ware, vollkommenn mensch vnd doch mensch got als gar entwichet, das got aldo selber ist der mensche, vnde got ist ioch alda selbst, vnd das selbe ein wircket stetiglichen vnd thut vnd leßet an alles ich, mir vnd meyne vnd des gleichen. Sich, do ist war Cristus vnd anders nyrgent.

Close translation

Yet there are also ways to Christ's life, as was said above. Wherever and whenever God and the human being have been united, so that one says in truth, and truth itself acknowledges it, that the one is true, perfect God and true, perfect human being, and yet the human being withdraws so wholly before God that God himself is the human being there, and God is indeed himself there, and that same one continually works and does and leaves undone without any "I", "to me" and "mine" and the like: see, there is true Christ, and nowhere else.

§ 24.2 · German text · p. 102–103

Synt nu hie war, vollkommen mensch ist, ßo ist auch hie volkomen befulen vnd entpfinden, wol vnd we, lib vnd leid vnd alles das, das beulet vnd besoben werden mag von außen vnd von ynnen. Vnd synt den got alda der selbe mensch ist, ßo ist er auch besobelich, befintlich libes vnd leides vnd des gleich. Als eyn mensch, der nicht got ist, befindet vnd beulet alles das, daz dem menschen wol vnd we thut vnde besunder das ym wider ist. Also ist eß auch,

do got vnd mensch eins ist vnd doch got der mensch ist. Do wirt alles das beschoben vnd entpfunden, das got vnd mensch wider ist. Vnnd als do selbs der mensch czu nicht wirt vnd got alles ist, also wirt eß auch vmmb das, das dem menschen wider ist, vnd seyn leiden wirt gar czu nichte ghein dem, das got wider ist vnd seyn leiden ist. Vnd diß muß weren von gote, alle die weile das liplich vnd wesentlich leben weret vnd ist.

Close translation

Since there is now true, perfect human being here, there is also perfect feeling and experiencing, well-being and pain, delight and grief, and everything that can be felt and experienced outwardly and inwardly. And since God is that same human being there, he too is capable of experiencing and feeling delight and grief and the like. Just as a human being who is not God feels and experiences everything that does the human being well or ill, and especially what is against them, so it is also where God and human being are one, and yet God is the human being. There everything that is against God and the human being is experienced and felt. And just as there the human being comes to nothing and God is all, so it is also with what is against the human being: their suffering comes wholly to nothing compared with what is against God and is his suffering. And this must endure from God as long as bodily and actual life endures and is.

§ 24.3 · German text · p. 103

Auch sal man mercken, das das eyn, da got vnd mensch voreyniget seyn, an sich selber vnd an alle vnnd alles ledig steet vnd ist icht, das ist gotis halben vnd nicht des menschen ader der creatur halben. Wan gotis eygen ist an diß vnd daß vnd an selbheit vnd icheit vnd dem eß glich stee vnd sey. Aber creaturen vnd naturen eigen ist, das sie sich selber vnd das yr vnd diß vnd das hie vnd da suchet vnnd wil yn allem dem, das sie thut ader lesset. Wo nu die creatur ader der mensch seyn eygen vnnd seyne selbheit vnd sich vorlußet vnd auß gehet, da gehet got yn mit seyme eygen, das ist mit seyner selbheit.

Close translation

One should also observe that the one in which God and the human being are united stands without itself and without all things, free of everything, and is something: that is on God's account, not on the human being's or the creature's account. For it is proper to God to stand and be without this and that, and without selfhood and I-ness and the like. But it is proper to

creatures and nature to seek and will themselves and what is theirs, and this and that, here and there, in everything they do or leave undone. Now, wherever the creature or the human being loses and goes out of what is their own and their selfhood and themselves, there God enters with what is his own, that is, with his selfhood.

Notes

The heading comes from the medieval table of contents. The four requirements are listed at the end of Chapter 22. The mismatch between heading and body is inherited, not introduced here; Chapters 22–24 should be read together.

In § 24.1, *vorgehet* is an old spelling of *verjehen*, “acknowledge, attest”. Luther’s 1518 edition has *bekennet* here. The pronoun *sine* refers to what is acknowledged: truth itself confirms the statement. The verb does not mean that truth precedes something in time.

Befulen in § 24.2 means feeling; C has *vorstentniß*, “understanding”. The early text is therefore not rendered as “perfect understanding”. The comparison is also retained: human suffering becomes nothing beside suffering over what opposes God.

Ist icht in § 24.3 means “is something”. The author assigns this being-something to God rather than to the human being or creature. Neither English version adds an “if” absent from the German.

At the end the same term, *selbheit*, names the human selfhood relinquished and that with which God enters. The paradox is retained: God’s “selfhood” has not been replaced by a term such as “grace”.

Chapter 25

Two evil fruits growing from the evil spirit's seed, two sisters who like to dwell together: one called spiritual riches and pride, the other disordered, false freedom

Source: D (1477), in Hinten, pp. 103–105. This is Chapter 24 in D; see the preceding chapter's note on the temporary difference in numbering.

Reading translation in Part I, p. 42

Von czweyn boßen fruchten, die do wachsen auß dem samen des boßen geists vnde synt czwu swestern, die do gerne bie eynnander wanen. Die eyne heißt geistlich richtum vnd hoffart, die ander vngeordente, falsche freiheit.

§ 25.1 • German text • p. 103–104

Auch sal man mercken, ßo der mensch alle die wege gegangen hat, die yn czu der warheit weißen, vnd sich dar jnne geubet hat vnd ist ym sure worden, also lange vnd also vil, das er meynet, eß sey czumal gescheen vnnd er sey gestorben vnd seyn selbs auß gegangen vnnd got gelaßen, ßo sehet den der tufel seynen samen dar yn. Auß dem samen wachsen den czwu frucht. Die eyne ist geistliche reichthum ader geistliche hoffart, die ander ist vngeordente, falsche freiheit. Das synt czwei geswister, die dicke vnd gerne bey eynnander seyn.

Close translation

One should also observe: when the human being has gone all the ways that direct them towards truth, and has practised themselves in them, and it has become hard for them, for so long and so much that they suppose it is wholly accomplished and they have died and gone out of themselves and are surrendered to God, then the devil sows his seed in them. From this seed grow two fruits. The one is spiritual riches or spiritual pride; the other is disordered, false freedom. These are two sisters who are often and gladly together.

§ 25.2 • German text • p. 104

Sich, diß erhebet sich also. Der teufel bleßet dem menschen yn, das den menschen duncket vnd wenet, er sey uff das hochste vnde uff das nehste kommen vnd durffe wider schrifft noch diß noch daß furbas mer vnd sey joch czumal durfftloß wurden. Vnd do von stehet yn ym eyn fride uff vnd großer lußt vnd volget den dar nach, das man spricht: Ja, nu bin ich vber alle menschen vnd weiß vnd vorstee mer denn alle die werlt, vnd dar vmmb ist eß

billich vnd recht, das ich aller creaturen got sey vnd mir alle creaturen vnd besunder alle menschen dynen vnd warten vnd mir vnderthenig seyn, vnd sucht vnnd begeret das selbe vnd nympt eß gerne von allen creaturenn vnd besundern von dem menschen vnd düncket sich diß alles wol wirdig seyn vnd man sey eß ym schuldig vnd heldet alle menschen als esel ader als vihe, vnd auch alles, das seyme leibe, seym fleische vnd syner nature czu gute vnd czu lußte, kurtzwile vnnd ergetzlikeit gescheen mag, des duncket er sich alles wirdigk vnd sucht vnd nympt, wo eß ym werden mag, vnd duncket yn alles czu cleyne, was man ym gethu mag, vnd er meynet, er sey seyn alles wol wirdig. Vnd alle menschen, die ym dynen vnd vnderthenig synt, ob sie ioch diebe ader morder weren, so spricht man doch, eß seyn edel, getruwe hertzen vnde haben liebe vnd treuwe czu der warheyt vnnd czu armen menschen, vnd werden gelobt von yn, vnnd die selben suchet man vnd volget yn nach, wo sie synt. Aber wer dißen hoffertigenn menschen nicht thut vnd wartet vnd vnderthenig ist noch yrem willen, der ist auch vngelobet von yn vnd ioch licht geschulden vnd vngesucht, vnnd ab er joch also heilig were also sant Peter.

Close translation

See, this arises in this way. The devil breathes into the human being, so that the human being thinks and supposes they have come to the highest and the nearest, and henceforth need neither scripture nor this nor that any more, and indeed have become wholly without need. From this a peace and a great pleasure arise in them, and then it follows that one says: yes, now I am above all human beings and know and understand more than the whole world; therefore it is fitting and right that I should be the god of all creatures, and all creatures, and especially all human beings, should serve and attend to me and be subject to me. And they seek and desire this very thing and gladly receive it from all creatures, and especially from the human being, and consider themselves well worthy of all this, and that it is owed to them, and hold all human beings as asses or beasts. They also consider themselves worthy of everything that can bring good and pleasure, pastime and delight to their body, flesh and nature, and seek and take it wherever they can obtain it, and everything that can be done for them seems too little to them, and they suppose themselves well worthy of it all. And all the people who serve and are subject to them, even if they were thieves or murderers, are nevertheless said to be noble, faithful hearts and to have love and fidelity towards truth and towards poor people, and are praised by them; and these people are sought and followed wherever they

are. But whoever does not act for and attend to these proud people, and is not subject to them according to their will, is also unpraised by them, and indeed perhaps reviled and unsought, even if they were as holy as Saint Peter.

§ 25.3 · German text · p. 105

Syder nu diße reiche, geistliche hoffart dunckt, sie bedorff nicht schrifft noch lere vnd des gleich, ßo werden da alle wiße, ordenunge vnd gesetze vnnd gebote der heiligen kirchen vnd die sacrament czu nichte geachtet vnd joch czu eynem spot vnnd auch alle menschen, die mit disser ordenunge vmmb gehen vnd da von halden. Hie bey merckt man wol, das diße czwo swestern bey eynnander wanen. Syder auch disse reiche hoffart dunckt, sie wisse vnd vorstehe mer den alle menschen, ßo wil sie auch meher klaffen vnd reden den alle ander menschen vnd wil, das yr wort vnnd yr rede sul allein geachtet vnd gehoret seyn vnde alle ander wort vnd rede sal vnrecht sey vnd joch eyn spot ader eyn thorheit.

Close translation

Since this rich spiritual pride now thinks that it needs neither scripture nor teaching and the like, all practices, ordinances and laws and commandments of the holy Church, and the sacraments, are regarded as nothing and indeed as a mockery, and so too are all people who observe these ordinances and make anything of them. By this one can well observe that these two sisters dwell together. Since this rich pride also thinks that it knows and understands more than all human beings, it also wishes to chatter and speak more than all other human beings, and wishes its words and speech alone to be regarded and heard, while all other words and speech should be wrong and indeed a mockery or a folly.

Notes

In § 25.2, the critical editor restores esel (“asses”) from other witnesses in place of D’s edel (“noble”). In § 25.3, nicht replaces D’s nicht vil, and sul replaces sol de.

The proud person explicitly claims to be got, “god”, of all creatures: a direct usurpation of God’s place.

In the early text “peace and great pleasure” arise. C’s description of a false peace and self-satisfaction accords with the criticism of pride, but has not been inserted into the earlier sentence.

Spiritual riches here mean the conviction that one has attained perfection and needs no further teaching. They are contrasted with spiritual poverty in the next chapter.

Chapter 26

Poverty of spirit and true humility, and how to recognise the righteous, well-ordered and truly free, whom truth has freed

Source: the critical text in Hinten, pp. 105–109; Chapter 25 in D. “In God’s place” (an gotis stat) in § 26.1 concerns the obligation towards creatures: undergoing, acting and serving them are treated as an obligation towards God.

Reading translation in Part I, p. 44

Later manuscript additions: p. 276

Von armut des geistes vnd warer demutikeyt vnd wo bey man sal erkennen die gerechten, geordneten, woren freyen, die dy warheit gefreyet hat.

§ 26.1 · German text · p. 105–106

Aber wo geistlich armut ist vnd ware, geistlich demutigkeit, da ist es vil anders, vnd die kommet do von, das yn der warheit gefunden vnd bekant wirt, das der mensch von ym selber vnd von dem seynen nicht ist noch vormag ader hat noch taug den allein gebrechen vnd vntogent vnd boßheit. Dar nach volget, das sich der mensche czumäl vnwürdig findet alles des, das ym von gote ader von creaturen gescheen mag, vnd das er schuldig ist got vnd allen creaturen an gotis stat yn lidender wiße vnd auch etwan yn thunder wiße vnd yn dynender wiße. Vnd dar vmmb hat man yn der warheit nyrgent czu recht vnd wirt da gesprochen uß eyne demutigenn gemute: Eß ist billich vnd recht, das got vnd alle creatur wider mich seyn vnd recht vbir mich vnnd czu mir haben vnd ich wider nymandes sey vnd czu nicht recht habe.

Close translation

But where there is spiritual poverty and true spiritual humility, it is very different. These come from its being found and known in truth that the human being, from themselves and what is theirs, is nothing, can do nothing, has nothing and is fit for nothing but deficiency and vice and wickedness alone. From this it follows that the human being finds themselves wholly unworthy of everything that can come to them from God or from creatures, and indebted to God and to all creatures in God’s place, in a manner of undergoing and also sometimes in a manner of acting and serving. Therefore in truth one has a right to nothing anywhere, and it is said from a humble disposition: it is fitting and right that God and all

creatures should be against me and have right over me and a claim upon me, and that I should be against no one and have a right to nothing.

§ 26.2 · German text · p. 106

Hie nach volget, das der mensche nichts beten ader begeren thar ader wil wider von got ader von creaturen den bloß notdorfft, vnnd das selbige alles mit forchten vnde von gnaden vnd nicht von rechte, vnnd lesset auch seyme leibe ader seyner natur auch nicht meher czu gute ader czu luste gesche den notdorfft, vnd lesset vnd statet ym nymandes czu helffenn ader czu dynen den yn notdorfft, vnd das selbe alles mit forchten, wann er czu keynem rechte hat vnd duncket sich seyne alles vnwirdig.

Close translation

From this it follows that the human being dares or wishes to ask or desire nothing, either from God or from creatures, except bare necessity, and even that all with fear and by grace and not by right. Nor do they allow more good or pleasure to come to their body or nature than necessity, nor allow or permit anyone to help or serve them except in necessity, and all this with fear, for they have a right to nothing and consider themselves unworthy of it all.

§ 26.3 · German text · p. 106

Auch duncket dißē menschen, das alle seyne wort vnd seyne rede nichts seyn vnd eyn thorheit. Dar vmmb redet er vnd spricht nicht, yemant czu leren ader czu straffen, yn tribe den gotliche libe vnd truwe dar czu, vnde das selbe geschiet mit forchten vnd so eß mynst mag.

Close translation

These human beings also think that all their words and their speech are nothing and a folly. Therefore they do not speak or say anything to teach or rebuke anyone unless divine love and fidelity drive them to it; and even this happens with fear and as little as possible.

§ 26.4 · German text · p. 106

Auch wirt yn dißem geistlichen armut vnd demutikeit vorstanden vnd funden, das alle menschen kummen czumäl auff sich selber vnd joch uff vntogent vnde boßheit geneyget vnd gekeret seyn, vnnd das dar vmmb not vnd nutze ist, das ordenung vnd wiße vnd gesetzte vnd gebot sint, das die blintheit da mit geleret werde vnd boßheit geczwungen werde czu ordenlicheit. Vnd were des nicht,

die menschen worden vil boßer vnd vnordenlicher dan hund ader ander vihe. Vnd wirt auch manig mensch durch diße weiße vnnd ordenunge geczogen vnd gekeret czu der warheit, das anders nicht geschee.

Close translation

In this spiritual poverty and humility it is also understood and found that all human beings are wholly inclined and turned towards themselves, and indeed towards vice and wickedness; and that therefore it is necessary and useful that ordinances and practices and laws and commandments exist, so that blindness may be taught through them and wickedness constrained to order. Without this, human beings would become much more evil and disorderly than dogs or other beasts. And many a human being is also drawn and turned towards truth through these practices and ordinances, which would not otherwise happen.

§ 26.5 · German text · p. 106–107

Auch das wenigk menschen czu der warheit kommen synt, sie haben vor ordenunge vnd wiße angefangen vnd sich dar ynne geubet, die weile sie nicht anders ader bessers westen. Sich, hir vmmb synt gesetze vnnd gebote vnd ordenunge vnd wiße yn der demutigen geistlikeit vnd yn geistlichen armut nicht vorsmehet noch vorspottet vnd auch die menschen, die da mit vmmb gehen vnd sie handeln. Sundern da wirt gesprochen yn eyner libsamen erbarmunge vnnd yn eyne clagende iamer vnd mit liden: Got vnd warheit, dir sie geclaget vnd du clagest eß selber, das menschliche blintheit vnd gebreche vnd boßheit macht, das das not ist vnd seyn muß, des yn der warheit nicht not ist noch sold seyn; vnd ist eyn begirde, das die menschen, die nicht bessers ader anders wissen czu der warheit czu kommen, das sie wissen vnd bekennen, war vmmb alle gesetze vnd ordenunge seyn vnd gescheen. Vnd man grifft eß an mit den andern, die nicht anders noch bessers wissen, vnd vbit yß mit yn, uff das man sie da bie behalde, das sie nicht czu boßen dingen keren, ader ab man sie mochte zu eynem nehern brengen.

Close translation

Even the few human beings who have come to truth first began with ordinances and practices and exercised themselves in them while they knew nothing else or better. See, for this reason laws and commandments and ordinances and practices are not despised or mocked in humble spirituality and spiritual poverty, nor are the people who have dealings with

them and practise them. Rather, it is said in a loving compassion and in a lamenting misery and fellow-suffering: God and truth, let this be lamented to you, and you lament it yourself, that human blindness and deficiency and wickedness make necessary and compulsory what in truth is not necessary and ought not to be. And there is a desire that those human beings who know no better or other way to come to truth should know and recognise why all laws and ordinances exist and are made. And one takes this up with the others who know nothing else or better, and practises it with them, so as to keep them with it, so that they do not turn to evil things, or to see whether one might bring them nearer.

§ 26.6 • German text • p. 107–108

Sich, alles, das hie for gesprochen ist von armut vnd demutikeit, das ist yn der warheit also, vnd bewert vnd beczuget man das mit dem leben Cristi vnd mit seynen worten. Wann er hat alle werck der waren demutikeit gevbet vnd volbracht, als man yn seyme leben findet, vnnd mit worten spricht er eß: «Lernet von mir, das ich gütig bin vnd eyns demutigen hertzen». Er hat auch die ee vnd die gesetze nicht vorsumet noch vorsmehet noch die menschen yn der ee. Er spricht wol: Eß were dar an nicht genug. Man solle vorbas kommen, als eß yn der warheit ist. Eß ist auch geschriben von sant Paul: «Cristus nam die ee an sich, auff das das er die, dy vnder der ee waren, erloßet». Das meynet er, das er sie czu eynem nehern vnd bessern brengen mochte. Er sprach auch: «Ich bin nicht kommen, das man mir dyne, sunder ich sal dienen». Kurtzlichen yn Cristus wortten vnd wercken vnd leben findet man nicht den ware, luter demutikeit vnd armut, vnd als vor hie gesprochen ist. Vnnd wo got der mensch ist vnd wo Cristus ist, da muß vnd sal von not das seyn. Vnde wo die hochmutikeit ist vnd die geistliche reicheit vnd das lichte, frey gemute, da ist nicht Cristus nach seyne ware nochvolgender. Cristus sprach: «Meyne sele ist betrubet biß yn den tod». Er meynet den liplichen todt. Das was von dem, das er von Marien geborn wart biß yn den liplichen tod, vnd wo von das was, das ist vor gesaget. Cristus spricht: «Seligk synt die, dij deß geistes arm synt, das synt die waren demutigen, wan gotis rich ist yr». Also spricht auch die warheit, allein eß nicht geschriben ist: Vnseligk vnd vormalediget synt die geistrichen vnd hochmutigen, wan des tufels riche ist yr. Sich, also findet man yn der warheit, wo got mensch ist. Aber wo Cristus vnd seyne ware nachvolger synt, da muß von not ware, gruntliche vnd geistliche demutikeit vnd geistlich armut seyn vnd eyn nyder gedrucket, yn blibendes gemute, vnd das sal

ynwendig vol heymlichs, vorborgens jamers vnd lidens seyn biß yn den leiplichen tod. Vnd wer anders wenet, der ist betrogenn vnnd betruget ander mit ym, als vor gesaget ist. Vnd dar vmmb gehet alle natur vnnd selbheit von dissem leben vnd heldet sich czu dem falschen, ledigen leben, als vor gesprochen ist.

Close translation

See, everything said above about poverty and humility is in truth so, and is established and attested by Christ's life and his words. For he practised and fulfilled all the works of true humility, as one finds in his life, and he says it in words: "Learn from me that I am good and of a humble heart." Nor did he neglect or despise the law and the statutes or the people under the law. He indeed says that this is not enough, that one should come further, as it is in truth. It is also written by Saint Paul: "Christ took the law upon himself so that he might deliver those who were under the law." He means that he might bring them nearer and to something better. He also said: "I have not come to be served, but I am to serve." In brief, in Christ's words and works and life one finds nothing but true, pure humility and poverty, as said above. And wherever God is the human being and wherever Christ is, this must and ought necessarily to be. And where there is pride and spiritual wealth and the easy, free disposition, there is neither Christ nor his true follower. Christ said: "My soul is troubled unto death." He means bodily death. This was from when he was born of Mary until bodily death, and what caused it has been said above. Christ says: "Blessed are those who are poor in spirit, that is, the truly humble, for God's kingdom is theirs." So truth also says, although it is not written: unblessed and accursed are the spiritually rich and proud, for the devil's kingdom is theirs. See, thus it is found in truth where God is human being. But where Christ and his true followers are, there must necessarily be true, deep and spiritual humility and spiritual poverty and a cast-down disposition that remains within; and inwardly this should be full of secret, hidden misery and suffering until bodily death. And whoever supposes otherwise is deceived and deceives others with them, as said above. Therefore all nature and selfhood go away from this life and hold to the false, unrestrained life, as was said above.

§ 26.7 • German text • p. 109

Sich, nu kumpt aber eyn Adam ader eyn tufel vnd wil sich behelffen vnd entschuldigen vnd spricht: Man saget vast, Cristus wer an sich selbir vnnd des gleich. Nu sprach er doch dicke von ym selber vnd rumte sich diß und des vnd des gleich. Antwort: Wo warheit wircken vnd wollen sal vnd wil, ßo ist yr wille vnd begirde vnd wercke vmmb nicht anders, danne das worheit bekant vnnd vffenbare werde, vnd diß was yn Cristo. Vnd dar czu gehorten wort vnd wercke. Vnd was dar czu das nutzte vnd das beßte waz, vnd was des geschach, des stunt er alles ledig als anders, das geschach.

Close translation

See, now an Adam or a devil comes again and wishes to defend and excuse himself, and says: people insist that Christ was without himself, and the like. Yet he often spoke of himself and boasted of this and that and the like. Answer: where truth should and will work and will, its will and desire and work are for nothing other than that truth should be known and revealed; and this was in Christ. Words and works belonged to this. And whatever was most useful and best for this, and whatever of this happened, he stood free of it all, as of everything else that happened.

§ 26.8 • German text • p. 109

Nu sprichstu aber: So was doch war vmmb yn Cristo. Ich sprich: Der die sonne fraget, war vmmb schinestu, sie sprech: Ich muß schynen vnd vormag anders nicht, wan eß ist meyn eygen vnd gehort mir czu, vnd der selben eigenschafft vnd des schynes sten ich ledig. Also ist eß auch vmmb got vnd Cristum. Vnd alles, das gotlich ist vnd got czu gehoret, das wil vnd wircket vnd begert anders nicht den gut als gut vnd vmmb gut, vnd da ist anders keyn war vmmb.

Close translation

But now you say: so there was nevertheless a “why” in Christ. I say: if someone asked the sun, “Why do you shine?”, it would say: I must shine and cannot do otherwise, for it is proper to me and belongs to me, and I stand free of this very property and of the shining. So it is also with God and Christ. And everything divine and belonging to God wills and works and desires nothing other than good as good and for good's sake, and there is no other “why”.

Notes

In § 26.4 the German retains the grammatically unclear *kummen* before *czumäl*. Both English versions convey the certain construction of the statement—that all people are inclined and turned towards themselves, vice and wickedness. No secure separate equivalent for *kummen* has been established here.

Quotations in § 26.6: Matthew 11:29; Galatians 4:4–5; Matthew 20:28; 26:38; 5:3, translated in the treatise’s wording. *Gütig* is rendered “good”; the author says “God’s kingdom” and explains the poor in spirit as the truly humble. The following curse of the spiritually rich is the author’s own opposing formulation, not a biblical quotation.

An sich selbir in § 26.7 is an older expression meaning “without oneself”. The accusation of boasting belongs to Adam or the devil. The author replies that Christ manifested truth while remaining free of appropriation of his words and deeds.

The sun in § 26.8 distinguishes possessing a natural property from claiming it as one’s own. Its statements that shining belongs to it and that it remains free of shining are both retained.

Chapter 27

How to understand Christ's words that all things must be left and lost, and wherein union with the divine will consists

Source: the critical text in Hinten, pp. 109–110. The words about leaving everything recall Matthew 19:21, freely rendered by the treatise. Union does not mean ceasing necessary activities; both the opening and the ending expressly state this.

Reading translation in Part I, p. 47

Wie man das vorstehen sal, das Cristus spricht: «Man sal alle dingk laßen vnde vorlißen» vnd war an die voreynunge mit gotlichem willen gelegen sey.

§ 27.1 • German text • p. 109–110

Dar nach sal man mercken, wan man spricht vnd ioch Cristus selber spricht: «Man solle alle ding laßen vnd vorlißen». Das sal man nicht also vorstehen, das der mensch nichts czu thun ader vorhanden solle haben, wan der mensch muß ioch etwan etwas thun vnd czu schicken han, die wile er lebet. Aber man sal eß also vorstan, das alles des menschen vormugenn, thun vnd laßen vnd wissen vnd joch aller creaturen ist nicht das, da die voreynung an ligt.

Close translation

Next one should observe when people say, and indeed Christ himself says: “One should leave and lose all things.” This should not be understood as meaning that the human being should have nothing to do or before them, for the human being must indeed sometimes do something and have something to arrange as long as they live. Rather, it should be understood thus: all the human being's ability, doing and leaving undone and knowing, and indeed that of all creatures, is not that in which union consists.

§ 27.2 • German text • p. 110

Was ist nu die eynung? Nichts anders, den das man luterlichen vnd einfeldichen vnd gantzlichen yn der warheit eynfeldig sey mit einfeldigen, ewigen willen gotis ader joch czumal an willen sey vnd der geschaffen wille geflossen sey yn den ewigen willen vnd dar jinne vormelczet sey vnd czu nichte worden, also das der ewige wille allein da selbist welle thun vnd laße.

Close translation

Now what is union? Nothing other than that one should purely and simply and wholly be in truth simple and one with God's simple, eternal will, or

indeed wholly without will, and the created will should have flowed into the eternal will and melted away in it and come to nothing, so that the eternal will alone wills, does and leaves undone there.

§ 27.3 · German text · p. 110

Nu warte, was mag dem menschen hir czu gedynen ader gehelffen? Sich, das mag wider wort noch werck ader wiße ader ioch keyner creaturen noch aller creaturen werck, wissen, vormugen, thun ader laßen. Sich, also sal man alle vorlißen vnd laßen, das ist, das man nicht wenen ader gedencken solle, das kein werck, wort ader wiße, kunst ader meisterschafft ader kurtzlich alles, das geschaffen ist, kan hie czu wider gehelffen noch gedienen, sunder man muß diß alles laßen seyn, das eß ist, vnd ghen yn die eynung. Doch müssen die ding seyn vnd muß man thun vnd laßen, vnd besundern der mensch muß slaffen vnd wachen, ghen, stehen, reden vnd swigen vnd anders vil, das joch sey muß, die wile der mensche lebet.

Close translation

Now attend: what can serve or help the human being towards this? See, neither word nor work nor practice can do this, nor indeed any creature's or all creatures' works, knowing, ability, doing or leaving undone. See, thus should one lose and leave everything: that is, one should not suppose or think that any work, word or practice, art or mastery, or, in brief, anything created can help or serve towards this. Rather, one must let all this be what it is and go into union. Yet these things must be, and one must do and leave undone; and especially the human being must sleep and wake, walk, stand, speak and be silent, and much else that must indeed be as long as the human being lives.

Notes

Eynfeldig and eynfeldig mit in § 27.2 combine simplicity and unity. The close translation preserves both. An *willen* means “without will”; “without a separate will” in the literary version makes explicit the following distinction between created and eternal will.

Chapter 28

How, after union with the divine will, the inner human being stands unmoving while the outer human being is moved here and there

Source: the critical text in Hinten, pp. 110–111. Near the beginning the editor restores from other witnesses the words missing in D: “unmoving, and God lets the outer human being”. Wesenlich (“actual, in being”) is adopted in place of D’s wissentlich. These readings are already part of the printed critical text.

Reading translation in Part I, p. 48

Later manuscript additions: p. 277

Wie noch der voreynunge mit gotlichem willen der ynner mensch vnbeweglich stet vnnd der vßer mensche her vnnd dar beweget wirt.

§ 28.1 · German text · p. 110–111

Auch sal man mercken jn der warheit; Wo die eynunge geschiet vnd wesentlich wirt, do steet vorbaß meher der jnnere mensche yn der eynunge vnbeweglich und gott let den ausser menschen her vnnd dar beweget werden jn dem vnd czu dem, da muß ader sal seyn ader gescheen, als das der vßer mensche spricht vnd eß yn der warheit also ist: Ich wil wider seyn noch nicht seyn, leben ader sterben, wissen ader nicht wissen, thun ader laßen vnnd alles, das dissem gleich ist. Sunder alles, das do muß vnd sal seyn vnd gescheen, do bin ich gehorsam zcu, eß sie yn lidender wiße ader yn thunder wiße. Vnnd hat der außer mensch kein war vmmb ader gesuch, sunder allein dem ewigen willen genug czu seyn. Wan das wirt bekant yn der warheit, das der ynner mensch steen sal vnbeweglich vnd der vßer mensch muß vnd sal beweget werden. Vnnd hat der jnner mensch yn seyner beweglikeit eyn war vmmb, das ist anders nicht den eyn muß vnde sal seyn, geordent von dem ewigen willen. Vnnd wo got selber der mensch were ader ist, da ist ym also. Das merckt man yn Cristo.

Close translation

One should also observe in truth: where union occurs and becomes actual, there henceforth the inner human being stands unmoving in union, and God lets the outer human being be moved here and there in and towards what must or ought to be or happen, so that the outer human being says, and in truth it is so: I will neither to be nor not to be, to live nor to die, to know nor not to know, to do nor to leave undone, and everything like this. Rather, everything that must and ought to be and happen, to this I am

obedient, whether in a manner of undergoing or in a manner of acting. And the outer human being has no “why” or seeking except to satisfy the eternal will alone. For this is known in truth: the inner human being should stand unmoving, and the outer human being must and should be moved. And if the inner human being in their mobility has a “why”, it is nothing other than a “must” and “ought”, ordained by the eternal will. And wherever God himself were or is the human being, there it is so. One observes this in Christ.

§ 28.2 · German text · p. 111

Auch wo diß yn gotlichem vnd vß gotlichem licht ist, do ist nicht geistliche hoffart noch vnachtsam freiheit ader ioch frey gemute, sunder gruntliche demutikeit vnd eyn nyder geslagen, yn gesuncken, betrübt gemute vnd alle ordendlicheit vnd redelikeit vnd glichheit vnnd warheyte, vnd das allen tugenden czu gehoret, das muß do seyn vnd freude vnd genüge sinthalben. Wo eß anders ist, do ist ym nicht recht, als anders wo mere gesprochen ist. Vnd auch recht also diß ader das czu disßer eynung nicht gehelffen ader gedynen kan, also ist auch nicht, das eß gehindern ader geyrren mag denn allein der mensch selber mit seynem eygen willen.

Close translation

Also, where this is in divine light and from divine light, there is no spiritual pride or heedless freedom, or indeed an unrestrained disposition, but deep humility and a cast-down, sunken-in, troubled disposition, and all orderliness and right conduct and fairness and truth, and what belongs to all virtues: this must be there, and peace and sufficiency on the person's part. Where it is otherwise, it is not right, as has been said more fully elsewhere. And just as this or that cannot help or serve towards this union, so too nothing can hinder or obstruct it except the human being themselves with their own will.

Notes

In § 28.1, the critical edition retains *jnner*, “inner”, in the sentence about the inner human being’s mobility. This contradicts the preceding distinction between inward immobility and outward movement. F explicitly reads “outer” here. Both English versions retain the main text’s reading; the likely intended meaning is the outer person in their movement.

Freiheit and *frey gemute* in § 28.2 describe the heedless freedom from order condemned here, rather than the true freedom discussed elsewhere. *Sinthalben* means “on the person’s part”.

Chapter 29

Why, before death, a person cannot become outwardly incapable of suffering and unmoving

Source: the critical text in Hinten, pp. 111–112. Vnleidelich means incapable of undergoing suffering, rather than freedom from morally disordered passions. Both translations make the subject of the dispute explicit.

Reading translation in Part I, p. 49

Wie der mensche vor seyme tode dar czu nicht kommen mag, das er von außßen vnleidlich vnd vnbeweglich werde.

§ 29.1 · German text · p. 111–112

Eß ist gesprochen vnnd gehort, der mensch muge vnd solle werden yn der czit vnleidelich yn aller weiße, als Cristus was nach der vfferstendunge. Vnd das wolde man beweisen vnd beweren do mit, das Cristus sprach: «Ich wil uch vor gehen yn Galilea, da sold yr mich sehen», vnde auch, das er sprach: «Eyn geist hat wider fleisch ader beine, als yr mich sehet haben». Vnnd wolde man das also glosiren, als yr mich gesehen habt vnd mir noch gevolget seyt mit eyne tolichen libe vnd leben, also salt ir mich auch sehen vnnd ich sal uch vor gehen vnd yr mir nach volgen yn Galilea, das ist, yn eyner vnleidelicheit vnd vnbeweglikeit befinden vnd smecken salt, vnd dar jnne leben vnd bliben, ee denn yr den leiplichen tod durch gehet vnd erlidet. Vnd als yr mich sehet fleisch vnd beyne haben vnd ich doch vnleidlich bin, also sollet yr auch vor dem leiplichen tode yn uwer leiplikeit vnd yn uwer tolichen menscheit vnleidelich werden.

Close translation

It has been said and heard that the human being can and should become incapable of suffering in every way within time, as Christ was after the resurrection. And people wished to prove and establish this from Christ's saying: "I will go before you into Galilee; there you shall see me"; and also from his saying: "A spirit has neither flesh nor bones as you see me have." And they wished to interpret this thus: as you have seen me and followed me with a mortal body and life, so shall you also see me, and I shall go before you, and you shall follow me into Galilee; that is, you shall feel and taste a condition incapable of suffering and unmoving, and live and remain in it before you pass through and suffer bodily death. And as you see me have flesh and bones, and yet I am incapable of suffering, so too before

bodily death you shall become incapable of suffering in your bodily condition and in your mortal humanity.

§ 29.2 · German text · p. 112

Sich, nu antwart man von erst czu disser bewerung vnd spricht, das Cristus nicht gemeynet hat, das der mensch hie czu kommen mag adder solle, er habe denn vor alles das durch gangen vnnd geliden, das Cristus durch gangen vnd geliden hat. Nu was Cristus nicht hir czu kommen, ee dan er den lipliehen tod durch gangen vnd geliden hatte vnnd anders, das dar czu gehorete. Also mag ader sal keyn mensch dar czu kommen, alle die weile er totlieh vnd lidelich ist. Wan wer diß das edelste vnd das beste, vnnd were eß auch moglich czu gescheen vnd solde eß seyn, das man yn der czit dar czu kem, als vor gesprochen ist, eß were yn Cristo auch gescheen, wan Cristus leben was vnd ist das edelste vnd das beste vnd gote das wirdigste vnd das libste leben, das ye wart ader ymmer wirt. Wanne eß nu in Cristo nicht gescheen sold ader macht, ßo sal eß auch yn keyme menschen nymmer gescheen, also das eß yn der warheit das beste vnd das edelste sey. Man mag seyn wol wenen ader mag eß sprechen, eß ist abir nicht also.

Close translation

See, now one first answers this proof and says that Christ did not mean that the human being can or should come to this unless they have first passed through and suffered everything that Christ passed through and suffered. Now Christ had not come to this before he had passed through and suffered bodily death and the other things belonging to it. Thus no human being can or should come to this as long as they are mortal and capable of suffering. For if this were the noblest and best, and if it were possible to happen and ought to be that one came to this within time, as said above, it would also have happened in Christ; for Christ's life was and is the noblest and best, and the worthiest and dearest to God, that ever was or ever will be. Since it should not or could not happen in Christ, neither should it ever happen in any human being in such a way that it is in truth the best and noblest. One may well suppose it or may say it, but it is not so.

Notes

For § 29.1 compare Matthew 26:32; 28:7, 10; Luke 24:39. The interpretation of Galilee as a state beyond suffering and movement belongs to the opponents whose position the author first presents and then rejects. The first paragraph is not his own teaching.

Chapter 30

In what sense we may come above practices, ordinances, laws, commandments and the like

Source: the critical text in Hinten, pp. 113–114. The next chapter continues the distinction between true freedom and the false rejection of virtue; Chapters 30–31 should be read together.

Reading translation in Part I, p. 50

In welcher weiße man kommen mag obir weiße, ordenunge, gesetzte vnd gebot vnnd des gleich.

§ 30.1 · German text · p. 113

Man spricht auch, man solle vnd muge kommen vbir alle tugent vnd vbir alle wiße, ordenung vnd gebote, gesetzte vnd redlikeit, also das man diß alles hin legen sol vnd sol eß uff schiben vnd vornichten. Hie ynne ist etwas wares vnd etwas vnwares. Diß sal man mercken. Sich, Cristus was vbir Cristus leben vnde vber alle togende, wiße vnd ordenunge vnd was des ist. Vnd der tufel ist auch dar vber, aber mit vnderscheid. Wan Cristus was vnd ist vbir das alles yn dem synne aller der wort vnd der wercke vnd wiße, thun vnd laßen, swigen vnd reden, liden vnd alles, das yn Cristo ye geschach, was ym nicht noth ader bedorfft seyn nicht vnd was ym kein nutz czu ym selber. Sich, also was vnd ist eß auch vmmb alle togent, ordenung vnd redlikeit vnnd des gleich, wanne was hir mit czu vberkumen ist und etwas hie mit zu vberkomen were, das ist yn Cristo alles vor vnd ist bereite da.

Close translation

People also say that one should and can come above all virtue and above all practices, ordinances and commandments, laws and right conduct, so that one should lay all this aside, set it aside and bring it to nothing. There is something true and something untrue in this. This should be observed. See, Christ was above Christ's life and above all virtues, practices and ordinances and everything of that kind. And the devil is also above them, but with a difference. For Christ was and is above all this in the sense that all the words and works and practices, doing and leaving undone, silence and speech, suffering and everything that ever happened in Christ were not necessary for him, or he had no need of them, and they were of no use to him for himself. See, so it was and is also with all virtue, ordinance and

right conduct and the like; for whatever is to be attained by these, and if anything were to be attained by these, all this is already beforehand in Christ and is present already.

§ 30.2 · German text · p. 113

In dissem synne ist eß auch ware vnd yn dissem synne seynt sant Pauls wort war vnd czu vorstehen, do er sprycht: «Die von gotis geiste geweisset vnd gewircket vnd geleitet werden, die synt gotis kint vnd synt nicht vnder der ee». In eyne synne, das ist, man darff sie nicht leren, waz sie thun ader lassen sollen, wanne yr meister, der geist gotis, sal sie wolleren. Auch bedarff man yn nicht gebiten ader heissen wol thun ader vbel lassen vnd des glich. Wann der selbe, der sie leret, was gut ader vngut ist ader sey ader das beste ader nicht, der selbe gebutet yn auch vnde heisset sie bliben bey dem besten vnd das ander lassen, vnd dem synt sie gehorsam. Sich, yn dissem synne durffen sie keyner ee warten wider czu leren noch czu gebiten.

Close translation

In this sense it is also true, and in this sense Saint Paul's words are true and to be understood when he says: "Those who are directed and moved and led by God's spirit are God's children and are not under the law." In one sense this means that one need not teach them what they should do or leave undone, for their master, God's spirit, will teach them well. Nor need one command or bid them to do well or leave evil and the like. For the same one who teaches them what is or may be good or not good, or the best or not, also commands and bids them to remain with the best and leave the other, and they obey him. See, in this sense they need attend to no law, either for teaching or for command.

§ 30.3 · German text · p. 113–114

Auch yn eyne andern synne durffen sie keyner ee, das sie yn selber do mit icht vbirkommen ader gewynnen ader yn selber irgent czu nutze sey, wan was man mit disßen ader ioch mit aller creaturen hilff ader rede, wortten vnd wercken vbir kommen ader geschicken mag uff den ewigen wegk vnd czu ewigem leben, das han sie alles gereite. Sich, yn dissem synne ist eß war, das man vber alle ee vnd tugent kommen mag vnd joch vber allen creaturen werck vnd wissen vnnd vormugen.

Close translation

In another sense too they need no law: to attain or gain anything for themselves by it, or for it to be of any use to themselves. For whatever one can attain or accomplish on the eternal way and towards eternal life by these things, or indeed with the help, speech, words and works of all creatures, they already have it all. See, in this sense it is true that one can come above all law and virtue, and indeed above all creatures' works and knowing and ability.

Notes

“Christ was above Christ’s life” in § 30.1 has been retained. The author explains that Christ did not need to gain for himself what others gain through following his life.

In § 30.2 the author combines being led by the Spirit and being God’s children with freedom from the law; compare Romans 8:14 and Galatians 5:18. This is the treatise’s combined formulation, not a quotation of a single verse. *Ee* means “law”, not a teacher or interpreter of the law.

Chapter 31

Why Christ's life must not be cast off, but practised and followed until death

Source: the critical text in Hinten, pp. 114–115. The opening continues Chapter 30: absence of personal gain does not remove the need to enact Christ's life.

Reading translation in Part I, p. 51

Wie man Cristus leben nicht sal auß schutten, sunder man sal eß an treyben vnd do methe vmmb gen biß an den tod.

§ 31.1 • German text • p. 114

Aber das ander, das man spricht: Man solle beide, Cristus leben vnd alle gebote vnd gesetze, wiße vnd ordenung vnd der glich hin legen vnnd uff schiben vnd man solle seyn vnachtsam sein vnd vorsmehen vnd haben eß czu eynem spotte, das ist falsch vnd gelogen. Sich, nu mochte man sprechen: Seint dem mal beide, Cristus vnd auch ander menschen, mit Cristus leben ader mit allen wißen, ordenung vnd des glich nicht vberkommen ader nutz geschicken mugen, wan das do mit czu vberkummen ist, das haben sie gereite. Was sal eß yn dan vorbas, das sie eß nicht vnderwegenn laßen sollenn? Sollen sie danne noch do mit vmmb gehen vnd sollen eß handeln vnd an treiben?

Close translation

But the other thing people say—that one should lay aside and set aside both Christ's life and all commandments and laws, practices and ordinances and the like, and be heedless of them and despise them and hold them to be a mockery—is false and a lie. See, now one might say: since both Christ and other human beings cannot attain or procure benefit through Christ's life or through all practices, ordinances and the like, because they already have what is to be attained through them, what are these things to them any longer, that they should not leave them undone? Should they then still have dealings with them and practise and pursue them?

§ 31.2 • German text • p. 114–115

Sich, das sal man wol mercken. Eß ist czweierley licht: eyn ware licht vnd das ander falsch. Das ware licht ist das ewige licht, das ist got, ader eß ist eyn geschaffen licht vnnd ist doch gotlich, vnd das heiße man gnade vnd diß ist alles ware licht. So ist falsch licht natur ader natürlich. Wor vmmb ist aber das

erst licht ware vnd das ander falsch? Diß sal man baß mercken, da man geschriben ader gesprechen kan. Got als gotheit gehoret nicht czu weder wille noch wissen ader vffenbarn noch diß noch daß, das man genennen mag ader gesprechen ader gedencken. Aber got als got gehoret czu, das er syne selbe voriehe vnd sich selber bekenne vnd libe vnd sich selber ym vffenbare yn ym selber, vnd diß noch alles an creature; vnd diß ist yn got noch alles eyn weßen vnd nicht als eyn wircken, die wile eß an creatur ist, vnd yn dissem vorgehen vnd vffenbaren wirt die personlich vnderscheid. Aber got, als got mensch ist ader do got lebet yn eyne gotlichen ader yn eyne vorgatten menschen, gehoret got etwas czu, das seyne eigen ist vnnd ym allein czu gehoret vnd nicht creaturen, vnd ist yn ym selber an creatur orspruncklich vnd weßenlich, ader nicht formelich ader wircklich, vnnd got wil das selbe gewirckt vnd geubet han, wan eß ist dar vmmb, das eß gewirckt vnd geubet werden sal. Vnd was solde eß anders? Solde eß mußig seyn, was were eß danne nutze? Szo were eß also gut, eß were nicht vnd besser. Wann was nyrgent czu nutze ist, das ist vmmb sust vnd das wil got vnd die natur nicht.

Close translation

See, this should be well observed. There are two kinds of light: one true light and the other false. The true light is the eternal light, which is God, or it is a created light and yet divine, and this is called grace; and this is all true light. But false light is nature or natural. Why, then, is the first light true and the other false? This should be observed better than one can write or say. To God as Godhead belongs neither willing nor knowing nor revealing, nor this nor that which one can name or say or think. But to God as God belongs that he utters himself and knows and loves himself and reveals himself to himself in himself, and all this still without creature; and in God all this is still one being, and not an activity, as long as it is without creature, and in this uttering and revealing the distinction of Persons comes to be. But God, insofar as God is human being, or where God lives in a divine or deified human being: to God belongs something that is his own and belongs to him alone and not to creatures, and is in himself without creature originally and essentially, but not formally or actively. And God wills that this should be worked and practised, for it exists for this: that it should be worked and practised. And what else should it do? If it should be idle, what use would it be? Then it would be just as good, and better, if it

did not exist. For whatever is of no use anywhere is in vain, and God and nature do not will that.

§ 31.3 • German text • p. 115

Nu dar got wil das gevbet vnd gewircket han, vnd das mag an creatur nicht gescheen, das eß also seyn solle. Ja, solle wider diß noch das seyn, ader were diß noch das, ader were keyn werck ader wircklikeit ader des gleich, was were ader sold got ioch selber? Ader was were eß? Ader weiß got were er? Man muß hie wenden vnd bliben. Man mochte dißem also verre nach volgen vnd nach krichen, man wisset nicht, wo man were ader wie man wider vß krichen sold.

Close translation

Now God wills this to be practised and worked, and that it should be so cannot happen without creature. Indeed, if neither this nor that should be, or there were neither this nor that, or there were no work or activity or the like, what would or should even God himself be? Or what would it be? Or whose God would he be? Here one must turn back and stop. One might follow and creep after this so far that one would not know where one was or how to creep out again.

Notes

In § 31.2 the author distinguishes “God as Godhead” from “God as God”, then being without creatures from activity in creatures. These distinctions have been retained. An *creatur* means “without creature”, not “in creature”.

“Utters himself” renders *voriehe*. The following *vorgehen* is understood as a noun from the same old verb, *verjehen*: utterance or acknowledgement. The different spellings do not by themselves indicate different actions. *Personlich vnderscheid* is the distinction of Persons. *Formelich* and *wircklich* refer to determinate form and enacted activity, contrasted with original, essential being.

The questions about what God would be and whose God he would be belong to the treatise itself. The author immediately cautions against pursuing this thought further. Both the questions and the stopping point are retained.

Chapter 32

How God is the true, simple, perfect Good, light, understanding and every virtue, and why the highest and best Good should be loved most

Source: the critical text in Hinten, pp. 115–117. Etwo, etwan and etwas distinguish place, time and particular being: somewhere, sometime, something. Both English versions retain the sequence.

Reading translation in Part I, p. 52

Wie got eyn war, eynfeldig, vollkommen gut ist, vnd wie er eyn licht ist vnd eyn vorstentniß vnd alle togent ist, vnd wie man das aller hochste, beste gut aller libst haben sal.

§ 32.1 · German text · p. 115–116

Nv sal man mercken: Got als er gut ist, so ist er gut als gut vnd ist wider diß gut noch das gut. Hie mercke aber etwas. Sich, was etwo ist, hie ader da, das ist nicht an allen enden vnnd vber alle ende vnd stete. Vnd was etwan ist, hute ader morgen, das ist nicht alwege vnd alle czit vnd vber alle czit. Vnde was etwas ist, dis ader das, das ist nicht alle vnd vber alle. Sich, were nu got etwas, diß ader das, ßo were er nicht alle vnnd vbir alle, als er ist, vnd ßo were er nicht die ware vollkommenheit. Vnd dar vmmb ist got vnd ist doch wider diß nach das, das creatur als creatur bekennen ader genennen, gedencken ader gesprechen mag. Dar vmmb were got, als er gut ist, diß gut ader das gut, ßo were er nicht alles gut vnd vbir alles gut, vnd ßo were er nicht das einfeldig vnd volkumen gut, das er doch ist.

Close translation

Now one should observe: God, insofar as he is good, is good as good, and is neither this good nor that good. Observe something here again. See, what is somewhere, here or there, is not in all places and above all places and locations. And what is sometime, today or tomorrow, is not always and at all times and above all time. And what is something, this or that, is not all and above all. See, if God were something, this or that, then he would not be all and above all, as he is, and thus he would not be true perfection. Therefore God is, and yet is neither this nor that which a creature as creature can know or name, think or say. Therefore, if God as he is good were this good or that good, he would not be all good and above all good,

and thus he would not be the simple and perfect Good that he nevertheless is.

§ 32.2 • German text • p. 116

Sich, nu ist got auch eyn licht vnd bekentniß, ßo gehort licht vnd bekentniß czu vnd ist syn eigen, das eß luchte vnd erluchte, scheyne vnd bekenne, vnnd dar vmmb das got licht vnd bekentniß ist, ßo muß er luchten vnd irluchten vnnd bekennen, vnd alles diß luchten vnd bekennen yn got ist an creatur. Eß ist nicht da als eyn werck, sunder als ein weßen ader eyn vrsprung. Sal eß aber gesehen als eyn werck yn wirckender wiße, das muß yn creaturen gesehen. Sehet, wo nu das bekentniß vnd das licht yn eyner creatur wirckenden ist, da bekennet eß vnd leret, das eß ist; ßo ist eß gut. Vnd dar vmmb so ist eß wider diß oder das. Szo bekennet vnd leret eß auch wider diß nach das, sundern eß bekennet vnd leret czu erkennen, das eyn wares, einfeldiges, volkommes gut ist, das wider diß ader das ist, sundern eß ist alles gut vnd vber alles gut.

Close translation

See, now God is also a light and a knowing. It belongs to light and knowing, and is their own property, to give light and enlighten, shine and know; and because God is light and knowing, he must give light and enlighten and know, and all this giving light and knowing in God is without creature. It is not there as a work, but as a being or an origin. But if it is to occur as a work in an active manner, this must occur in creatures. See, wherever this knowing and light is working in a creature, there it knows and teaches what it is; and it is good. Therefore it is neither this nor that. So it also knows and teaches neither this nor that, but knows and teaches one to recognise that there is one true, simple, perfect Good, which is neither this nor that, but is all good and above all good.

§ 32.3 • German text • p. 116

Nu ist hie gesprochen, eß lere das ein gut. Was leret es aber von ym? Sich, diß sal man wol mercken. Sich, recht als got eyn gut bekentniß vnd licht ist, also ist er auch eyn wille vnd libe vnd gerechtikeit vnd warheit vnd ist auch alle togent, vnd ist doch alles eyn weßen yn got, vnnd eß mag keines nymmer gewircket vnd geuget werden an creatur, wan eß ist yn got an creatur nicht anders dann eyn weßen vnd eyn vrsprung vnd nicht werck. Aber wo diß eyne, das doch diße alle ist, eyn creatur an sich nympt vnd yr geweldig ist vnde ym da czu fuget vnd duncket, das eß sich synes eigens da bekennen mag, sich, also

eß den eyen wille vnd libe ist, so wirt er geleret von ym selber yn dem, als es eyen licht vnd bekentniß ist. Eß sal nicht wellen dan das eyen, das eß ist.

Close translation

Now it has been said here that it teaches the one Good. But what does it teach about it? See, this should be well observed. Just as God is a good, a knowing and a light, so he is also a will and love and righteousness and truth, and is also all virtue; yet it is all one being in God, and none of it can ever be worked and practised without creature, for in God without creature it is nothing other than a being and an origin, and not a work. But where this one, which is nevertheless all these, takes a creature to itself and is master of it and fits it to itself, and it seems to it that it may there know its own property: see, insofar as it is then a will and love, it is taught by itself insofar as it is a light and knowing. It should will nothing but the one that it is.

§ 32.4 · German text · p. 116–117

Sich, da wirt den furbas me nicht anders gewolt ader gelibet dan gut vmmb gut vnd vmmb nicht anders dan dar vmmb, das eß gut ist, vnnd nicht dar vmmb, das eß diß ader das ist, ader das eß diß ader daß sey, dißem ader dem lieb ader leid, wol ader we, suße ader suere sey vnd des glich. Des wirt nicht gefraget ader gerucht vnd auch nicht vmmb sich selber ader als sich selber, wan da ist all selbheit vnd icheit vnd ich vnd mir vnd des glich gelassen vnd abgefallen. Da wirt nicht gesprochen: Ich han mich lieb ader dich ader diß ader das vnd des glich. Vnd sprech man czu der libe: Was has tu lieb?, sie sprech: Ich han gut lieb. War vmmb? Sie sprech: Dar vmmb, das eß gut ist vnd vmmb gut. Szo ist eß gut vnnd recht vnd wol gethan, das eß gelibet werde. Vnd were icht bessers den got, das must gelibet werde vor got. Vnd dar vmmb hat sich got nicht lieb als sich selber, sunder als gut. Vnd were vnd wesset got icht bessers denn got, das hette er lieb vnde nicht sich selber. Also gar ist icheit vnd selbheit von got gescheiden vnd gehoret ym nicht czu, sunder als vil seyn nôt ist czu der personlichkeit. Sich, diß sal seyn vnd ist yn der warheit yn eyne gotlichen ader yn eyne waren, vorgotten menschen, dan er wer anders nicht gotlich adder vergottet.

Close translation

See, thereafter nothing is willed or loved but good for good's sake and for no other reason than that it is good, and not because it is this or that, or

because it may be this or that, dear or grievous to this one or that one, well or ill, sweet or sour and the like. This is not asked or cared about, nor is it for itself or as itself, for there all selfhood and I-ness and “I” and “to me” and the like have been left and fallen away. There one does not say: I love myself, or you, or this or that and the like. And if one said to love, “What do you love?”, it would say: I love good. Why? It would say: because it is good and for good's sake. Thus it is good and right and well done that it should be loved. And if there were anything better than God, it would have to be loved before God. Therefore God does not love himself as himself, but as good. And if there were anything better than God, and God knew it, he would love that and not himself. So wholly are I-ness and selfhood separated from God and do not belong to him, except as much as is necessary for personhood. See, this should be and in truth is in a divine or truly deified human being; otherwise they would not be divine or deified.

Notes

The sentence about taking a creature in § 32.3 is syntactically difficult. D has *duncket*, “seems”, while another branch reads *daugt*, “is fit”. Both translations preserve “seems”. The passage concerns the creature in which the one knows its own property and acts.

The hypothetical good “better than God” in § 32.4 argues for loving good for its own sake; it does not assert that such a good exists. The qualification concerning personhood also belongs to the author and is retained.

Icheit is “I-ness”, distinct from *ichtheit*, “somethingness”, in Chapter 1; *selbheit* is selfhood. “Sweet” and “sour” preserve the paired image of taste applied to a person’s experience of the good.

Chapter 33

How love in a deified person is pure and unmixed, loving all creatures and willing to do what is best for them

Source: the critical text in Hinten, pp. 117–118. The opening directly continues Chapter 32. The hypothetical killing a hundred times carries the claim of unwavering benevolence to its limit; it is the author's thought experiment.

Reading translation in Part I, p. 54

Wie yn eym vorgotten menschen die liebe lauter vnd vnvormischt ist, vnd die selbe liebe allen creaturn wol liben vnd thun wil das aller beste.

§ 33.1 · German text · p. 117

Hir noch volget, das yn eyme vorgotten menschen die libe ist luter vnd vnvormischt vnd gutwillig czu allen vnd czu allen dingen. Vnd dar vmmb muß alda selbst alle vnd alle ding gelibet werden vnd allen vnd allen dingen wol wollen vnd gunnen vnd thun vnvormischt. Ja, man thu eyme vorgotten menschen, was man wil, wol ader we, lieb ader leid, diß ader das. Ja, der eyne vorgotten menschen hundertfart totet, vnnd wurde er wider lebendig, er muß den menschen lieb han, der yn also getotet hette, vnd hette ym doch also vil vnrechts vnd vbels vnd bößes gethan, vnd muß ym wol wollen vnd gonnen vnd begeren vnd auch dem selben das aller beßte thun, mochte er eß genemen vnd entphaen.

Close translation

From this it follows that in a deified human being love is pure and unmixed and well disposed towards all and towards all things. Therefore there all and all things must be loved, and good must be willed and wished and done to all and all things without mixture. Indeed, let someone do whatever they will to a deified human being, well or ill, dear or grievous, this or that. Indeed, if someone killed a deified human being a hundred times, and that person became alive again, they would have to love the human being who had killed them in this way and had nevertheless done them so much wrong and evil and wickedness; and they would have to will and wish and desire good for that person and also do the very best for that same person, if the person could take and receive it.

§ 33.2 • German text • p. 117–118

Sich, diß magk man mercken vnd bewißen vnd beweren mit Cristo. Der sprach czu Judas, der yn vorriet: «Frunnt, wor vmmb bistu kommen?», also ab er spreche: Du hassest mich vnd bist meyn feint, so habe ich dich lieb vnd bin dein frunt, vnd begerest vnd ganst vnd thust mir das aller bößt, das du kanst ader magst, ßo wil ich vnd begere vnd gan dir des allerbestenn vnd gebe vnd thete eß dir gerne, mogestu eß genemenn vnd entphaen, recht alßo got vß der menscheit spreche: Ich bin eyn luter, einfeldig gut, also magk ich auch nicht wollen, begeren, gegunnen, gethun, geben den gut. Sal ich dir dynes vbels vnd dyner boßheit lonen, das muß ich mit gute thun, wan ich bin ader han anders nicht.

Close translation

See, this can be observed and proved and established from Christ. He said to Judas, who betrayed him: “Friend, why have you come?” As if he said: you hate me and are my enemy, yet I love you and am your friend; and you desire and wish and do to me the very worst that you can or are able to do, yet I will and desire and wish the very best for you and would gladly give and do it for you, if you could take and receive it. Just as if God spoke out of humanity: I am a pure, simple Good; therefore I too cannot will, desire, wish, do or give anything but good. If I am to repay you for your evil and wickedness, I must do it with good, for I am or have nothing else.

§ 33.3 • German text • p. 118

Hie nach volget, das got yn eynem vorgotten menschen keyner rach begeret ader wil ader thut vmmb alles das vbel, das man ym gethun magk ader ymmer geschiet. Das mercke man aber bie Cristo, der sprach: «Vater, vorgib yn, wan sie wissen nicht, was sie thun».

Close translation

From this it follows that God in a deified human being neither desires nor wills nor takes any revenge for all the evil that can be done to them or ever happens. This may again be observed in Christ, who said: “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.”

§ 33.4 • German text • p. 118

Auch ist gotis eygen, das er nymant czwinget mit gewalt czu thun ader czu lassen, sundern er lesset eynen itzlichen menschen thun und laßen noch seynem willen, eß sey gut ader boße, vnd wil nymant widersteen. Das merckt

man aber yn Cristo, der wolde synenn vbelthetern nicht widerstan ader werenn. Vnd da yn sente Peter weren wold, da sprach Cristus": «Petre, stecke dein swert wider yn, wan mit gewalt widersteen vnnd weren vnd czwingen gehoret mir nicht czu noch den meynen». Auch mag ein vorgotter mensch nymant besweren vnd betruben, das meynet also vii, yn seynem willen ader begirde ader yn seyner meynunge kumpt nymmer czu thun ader czu laßen, czu reden ader czu swigen, keynen menschen czu leide ader czu betruben.

Close translation

It is also proper to God that he compels no one by force to do or leave undone anything, but lets each human being do and leave undone according to their will, whether good or evil, and will oppose no one. This too may be observed in Christ, who would not resist or defend himself against those who did him evil. And when Saint Peter would have defended him, Christ said: "Peter, put your sword back, for resisting and defending and compelling by force belong neither to me nor to mine." Nor can a deified human being burden or trouble anyone; this means that it never enters their will or desire or intention to do or leave undone, to speak or remain silent, in order to cause any human being grief or distress.

Notes

"Friend, why have you come?" in § 33.2 is Matthew 26:50. The author introduces the extended speech that follows with "as if he said". It is his explanation, not a continuation of the Gospel quotation. Menschheit is the humanity or human nature from which God speaks.

For § 33.3 see Luke 23:34; for § 33.4 compare John 18:11. The words about non-resistance and non-compulsion after the command to put away the sword are the treatise's expanded formulation.

The statement in § 33.4 that a deified person cannot burden or trouble anyone is immediately explained in terms of will, desire and intention. This qualification is essential: the point is the absence of an intention to cause harm.

Chapter 34

To attain the best, we must relinquish our own will; whoever helps us obtain our own will helps us towards the worst

Source: the critical text in Hinten, pp. 118–119. “He” in the opening question refers to God, discussed at the end of Chapter 33. The examples of pope and bishop are the treatise’s own.

Reading translation in Part I, p. 55

Later manuscript additions: p. 277

Sal der mensche zcu dem besten kommen, ßo muß er seynen eygen willen lassen, vnde wer dem menschen hilfft zu seynem eygen willen, der hilfft ym czu dem aller boßten.

§ 34.1 • German text • p. 118–119

Nv mocht man sprechen: Syder das er eynem iglichen das beste wil, begeret vnd thut, ßo solde er auch eynem iglichen helffen vnd thun, das ym alle syne wille volginge, also dem eynen czu babist, dem andern czu bischoff vnd des glich. Das merck man: Wer dem menschen czu seynem eigen willen hilfft, der hilfft ym czu dem aller bosten. Wan ßo der mensche meher volget vnd czu nympt yn syme eigen willen, ßo er got vnd dem waren got verrer ist.

Close translation

Now one might say: since he wills, desires and does the best for everyone, he should also help everyone and act so that all their will should be fulfilled, for example one to become pope, another bishop, and the like. Let this be observed: whoever helps the human being towards their own will helps them towards the very worst. For the more the human being follows and grows in their own will, the farther they are from God and the true Good.

§ 34.2 • German text • p. 119

Nu wolde got dem menschen gerne helffen vnd yn brengen czu dem, das an ym selber das beste ist vnd ist auch dem menschen vnder allen dingen das beste. Vnd sal das geschee, ßo muß aller eygen wille abe, also vor gesprochen ist, vnd dar czu hette vnd hulffe got dem menschen gerne; wan alle dij wile der mensch syne bestes sucht, ßo sucht er nicht seyne bestes vnnd findet eß auch nymmer. Wann des menschen bestes were vnd ist, das er wider sich noch daz syne suche ader meyne, das leret vnnd redet got. Vnd wer da wil, das ym got

helffe czu dem besten vnd czu syme besten, der volge gotis rede vnd syner lere vnd gebote, ßo wirt vnd ist ym gehulffen vnd anders nicht.

Close translation

Now God would gladly help the human being and bring them to that which is the best in itself and is also the best of all things for the human being. And if this is to happen, all own will must go, as was said above, and God would gladly have and help the human being towards this. For as long as the human being seeks their best, they do not seek their best and never find it. For the human being's best would be and is that they seek or intend neither themselves nor what is theirs: this God teaches and says. And whoever wishes God to help them towards the best and towards their best should follow God's word and teaching and commandment; then they will be and are helped, and not otherwise.

§ 34.3 · German text · p. 119

Nu leret vnd redet got, der mensche solle sich selber vnd alle lassen vnd ym nach volgen. Wan wer seyne sele, das ist sich selber, lib hat vnd behuten vnd behalden wil, das ist, wer sich vnd das seyne yn den dingen sucht, ßo wirt er die sele vorlorenn. Aber wer seyner sele unachtsam ist vnd sich selber vnd alles das seyne vorlüst, die sele wirt behutet vnd behalden yn das ewige leben.

Close translation

Now God teaches and says that the human being should leave themselves and all things and follow him. For whoever loves their soul, that is, themselves, and wishes to guard and keep it—that is, whoever seeks themselves and what is theirs in things—will lose the soul. But whoever is heedless of their soul and loses themselves and everything of their own, their soul will be guarded and kept unto eternal life.

Notes

The apparent contradiction in § 34.2, “as long as we seek our own best, we fail to seek our own best”, has been retained. The author distinguishes the pursuit of personal advantage from what is truly best for a person.

For § 34.3 compare John 12:25 and Matthew 16:24–25. The main text has vnachtsam, “heedless, not concerned”, while C reads hassett, “hates”. Substituting the familiar biblical expression about hating one’s soul would replace the chosen German reading with another.

Chapter 35

The true, deep and essential humility and poverty of spirit present in a deified person

Source: the critical text in Hinten, pp. 119–120. Section 35.2 links humility to two points: the creature has no good of its own and must be surrendered to God; this surrender extends to what it undergoes from every creature.

Reading translation in Part I, p. 56

Wie yn eynem vorgotten menschen ware, gruntliche, weßeliche demutikeit sey vnd geistlich armüth.

§ 35.1 • German text • p. 119–120

Auch gehoret vort czu yn eym vorgottenn menschen war, gruntliche, wesentliche demutikeit, vnd wo die nicht ist, da ist nicht eyn vorgotter mensch. Vnd das hat Cristus geleret mit wortten vnd mit wercken vnd mit leben vnd eß kumpt da von, das da wirt yn dem waren licht bekant, als eß yn der warheit ist, das weßen, leben vnd bekennen, wissen vnd vormugen, vnd was des ist, alles des waren gutis ist vnd nicht der creaturen; sunder creatur als creatur ist ader hat von yr selber nichts, vnd wen sie sich von dem waren gut keret mit yrem willen vnd wercken, vnd was des sey, ßo findet man da nicht dann luter boßheit. Vnnd dar vmmb ist eß auch yn der warheit ware, das creatur als creatur von yr selber nicht wirdig ist ader czu nicht recht hat vnnd yr nymant schuldig ist, weder got noch creatur, vnd das sie von recht got sal gelassen seyn vnd vnderthan.

Close translation

There further belongs in a deified human being true, deep, essential humility, and where this is absent, there is no deified human being. Christ taught this with words and with works and with life. It comes from its being known there in the true light, as it is in truth, that being, life and understanding, knowing and ability, and everything of that kind, all belong to the true Good and not to creatures; rather, a creature as creature is or has nothing of itself. And when it turns from the true Good with its will and works and whatever else, nothing is found there but pure wickedness. Therefore it is also true in truth that a creature as creature is of itself worthy of nothing or has a right to nothing, and no one owes it anything, neither God nor creature, and that by right it should be surrendered and subject to God.

§ 35.2 · German text · p. 120

Vnd das ist das größte vnd das aller mercklichste. Was nu gote gelassen vnd vnderthan sal vnd wil seyn, das muß vnd sal allen vnderthan seyn yn liedender wiße ader eß ist falsch. Vnd von dißer leczsten sache vnd von dissem letzten artikel kumpt ware demutikeit, vnd auch von dem andern artikel. Vnnd sold eß yn der warheit nicht seyn vnnd were eß nicht von warer, gotlichen gerechtikeit das beste, Cristus hette eß nicht mit Worten gelert vnd mit leben volbracht. Vnd alda wirt eyne ware vorjehen vnd eß ist yn der warheit also.

Close translation

And this is the greatest and most noteworthy thing. Now, whatever should and will be surrendered and subject to God must and should be subject to all in a manner of undergoing, or it is false. From this last matter and this last point comes true humility, and also from the other point. And if it should not be so in truth and were not the best according to true, divine righteousness, Christ would not have taught it with words and fulfilled it with life. And there a true acknowledgement comes to be, and in truth it is so.

§ 35.3 · German text · p. 120

Diße creatur sal von gotlicher warheit vnd gerechtikeit got vnd allen creaturen vnderthan seyn, vnnd yr sal nicht vnderthan ader gelassen seyn, vnd got vnnd alle creatur haben recht vbir sie vnnd czu yr, vnd sie czu nichte ader vbir nichte, vnd sie ist allen schuldig vnde yr nymant, vnd diß alles yn lidender wiße vnd auch etwan yn thunder wiße. Vnd do von wirt den auch geistlich armut, da von Cristus sprach: «Selig synt die armen des geistes, wan das reiche gotis ist yr». Diß hat alles Cristus mit wortten geleret vnd mit leben volbracht.

Close translation

By divine truth and righteousness, this creature should be subject to God and all creatures, and nothing should be subject or surrendered to it. God and all creatures have right over it and a claim upon it, and it has a claim to or right over nothing; it is indebted to all, and no one to it. All this is in a manner of undergoing, and also sometimes in a manner of acting. From this also comes spiritual poverty, of which Christ said: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for God's kingdom is theirs.” Christ taught all this with words and fulfilled it with life.

Notes

The quotation in § 35.3 recalls Matthew 5:3. The chosen text says “God’s kingdom”. C substitutes “the kingdom of heaven” and adds “that is, the truly humble” to “the poor in spirit”. The main text’s wording is retained.

Chapter 36

Why nothing opposes God except sin, and what sin is

Source: the critical text in Hinten, pp. 120–121. The author distinguishes a creature's being, which comes from God, from the direction of its will. Calling the devil's existence good does not approve his wickedness.

Reading translation in Part I, p. 57

Wie nicht anders widder got sey den sunde vnde was sunde sey.

§ 36.1 · German text · p. 120–121

Hye sal man aber etwas mercken. Man spricht, eß sey ader geschee etwas wider got vnd sey etwas got leid vnnd muhe yn. Man sal wissen, das keyn creatur wider got ist ader ym leid ader ym musal ist yn dem, das sie ist ader lebet, weiß ader vormag ader was deß ist; das ist alles nicht wider got. Das der tufel ader mensch ist, lebet vnd des glich, das ist alles gut vnd gotis, wan got ist diße alczumal wesentlich vnd orsprunglich, wan got ist aller wesenden weißen vnd aller lebendigenn leben vnd aller wißen wißheit, wan alle ding haben yr weißen werlicher yn got den yn en selber vnnd auch yr vormugen, leben vnd was des ist. Got were anders nicht alles gut, vnd dar vmmb ist eß alczumal gut. Was nu gut ist, das ist got lib vnde er wil eß han, dar vmmb ist eß nicht wider yn.

Close translation

Here something should again be observed. It is said that something is or happens against God, and that something grieves God and troubles him. One should know that no creature is against God or grievous or troublesome to him in that it is or lives, knows or has ability, or anything of that kind: none of this is against God. That the devil or the human being is, lives and the like is all good and God's, for God is all these essentially and originally, for God is the being of all that has being and the life of all that lives and the wisdom of all the wise. For all things have their being more truly in God than in themselves, and also their ability, life and everything of that kind. Otherwise God would not be all good, and therefore it is all good. Now, whatever is good is dear to God, and he wills to have it; therefore it is not against him.

§ 36.2 • German text • p. 121

Was ist den wider got vnd ist ym leit? Das ist alleyn sund. Was ist aber sund? Nicht anders, den das die creatur anders wil den got vnd wider got wil. Das mercke eyn iglicher bey ym selber. Wan wer anders wil den ich ader wider mich wil, der ist meyn findt, vnd wer will als ich, der ist meyn frunt vnde ist mir lieb. Als ist eß auch vmb got. Sich, das ist sund vnd wider got vnd ist ym leit vnd eyn betrupniß, vnd wer nu anders wil den ich ader wider mich, was der thut ader leßet, redet ader swiget, das ist alles wider mich vnd ist mir swere. Also ist eß auch vmb got. Wer anders dann got adder wider got wil, was der thut adder leßet vnd alles, das der zcu schicken hat, das ist alles wider got vnd sund. Vnd welcher wille anders wil den got, der ist auch wider gotis willen. Wan Cristus spricht: «Wer nicht mit mir ist, der ist wider mich». Er meynet, wer nicht mit mir wil vnd nicht eynig willig mit mir ist, der wil wider mich.

Close translation

What, then, is against God and grieves him? Sin alone. But what is sin? Nothing other than the creature's willing otherwise than God and willing against God. Let each person observe this in themselves. For whoever wills otherwise than I do or wills against me is my enemy, and whoever wills as I do is my friend and dear to me. So it is also with God. See, this is sin and against God, and it grieves and troubles him. Now, whoever wills otherwise than I do or against me, whatever they do or leave undone, speak or keep silent, it is all against me and burdens me. So it is also with God. Whoever wills otherwise than God or against God, whatever they do or leave undone and everything they have to attend to, it is all against God and sin. And whatever wills otherwise than God is also against God's will. For Christ says: "Whoever is not with me is against me." He means: whoever does not will with me and is not of one will with me wills against me.

§ 36.3 • German text • p. 121

Hie bie magk eyn mensch mercken, ab er an sund sey ader nicht, vnd ab er sund thu ader nicht, vnd was sund sey, vnde wie ader wo mit man sund bussen ader bessern sal vnd mag. Vnd disse widerwillikeit czu got heisset man vnd ist vngehorsam. Adam, icheit vnd selbheit, eigen willikeit, sund ader der ald mensch vnd abkeren vnd adscheiden von got, das ist alles eyns.

Close translation

By this a human being can observe whether they are without sin or not, and whether they commit sin or not, and what sin is, and how or by what one should and can atone for or remedy sin. And this willing against God is called, and is, disobedience. Adam, I-ness and selfhood, self-will, sin or the old human being, and turning away and separation from God: these are all one.

Notes

Section 36.2 cites Matthew 12:30. The close translation preserves both “willing otherwise than God” and “willing against God”; the author then explicitly connects them.

Widerwillikeit in § 36.3 is a will directed against God; eigen willikeit is self-will. An sunde means “without sin”, not “in sin”.

Chapter 37

How grief, suffering, displeasure and the like cannot enter God as God, but are present in a deified person

Source: the critical text in Hinten, pp. 121–122. The distinction between God without creatures and God in a human being continues Chapters 31–32 and 36. It determines the sense in which suffering is attributed to God.

Reading translation in Part I, p. 58

Later manuscript additions: p. 277

Wie yn got, als er got ist, nicht kommen mag betrupniß, leid, missevallen vnd des gleich; eß ist aber yn eynem vorgotten menschen.

§ 37.1 · German text · p. 121–122

Nv sal man mercken: Got, als er got ist, ßo mag wider leid noch betrupniß ader misseval yn en kommen, vnnd wirt doch got betrubt vmmb des menschen sunde. So nu diß nicht gescheen mag yn got an creatur, ßo muß eß gescheen, da got mensch ist ader yn eyme vorgotten menschen. Sich, da ist sunde got also leid vnd muet yn also ßere, das got alda selbs gerne wolt gemartert werdenn vnnd liplich sterben, uff das er eyns menschen sunde da mit vortilgenn mochte. Vnd der czu ym spreche, ab er liber leben wolde, daz die sunde blebe, ader sterben vnd die sunde myt seynem tode vortilgenn. Er wolde sterben, wann got ist eyns menschen sunde leider vnd thut ym werter den seyn eigen marter vnd tod. Thut ym nu eyns menschen sunde also wee, wie thut ym den aller menschen sunde?

Close translation

Now one should observe: God, insofar as he is God, can have neither suffering nor grief nor displeasure enter him, and yet God is grieved over the human being's sin. Since this cannot happen in God without creature, it must happen where God is human being or in a deified human being. See, there sin is so grievous to God and troubles him so greatly that God himself there would gladly be tormented and die bodily so that he might thereby blot out one human being's sin. And if someone said to him whether he would rather live and let the sin remain, or die and blot out the sin with his death, he would wish to die, for one human being's sin is more grievous to God and hurts him more than his own torment and death. Now, if one

human being's sin pains him so much, how much does all human beings' sin pain him?

§ 37.2 · German text · p. 122

Sich, hie beij sal man mercken, wie der mensch got betrube mit seynenn sunden. Vnd wo got mensch ist ader yn eyne vorgotten menschen, da wirt anders nicht geclaget den sunde, ader ist anders keyn leit. Wann alles, das da ist ader geschiet an sunde, das wil got han vnd seyn. Aber die clage vnd der jammer, der vmmb die sunde ist, der sal vnd muß bliben biß yn den liplichen todt an eynem vorgotten menschen. Vnd solde der mensche leben biß an den jungsten tag ader ewiclichen, hie von was vnd ist Cristus heymelich leiden, da von nymant saget ader weiß den allein Cristus. Vnd dar vmmb heißet eß vnd ist heymlich.

Close translation

See, by this one should observe how the human being grieves God with their sins. And where God is human being or in a deified human being, nothing but sin is lamented, or there is no other grief. For everything that is or happens without sin God wills to have and to be. But the lament and misery over sin should and must remain in a deified human being until bodily death, even if the human being should live until the Last Day or eternally. From this was and is Christ's secret suffering, of which no one speaks or knows but Christ alone. Therefore it is called, and is, secret.

§ 37.3 · German text · p. 122

Eß ist auch eyn eygenschafft gotis, die er haben wil vnd ym wol gefellet yn eyne menschen, vnnd ist wol gots eigen, wan eß gehoret menschen nicht czu vnd er vormag seyn nicht. Vnd wo sich got diß bekommen kan, das ist ym das wirdigste vnd das libste, wan eß ist dem menschen das bittirte vnd das swerste. Alles, das hie geschriben ist von gotis eygenschafft, die er doch han wil yn dem menschen, yn dem sie gevbet vnd gewirckt sol werden, die leret das ware lichte, vnd leret dar czu, das der mensch, yn dem sie gewircket vnd gevbet wirt, das er sich der also wenigk an nympt, als ab er nicht were. Wan da wirt bekant also, daz eß der mensch nicht vormag vnnd ym nicht czu gehoret.

Close translation

It is also a property of God that he wills to have, and which pleases him well, in a human being; and it is indeed God's own, for it does not belong to the human being and they are not capable of it. And where God can obtain

this for himself, it is the worthiest and dearest thing to him, for it is the bitterest and heaviest to the human being. Everything written here about God's property, which he nevertheless wills to have in the human being in whom it should be practised and worked, is taught by the true light. It teaches besides that the human being in whom it is worked and practised should appropriate it as little as if they did not exist. For there it is known that the human being is not capable of it and it does not belong to them.

Notes

In § 37.2, an *sunde* means “without sin”. The words about living until the Last Day or for ever concern the duration of the deified person’s sorrow. The author identifies sin, rather than personal loss or inconvenience, as the cause of Christ’s *heymelich leiden*, “secret suffering”.

Chapter 38

Why Christ's life should be embraced from love, not for reward, and never laid aside or cast off

Source: the critical text in Hinten, pp. 123–124. Lon means pay or reward; loner is someone who works for pay, a hireling. The distinction runs throughout this chapter and continues in Chapter 39.

Reading translation in Part I, p. 59

Later manuscript additions: p. 277

Wie man das leben Cristi ane sich nemen sal von liebe vnd nicht vmmb Ion, vnd sal yß nymmer hyn legen adder auß schutten.

§ 38.1 · German text · p. 123

Sich, wo eyn solcher vorgotter mensch were ader ist, da wirt ader ist das aller beßte vnd edelste leben vnd got das wirdigste, das ye gewart ader ymmer gewirt. Vnnd von der ewigenn libe, die da libet gut als gut vnd vmmb gut vnd das beßte vnd das edelste yn allen dingen libet vmmb gut, da von wirt das ware, edele leben also ßere gelibet, das eß nymmer mere gelassen wirt ader uß geschutt, wo eß yn eym menschen ist. Sold der mensch leben biß an den jungsten tag, vnd eß ist vnmüglich czu lassen, vnd solde der selbige mensch thusent tode sterben vnd alles das leiden uff yn fallen, das uff alle creaturen gefallen mag, das wolde man alles liber liden, den man das edel leben lassen sold, vnnd ab man eyns engels leben da vor haben macht.

Close translation

See, wherever such a deified human being were or is, there arises or is the very best and noblest life, and the worthiest to God, that ever was or ever will be. And from the eternal love that loves good as good and for good's sake, and loves the best and noblest in all things for good's sake, the true, noble life is so greatly loved that it is never again left or cast off wherever it is in a human being, even if the human being should live until the Last Day. And it is impossible to leave it; and if that same human being were to die a thousand deaths, and all the suffering that can fall upon all creatures were to fall upon them, they would rather suffer all this than leave the noble life, even if they could have an angel's life in exchange.

§ 38.2 · German text · p. 123–124

Sich, nu ist geantwart, ðo man fraget, wan der mensch mit Cristus leben nicht mer vberkommen mochte ader keynen nutz da mit geschicken, was sold eß danne vorbas me? Eß wirt nicht gehabet dar vmmb, das man nutz do mit schicke ader etwas da mit vberkume, sundern von libe vmmb seynen adel, vnd das eß got also lib vnd werd ist. Vnd wer do spricht ader wenet, man habe syn genug ader man solde eß hin legen, der gesmackt ader bekant eß nye. Wann wo eß yn warheit befunden ader gesmackt wirt, da mag eß nymmer mer gelassen werden. Vnd wer Cristus leben dar vmmb hat, das er do mit etwas vberkomen ader vordynenn wil, der hat eß also eyn loner vnd nicht von libe vnd hat seyn joch czumale nicht. Wann wer eß nicht von libe hat, der hat syn nicht. Er mag wol wenen, er habe eß, er ist aber betrogen. Cristus hatte seyn leben nicht vmmb lone, sundern von libe, vnd die liebe macht das leben licht vnnd nicht swere, vnd das eß gerne gehabt vnd williclichen getragen wirt. Aber der eß nicht hat von liben, sunder er wenet, er habe eß vmmb lone, dem ist eß suere vnd were seyn gerne schire loß. Vnde das gehoret eynem iglichen loner czu, das er seyner erbeit gerne eyn ende hette. Aber eynen waren liphaber vordrußet weder erbeit noch czit ader lidens. Dar vmmb ist geschriben: Got dienen vnd leben ist lichte dem, der eß thut. Eß ist ware dem, der eß von libe thut. Aber der eß vmmb lone thut, dem ist eß swere. Vnnd also ist eß vmmb alle togent vnd gute werck, vnd also ist eß auch vmmb ordenung vnd redelicheit vnd des glich.

Close translation

See, now the question is answered: if the human being could no longer attain anything through Christ's life or procure any benefit by it, what further purpose would it serve? It is not held so that one may procure benefit or attain something by it, but from love, for its nobility and because it is so dear and worthy to God. And whoever says or supposes that one has had enough of it or should lay it aside has never tasted or known it. For wherever it is truly experienced or tasted, it can never again be left. And whoever has Christ's life so as to attain or earn something by it has it as a hireling and not from love, and indeed does not have it at all. For whoever does not have it from love does not have it. They may well suppose that they have it, but they are deceived. Christ did not have his life for reward but from love, and love makes the life easy and not heavy, and makes it gladly had and willingly borne. But whoever does not have it from love,

but supposes that they have it for reward, finds it bitter and would gladly soon be rid of it. And it belongs to every hireling to wish their labour were at an end. But a true lover is wearied neither by labour nor time nor suffering. Therefore it is written: to serve God and to live is easy for the one who does it. This is true of the one who does it from love. But for the one who does it for reward, it is heavy. And so it is with all virtues and good works, and likewise with ordinance and right conduct and the like.

Notes

The saying in § 38.2 reads *leben*, “live”, in the printed text, not the similar *lieben*, “love”. No source for the saying is identified in the edition. The author’s following qualification is essential: it is easy for the one who acts from love.

Chapter 39

Why God wills order, form and measure in creatures, since he cannot have them without creatures; four kinds of people who observe ordinances, laws and practices

Source: the critical text in Hinten, pp. 124–125. An alle wiße in § 39.1 means “without all form”; vnwiße is absence of form or established manner, not a moral judgement of ugliness.

Reading translation in Part I, p. 60

Wie got ordenunge, weiße, moße vnd des gleichen yn den creaturn haben wil, wan er eß an creatur nicht gehaben magk; vnd vierley menschen, die ordenunge, die gesetze vnd die weiße handeln vnd methe vmmb gehen.

§ 39.1 · German text · p. 124

Man spricht vnd ist war: Got ist vber vnd an alle wiße vnd maße vnd ordenung vnd gibt allen dingen wiße, ordenung, maß vnd redelikeit. Das sal man also vorsteen: Got wil das alles han vnd mag eß an ym selber an creatur nicht gehan, wan yn got an creatur ist wider ordenung ader vnordenung, wiße vnd vnwiße vnd des glich. Dar vmmb wil er eß haben, das eß gescheen vnd seyn sal vnd mag. Wan wo wort, werck vnd handelunge ist, da muß es etweder seyn yn ordenung, wiße, masse vnd redelikeit ader yn vnredelichkeit ader yn vnordenung. Nu ist ordenlikeit vnd redelikeit besser vnd edeler dan das ander.

Close translation

It is said, and is true: God is above and without all form and measure and order, and gives all things form, order, measure and right conduct. This should be understood thus: God wills to have all this, and cannot have it in himself without creature, for in God without creature there is neither order nor disorder, form nor absence of form, and the like. Therefore he wills to have it where it should and can happen and be. For where there are words, works and dealings, they must be either in order, form, measure and right conduct or in wrong conduct or disorder. Now order and right conduct are better and nobler than the other.

§ 39.2 · German text · p. 124–125

Doch sal man mercken, das vierley menschen die ordenung vnd gesetze vnd die wiße handeln. Etliche thun eß wider vmmb got ader vmmb diß ader vmmb das, sunder vmmb die geczwungenheit. Die thun yr, ßo sie mynst mügen, vnnd wirt en sure vnde swere. Die andern, dy thun sie vmmb lone. Das synt menschen, die anders nicht wissen dan das selbige vnd wenen, man muge da

mit hymmelrich vnd ewig leben vberkummen vnd vordienen vnd anders mit nichte. Vnd wer sein vil thut, der ist heilig, vnd wer syn icht vorsumet vnd vnderwegen leth, der ist verloren vnnd des tufels. Vnd die haben großen ernst vnd fliß dar czu vnd wirt yn doch sure. Die dritten, das synt boße, falsche geiste, die wenen vnd sprechen, sie synt vollkommen, sie dorffen sein nicht vnd han eß czu eyne spotte. Die virden, das synt irluchte menschen mit dem warenn lichte. Die handeln disse dinge nicht vmmb lone, wan sie wollen nichts vbirkummen da mit, ader das yn nichts dar vmmb werde, sundern sie thun von libe, was sie dißes thun. Vnd die han nicht also groß not, wie diß dings vil geschee vnd bald vnd des glich, sunder was wol gescheen mag vnd mit frede vnd mit muß. Vnd wurde seyn etwas vorsumet an geverde vnd des glich, vnd dar vmmb werden sie nicht verloren, wan sie wissen wol, das ordenung vnd redelikeit besser vnd edeler ist den vnredelikeit. Dar vmmb wollen sie eß haldenn vnd wissen, das auch selikeit hir an nicht legt. Dar vmmb han sie nicht also groß not als die andern vnd disse menschen werden von den andern beiden partyen gestrafft vnnd geortelt. Wan die loner sprechen: diße menschen vorsumen sich czumäl, vnde sprechen etwan, sie seyn vngerecht vnnd des gleich. Vnd die andern, das synt die freyen geiste, haben disse czu spotte vnd sprechen: sie gehen mit grobheit vnde mit torheit vmmb vnd des gleich. So halden sie das mittel vnd das beste, wan eyn liphaber gotis ist besser vnd got liber den hundert thusent loner. Also ist eß auch vmmb yre werck.

Close translation

Yet one should observe that four kinds of people practise ordinances, laws and practices. Some do it neither for God nor for this nor for that, but because of compulsion. They do as little of it as they can, and find it bitter and heavy. The second do it for reward. These are people who know nothing other than this, and suppose that one can attain and earn the kingdom of heaven and eternal life by it, and by nothing else. Whoever does much of it is holy, and whoever neglects or leaves any of it undone is lost and the devil's. They apply great earnestness and diligence to it, and yet find it bitter. The third are evil, false spirits who suppose and say that they are perfect, have no need of it, and hold it to be a mockery. The fourth are people enlightened by the true light. They practise these things not for reward, for they wish to attain nothing by them or to have anything come to them on their account; rather, whatever they do of this, they do from love. They are not so greatly concerned that much of these things be done, and quickly and the like, but that what can be done well should be done in peace and at leisure. And if something of it were neglected unintentionally

and the like, they would not therefore be lost; for they know well that order and right conduct are better and nobler than wrong conduct. Therefore they wish to observe it, and know that blessedness does not lie in it either. Therefore they are not as greatly concerned as the others, and these people are rebuked and judged by the other two parties. For the hirelings say: these people neglect themselves entirely, and sometimes say that they are unrighteous and the like. And the others, the free spirits, mock them and say: they occupy themselves with crudeness and folly and the like. Yet they keep the middle and the best, for one lover of God is better and dearer to God than a hundred thousand hirelings. So it is also with their works.

§ 39.3 · German text · p. 125

Auch sal man mercken, das gotis gebote vnd seyne rede vnde alle seyne lere gehoret czu dem ynnern menschen, wie er mit gote voreynet werde; vnd wo das geschieht, da wirt der vßer mensch von dem ynnern wol geordent vnd geleret, das man da keyner vßer gebote ader lere darff. Aber der lüte gebot vnd gesetze gehoret czu dem vßern menschen. Vnd des ist not, do man nicht bessers weiß. Wan da wisset man nicht, was man thun ader laßen sold, vnde wurde als hunde adder als vihe.

Close translation

One should also observe that God's commandments and his word and all his teaching concern the inner human being, how they may be united with God. And where this happens, the outer human being is well ordered and taught by the inner, so that no outward commandments or teaching are needed there. But people's commandments and laws concern the outer human being. These are needed where one knows no better, for there one would not know what to do or leave undone, and would become like dogs or beasts.

Notes

An geverde in § 39.2 means unintentionally, without deliberate intent. Mit muß means at leisure, without haste, opposed to the pursuit of quantity and speed. The four groups differ in their motive: compulsion, reward, supposed perfection and love.

“Free spirits” designates the position criticised by the author. The “middle” means observing proper order without seeking payment for it or despising it.

Chapter 40

A careful distinction concerning the false light and its properties

Source: the critical text in Hinten, pp. 125–130. The beginning of § 40.4—the question about the cause of deception and the answer concerning the false light’s cleverness—is absent from D and C. The editor restores it from B and E (p. 127, lines 42–43). It is translated here as part of the critical text.

Reading translation in Part I, p. 62

Later manuscript additions: p. 277

Guther vnderscheid von dem falschen licht vnnd seyner eygenschaftt.

§ 40.1 · German text · p. 125–126

Nv ist auch gedacht von eyne falschen lichte; da ist etwas von czu sagen, was es sey vnd was ym czu gehore. Sich, alles das, das dem waren lichte wider ist, das gehoret dem falschen czu. Dem waren lichte gehoret czu vnd muß seyn, das eß nicht trigen wil vnd mag syne nicht wollen, das ymands betrogen werde, vnd eß mag nicht betrogen werde. Aber das falsch licht wirt vnd ist betrogen vnd betruget vorbas ander mit ym. Wan got wil nymant betrogen vnnd mag nicht wolle, das ymant betrogen werde. Vnnd also ist eß auch vmmb das ware licht.

Close translation

Now mention has also been made of a false light; something should be said about what it is and what belongs to it. See, everything contrary to the true light belongs to the false. It belongs to the true light, and must be so, that it will not deceive and cannot will anyone to be deceived, and it cannot be deceived. But the false light becomes and is deceived, and goes on to deceive others with itself. For God will deceive no one and cannot will anyone to be deceived. So it is also with the true light.

§ 40.2 · German text · p. 126

Nu mercke: Das ware licht ist got ader gotlich, ßo ist das falsch licht natur ader natürlich. Nu gehoret got czu, das er wider diß noch das ist ader diß noch das wil, begeret ader suchet yn eynem vorgotten menschen, sundern gut als gut vnnd vmmb nicht den vmmb gut. Als ist eß auch vmmb das ware licht. So gehoret der creatur vnd der natur czu, das sie etwas ist, diß ader daß, vnd auch yn yrer meynunge vnd gesuch etwas hat, diß ader das, vnd nicht luterlichen gut als gut vnd vmmb gut, sunder vmmb etwas, diß ader das. Vnnd also got vnd

das ware licht an alle icheit vnd selbheit vnnd an eygen gesuch ist, also gehoret der natur vnd dem naturlichen, falschen lichte czu: ich, mir, mich vnd deß glich, also das eß sich vnd das seyne mer sucht yn allen dingen den gut als gut. Diß ist syne eygen vnd eyner iglichen naturen. Nu mercke man, wie diß von ersten betrogen ist. Eß wil ader welt nicht gut alß gut vnd vmmb gut, sunder eß wyl vnd welet sich selber vnd das seyne vnnd ym vor das beßte, vnnd das ist falsch vnd das ist die erste betrigunge.

Close translation

Now observe: the true light is God or divine, while the false light is nature or natural. It belongs to God that he is neither this nor that, nor wills, desires or seeks this or that in a deified human being, but good as good and for nothing but good's sake. So it is also with the true light. But it belongs to the creature and nature to be something, this or that, and also to have something, this or that, in its intention and seeking, and not purely good as good and for good's sake, but for something, this or that. And as God and the true light are without all I-ness and selfhood and self-seeking, so to nature and to the natural, false light belong "I", "to me", "me" and the like, so that it seeks itself and what is its own in all things more than good as good. This is its property, and every nature's. Now let it be observed how it is first deceived. It does not will or choose good as good and for good's sake, but wills and chooses itself and what is its own and for itself as the best; and this is false and is the first deception.

§ 40.3 · German text · p. 126–127

Auch wenet eß, es sey, das eß nicht ist, wann eß wenet, eß sey got, vnd ist natur; vnd do von, das eß wenet, das eß got sey, ßo nympt eß sich des an, das got czu gehoret, vnde nicht des, das gotis ist, als got mensch ist ader yn eyne vorgotten menschen; sunder eß nympt sich an des, das gottes ist vnd ym czu gehort, als er got ist an creatur yn ewikeit. Wan also man spricht: Got ist durfitloß, frey, mussig, ledig vnd vbir alle vnd des gleich, das alles war ist, vnd ist vnbeweglich vnde nympt sich nichts an vnd ist an gewissen, vnd was er thut, das ist wol gethan. Sich, also wil ich auch seyn, spricht das falsch licht. Wan so man got glicher ist, so besser, vnd dar vmmb wil ich got glich seyn vnd wil ioch got seyn vnnd bey got sitzen vnd seyn ym glich, recht als lucifer, der tufel. thet. Got yn ewikeit ist an leyt, liden vnd betrupnis vnd leth ym mit nichte swere ader leit seyn vmmb keyne dingk, was da ist ader geschieht. Aber da got mensch ist vnnd yn eyne vorgotten menschen, da ist eß anders.

Kurtzlich alles, das betrogen werden mag, das muß betrogen werde von dissem falschen lichte. Syder nu alles, das betrogen wirt von dissem, das betrogen werden mag, vnd alle creaturen vnd naturen vnd alles, das nicht got ader gotlich ist, mag betrogenn werde, vnd diß licht dann selber natur ist, so ist eß mugelich, das eß betrogen werde. Dar vmmb wirt eß vnd ist betrogen von ym selber.

Close translation

It also supposes itself to be what it is not, for it supposes that it is God and is nature. And because it supposes that it is God, it appropriates to itself what belongs to God—not what is God's insofar as God is human being or in a deified human being, but what is God's and belongs to him insofar as he is God without creature in eternity. For as people say, God is without need, free, inactive, unbound and above all and the like, which is all true, and is unmoving and appropriates nothing and is without conscience, and whatever he does is well done. See, so will I also be, says the false light. For the more like God one is, the better; therefore I will be like God and indeed will be God and sit beside God and be his equal, just as Lucifer, the devil, did. God in eternity is without grief, suffering and distress, and lets nothing be heavy or grievous to him because of anything that is or happens. But where God is human being and in a deified human being, it is otherwise. In brief, everything that can be deceived must be deceived by this false light. Since everything that is deceived by it can be deceived, and all creatures and natures and everything that is not God or divine can be deceived, and this light is itself nature, it is possible for it to be deceived. Therefore it becomes and is deceived by itself.

§ 40.4 · German text · p. 127

Nu mocht man sprechen: Wa von ist oder kumpt das, das von ym alles, daz betrogen wirt, das betrogen werden mag? Sich, es ist von seiner vbrigen kundicheit. Wan es also gar clüg vnd subtil und behent in ym selber ist, das eß also hoch stiget vnd klymmet, das eß wenet, eß sey vber natur vnd eß sey natur ader creatur vnmglich, also hoch czu kommen. Dar vmmb wenet eß, eß sey got, vnd da von so nympt eß sich alles des an, das got czu gehoret, vnd besunder als got ist yn ewikeit vnd nicht als er mensch ist. Dar vmmb spricht eß vnde wenet, eß sey vbir alle werck, wort, wiße, ordenung vnd uber das liplich leben Cristi, das er yn der menscheit hatte. Dar vmmbe wil eß vngeruret

seyen von allen creaturenn vnd aller creaturen werck, eß sey boße ader gut, eß sey wider got ader nicht, das ist ym alles glich vnd steet seyn alles ledig recht als got yn ewikeit. Vnd des andern alles, das got czu gehoret vnd nicht creaturen, des nympt eß sich alles an, eß gehore ym czu vnd eß sey aller dinge wirdig vnd eß sey billich vnd recht, das ym alle creatur dynen vnd vnderthan seyn. Vnd also bleibet da kein leid, liden ader betrupniß vmmb kein ding ader sache, den allein eyen liplich vnd synnelich enpfinden, das muß bliben biß an den liplichen tod, vnd was da von lidens kommenn mag. Vnd spricht vnd wenet, man sey vber Cristus liplich leben kommen vnd sey vnd solle sey vnliedlich vnnd vnberurlich, also Cristus was nach der erstendunge, vnd anders mannig wunderlich, falsch irrunge, die hie von ersten vnnd erhaben werden.

Close translation

Now one might say: from where is or comes this, that everything capable of being deceived is deceived by it? See, it comes from its excessive cleverness. For it is so very clever and subtle and dexterous in itself that it rises and climbs so high that it supposes itself to be above nature, and that it is impossible for nature or creature to come so high. Therefore it supposes itself to be God, and for this reason appropriates everything that belongs to God, especially insofar as God is in eternity and not insofar as he is human being. Therefore it says and supposes that it is above all works, words, practices and ordinances, and above Christ's bodily life that he had in humanity. Thus it will be untouched by all creatures and all creatures' works, whether evil or good, whether against God or not. It is all the same to it, and it stands free of it all, just as God in eternity. And it appropriates all the other things that belong to God and not to creatures, as belonging to itself, and holds itself worthy of all things and that it is fitting and right for all creatures to serve and be subject to it. So no grief, suffering or distress remains there over any thing or matter, except bodily and sensory feeling alone, which must remain until bodily death, and whatever suffering can come from it. And it says and supposes that one has come above Christ's bodily life, and is and should be incapable of suffering and incapable of being touched, as Christ was after the resurrection; and many other strange, false errors arise and grow from this.

§ 40.5 · German text · p. 127–128

Vnnd syder diß falsch licht natur ist, so gehoret ym der natur eygen czu, das ist sich selber vnd das seyne meynen vnd suchen yn allen dingen vnd der natur vnd im selber in allen dingen das beqwemest, gemachsampste vnd das lustigste. Vnd dar vmmb das iß betrogen ist, so wenet eß vnd spricht, was ym das lustigste, beste vnd bequemste sey, das sey das aller beste, vnd spricht, eß sey das aller beste, das eyn iglicher ym selber das beste suche vnnd thu vnd wil von anders keyme guten wissen den von syme, das ym gut ist, als eß wenet. Vnnd wer ym saget von dem waren, einfeldigen gut, das wider diß nach das ist, da von weiß eß nichts vnd ist ym eyn spott, vnd das ist wol billich. Wan natur als natur magk hie czu nicht kommen, vnnd dann dis licht bloß natur ist, so magk eß auch hie czu nicht kommen.

Close translation

And since this false light is nature, nature's property belongs to it: to intend and seek itself and what is its own in all things, and in all things what is most convenient, most comfortable and most pleasurable to nature and itself. And because it is deceived, it supposes and says that whatever is most pleasurable, best and most convenient to it is the very best; and says that it is the very best that everyone should seek and do what is best for themselves. It will know of no good other than its own, what is good for it, as it supposes. And if someone tells it of the true, simple Good, which is neither this nor that, it knows nothing of it and holds it to be a mockery. This is indeed fitting, for nature as nature cannot come to this, and since this light is bare nature, it too cannot come to this.

§ 40.6 · German text · p. 128

Auch spricht diß falsch licht, eß sey vber gewissen vnd conscientz kommen, vnd was eß thut, das sey alles wol gethan. Ja, eß wart gesprochen von eyne falschen, freyen geiste, der yn disser irrung was, ertotet er czeihen menschen, eß were ym als klein gewissen, also ab er eynen hunt ertotet. Kurtzlich diß falsch, betrogen licht fluget alles, das natur wider vnnd swer ist, vnnd das gehoret ym czu, wan eß natur ist. Vnd syder eß denn also gar betrogen ist, das eß wenet, eß sey got, dar vmmb swure eß vbir alle heiligen, eß bekenete das beste vnnd seyne meynunge vnd gesuche stehe uff dem aller besten. Vnd dar vmmb mag eß nymmer bekeret ader gewiſet werden recht als der tufel.

Close translation

This false light also says that it has come above conscience and consciousness of guilt, and that whatever it does is all well done. Indeed, it was said by a false, free spirit who was in this error that, if he killed ten human beings, it would cause him as little conscience as if he killed a dog. In brief, this false, deceived light flees everything opposed and burdensome to nature; and this belongs to it, since it is nature. And because it is so wholly deceived that it supposes itself to be God, it would swear by all the saints that it knows the best and that its intention and seeking are directed to the very best. Therefore it can never be converted or directed, just like the devil.

§ 40.7 · German text · p. 128

Auch sal man mercken jn dem, als diß licht wenet, eß sey got, vnd sich des an nympt, ßo ist eß luciper, der tufel. Aber yn dem, als eß Cristus leben vorwirfft vnd anders, das dem waren gute czu gehoret, das Cristus geleret vnd gelebet hat, ßo ist eß endecrist, wan eß leret vnde lebet wider Cristum. Vnd also diß licht betrogen ist von syner kündekeit, also wirt von ym alles das betrogen, das nicht got ader gotlich ist. Das meynet alle menschen, die das ware licht nicht erluchtet hat vnd syne libe. Wann, wo vnd wilche die synt, die das ware licht erluchtet hat, die werden nymmer betrogen. Aber wer das nicht hat vnd sal ader wil mit dissem falschen lichte wandeln vnd bey wonen, der wirt betrogen. Das kumpt do von, wan alle menschen, yn den das ware licht nicht ist, die synt uff sich selber gekeret vnnd halten sich selber, vnd was yn gute vnd beqweme ist, das halten sie vor das beste. Vnd wer yn dann das selbe vor daz beste dar gibt vnd yn dar czu hilffet vnd leret sie eß vbirkommen, dem volgen sie vnd halten yn vor den besten lerer.

Close translation

One should also observe: insofar as this light supposes itself to be God and appropriates this to itself, it is Lucifer, the devil. But insofar as it rejects Christ's life and other things belonging to the true Good that Christ taught and lived, it is Antichrist, for it teaches and lives against Christ. And as this light is deceived by its cleverness, so everything that is not God or divine is deceived by it. This means all human beings whom the true light and its love have not enlightened. For whenever, wherever and whoever they are whom the true light has enlightened, they are never deceived. But whoever

does not have it and should or will walk and dwell with this false light is deceived. This comes from all human beings in whom the true light is absent being turned towards themselves and holding to themselves, and regarding what is good and convenient for them as the best. And whoever then presents this same thing to them as the best and helps them towards it and teaches them to attain it, they follow that person and regard them as the best teacher.

§ 40.8 · German text · p. 129

Nu leret diß falsch licht alles das selbige, das dar czu gehoret. Dar vmmb volgen ym alle die nach, die des waren liches nicht wissen. Also werden sie mit eynnander betrogen. Man saget von endecrist, wan der kumpt, wer den gotis czeichen nicht hat, der volget ym noch; aber wer eß hat, der volget ym nicht nach. Das ist diß selb.

Close translation

Now this false light teaches all these same things that belong to this. Therefore all who know nothing of the true light follow it. Thus they are deceived together. It is said of Antichrist that, when he comes, whoever does not have God's mark follows him, but whoever has it does not follow him. This is the same thing.

§ 40.9 · German text · p. 129

Eß ist wol ware, wer seyn bestes vbirkommen mag ader kan, das ist das beste. Aber das geschiet nicht, die weile der mensch seyn bestes sucht ader meynet. Wan sal er seyn bestes finden vnde vberkommen, ßo muß er seyn bestes vorlißen, als vor gesagt ist. Vnd wil der mensche seyn bestes lassen vnd vorlißen, uff das er sein bestes finde, ßo ist es aber falsch vnd hie von mag wenig ymant uff dißen weg komenn vnd eß spricht joch Cristus, auch als vor gesprochen ist.

Close translation

It is indeed true that, if someone can or is able to attain their best, that is the best. But this does not happen as long as the human being seeks or intends their best. For if they are to find and attain their best, they must lose their best, as was said above. And if the human being wishes to leave and lose their best so that they may find their best, this is again false, and for this

reason scarcely anyone can come upon this way; and Christ indeed says it too, as was said above.

§ 40.10 · German text · p. 129

Dis falsch licht spricht, man solle ane consciencz seyn, vnnd eß sey eyn torheit vnnd eyn grobheit, das man da mit vmmb gehet vnd wil das beweren mit Cristo, wan er was an conscientz. So antwart man vnd spricht: Der teufel hat auch kein vnde ist dar vmmb dester besser nicht. Mercke, was conscientz sey. Eß ist, das man bekennet, das der mensch ab gekeret ist ader werde von got mit syme willen, das man sunde heisset vnd ist, vnd das diß deß menschen schuld ist vnd nicht gotis, wan got vnschuldig ist an der sunde. Wer ist nu, der sich vnschuldig weiß den allein Cristus, vnd wenig ymant meher? Sich, wer nu an conscientz ist, der ist Cristus ader teufel.

Close translation

This false light says that one should be without conscience, and that it is a folly and a crudeness to concern oneself with it; and it wishes to establish this from Christ, for he was without conscience. One answers and says: the devil has none either and is not the better for that. Observe what conscience is. It is to recognise that the human being has turned or turns away from God with their will, which is called, and is, sin, and that this is the human being's guilt and not God's, for God is innocent of sin. Now who is there who knows themselves innocent but Christ alone, and few others? See, whoever is without conscience is Christ or devil.

§ 40.11 · German text · p. 130

Kurtzlich, wo das ware licht ist, da ist war, gerecht leben, das got werd vnd lib ist. Vnnd ist eß nicht Cristus leben yn volkommenheit, so ist eß doch dar noch gerichtet vnd gebildet, vnd Cristus leben wird lib gehabt vnd alles, das redelicheit, ordenung vnd allen tugenden czu gehoret. Vnnd do ist vnd wirt verloren alle selbheit vnd ich vnd meyn vnd des glich. Da wirt nicht gemeynet ader gesucht den gut vmmb gut vnd als gut. Aber da das falsch licht ist, do wirt man vnachtsam Cristus leben vnd aller togent, sunder was der natur beqwem vnd lustig ist, das wirt da gesucht vnnd gemeynet. Da von kumpt den falsch, vngeordent freyheit, das man vnachtsam vnd ruchlos wirt dis vnd des. Wanne das ware licht ist eyn samen gotis, dar vmmb brenget eß gotis frucht. Vnd das falsch licht ist des tufels samen. Wo der gesehet wirt, do wechst des tufels

frucht vnde der tufel selber. Das mag man mercken vnd vorstehen yn disßen vor geschriben Worten vnde vnderscheid.

Close translation

In brief, where the true light is, there is true, righteous life that is worthy and dear to God. And if it is not Christ's life in perfection, yet it is directed and formed after it; and Christ's life is loved, and everything belonging to right conduct, order and all virtues. And there all selfhood and “I” and “mine” and the like are and become lost. Nothing is intended or sought but good for good's sake and as good. But where the false light is, one becomes heedless of Christ's life and all virtue, and instead seeks and intends what is comfortable and pleasurable to nature. From this comes false, disordered freedom, so that one becomes heedless and careless about this and that. For the true light is a seed of God; therefore it brings God's fruit. And the false light is the devil's seed. Where it is sown, the devil's fruit grows, and the devil himself. This can be observed and understood in the words and distinctions written above.

Notes

In §§ 40.3, 40.6 and 40.10, *gewissen* and *conscientz* mean conscience specifically as consciousness of one's guilt, as the author defines it in § 40.10. Christ being “without conscience” means absence of guilt and remorse; the devil's case means failure to acknowledge guilt. The close translation retains the source's sharp paradox. It does not attribute moral insensibility to Christ.

Section 40.4 distinguishes bodily, sensory suffering, which the false light cannot escape before death, from sorrow over sin, which it rejects. This continues the dispute in Chapters 29 and 37.

The statement about ten killings in § 40.6 exemplifies the error the author condemns. It does not describe an approved or permissible act.

For § 40.8 compare Revelation 7:3; 9:4; 13:8. “God's mark” renders *gotis czeichen*; the treatise does not quote a single verse exactly here.

The essential continuation in § 40.9 is retained: giving up one's advantage in order to gain that same advantage is “again false”. C replaces this ending with the longer instruction given among the later additions.

“And few others” in § 40.10 renders *vnd wenig ymant meher*. This qualification belongs to the source and remains, although it makes the statement less absolute than the final formula.

Chapter 41

How a person illuminated by divine light and kindled by eternal, divine love is called and is deified, and why light and knowledge avail nothing without love

Source: the critical text in Hinten, pp. 130–131. The definition of a deified person combines the light of knowledge with love. The following examples explain why knowledge alone is insufficient.

Reading translation in Part I, p. 66

Wie das eyn vorgotter mensch heißt vnnd ist, der da durchleuchtet ist mit dem gotlichen lichte vnd entprandt ist mit ewiger, gotlicher liebe, vnnd wie licht vnd bekentniß nicht togen ane liebe.

§ 41.1 • German text • p. 130

Man mochte fragen, welchs ader was ist eyn vorgotter ader eyn gotlich mensch. Die antwort: Der durchleuchtet vnd durchglantzet ist mit dem ewigen ader gotlichen lichte vnd enbrant mit ewiger vnd gotlicher libe, der ist eyn gotlicher ader vorgotter mensch. Vnd von dem licht ist vor etwas gedacht.

Close translation

One might ask: who or what is a deified or divine human being? The answer: whoever is illuminated and made radiant through and through by the eternal or divine light, and kindled by eternal and divine love, is a divine or deified human being. Something of the light has been mentioned above.

§ 41.2 • German text • p. 130

Aber man sal wissen, das licht ader bekentniß nicht ist ader taug an libe. Das mag man mercken, das eyn mensch gar wol weiß, was togent ader vntogent ist. Hat er tugent nicht lib, er wirt ader ist nicht tugentsam, er volget der vntogent nach vnd leßit die togent. Libet er aber togent, so volget er der togent, vnnd die liebe macht, das er der vntogent vindt wirt vnd magk yr nicht gethun ader gevben vnd er hasset sie yn allen menschen. Vnd er hat tugent also lib, das er sie nicht vngethan ader vngevet lesset, wo er magk, vnd das vmmb keynen Ion ader war vmmb, sunder allein der togent czu libe. Vnnd dem wirt togent czu lone vnd do genuget ym wol an, vnd neme keynen schatz ader gut vor die tugent, der ist ader wirt tugentsam. Vnd wer eyn war, togentesam mensch ist,

der neme nicht alle die werlt, das er vntogentsam werden sold. Ja, er storbe liber eyns iamerlichen todes.

Close translation

But one should know that light or knowledge is nothing or avails nothing without love. This can be observed in a human being who knows very well what virtue or vice is. If they do not love virtue, they do not become or are not virtuous; they follow vice and leave virtue. But if they love virtue, they follow virtue, and love makes them become an enemy of vice, so that they cannot do or practise it and hate it in all human beings. And they love virtue so much that they do not leave it undone or unpractised wherever they can, and this for no reward or “why”, but solely for love of virtue. And virtue becomes their reward and satisfies them well, and they would take no treasure or goods in exchange for virtue: such a person is or becomes virtuous. And whoever is a true, virtuous human being would not take the whole world in order to become vicious; indeed, they would rather die a grievous death.

§ 41.3 · German text · p. 131

Sich, also ist es auch vmmb gerechtikeit. Mannich mensch weiß wol, was recht ader vnrecht ist, vnd wirt vnd ist doch nicht gerecht, wan er gerechtikeit nicht lib hat. Dar vmmb vbet er vnd thut vnrecht. Aber hette er gerechtikeit lieb, ßo mocht er kein vnrecht thun, wann er vngerechtikeit also findt were vnd gram, wo das er sie bekennet yn eyne menschen, das er gerne groß dingk leiden ader thun wolde, uff das die vngerechtikeit vortilget wurde vnd der mensche gerecht worde. Vnd ee er vnrecht wolde thun, er wulde liber sterben, vnd das alles vmmb nicht den der gerechtikeit czu libe. Vnd dem wurde gerechtikeit czu lone vnd sie lonet ym mit yr selber, vnd da wirt vnd ist eyn gerecht mensch. Vnd er wulde liber hundertfert sterben den vngerecht leben.

Close translation

See, so it is also with righteousness. Many a human being knows well what is right or wrong and yet does not become or is not righteous, because they do not love righteousness. Therefore they practise and do wrong. But if they loved righteousness, they could do no wrong, for they would be so hostile and opposed to unrighteousness, wherever they recognised it in a human being, that they would gladly suffer or do great things so that the unrighteousness might be blotted out and the human being become

righteous. And rather than do wrong, they would wish to die, all for nothing but love of righteousness. And righteousness would become their reward and reward them with itself; there a righteous human being comes to be and is. And they would rather die a hundred times than live unrighteously.

§ 41.4 • German text • p. 131

Sich, also ist eß auch vmmb warheit. Das der mensch weiß vil, was war ader falsch ader gelogen ist; hat er warheit nicht lib, ßo ist er nicht warhafftig. Hat er sie aber lip, ßo geschiet ym also mit gerechtikeit. Von der gerechtikeit spricht Ysaiaß an dem vj capitel": «We, we allen den, die eyne czwifaldigen geist han.» Das synt, die von vßen gut scheinen vnd von jnnen vollugen synt vnd yn yrem munde logende wirt funden. Also merck man, das daß wissen vnd bekentniß an libe nichtis wert ist. Auch merck man eß bie dem tufel: der weiß vnd bekennet boß vnd gut, recht vnd vnrecht vnd des glich, vnd wen er nicht libe hat czu dem guten, das er bekennet, so wirt er nicht gut, das doch geschee, hette er libe czu der warheit vnnd czu andern gute vnd togende, die er bekennet. Eß ist wol ware, das libe von bekentniß muß gewisset vnd geleret werden. Aber volget libe dem bekentniß nicht nach, ßo wirt nicht dar auß.

Close translation

See, so it is also with truth. A human being may know much about what is true or false or a lie; if they do not love truth, they are not truthful. But if they love it, the same happens to them as with righteousness. Of righteousness Isaiah says in the sixth chapter: "Woe, woe to all who have a double spirit." These are those who appear good outwardly and are full of lies inwardly, and lying is found in their mouth. Thus let it be observed that knowing and knowledge without love are worth nothing. Observe this also in the devil: he knows and recognises evil and good, right and wrong and the like; and because he has no love for the good that he knows, he does not become good, which would nevertheless happen if he loved truth and the other good and virtues that he knows. It is indeed true that love must be directed and taught by knowledge. But if love does not follow knowledge, nothing comes of it.

§ 41.5 • German text • p. 131

Sich, also ist eß auch vmmb got vnd das got czu gehoret. Das ein mensch vil bekennet von got vnd was gotis eigen ist, vnd er wenet, er wisse vnd bekenne

joch, was got ist, hat er nicht libe, ßo wirt er nicht gotlich ader vargott. Ist aber ware libe da mit, so muß sich der mensch an got halden vnd laßen alles, das nicht got ist ader got nicht czu gehoret. Vnd was deß ist, dem ist er vinct vnd gram vnd ist ym wider vnd eyn liden. Vnd diße liebe voreyniget den menschen mit got, das er nymmer mere da von gescheiden wirt.

Close translation

See, so it is also with God and what belongs to God. A human being may know much of God and what is God's own, and suppose that they know and recognise even what God is; if they have no love, they do not become divine or deified. But if true love is present with this, the human being must hold to God and leave everything that is not God or does not belong to God. They are hostile and opposed to whatever is of that kind, and it is against them and a suffering to them. And this love unites the human being with God, so that they are never again separated from him.

Notes

The reference to Isaiah's sixth chapter in § 41.4 belongs to the treatise, but the words are not an exact quotation of Isaiah 6. The critical edition points to Isaiah 5:20. The image of a divided spirit also recalls Sirach 2:14 in the Vulgate, *Vae duplici corde*, "woe to the double heart" (Sirach 2:12 in many modern numberings). The author's reference remains in the text, with its inaccuracy explained here.

The statement about the devil in § 41.4 is conditional: if he loved the good he knows, he would become good. It argues that knowledge without love is insufficient, not that the devil knows nothing of good.

Chapter 42

Whether God can be known without being loved, and the two kinds of light and love, true and false

Source: the critical text in Hinten, pp. 132–134. This chapter addresses the difficulty arising in Chapter 41: knowledge about good need not include love, but true knowledge of God through the true light is joined to true love.

Reading translation in Part I, p. 68

Eyne frage, ab man got moge bekenne vnd nicht lieben, vnd wie czweierley licht vnd liebe ist: ware vnd falsche.

§ 42.1 • German text • p. 132

Sich, hie kumpt eyn redelich frage. Wan man hat gesprochen, wer got bekennet vnd nicht libet, der wirt nymmer selig von dem bekentniß, das lutet, man muge got bekennen vnd nicht liben. So spricht man anderß wo, wo got bekant wirt, da wirt er auch gelibet, vnd was got bekennet, das muß yn auch lieben. Wie mag diß besteen? Sich, hie sal man aber etwas mercken. Eß ist vor gesprochen von czwei lichten: ware vnd falsch. Also sal man auch mercken czwierley liebe: ware vnd falsch. Eyn itzlich libe muß von eyne lichte ader bekentniß geleret vnd geleitet werden. Nu das ware licht macht ware libe vnd falsch licht macht falsch libe, wan was das licht vor das beste hat, das gibt eß der libe vor das beßte dar vnd spricht, sie solle eß lib haben; vnd die libe volget ym vnd thut syne gebote.

Close translation

See, here comes a reasonable question. For it has been said that whoever knows God and does not love him never becomes blessed through that knowledge; this sounds as though one could know God and not love him. Yet elsewhere it is said that where God is known, he is also loved, and whatever knows God must also love him. How can this stand together? See, here something should again be observed. Two lights have been spoken of above, true and false. So one should also observe two kinds of love, true and false. Every love must be taught and led by a light or knowledge. Now true light makes true love, and false light makes false love, for what the light holds to be best it presents to love as the best and says that love should love it; and love follows it and does its commandments.

§ 42.2 · German text · p. 132

Nu ist vor gesagt, das daß falsch licht natürlich vnd natur ist. Dar vmmb ist syne eigen vnd ym gehoret czu alles das, daß naturen eigen ist vnd ir czu gehoret, das ist: jch, myne, mir, diß, das, des vnd des gleich, vnd ist doch das beste vnd alles ich, myn, mir vnde des glich. Vnd dar vmmb muß eß betrogen seyn an ym selber vnd falsch, wan eß kam nye kein ich ader meyn czu warem lichte vnd bekentniß vnbetrogenn an eyns allein, das ist den gotlichen personen. Vnd wo man czu bekentniß der einfeldigen warheit komen sal, do muß diß alles abe vnnd verloren werden.

Close translation

Now it has been said above that the false light is natural and is nature. Therefore everything proper to nature and belonging to it is also its property and belongs to it: “I”, “mine”, “to me”, this, that, this one's and the like; and yet the best and all is “I”, “mine”, “to me” and the like. Therefore it must be deceived in itself and false, for no “I” or “mine” ever came to true light and knowledge undeceived, except one alone: the divine Persons. And wherever one is to come to knowledge of simple truth, all this must go and be lost.

§ 42.3 · German text · p. 132–133

Vnd dem natürlichen licht gehoret besundern czu, das eß gerne vil wisset vnd gerne wissen wolte, mocht eß seyn, vnd hat großen luste, freude vnd glorieren yn syne wissen vnd bekennen. Vnd dar vmmb begeret eß alles mer vnnd meher czu wissen vnd kumpt dar ynne nymmer czu ruwe ader genuge. Vnde so eß mer vnd hoer bekennet, so eß mer lustes vnd glorierens hat. Vnd wen eß also hoch kumpt, das eß wenet, eß bekenne alle vnd vbir alle, so steet eß yn seynen höchsten lusten vnd glorieren. Vnd eß hat bekennen vor das beste vnd vor das edelste vnd dar vmmb leret eß die liebe, sie solle das bekennen vnd wissen lip han für das beste vnd edelste. Sich, alda wirt das bekennen vnd wissen mer gelibet den das, das bekant wirt, wan das falsch, natürlich licht libet seyn bekennen vnnd wissen, das eß selber ist mer den das, das bekant wirt. Vnd wer eß muglich, das diß natürlich licht got vnd einfeldige warheit, als eß yn got vnd yn der warheit ist, bekennete, eß liß nicht von seyner eygenschaft, das ist von ym selber vnd dem seynen. Sich, yn dissem synne ist bekentniß an liebe des, das bekant ist ader wirt. Vnd also steigt eß vnnd clymmet eß also hoch, das eß wenet, eß bekenne got vnd luter, einfeldige warheit, vnd so libet eß yn ym selber.

Close translation

It belongs especially to the natural light that it gladly knows much and would gladly know, if it could, and has great pleasure, joy and glorying in its knowing and knowledge. Therefore it desires always to know more and more, and never comes to rest or sufficiency in this. And the more and higher it knows, the more pleasure and glorying it has. And when it comes so high that it supposes it knows all and above all, it stands in its highest pleasure and glorying. It holds knowing to be best and noblest and therefore teaches love to love knowing and knowledge as the best and noblest. See, there knowing and knowledge are loved more than what is known, for the false, natural light loves its knowing and knowledge, which it itself is, more than what is known. And if it were possible for this natural light to know God and simple truth as it is in God and in truth, it would not leave its own property: that is, itself and what is its own. See, in this sense there is knowledge without love of what is or becomes known. And thus it rises and climbs so high that it supposes it knows God and pure, simple truth, and then loves him in itself.

§ 42.4 · German text · p. 133

Vnd eß ist ware, das got von nicht bekant wirt den von gote. Vnd ßo eß wenet, eß bekenne got, ßo wenet eß auch, eß sey got, vnd gibt sich vor got dar vnde wil da vor gehalten seyn, vnd eß sey aller dinge wol wirdig vnd habe czu allen dingen recht, vnd sey vbir alle ding kommen als vbir tugent vnd des glich vnd ioch vber Cristum vnd Cristus leben, vnd wirt alles eyn spotte, wan eß wil nicht Cristus seyn, sundern eß wil got seyn yn ewikeyt. Das ist do von, wan Cristus vnd seyn leben ist aller natur wider vnd swere. Dar vmmb wil die natur nicht dar an. Aber got seyn yn ewikeit vnd nicht mensch ader Cristus seyn nach der erstendunge, das ist alles lichte, lustig vnd gemachsam der natur. Dar vmmb hat sie eß vor das beste, wann sie meynet, eß sey yr das beste. Sich, von dißem falschen lichte vnd dißer falscher, betrogener libe wirt etwas bekant vnd nicht gelibet, sunder das bekennen vnd wissen wirt mer gelibet dan das bekant wirt.

Close translation

And it is true that God is known by nothing but God. And so, when it supposes it knows God, it also supposes that it is God, and presents itself as God and wishes to be held as such, and to be well worthy of all things and

have a right to all things; and that it has come above all things, above virtue and the like, and indeed above Christ and Christ's life, and all become a mockery. For it does not will to be Christ, but wills to be God in eternity. This is because Christ and his life are contrary and burdensome to all nature. Therefore nature will not undertake this. But to be God in eternity and not human being, or to be Christ after the resurrection, is all easy, pleasurable and comfortable to nature. Therefore it holds this to be the best, because it means that it is best for itself. See, through this false light and this false, deceived love something is known and not loved; rather, knowing and knowledge are loved more than what is known.

§ 42.5 · German text · p. 133

Auch ist eyn bekentniß, das heisset man wissen. Eß ist aber nicht wissen. Das ist, das man von hore sagen ader von leßen ader von großer meisterschafft der geschriff wenet, man wisse gar vil vnnd heisset eß eyn wissen vnnd spricht: Ich weiß diß ader daß. Vnnd wan man fraget: Wo von weistu das?, so spricht man: Ich han eß gelesen yn der schriff vnd des glich. Sich, das heißet man wissen vnd bekennen. Eß ist aber nicht wissen, sunder glaube. Sich, von dissem wissen vnd bekentniß wirt vil bekant vnd gewisset vnd nicht geliebet.

Close translation

There is also a knowing that is called knowledge, yet it is not knowledge. This is when, from hearsay or reading or great mastery of writings, one supposes that one knows very much and calls it knowledge, saying: I know this or that. And when someone asks, "From where do you know it?", one says: I have read it in a writing, and the like. See, this is called knowing and knowledge, but it is not knowledge; rather, it is belief. See, through this knowing and knowledge much is known and understood and not loved.

§ 42.6 · German text · p. 133–134

Noch ist eyn liebe, die ist czumal falsch, das ist, so man etwas libet vmmb lone, also man hette gerechtikeit lieb nicht vmmb gerechtikeit, sunder das man etwas da mit vberkumme vnd des glich. Vnd wan eyn creatur die andern lieb hat vmmb etwas des yren ader die creatur got vmmb etwas lib hat, so ist eß alles falsch vnnd diße liebe gehoret eygenlich natur czu. Vnd natur als natur vormag ader weiß anders keyne libe den dieße, wan wer eß kan gemercken, so hat natur als natur nichts lieb den sich selber. Sich yn dißer weiße wirt etwas bekant vor gut vnd nicht gelibet.

Close translation

There is still another love that is wholly false: when one loves something for reward, as if one loved righteousness not for righteousness' sake but in order to attain something by it, and the like. And when one creature loves another for something belonging to that other creature, or a creature loves God for something, it is all false. This love belongs properly to nature. And nature as nature can or knows no love other than this; for whoever can observe it finds that nature as nature loves nothing but itself. See, in this manner something is known as good and not loved.

§ 42.7 · German text · p. 134

Aber ware libe wirt geleret vnd geleitet von dem waren licht vnd bekentniß, vnd das ware, ewige vnd gotlich licht leret die liebe nicht lieb han den das ware, einfeldige, volkumen gut, vnd vmmb nicht denn vmmb gut vnd nicht, das man das czu lone haben wolle ader icht von ym, sundern dem guten czu libe vnd dar vmmb, das eß gut ist vnd das eß von recht gelibet werden sal. Vnd was also von dem waren licht bekant wirt, das muß auch gelibet werden von der waren libe. Nu magk das volkummen gut, das man got nennet, nicht bekant werden dan von dem waren licht. Dar vmmb muß eß auch gelibet werden, wo eß bekant wirt ader ist.

Close translation

But true love is taught and led by true light and knowledge. And the true, eternal and divine light teaches love to love nothing but the true, simple, perfect Good, and for nothing but good's sake; not wishing to have it as a reward, or anything from it, but for love of the Good and because it is good and ought rightly to be loved. And whatever is thus known by the true light must also be loved by true love. Now the perfect Good called God cannot be known except by the true light. Therefore it must also be loved wherever it becomes or is known.

Notes

In § 42.2, “and yet the best and all is ‘I’, ‘mine’, ‘to me’...” is identified by the editor as a corrupt reading of the manuscripts’ common ancestor. It occurs in D and E and is absent from B and C. It has been retained and translated closely, rather than replacing it with a conjecture presented as established text.

Section 42.3 distinguishes love of one's own knowing from love of what is known. In the final words, "loves him in itself", the pronoun refers to God. The next section explains the passage from supposed knowledge of God to deifying one's own self.

Schrift in § 42.5 can mean a writing, a written text or Scripture; it has not automatically been replaced by "the Bible". Glaube is contrasted here with direct knowledge: accepting something read or heard on trust. This is not a claim that Christian faith is false.

Des yren in § 42.6 refers to what belongs to the creature that is loved. The love seeks something from that creature rather than loving the creature itself.

Chapter 43

How to recognise a truly deified person, what belongs to such a person, and what belongs to a false light or false, free spirit

Source: the critical text in Hinten, pp. 134–137. The opening of § 43.1, including vnd joch, “and indeed”, is identified by the editor as a damaged reading of the manuscripts’ common ancestor. The close translation retains its interrupted construction. The next phrase does not repeat the verb; the literary version makes the implied loving explicit.

Reading translation in Part I, p. 70

Wo bey man eynen waren, vorgotten menschen bekennen magk, vnd was ym zu gehare, vnd was eym falschen lichte adder eyne falschen, freyen geiste auch zcu gehare.

§ 43.1 · German text · p. 134

Auch sal man mercken, wo das ware licht vnd die ware liebe ist vnd joch yn eyne menschen, da wirt das volkommende gut bekant vnd gelibet von ym selber, vnd doch nicht also, das eß sich selber von ym selber vnd als sich selber, sunder das ware, einfeldig gut vnd das volkommenn vormagk vnd wil anders nicht lib han yn dem, als eß yn ym ist, denn das ein, ware gut. Vnd wann eß nu das selbe ist, ßo muß eß sich selber lib han, vnnd nicht sich selbir als sich selber vnd nicht von ym selber als von ym selber, sundern also vnd yn dem, als das eyne, ware gut libet vnd lieb hat das eyne, ware, volkummen gut, vnd das eyne, ware, volkummen gut wird gelibet von dem eynen, waren, volkummen gut.

Close translation

One should also observe: where the true light and true love are, and indeed in a human being, there the perfect Good is known and loved by itself; yet not in such a way that it itself, by itself and as itself, but the true, simple Good and the Perfect can and will love nothing else, insofar as it is in itself, than the one true Good. And since it is now this same Good, it must love itself, and not itself as itself, nor by itself as by itself, but thus and insofar as the one true Good loves and holds dear the one true, perfect Good, and the one true, perfect Good is loved by the one true, perfect Good.

§ 43.2 · German text · p. 135

Vnd yn dissem synne spricht man vnd ist ware: Got hat sich selber nicht lib als sich selber, wan were icht besser den got, das hette got lieb vnd nicht sich

selber. Wan yn dissem waren licht vnd yn dißer warer liebe ist ader blibet weder ich noch meyne, mir, du, deyne vnd des glich, sundern das lichte bekennet vnnd wißet eyne gut, das alle gut vnd vber alle gut ist, vnd alle gut eyne synt weßenlich yn dem eyne, vnnd an das eyne kein gut ist. Vnnd dar vmb wirt auch nicht da gemeynet diß ader das, ich noch du ader des glich, sunder alleine das eyne, das wider ich noch du, diß ader das ist, sunder eß ist vber alle ich vnd du, diß vnd das, vnd yn dem wirt alles gut gelibet als eyne gut, als man spricht: alles yn eyne als eyne vnd eyne yn allem als alle, vnd eyne vnd alle gut gelibet durch das eyne yn dem eyne vnd dem eyne czu libe von der libe, die man czu dem eyne hat. Sich, hie muß alle icheit, myneheit vnd selbheit, vnd waz des ist, czumal vorloren vnd gelassen werde; das ist gotis eygen, an also vil czu der personlikeit geharet.

Close translation

In this sense it is said, and is true: God does not love himself as himself, for if there were anything better than God, God would love that and not himself. For in this true light and this true love neither “I” nor “mine”, “to me”, “you”, “yours” and the like is or remains; rather, the light knows and recognises one Good that is all good and above all good, and all good things are essentially one in the one, and without the one there is no good. Therefore neither this nor that, “I” nor “you” nor the like, is intended there, but the one alone, which is neither “I” nor “you”, this nor that, but is above all “I” and “you”, this and that. In it all good is loved as one Good, as one says: all in one as one, and one in all as all; and one and all good loved through the one, in the one and for love of the one, from the love that one has for the one. See, here all I-ness, mineness and selfhood and whatever is of that kind must be wholly lost and left; this is God's property, except insofar as belongs to personhood.

§ 43.3 · German text · p. 135

Vnd was yn eynem waren, vorgotten menschen geschiet, eß sey yn thuender ader yn lidender wiße, das geschiet yn dissem licht vnnd yn disser liebe vnd auß dem selben, durch das selbe wider yn das selbe. Vnnd da wirt und ist ein genügte vnd eyne stillesteen, nicht czu begeren mer ader mynner czu wissen, czu haben, czu leben, czu sterben, czu seyn ader nicht czu sein, vnd was des ist, das wirt vnd ist alles eyne vnd glich.

Close translation

And whatever happens in a truly deified human being, whether in a manner of acting or of undergoing, happens in this light and in this love, and from the same, through the same, back into the same. And there a contentment and a standing still come to be and are: not desiring to know more or less, to have, to live, to die, to be or not to be, and everything of that kind; it all becomes and is one and alike.

§ 43.4 · German text · p. 135

Vnd da wirt nicht geclaget den allein sunde, vnd was das sey, das ist vor gesaget. Das ist anders wollen denn das einfeldige, volkommen gut ader der eyne, ewige wille, vnnd an vnd wider das selbe ader den selben eynen willen wollen, vnd was hie auß geschiet als ligen, trigen, vngerechtikeit, falscheit vnd alle vntogent, vnd kurtzlich, was man sunde nennet vnd ist, das kommet alles da von, das man anders wil den got vnnd das ware gut. Wenne were keine wille den der eyne, ßo geschee nymmer sunde. Vnd dar vmmb mag man wol sprechen, das aller eigen wille sunde sey. Vnd ist anders nicht den alles, das dar auß geschiet. Vnd diß wirt alleyne geclaget yn eynem waren, vorgotten menschen vnd wirt also ßere geclaget vnd thut also wee, das der selbe mensche hundert schemelich, pinlich tode liden sold, das worde nicht also sere geclaget vnd thet nicht als we vnnd das muß bliben biß yn den liepliehen tod. Vnd wo das nicht ist, da ist auch nicht eyn ware, gotlich ader vorgotter mensch an czwifel.

Close translation

And there nothing is lamented except sin alone, and what that is has been said above. It is to will otherwise than the simple, perfect Good or the one eternal will, and to will without and against that same Good or that same one will; and whatever comes from this, such as lying, deceiving, unrighteousness, falsehood and every vice. In brief, everything called and being sin comes from willing otherwise than God and the true Good. For if there were no will but the one, sin would never happen. Therefore one may well say that all own will is sin. And there is nothing else except everything that happens from it. This alone is lamented in a truly deified human being, and is lamented so greatly and pains so much that, if that person had to suffer a hundred shameful, painful deaths, it would not be lamented so

greatly or hurt so much. And this must remain until bodily death. Where it is absent, there is assuredly no true, divine or deified human being.

§ 43.5 · German text · p. 136

Syder nu yn dissem licht vnd yn disser liebe alle gut yn eyne vnd alles eyne vnd das eyne yn allem vnd yn allen als eyne vnd als alle gelibet wirt, so muß alles das da gelibet werden, das gutenn namen yn der warheit hat, als togent, ordenunge, redelikeit, gerechtikeit, warheit vnd des glich; vnd alles, das got yn dem waren gut czu gehoret vnd syne eygen ist, das wirt da gelibet vnd gelobet, vnd alles, das dem wider ist vnd an diß ist, das ist liden vnd pyne vnd wirt geclaget als sunde, wan eß yn der warheit sunde ist.

Close translation

Since in this light and in this love all good is loved in one, and all as one, and the one in all and in everyone as one and as all, everything that truly bears the name of good must be loved there: virtue, ordinance, right conduct, righteousness, truth and the like. Everything belonging to God in the true Good and being his own is loved and praised there; and everything opposed to this and without it is suffering and pain, and is lamented as sin, for in truth it is sin.

§ 43.6 · German text · p. 136

Vnd yn welchem menschen geliebet wirt yn dem waren licht vnd yn der waren liebe, das ist das aller edelste, beste vnd wirdigste leben, das ye wart ader ymmer gewirt. Dar vmmb muß eß auch gelibet vnd gelobet werden vber alle leben. Vnde diß was vnd ist yn Cristo yn gantzer vollkommenheit, er were anders nicht Cristus. Vnd diße libe, da von dis edel leben gelibet wirt vnd alles gut, die macht, das alles das, das zu leiden, zu thun ader czu gescheen geburet vnd seyn muß vnd sal, das wirt alles willicklich vnd gerne gethan vnd geliden, wie swere eß der natur ist. Dar vmmb spricht jesus: «Mein joch ist suße vnd meyn burde lichte». Das kumpt von der libe, die dis edel leben libet. Das mag man mercken bie den aposteln vnd merteren. Die liden williglichen vnd gerne, was yn czu liden geschach, vnd begerten nicht von gote, das yn das liden ader die peyne kurtzer ader lichter ader mynder wurde, sunder allein, das sie stete vnd bestendig bliben. In der warheit, alles, das gotlicher libe zu gehoret yn eyne waren, vorgotten menschen, das ist also gar einfeldig, recht vnd schlechte, das eß mit rechtem vnderscheit nye gesprochen ader geschriben wart ader noch

nye bekant wart den allein, das eß ist. Vnd da eß nicht ist, da kan man syn nicht gleuben. Wie salt man eß dan wissen?

Close translation

And in whichever human being there is loving in the true light and in true love, that is the very noblest, best and worthiest life that ever was or ever will be. Therefore it must also be loved and praised above every life. This was and is in Christ in complete perfection; otherwise he would not be Christ. And this love, by which this noble life and all good are loved, makes everything that is fitting and must and ought to be suffered, done or happen all willingly and gladly done and suffered, however heavy it is to nature. Therefore Jesus says: "My yoke is sweet and my burden light." This comes from the love that loves this noble life. It can be observed in the apostles and martyrs. They willingly and gladly suffered whatever came to them to suffer, and did not ask God for the suffering or pain to become shorter or lighter or less, but only that they might remain steadfast and constant. In truth, everything belonging to divine love in a truly deified human being is so utterly simple, right and plain that it has never been spoken or written with proper distinction, nor has ever yet been known, except only that it is. And where it is not, one cannot believe it. How, then, should one know it?

§ 43.7 • German text • p. 136–137

Nu ist hir widervmmb natürlích leben, da eyn subtile, behende, kundige natur ist also manigfeldigk vnd vorworren vnd suchet vnd vindet also vil winckel vnd falscheit vnd betrigunge vnd alles vmmb sich selber, das eß auch nicht czu sagen vnd czu schreiben ist. Wan nu alle falscheit betrogen ist vnd alle betrigunge sich selber von erste betruget, so geschiet dissem falschen licht vnd leben auch also. Wan wer betruget, der ist betrogen, da von mer gesagt ist. Vnd yn dissem leben vnd lichte vnd yn syner libe ist alles, das dem tufel czu gehort vnd syne eigen ist, also gar, das da nicht vnderscheides ist, den falsch licht, das ist tufel, vnd tufel ist das licht.

Close translation

Now, opposed to this, there is natural life, where a subtle, dexterous, clever nature is so manifold and entangled, seeking and finding so many corners and falsehoods and deceptions, all for itself, that this too cannot be told or written. Since all falsehood is deceived and all deception first deceives

itself, so it happens also with this false light and life. For whoever deceives is deceived, as more has been said of this. And in this life and light and in its love is everything that belongs to the devil and is his own, so wholly that there is no distinction: the false light is devil, and devil is the light.

§ 43.8 · German text · p. 137

Das magk man mercken, wan recht als der tufel wenet, er sey got ader wer gerne got ader vor got gehalten, vnd er yn dissem allem betrogen ist, vnd ist also gar betrogen, das er wenet, er sie nicht betrogen. Sich, also ist eß auch vmmb das falsche licht vnd syne libe vnd seyn leben. Vnd also der tufel alle menschen gerne betrüge vnd an sich vnd an das syne czuge vnd ym glich machte vnd kan dar czu mannich kunst vnd liste, also ist auch yn dissem lichte. Vnnd also den tufel nymant auß dem synen brengen mag, also ist eß auch hie. Vnd kumpt alles da von, das beide, tufel vnd natur, wenet, sie syn vnbetrogenn vnd uff dem aller besten. Vnd das ist die aller boßlichste vnd schedelichste betrigung. Dar vmmb ist der tufel vnd natur eyns, vnd wo natur vbirwunden ist, do ist auch tufel vberwunden; vnd hir widervmmb, wo natur nicht vbirwunden ist, da ist auch der tufel nicht vberwunden. Eß werde uff wertlich ader uff geistlich leben gekeret, ßo blibet eß doch alles yn syner falschen betrigung, beyde, das eß betrogen ist vnd betruget ander mit ym, wo eß magk.

Close translation

This can be observed: just as the devil supposes that he is God, or would gladly be God or be held as God, and is deceived in all this, and so wholly deceived that he supposes he is not deceived, so it is with the false light and its love and life. And as the devil would gladly deceive all human beings and draw them to himself and his own and make them like him, and knows many arts and devices for this, so it is in this light. And as no one can bring the devil out of his own, so it is also here. It all comes from both devil and nature supposing that they are undeceived and directed to the very best. This is the most evil and harmful deception of all. Therefore devil and nature are one, and where nature is overcome, the devil is also overcome; conversely, where nature is not overcome, neither is the devil. Whether it is turned towards worldly or spiritual life, it all remains in its false deception: both being deceived and deceiving others with it wherever it can.

§ 43.9 • German text • p. 137

Auß dissem vor gesprochen mag man noch neher vorsteen vnd bekennen, den hie vnderscheiden ist, wan vnd wo man spricht von Adam vnd vngehorsam vnd von eynem alden menschen, icheit vnnd eigen willen vnd eigenwillikeit, selbwillikeit, ich, meyn, natur, falscheit, tufel, sunde, das ist alles glich vnd eyn. Diß ist alles wider got vnd an got.

Close translation

From what has been said above one can understand and recognise still more closely than has been distinguished here that, whenever and wherever one speaks of Adam and disobedience and an old human being, I-ness and own will and self-willedness, self-willing, “I”, “mine”, nature, falsehood, devil, sin, it is all alike and one. All this is against God and without God.

Notes

The distinction in § 43.2 between loving oneself as oneself and loving good as good continues Chapter 32. Myneheit is mineness or appropriation; personlikeit is personhood. The qualification concerning personhood is retained.

In § 43.3, “contentment” is restored by the critical editor from other witnesses in place of D’s damaged vns (p. 135, lines 27–28). In § 43.6 the editor also supplies zu leiden, “to suffer”, omitted in D.

Section 43.6 cites Matthew 11:30: suße, “sweet”, and lichte, “light”, follow the treatise. D and C read geliebet, “loved”, at the start of the section; another branch has gelebt, “lived”. The English follows loving, without silently substituting living.

“Except only that it is” in § 43.6 renders den allein, das eß ist. This difficult phrase can refer to knowing that this life is present while being unable to describe it exhaustively. The English does not add an explicit identification of the knower as God, which the German does not state.

The identification of nature with the devil in §§ 43.8–43.9 belongs to the author’s polemic against self-seeking nature that takes itself for God. Read it alongside Chapter 36, which distinguishes the goodness of creaturely being from an opposing will.

Chapter 44

Why only own will opposes God; why seeking our best as our own does not find it; and why we know and can do no good of ourselves

Source: the critical text in Hinten, pp. 137–139. The opening “no” and the following exception are retained. The author distinguishes all things’ being in God from a separate will opposing him; compare Chapter 36. An got and an mich mean “without God” and “without me”.

Reading translation in Part I, p. 73

Wie nicht anders widder got sey den eygener wille, vnd wer seyn bestis sucht als das seyne, der vindet eß nicht, vnnd wie der mensch von ym selber nichtcz guts weiß adder vormagk.

§ 44.1 · German text · p. 137–138

Sich, nu mocht man fragen: Ist icht wider got vnnd das ware gut? Man spricht: neyn. So ist auch nichts an got, sundern allein wollen anders den der ewige wille wil, vnd das anders gewold wirt den der ewige wil. Das ist wider den ewigen willen. Nu wil der ewige wille, das anders nicht gewollet ader gelibet werde den das ware gut, vnnd wan eß nu anders ist, das ist ym wider. Vnd yn dissem synne ist eß ware: wer an got ist, der ist wider got. Aber yn der warheit, so ist nichts wider got ader wider das ware gut. Man sal also vorsteen, also ab got sprech: Wer an mich wil ader nicht wil als ich ader anders den ich, der wil wider mich. Wan meyn wille ist, das nymant anders wollen sal den ich ader an mich, vnd an mynen willen sal keyn wille seyn. Recht als an mich ist wider weßen noch leben, noch diß ader das, also sold auch keyne wille seyn an mich vnd an mynen willen. Vnnd recht als yn der warheit alle weßen weßenlich eyns synt yn dem volkomen weßen vnd alle gut ein yn dem eynen vnd des glich vnd nicht geseyn mag an das eyne, also sollen alle willen eyn seyn yn dem eynen, vollkommen willen vnd kein wille an den eynen. Vnd wo eß anders ist, das ist vnrecht vnd wider got vnd seynen willen, vnd dar vmmb ist eß sunde. Sich, her nach als vor, das alle die willen an gotis willen, das ist aller eygen wille, ist sunde, vnd was vß dem eigen willen geschiet.

Close translation

See, now one might ask: is anything against God and the true Good? The answer is no. Neither, then, is anything without God except willing otherwise than the eternal will wills, and whatever is willed otherwise than the eternal will. This is against the eternal will. Now the eternal will wills

that nothing should be willed or loved but the true Good, and when it is otherwise, this is against it. And in this sense it is true: whoever is without God is against God. But in truth nothing is against God or against the true Good. This should be understood as if God said: whoever wills without me, or does not will as I do, or otherwise than I, wills against me. For my will is that no one should will otherwise than I or without me, and without my will no will should be. Just as without me there is neither being nor life nor this nor that, so too no will should be without me and without my will. And just as in truth all beings are essentially one in the perfect Being, and all good one in the one, and the like, and cannot be without the one, so all wills should be one in the one perfect will, and no will without the one. Where it is otherwise, this is wrong and against God and his will, and therefore it is sin. See, from this follows, as above, that all wills without God's will—that is, all own will—are sin, and whatever happens from own will.

§ 44.2 · German text · p. 138

Alle die viele der mensch syn eygen gut suchet vnd syn bestes als das seyne vnd ym selber vnd als von ym selber, ßo findet er eß nymmer. Wan alle die wile das ist, ßo suchet der mensch nicht syne beste. Wie sold er eß den finden? Wan die wile ym also ist, ßo sucht der mensch sich selber vnd wenet, er sey selber das beste. Vnd sider der mensch das best nicht ist, so sucht der mensch nicht das beste, die viele er sich selber sucht. Aber yn welchem menschen gesucht, gelibet vnd gemeynet wirt gut als gut vnd vmmb gut vnde nicht anders den luterlich dem gute czu libe, nicht als von mir ader als ich, meyn, mir ader vmmb mich ader des glich, da wirt eß funden; wan eß wirt da recht gesucht, vnd wo eß anders ist, da ist eß falsch. Vnd yn der warheit yn disser wiße suchet, meynet vnd libet sich das ware, volkommenn gut, vnnd dar vmmb findet eß sich.

Close translation

As long as the human being seeks their own good and their best as their own and for themselves and as from themselves, they never find it. For as long as this is so, the human being does not seek their best. How, then, should they find it? For while it is thus, the human being seeks themselves and supposes that they themselves are the best. And since the human being is not the best, they do not seek the best as long as they seek themselves. But in whichever human being good is sought, loved and intended as good

and for good's sake, and for nothing other than purely for love of the Good—not as from me or as “I”, “mine”, “to me” or for me or the like—there it is found. For it is rightly sought there; where it is otherwise, it is false. And in truth it is in this manner that the true, perfect Good seeks, intends and loves itself, and therefore finds itself.

§ 44.3 · German text · p. 138–139

Eß ist eyn groß torheit, das eyn mensch ader eyn creatur wenet, sie wisse ader vormuge von yr selber, vnd besunder das sie wenet, sie wisse ader vormuge etwas gutes, da mit sie groß vordynen ader vberkomen moge vmmb got. Man butet got smacheit da mit, wer eß recht vorstunde. Aber das ware gut vbersyhet eyn einfeldigen, albern menschen, daß nicht bessers weiß, vnd lesset ym also wol gescheen, als ym ymmer gescheen magk, vnd also vil gutes eß entphan magk, des gan ym got czumale wol. Aber als gesprochen ist, eß findet vnd enphet syn nicht, die weile ym also ist; wan die icheit sold ab, eß wirt anders nicht funden ader enphangen.

Close translation

It is a great folly for a human being or a creature to suppose that they know or can do anything of themselves, and especially to suppose that they know or can do some good by which they may merit or attain much with God. If this were rightly understood, one offers God dishonour by it. But the true Good overlooks this in a simple, unlearned human being who knows no better, and lets as much good come to them as can ever come to them, and God wholly wishes them as much good as they can receive. Yet, as has been said, they do not find or receive it as long as it is thus with them; for I-ness must go, otherwise it is not found or received.

Notes

“Eternal will” in § 44.1 follows the critical reading ewigen in place of D’s erroneous eygen, “own” (p. 138, line 4). The distinction directly affects the argument.

The negative nicht in § 44.2 is essential: the person does not seek their best, but themselves, mistakenly taking themselves to be best. Syn eygen gut means one’s own good, not one’s own will.

Smacheit in § 44.3 is insult or dishonour, here offered to God by the claim to be an independent source of good. Icheit is “I-ness”.

Chapter 45

Where Christ's life is, Christ is also; why his life is the best and noblest that ever was or can be

Source: the critical text in Hinten, p. 139. Galatians 2:20 is quoted in the treatise's wording. The conclusion about the holy sacrament concerns the presence of Christ's life in a person and repeats the relation "the more... the more".

Reading translation in Part I, p. 75

Wo Cristus leben ist, do ist auch Cristus, vnnd wie Cristus leben das aller beste vnd edelste leben sey, das ye wart adder vmmer werden magk.

§ 45.1 • German text • p. 139

WEr Cristus leben weiß vnd bekennet, der weiß vnd bekennet auch Cristum, vnnd hir widervmmb, wer das leben nicht bekennet, der bekennet auch Cristum nicht. Vnnd wer an Cristum gleubet, der gleubt das seyn leben das aller edelst vnd beste leben sey. Vnd wer des nicht gleubt, der gleubt an Cristum auch nicht. Vnnd also vil Cristus leben yn eym menschen ist, als vil ist auch Cristus yn ym, vnd als wenigk des eynen, als wenigk des andern. Wan wo Cristus leben ist, da ist Cristus, vnd da seyn leben nicht ist, da ist Cristus auch nicht. Vnd wo Cristus leben ist ader were, da wurde gesprochen, als sant Paul spricht: «Ich lebe, aber ich nicht, sunder Cristus lebet yn mir». Vnd das ist das edelste vnd beste leben, wan wo das leben ist, do ist vnd lebet got selber vnd alles gut. Wie mocht eyn besser leben geseyn? Wan man spricht von gehorsam, von eynem nuwen menschen vnd von dem waren lichte vnd von der waren libe vnd von Cristus leben, das ist alles eins. Vnd wo yr eyns ist, da synt sie alle. Vnd wo yr eyns gebricht ader nicht ist, da ist yr keynes, wan eß alles eyns ist vnd werlieh vnd weßenlich. Vnd wo mit man das vbirkommen mochte, das eß geborn wurde vnd lebendig wurde yn eynem menschen, dem solde man an hafften vnd anderß nicht. Vnde was eß erret, das sal man lassen vnd fliehen. Vnnd wer das enpheet yn dem heiligen sacrament, der hat Cristum werlichen vnd wol empfangen, vnd so man seyn meher enpfet, ßo mer Cristus. Vnde ßo des mynder, ßo mynder Cristus.

Close translation

Whoever knows and recognises Christ's life also knows and recognises Christ; conversely, whoever does not know the life does not know Christ either. And whoever believes in Christ believes that his life is the very

noblest and best life. Whoever does not believe this does not believe in Christ either. And as much as Christ's life is in a human being, so much is Christ also in them; as little of the one, so little of the other. For where Christ's life is, there Christ is; where his life is not, neither is Christ. And where Christ's life is or were, there it would be said as Saint Paul says: "I live, yet not I, but Christ lives in me." And this is the noblest and best life, for where this life is, God himself and all good are and live. How could a better life be? When one speaks of obedience, of a new human being, of the true light and of true love and of Christ's life, it is all one. Where one of them is, all are; where one is lacking or absent, none is, for it is all one, really and essentially. And whatever could bring this about, that it might be born and become alive in a human being, to that one should cling and to nothing else. Whatever hinders it should be left and fled. And whoever receives this in the holy sacrament has truly and well received Christ; the more one receives of it, the more Christ, and the less of it, the less Christ.

Notes

"This" (das) is retained in the final sentences. It connects reception in the holy sacrament with the unity named above: Christ's life, true love, light and obedience.

Chapter 46

Why complete contentment and rest are in God alone, not in any creature; why obedience to God means obedience to all in undergoing, and love of God means loving all things in the one

Source: the critical text in Hinten, pp. 140–141. The heading's yn eyem means "in the one", referring all-embracing love to God.

Reading translation in Part I, p. 76

Wie alleyne gantz genuge vnnd rwe yn got sey vnnd yn keyner creaturen, vnd wer got gehorsam wil seyn, der muß allen gehorsam seyn yn leydender weiße, vnd wer got lib haben wil, der muß alle dingk lieb haben yn eyem.

§ 46.1 • German text • p. 140

Man spricht: Wer ym an got genugen leth, der hat genug, vnd das ist ware. Vnd wem an icht genuget, das dis ader daß ist, dem genuget nicht an got, sunder wem an got genüget, dem genuget an nichte vnnd an allem, das wider diß ader das ist vnd alle ist. Wan got ist eyen vnnd muß eyen seyn, vnd got ist alle vnde muß alle seyn. Vnd was nu ist vnnd nicht eyen ist, das ist nicht got, vnd was ist vnd nicht alle ist vnd vbir alle, das ist auch nicht got. Wann got ist eyen vnde vber eyen vnd ist alle vnnd vbir alle. Wem nu an got genuget, dem genuget an eyem vnd allem yn dem eynen als an eyem. Vnnd wem nicht alle eyen ist vnd eyen alle vnde wem nicht icht vnd nicht glich vnnd eyen ist, dem kan an got nicht genugen. Aber wo diß were, da were auch ware genugen vnd anders nyrgent.

Close translation

People say: whoever lets themselves be satisfied with God has enough; and this is true. Whoever is satisfied with anything that is this or that is not satisfied with God. But whoever is satisfied with God is satisfied with nothing and with all, which is neither this nor that and is all. For God is one and must be one, and God is all and must be all. Whatever is and is not one is not God; and whatever is and is not all and above all is not God either. For God is one and above one, and all and above all. Now, whoever is satisfied with God is satisfied with one and with all in the one as with one. And whoever does not find all to be one and one to be all, and something and nothing alike and one, cannot be satisfied with God. But where this were so, there would also be true contentment, and nowhere else.

§ 46.2 · German text · p. 140

Sich, also ist eß auch, wer sich got gentzlichen laßen sal vnd gehorsam seyn, der muß allen gelassen vnd gehorsam seyn yn lidender weiße vnd auch nicht wider czu steen ader sich czu werenn ader czu behelffen. Vnd wer also nicht allem vnd allen dingen gelassen vnd gehorsam ist yn eym vnd als eym, der ist got nicht gelassen ader gehorsam. Diß merck man bey Cristo. Vnd wer got liden sal ader wil, der muß alle liden yn eym als eyn vnd keynem liden mit nichte widersteen. Das ist aber Cristus. Vnde wer liden widersteet vnd sich des weret, der wil ader mag got nicht geliden. Diß sal man also vorsteen. Man sal kein ding ader creatur widder steen mit gewalt ader mit krigen an willen ader an wercken. Man mag liden wol vorkommen ader ym entwichen vnd flihen an sunde.

Close translation

See, so it is also: whoever should surrender themselves wholly to God and be obedient must be surrendered and obedient to all in a manner of undergoing, and not resist or defend or help themselves against it. And whoever is not thus surrendered and obedient to all and to all things in one and as one is not surrendered or obedient to God. Let this be observed in Christ. Whoever should or will undergo God must undergo all in one as one, and resist no suffering with anything. This again is Christ. Whoever resists suffering and defends themselves against it will not or cannot undergo God. This should be understood thus: one should resist no thing or creature by force or by fighting, in will or in works. One may well prevent suffering, or evade and flee it, without sin.

§ 46.3 · German text · p. 140–141

Sich, wer nu got lieb haben wil ader sal, der hat alle lieb yn eym als eym vnnd alle vnd eyn yn alle als alle yn eyn. Vnnd wer etwas lib hat, diß ader daß, anders den yn dem eyenen vnd vmmb das eyne, der hat got nicht lieb, wann er hat etwas lib, das nicht got ist. Dar vmmb hat er mer lib den got. Wer nu meher lib hat den got ader etwas mit got, der hat got nicht lip, wan got sal vnde wil allein lip gehabt seyn, vnd eß sold yn der warheit nichts lip gehabt werden den allein got. Vnd wo das ware licht yn eym menschen ist vnd die ware liebe, da wirt anders nicht lieb gehabt den allein got. Wan da wirt got lieb gehabt als gut vnd vmmb gut vnd alle gut als eyn vnnd eyn als alle, wan yn der warheit alle ist eyn vnd eyn ist alle yn got.

Close translation

See, whoever now will or should love God loves all in one as one, and all and one in all as all in one. Whoever loves anything, this or that, otherwise than in the one and for the one does not love God, for they love something that is not God. Therefore they love more than God. Whoever loves more than God, or anything together with God, does not love God, for God should and will be loved alone, and in truth nothing should be loved but God alone. Where the true light and true love are in a human being, nothing is loved but God alone. For there God is loved as good and for good's sake, and all good as one and one as all, for in truth all is one and one is all in God.

Notes

Got liden in § 46.2 literally means “undergo God”. Both versions retain the expression. The context explains it through undergoing all in the one and obeying God in undergoing. The author then expressly permits preventing suffering, avoiding it and fleeing it without sin. This ending materially qualifies the preceding statements.

“More than God” in § 46.3 includes loving something in addition to God, as the following “or anything together with God” explains. It is not limited to comparing the intensity of love for two objects.

Chapter 47

Whether sin too should be loved, if all things are to be loved

Source: the critical text in Hinten, p. 141. The distinction between being and a will opposing God continues Chapters 36 and 44. The author does not call sin good: the opening answer is explicitly negative.

Reading translation in Part I, p. 77

Ob man auch sunde lip sal haben, wen man alle dingk lib sal haben.

§ 47.1 · German text · p. 141

Man mochte sprechen: Sal man alle lieb han, sal man dan auch sunde lieb han? Man antwart neyn. Wan man spricht: alle, so meynet man gut. Vnd alles, das da ist, das ist gut yn dem, als eß ist. Der tufel ist gut, yn dem als er ist; yn dem synne ist nichts boße ader vngut. Aber sunde ist anderß wollen ader begerenn ader lib han den got. Vnd das wollen ist nicht weßen, vnd dar vmmb ist eß auch nicht gut. Kein ding ist gut den als vil, als eß yn got vnd mit got ist.

Close translation

One might say: if one should love all, should one then love sin too? The answer is no. When one says “all”, one means good. Everything that is good insofar as it is. The devil is good insofar as he is; in that sense nothing is evil or not good. But sin is to will or desire or love otherwise than God. And this willing is not being, and therefore it is not good either. No thing is good except insofar as it is in God and with God.

§ 47.2 · German text · p. 141

Nu synt alle ding weßenlich yn got vnd weßenlicher den yn en selber. Dar vmmb synt alle ding gut nach weßen. Vnde were icht, das nicht weßenlich yn got were, das were nicht gut. Sich, nu ist das wollen vnd begeren, das wider got ist, das ist nicht yn got, wan got mag nicht wollen ader begeren wider got ader anders den got. Sich, dar vmmb ist eß boße ader nicht gut ader ioch nichts nicht.

Close translation

Now all things are essentially in God, and more essentially than in themselves. Therefore all things are good according to being. If anything were not essentially in God, it would not be good. See, now the willing and desiring that is against God is not in God, for God cannot will or desire

against God or otherwise than God. See, therefore it is evil or not good, or indeed nothing at all.

§ 47.3 • German text • p. 141

Got hat auch die werck lieb, aber nicht alle werck. Welche dan? Die da gescheen auß der lere vnd anweisung des waren lichte vnd vß der waren libe. Wan was uß dissem vnd yn dissem geschiet, das geschiet yn dem geiste vnd yn der warheyte. Vnd was des ist, das ist gotis vnd gefellet ym wol. Aber was geschiet uß falschem lichte vnd vß falscher libe, das ist, als eß mag, vnd besunder was geschiet vnd gethan ader gelassen, gewirckt ader geliden wirt auß eyne andern willen ader begirde ader ander libe den vß gods willen vnd seyner libe, das ist vnd geschiet an got vnde wider got, vnd ist doch nicht wider gods werck, vnd ist alczumal sunde.

Close translation

God also loves works, but not all works. Which, then? Those that happen from the teaching and direction of the true light and from true love. For whatever happens from and in these happens in the spirit and in truth. Whatever is of this kind is God's and pleases him well. But whatever happens from false light and false love is as it may be; and especially whatever happens and is done or left undone, worked or suffered from another will or desire or another love than God's will and his love is and happens without God and against God, and yet is not against God's works, and is wholly sin.

Notes

The indefinite phrase in § 47.3, *das ist, als eß mag*, is retained as “is as it may be”. C replaces it with the categorical “all evil”; that substitution has not been made in the main text.

At the end of § 47.3, D and C read “yet is not against God's works”; B reads “also” instead of “not”. The negative follows the chosen text. Chapter 50 again distinguishes the deed itself from the will from which it proceeds.

Chapter 48

Why some things of divine truth must first be believed before we come to true knowledge and experience

Source: the critical text in Hinten, p. 142. The opening freely renders Mark 16:16, adding “will not or cannot believe”. These words have been retained rather than replaced by a familiar English Gospel wording.

Reading translation in Part I, p. 78

Wie man etliche dinck von gotlicher warheit vor muß gleuben, ee man kumpt czu eynem waren wissen vnd befinden.

§ 48.1 · German text · p. 142

CRistus sprach: «Wer nicht glaubt ader nicht glauben wil ader kan, der ist vnd wirt vordampt vnd verloren». Das ist werlieh war. Wan eyn mensch, der yn die czeit kommen ist, der hat nicht wissen vnd kan czu wissen nicht kommen, er muß vor glauben. Vnd wer wissen wil, ee dan er glaubt, der kumpt nymmer czu warem wissen. Vnd man meynt hie nicht die artikel des cristenglaubens, wan der glaubt yderman vnd eyn itlich cristenmensch gemeyniglich, sundig vnd selig, boße vnd gut. Vnde man sal yr glauben vnd man sal yr nicht czu wissen kommen. Man meynet hie etwas von der warheit, das muglich ist czu wissen vnd czu befinden, des muß man glaube, ee den man eß wisse ader befinde, anders eß kumpt nymmer czu warem wissen. Vnde den glauben meynet Cristus.

Close translation

Christ said: “Whoever does not believe or will not or cannot believe is and becomes condemned and lost.” This is truly true. For a human being who has come into time does not have knowledge and cannot come to knowledge: they must first believe. Whoever wishes to know before believing never comes to true knowledge. The articles of Christian faith are not meant here, for everyone and every Christian commonly believes these, sinful and blessed, evil and good. One should believe them, and one should not come to knowledge of them. What is meant here is something of truth that it is possible to know and experience: one must believe it before knowing or experiencing it; otherwise one never comes to true knowledge. This is the belief Christ means.

Notes

In the statement about the articles of faith, D and E have *sal*, “should”, while B and K have *mag*, “can”. “Should not come to knowledge of them” follows the critical text. The author then distinguishes these articles from truths that can become matters of experiential knowledge. *Befinden* here is experience and felt apprehension.

Chapter 49

Own will, and how Lucifer and Adam fell from God through it

Source: the critical text in Hinten, p. 142. The author defines own will here as willing otherwise than the eternal will. This brief chapter prepares the questions about the tree in paradise and the origin of will in Chapters 50–51.

Reading translation in Part I, p. 79

Von eygem willen vnnd wie lucifer vnnd Adam von got seyn gefallen durch den eygen willen.

§ 49.1 · German text · p. 142

Man spricht: Eß ist nicht als vil yn der helle als eygener wille, vnd das ist ware, vnd da ist nicht anders den eygener wille. Vnd wer nicht eygen wille, ßo were keyne helle ader kein tufel. Wan man spricht, der tufel luciper fiel von dem hymelreich vnd kerete sich von gote vnd des glich, das ist nicht anders, denn er wold seynen eygen willenn han vnd nicht einwillig seyn mit dem ewigen willen. Vnd also was eß auch vmmb Adam yn deme paradise. Vnd wan man eigen willen nennet, ßo meynet man anders wollen, den der einfeldig, ewig wille wil.

Close translation

People say: nothing is so plentiful in hell as own will. This is true, and there is nothing else there but own will. If there were no own will, there would be no hell or devil. For when people say that Lucifer, the devil, fell from the kingdom of heaven and turned away from God and the like, it is nothing other than that he wished to have his own will and not be of one will with the eternal will. So it was also with Adam in paradise. When one names own will, one means willing otherwise than the simple, eternal will wills.

Chapter 50

How this present time is a paradise and a forecourt of heaven, with only one forbidden tree: own will

Source: the critical text in Hinten, p. 143. Vorburg is an outer part of a castle or fortified enclosure; vorstat is the surrounding quarter or suburb. Both images describe an approach to the kingdom of heaven.

Reading translation in Part I, p. 80

Wie diße czeit sey eyn paradiß vnnd eyn vorstad des hymmelrichs, vnd ist dar ynne nicht me dan eyn baum vorbotten, das ist eygener wille.

§ 50.1 · German text · p. 143

Was ist aber das paradiß? Das ist alles, das da ist; wan alles, das da ist, das ist gut vnd lustig vnd ist ioch got lustig, vnd dar vmmb heisset eß vnd ist wol ein paradiß. Man spricht auch, das das paradiß sey ein vorborge ader eyn vorstat des hymmelrichs. Als ist alles, das do ist, wol eyn vorstat des ewigen ader der ewikeit vnd besunder, was man yn der czite vnd bie den czitlichen dingen vnd yn vnd bey den creaturen gotis vnd ewickeit gemercken ader bekennen mag, wan die creaturen synt eyn wißunge vnd eyn wegk czu gote vnnd czu der ewikeit. Also ist eß alles eyn vorburg vnd eyn vorstat der ewikeit, vnd dar vmmb mag eß wol eyn paradiß heissen vnd seyn. Vnd yn dißem paradiße ist alles das erlaubet, das dar ynne ist, an eyn baum vnd seyn frucht. Das meynt also vil: In allem dem, das da ist, da ist nicht vorboten vnd nicht, das got wider ist, den eyns allein, das ist eygen wille, ader das man anders wolle, den der ewige wille wil.

Close translation

But what is paradise? It is everything that is, for everything that is is good and delightful, and is indeed delightful to God; therefore it is rightly called, and is, a paradise. People also say that paradise is an outer court or a suburb of the kingdom of heaven. So everything that is is indeed a suburb of the Eternal or of eternity, and especially whatever one can observe or know of God and eternity within time and with temporal things, and in and with creatures. For creatures are a direction and a way towards God and eternity. Thus it is all an outer court and a suburb of eternity, and therefore can well be called, and be, a paradise. In this paradise everything within it is permitted except one tree and its fruit. This means: in everything that is,

nothing is forbidden and nothing is against God except one alone, own will, or willing otherwise than the eternal will wills.

§ 50.2 · German text · p. 143

Das ist czu mercken. Wan got spricht czu Adam, das ist czu eym itlichen menschen: Was du bist ader was du thust ader lessest ader waz geschiet, das ist alles vnvorboten vnd ist erlaubt, also das eß nicht auß dynem ader noch deynem willen geschee, sunder auß vnd nach meynem willen. Was aber geschiet auß deynem willen, das ist alles wider den ewigen willen. Nicht das alle werck, die also gesehen, wider den ewigen willen seyn, sunder das sie gescheen vß eynem andern willen ader anders den vß dem ewigen willen.

Close translation

This should be observed. For God says to Adam, that is, to each human being: whatever you are, or whatever you do or leave undone, or whatever happens, it is all unforbidden and permitted, provided that it happens not from your will or according to your will, but from and according to mine. But whatever happens from your will is all against the eternal will. Not that all works happening in this way are against the eternal will, but that they happen from another will, or otherwise than from the eternal will.

Notes

God's speech to Adam in § 50.2 is the author's interpretation, not a word-for-word quotation from Genesis. The condition "from and according to my will", and the final distinction between the deed and the source of its willing, are essential to the statement that everything is permitted.

Chapter 51

Why God created own will, if it is so opposed to him

Source: the critical text in Hinten, pp. 143–148. The central distinction is that God creates will; it becomes “own” will when a creature appropriates it. The question in the heading is therefore not the author’s final answer.

Reading translation in Part I, p. 81

War vmmb got den eygen willen geschaffen habe, wan er ym als widder ist.

§ 51.1 · German text · p. 143–144

Nv mocht man fragen: Syder das disser baum, das ist eygener wille, got vnd dem ewigen willen also wider ist, war vmmb hat yn den got geschaffen vnd gemacht vnd hat yn yn das paradiß gesetzt? Antwort: Welcher mensch ader wilche creatur begeret czu erfahren vnd czu wissen den heymlichen rat vnd willen gotis, also das er gerne wolle wissen, war vmmb got diß ader das thu ader laße vnd des glich, der begeret nicht anders den als Adam ader der teufel. Vnd alle die weile die begerung weret, so wirt yß nymmer bekant, vnd der mensch ist nicht anders den als Adam ader der teufel. Wan diße begirde ist selden vmmb anders icht, den das man do von lust habe vnd do ynne gloriere, vnnd das ist ware hoffart. Eyn ware, demutigk, erlucht mensche begeret nicht von got, das er ym syne heymlikeit offenbare, also das er frage, war vmmb got diß ader das thu ader vorhenge vnd des glich, sunder er begeret, wie er allein an ym selber czu nichte vnd willenlos werde, vnd der ewige wille yn ym lebe vnd gewaldigk sey vnd vngehindert von andern willen, vnd wie dem ewigenn willen von vnd yn ym genug geschee.

Close translation

Now one might ask: since this tree, that is, own will, is so opposed to God and the eternal will, why did God create and make it and place it in paradise? Answer: whatever human being or creature desires to discover and know God’s secret counsel and will, so as gladly to know why God does or leaves undone this or that and the like, desires nothing other than Adam or the devil. As long as this desire lasts, it is never known, and the human being is no different from Adam or the devil. For this desire is seldom for anything other than to have pleasure from it and glory in it, and that is true pride. A truly humble, enlightened human being does not desire God to reveal his secrets to them by asking why God does or permits this or

that and the like; rather, they desire only how they may come to nothing in themselves and become without will, and how the eternal will may live and be master in them, unhindered by another will, and be satisfied by and in them.

§ 51.2 · German text · p. 144

Doch mag man etwas anders czu disser frage antwartten vnd sprechen: Das aller edelste vnd lustigiste, das yn allen creaturen ist, das ist bekentniß ader vornunfft vnd wille. Vnd disse czwei seynt mit eyynnander; wo das ein ist, da ist auch das ander, vnd weren diße czwei nicht, ßo were auch kein vornunfftig creatur, sundern allein vihe vnd vihelikeit. Das were eyn groß gebrech, vnd got mochte sich des seynen nyrgent bekommen, vnnd seyner eygenschafft, do von vor gesaget ist yn wircklicher weiße, das doch seyn sal vnd gehoret czu volkommenheit.

Close translation

Yet one may give another answer to this question and say: the noblest and most delightful things in all creatures are knowing or reason and will. These two are together; where one is, the other is also. If these two did not exist, neither would any rational creature exist, but only beasts and beastliness. That would be a great deficiency, and God could nowhere obtain what is his own and his property, of which it has been said above that it should be present in an active manner and belongs to perfection.

§ 51.3 · German text · p. 144

Sich, nu ist das bekentniß vnd vornunfft mit dem willen geschaffen vnd gegeben. Das sal den willen leren vnd auch sich selber, das wider bekentniß ader wille von ym selber ist, ader das yr keynes seyne selbs ist ader seyn sol, noch ym selber sollen ader wollen sal ader yr keynes sich selber nutzen, ader seyn selbs gebruchen sal czu ym selber ader vmmb sich selber, sunder von dem sie synt, des synt sie auch, vnd dem sollen sie gelaßen seyn vnd wider dar yn flissen, vnd werden an yn selber czu nichte, das ist an yr selbheit.

Close translation

See, now knowing and reason have been created and given together with will. Knowing should teach will, and itself too, that neither knowing nor will is from itself, or that neither is or should be its own, nor should either be under obligation to itself or will for itself, nor should either use itself or

enjoy itself for itself or for its own sake. Rather, they also belong to the one from whom they are, and should be surrendered to him and flow back into him and come to nothing in themselves, that is, in their selfhood.

§ 51.4 · German text · p. 144–145

Hie sal man aber etwas mercken vnd besondern von dem willen. Der ewige wille, der yn got orsprunglich vnd weßenlich ist vnde an alle werck vnd wircklikeit, der selb wille ist yn dem menschen ader yn der creatur wircklich vnd wollende, wan dem willen gehoret czu vnde ist seyn eygen, das er wollen sal. Was solde er anders? Er were anders vorgebens, sold er kein werck haben. Vnd diß magk an creatur nicht gescheen. Dar vmmb sal creatur seyn vnd got wil sie haben, das disser wille seyn eygen werck dar ynne habe vnd wircke, der yn got an werck ist vnd seyn muß. Dar vmmb der wille yn der creatur, den man eynen geschaffen willen heißet, der ist also wol gotis als der ewige wille vnd nicht der creaturen. Vnd wan nu got an creatur wurcklich vnd beweglich nicht gewollen mag, dar vmmbe wil er eß thun yn vnd mit den creaturen. Dar vmmb sold die creatur mit dem selben willen nicht wollen, sunder got sold vnd wold wollen wircklichen mit dem willen, der yn dem menschen ist, vnd doch gotis ist. Vnd wo das luterlich vnd gantzlich were ader yn welchem menschen da wurde gewold nicht von dem menschen, sunder von got, vnd da were der wille nicht eygen wille vnd da wurde auch nicht anders gewold, den als got wil. Wan got wolde selber da vnd nicht der mensch, vnd da were der wille eyn mit dem ewigen willen vnd were dar yn geflossen. Vnd yn dem menschen were vnd blibe lib vnnd leyd, wol vnd we vnd des glich. Wan da wille willigliehen wil, da ist lip ader leid. Wan ist eß, als der wille wil, so ist eß lieb, vnd was anders wil, den der wille wil, das ist leid. Vnd diß lip vnd leid ist nicht des menschen, sunder gotis, wan wes der wille ist, des ist auch lip vnnd leid.

Close translation

Here something should again be observed, especially about will. The eternal will, which is in God originally and essentially and without all work and activity, is the same will that is active and willing in the human being or creature; for it belongs to will, and is its property, that it should will. What else should it do? It would otherwise be in vain if it had no work. And this cannot happen without creature. Therefore creature should be, and God wills to have it, so that this will may have and perform its own work in it, though in God it is and must be without work. Therefore the will in the creature, called a created will, is just as much God's as the eternal will, and

is not the creature's. And since God cannot will actively and movingly without creature, he wills to do this in and with creatures. Therefore the creature should not will with this will; God should and would will actively with the will that is in the human being and yet is God's. Wherever this were purely and wholly so, or in whichever human being, there would be willing not by the human being but by God. There the will would not be own will, nor would anything be willed otherwise than as God wills. For God himself would will there, not the human being; and the will would be one with the eternal will and have flowed into it. And in the human being delight and grief, well-being and pain and the like would be and remain. For where will wills willingly, there are delight or grief. If it is as will wills, it is delight; whatever wills otherwise than will wills is grief. This delight and grief are not the human being's but God's, for to whomever the will belongs, the delight and grief also belong.

§ 51.5 · German text · p. 145

Nu ist der wille nicht des menschen, sunder gotis, dar vmmb ist das lip vnd leid auch seyn, vnd da wirt nicht geclaget den alleyn, das wider got ist. So wirt auch keyne freude da dan allein von gote vnd von dem, das gotis ist vnd ym czu gehoret. Als eß nu vmmbe den willen ist, also ist eß auch vmmb bekentniß, vornunfft, vormugen, liebe, vnd was yn dem menschen ist, das ist alles gotis vnd nicht des menschen. Vnnd wo das geschee, das der wille got also gar gelaßen were, da wurde das ander alczumal gelassen vnnd da bequeme sich got alles des seynen vnd der wille were nicht eygen wille. Sich, also hat got willen geschaffen, aber nicht, das er eigen sal seyn.

Close translation

Now the will is not the human being's but God's; therefore the delight and grief are his too, and nothing is lamented there except what is against God alone. Nor is there any joy except from God and from what is God's and belongs to him. As it is with will, so it is also with knowing, reason, ability, love and whatever is in the human being: all is God's, not the human being's. Wherever it happened that the will were so wholly surrendered to God, all the rest would be surrendered too, and God would obtain all that is his own, and the will would not be own will. See, thus God has created will, but not that it should be one's own.

§ 51.6 • German text • p. 145–146

Nu kumpt der tufel vnd Adam, das ist die falsch natur, vnd nympt dissen willen an sich vnd macht yn yr eigen vnnd nutzt yn czu yr selber, czu dem yren. Vnd diß ist der schade vnd das vnrecht vnd ist der biß, do mit Adam den appfel beiß, vnd das ist vorboten, vnd das ist wider got. Vnd alle die weile vnd wo eygen wille ist, do wirt nymmer mer war genugde noch war frede ader ruwe. Das merck man bie dem menschen vnd bie dem teufel. So wirt werliehen alda selbst nymmer ware selikeit, wider yn czeit noch yn ewikeit, wo disser eygen wille geschiet, das ist dy eygenschafft, das man sich des willen an nympt vnd macht yn eygen, vnde nicht gelassen wirt yn der czeit, sunder das er bracht wirt auß der czeite, ßo ist vorsehelich, das er nymmer gelassen muge werden, ßo wirt auch yn der warheit do selbst nymmer genuge ader fride ader ruwe ader selikeit. Das merck man aber bey dem tufel. Wer nicht vornunfft ader wille yn den creaturen, werlieh got blebe vnd were vnbekant vnnd vngelibet vnd vngelobet vnd vngeeret, vnd alle creaturen weren nicht wert vnd tochten got nyrge czu. Sich, also ist geantwort czu der frage. Wer ymant, der sich gepessern mochte vnd wolde von dissen langen, vil wortten, die doch kurtz vnd nutz yn goth synt, das were got lib.

Close translation

Now the devil and Adam, that is, false nature, come and appropriate this will, make it their own and use it for themselves and their own. This is the harm and wrong, and the bite with which Adam bit the apple; it is forbidden and against God. As long as and wherever own will exists, there will never again be true contentment or true peace or rest. Observe this in the human being and the devil. Truly, blessedness never arises there, either in time or eternity, where this own will takes place: this is appropriation, taking the will to oneself and making it one's own. If it is not relinquished within time, but is carried out of time, it is to be expected that it may never be relinquished; then in truth contentment, peace, rest or blessedness will never be there. Observe this again in the devil. If there were no reason or will in creatures, truly God would remain and be unknown, unloved, unpraised and unhonoured, and all creatures would be worthless and of no use to God. See, thus the question is answered. If anyone could and would be improved by these long, many words, which are nevertheless short and useful in God, that would be dear to God.

§ 51.7 · German text · p. 146

Was frey ist, das ist nymants eigen, vnd wer das eygen macht, der thut vnrecht. Nu ist vnder aller freiheit nichts also frey als der wille, vnd wer den eygen macht vnd lisset yn nicht an seyner edeln freiheit vnd yn synem freyen adel vnd yn seyner freyen art, der thut vnrecht. Das thut der teufel vnd Adam vnd alle yr nochvolger. Aber wer den willen leßet yn seyner edeln freiheit, der thut recht, vnnd das thut Cristus vnd alle seyne nochvolger. Wer den willen seyner edeln freiheit beraubt vnd macht yn eygen, der muß czu lone han, das er mit sorgen vnde bekummerniß vnd mit vngenugung vnnd vnfride vnd vnruwe vnd allem vnglücke behangen ist vnd bleibet, alle die wiele daß weret yn czit vnd yn ewikeit. Aber wer den willen yn seyner freyen art lesset, der hat genuge, fride, ruwe, selikeit yn der czeit vnd yn ewikeit. Wo vnd yn welchem menschen der wille nicht geeygent wirt, sundern das er bleibet yn seyner edeln freiheit, da wirt vnd ist eyn ware, frey, ledig mensch adder creatur, da von Cristus spricht: «Die warheit sal uch frey machen», vnnd czuhant dar nach: «Wen der sone frey macht, der ist werlieh frey».

Close translation

Whatever is free is no one's own, and whoever makes it their own does wrong. Now among all freedom nothing is as free as will; whoever makes it their own and does not leave it in its noble freedom, free nobility and free nature does wrong. This is what the devil and Adam and all their followers do. But whoever leaves will in its noble freedom does right; this is what Christ and all his followers do. Whoever robs will of its noble freedom and makes it their own must have as reward that they are and remain beset by care and concern, discontent, lack of peace and rest, and every misery, as long as this lasts in time and eternity. But whoever leaves will in its free nature has contentment, peace, rest and blessedness in time and eternity. Wherever and in whatever human being will is not appropriated but remains in its noble freedom, there a true, free, unbound human being or creature comes to be and is, of whom Christ says: "The truth shall make you free"; and immediately afterwards: "Whomever the Son makes free is truly free."

§ 51.8 · German text · p. 146

Auch sal man mercken: In welchem menschen der wille seyner freiheit gebrucht, da hat her syne eygen wergk, das ist wollen, vnnd do wil er, was er

wil, vngehindert, ßo wil er auch das edelste vnd das beßte yn allen dingen. Vnd alles, das nicht edel vnd gut ist, das ist ym widder vnnd ist ym jammer vnd clage. Vnnd ßo der wille ye freyer ist vnd vngehindert, ßo ym vngut, vnrecht, boßheit, vntogent vnd alles, das man sunde heisset vnd ist, wers thut vnd großer jammer vnd clage ist. Das merck man by Cristo. Yn dem was der aller freyste, vngehinderste vnd vngeeygenst wille, der yn keynem menschen ye wart ader ymmer wirt. So was auch Cristus menscheit die aller freiste vnd ledigst creatur, vnd was doch die größte clage vnnd jammer vnd leiden vmmb sunde, das ist vmmb alles das, das wider got ist, das yn keyner creatur geseyn mag.

Close translation

One should also observe: in whichever human being will enjoys its freedom, there it has its proper work, which is willing; and there it wills what it wills unhindered, and so also wills the noblest and best in all things. Everything that is not noble and good opposes it and is misery and lament to it. The freer and more unhindered will is, the more not-goodness, wrong, wickedness, vice and everything called and being sin hurt it and are a greater misery and lament. Observe this in Christ. In him was the freest, most unhindered and least appropriated will that ever was or ever will be in any human being. So Christ's humanity was also the freest and most unbound creature; yet there was the greatest lament and misery and suffering over sin, that is, over everything against God, that can be in any creature.

§ 51.9 · German text · p. 147

Aber wo man sich freiheit an nympt, als das do keyne clage ader jammer sey vmmb sunde, vnd was wider got ist, sundern man sal alles vnachtsam vnd ruchlos seyn vnd man sal seyn yn der czeit, als Cristus was noch der erstendung vnd des gleich. Da ist nicht eyne ware, gotlich freiheit auß eyne waren, gotlichen lichte, sunder das ist eyn naturlich, vngerecht, falsch, betrogen tufels freiheit auß eim naturlichen, falschen, betrogen lichte. Were nicht eygen wille, so were kein eygenschafft. In dem hymmelrich ist nicht eygens, da von ist da genuge vnd war fride vnd alle selykeyt. Vnd were ymant do, der sich eygenschafft an neme, der muß her auß yn die helle vnd eyn teufel werden. Aber yn der helle wil yderman eygen willen han, dor vmmb ist do alles vngluck vnde vnselikeit. Also ist eß auch yn der czeit. Were aber ymant

yn der hellen, der an eygen willen wurde vnd an eygenschafft, der kem auß der helle yn das hymmelrich.

Close translation

But where one appropriates a freedom such that there is no lament or misery over sin and what is against God, but one should be heedless and careless of everything and should be within time as Christ was after the resurrection and the like, there is no true, divine freedom from a true, divine light. Rather, it is a natural, unrighteous, false, deceived freedom of the devil from a natural, false, deceived light. If there were no own will, there would be no appropriation. In the kingdom of heaven nothing is one's own; therefore there are contentment, true peace and all blessedness. If anyone there took appropriation to themselves, they would have to come out into hell and become a devil. But in hell everyone wills to have their own will; therefore all misery and unbledness are there. So it is also within time. But if anyone in hell became without own will and without appropriation, they would come out of hell into the kingdom of heaven.

§ 51.10 · German text · p. 147

Nu ist der mensch yn der czeit czwischen hymmelrich vnd der helle vnd mag sich keren, czu welchem er wil. Wan ßo mer eygenschafft, so mer helle vnd vnselikeit, vnd so mynner eygens willen, so mynder helle vnd neher dem hymmelriche. Vnde mochte der mensche yn der czeite lutterlichen an eygen willen vnd an alle eygenschafft geseyn vnd ledigk vnd frey auß eyne waren, gotlichen lichte vnd blibe wesentlich also, der were des hymelrichs sicher. Wer etwas eygens hat ader haben wil ader gerne hette, der ist selber eygen. Vnnd wer nicht eygens hat ader haben wil ader nichts begert czu haben, der ist ledigk vnd frey vnnd nymandes eygen.

Close translation

Now the human being within time is between the kingdom of heaven and hell, and can turn to whichever they will. For the more appropriation, the more hell and unbledness; the less own will, the less hell and the nearer the kingdom of heaven. If a human being could be purely without own will and all appropriation within time, unbound and free from a true, divine light, and remained essentially so, they would be secure of the kingdom of heaven. Whoever has or wills to have or would gladly have anything of their own is themselves owned. Whoever has or wills to have nothing of

their own, and desires nothing to possess, is unbound and free and no one's own.

§ 51.11 · German text · p. 147–148

Alles, das hie geschriben ist, das hat Cristusgeleret mit langem leben, wan vierdhalb vnde dreißig jare, vnd mit kurtzen wortten, das ist mit dem, das er spricht: «Volge mir nach». Aber wer ym volgen sal, der muß alle lassen, wan yn ym was alles gelassen also gar, als eß yn creatures ye gelassen wart ader gescheen magk. Auch wer ym volgen wil, der sal das creucze an sich nemen, vnd das creucze ist anders nicht den Cristus leben, wan das ist eyn bitter creucz aller natur. Dar vmb spricht er: «Wer nicht alles das lesset vnd nicht das creucz uff sich nympt, der ist meyn nicht wirdigk vnnd ist meyn junger nicht vnd volget mir nicht nach». Aber die frey, falsch natur wenet, sie habe alles gelassen. Sie wil aber des creuczes nicht vnd spricht, sie habe syn genugk gehabt vnnd durff seyn nymmer, vnd ist betrogen. Wan hette sie das creucze ye gesmecket, sie mochte eß nymmer gelassen. Wer an Cristum glaubet, der muß alles daß glauben, das hie geschriben stet. Amen.

Close translation

Christ taught everything written here by a long life, of thirty-three and a half years, and with short words: by saying, “Follow me.” But whoever is to follow him must leave all things, for in him all was relinquished as wholly as it ever was or can be in creatures. Whoever wills to follow him should also take the cross upon themselves, and the cross is nothing other than Christ's life, for that is a bitter cross to all nature. Therefore he says: “Whoever does not leave all this and does not take the cross upon themselves is not worthy of me, is not my disciple and does not follow me.” But free, false nature supposes that it has left everything. Yet it will not have the cross, and says it has had enough of it and no longer needs it, and is deceived. For if it had ever tasted the cross, it could never have left it. Whoever believes in Christ must believe everything written here. Amen.

Notes

Ym selber sollen ader wollen in § 51.3 is a difficult construction joining obligation and willing for oneself. Neither has been reduced to the other. Gebruchen alongside nutzen distinguishes enjoying oneself from using oneself.

Lip and leid in §§ 51.4–51.5 mean what delights and grieves, explained by agreement or disagreement with will. They should not automatically be replaced by “love and hatred”.

Vorsehelich in § 51.6 is rendered “it is to be expected”; the passage does not claim unconditional knowledge of each person’s fate. The apple is named by the treatise itself; Genesis names a fruit without identifying it as an apple.

Section 51.7 cites John 8:32, 36. For § 51.11 compare Mark 1:17, 20; Matthew 10:38; Luke 14:27, 33. The final speech combines several Gospel formulations into a single quotation in the author’s wording.

The departure from hell and fall from heaven in § 51.9 are conditional: “if someone...”. The English does not turn them into assertions that these events must occur.

Vierdhalb vnde dreißig in § 51.11 is thirty-three and a half, not thirty-four and a half: vierdhalb is three whole units and half of the fourth. The treatise gives this traditional duration of Christ’s earthly life. C instead speaks of teaching in words and fulfilling in deeds; the main text speaks of a long life and short words.

Eigenschafft in this chapter chiefly means appropriation, not simply a property. The play on eygen in § 51.10 is preserved: one who has something as their own is themselves owned and unfree.

Chapter 52

How to understand Christ's two sayings: "No one comes to the Father except through me", and "No one comes to me unless the Father draws them"

Source: the critical text in Hinten, pp. 148–149. The opening quotation is John 14:6. The heading's second saying, John 6:44, is treated in the next chapter. In D the two chapters formed a single concluding whole, divided in the critical edition.

Reading translation in Part I, p. 85

Wie man die czwei wort vorsteen sal, die Cristus gesprochen hat, das eyne: «Nymant kumpt zu dem vater dan durch mich», das ander: «Nymant kumpt czu mir, der vater czihe yn danne».

§ 52.1 • German text • p. 148

CRistus spricht: «Nymant kumpt czu dem vater dan durch mich». Nu merckt, wie man durch Cristum kommen sal czu dem vater. Der mensch sal war nemen seyn selbs vnd alles deß seynen von ynnen vnd von außen vnnd sich also halten vnd bewaren, als vil es muglich ist, das yn ym von ynnen nymmer wille noch begerung, libe ader meynunge, gedang ader luste uff stehe ader bliben habe anders, dan also got czu gehore vnd wol geczeme, ab got selber der mensch were. Vnd wo man gewar wirt, das sich anders erhebet, das gote nicht czu gehoret ader got nicht wol geczemet, das sal man vortilgen vnd ym widersteen, so man erst vnd beste mag. Vnd das selb sal auch seyn von vßen an thun vnd an lassen, an reden, an sweigen, an wachen, an schlaffen vnd kurtzlich an aller weiße vnd wandelunge, die der mensch hat czu ym vnd mit ym selber vnde czu andern vnd mit andern luten, das diß alles behutet sey, das icht anders geschee, ader das sich der mensch czu icht anders kere ader anders icht yn ym gestate uff czu steen ader bleiben von ynnen vnd auß ym, vnnd durch yn geschee anders, dan also got wol czu gehoret vnd wol muglich vnnd wol czimlich were, ab got selber der mensch were.

Close translation

Christ says: "No one comes to the Father except through me." Now observe how one should come through Christ to the Father. The human being should attend to themselves and everything of their own, inwardly and outwardly, and keep and guard themselves, as much as possible, so that inwardly there never arises or remains in them any will or desire, love or intention, thought or pleasure other than what would belong and be well

fitting to God if God himself were the human being. Wherever one notices something else arising that does not belong to God or does not benefit him, one should blot it out and resist it as soon and as well as possible. The same should also be outwardly, in doing and leaving undone, speaking, keeping silent, waking, sleeping, and, in brief, every manner and conduct the human being has towards and with themselves and towards and with other people. All this should be guarded so that nothing else happens, or the human being turns to nothing else, or allows anything else to arise or remain within or outwardly from themselves and to happen through them, other than what would properly belong to God and be possible and fitting if God himself were the human being.

§ 52.2 · German text · p. 148–149

Sich, wo das ist ader were, was da were ader ist von ynnen ader geschee von außen, das ist ader were alles gotis, vnd der mensch ist ader were eyn nachvolger Cristi noch seynem leben, da von wir vorsteen vnd gesagen können. Vnd wer diß leben hette, der ginge vnd keme durch Cristum, wan er were Cristus nachvolger; ßo keme er auch mit Cristo czu dem vater vnd durch Cristum vnd er were auch eyn warer dyner Cristi. Dann wer ym noch volget, als er selber spricht: «Wer mir dynen wil, der volge mir noch», als ab er sprech: Wer mir nicht volget, der dynet mir auch nicht, vnd wer also Cristo nach volget vnd dynet, der kumpt da selbs hin, da Cristus ist, das ist czu dem vater. Das spricht Cristus selber, da er spricht: «Vater, ich wil, wo ich pin, das auch meyn dyner do selbs sey».

Close translation

See, where this is or were, whatever were or is within, or happened outwardly, is or would all be God's, and the human being is or would be a follower of Christ according to his life, of which we can understand and speak. Whoever had this life would go and come through Christ, for they would be Christ's follower; so they would also come with Christ to the Father and through Christ, and would also be a true servant of Christ. For whoever follows him, as he himself says: "Whoever will serve me, let them follow me"—as if he said: whoever does not follow me does not serve me either. Whoever thus follows and serves Christ comes to where Christ is, that is, to the Father. Christ himself says this when he says: "Father, I will that where I am, my servant should also be there."

§ 52.3 · German text · p. 149

Sich, wer dissen weg gehet, der gehet durch die thure yn das schaffhuß, das ist yn das ewige leben, vnd der torbatter schleusset ym auff. Vnd wer eynden andern wegk gehet ader wenet, er wolle ader muge czu dem vater kommen ader czu ewiger selikeit anders dann durch Cristum, der ist betrogen, wen er gehet nicht durch den rechten wegk noch gehet nicht yn durch dy rechten thur. Dar vmmb wirt ym nicht uff gethan, sunder er ist eyn dip vnd eyn morder, als Cristus spricht.

Close translation

See, whoever goes this way goes through the door into the sheepfold, that is, into eternal life, and the gatekeeper opens to them. Whoever goes another way, or supposes that they will or can come to the Father or to eternal blessedness otherwise than through Christ, is deceived, for they neither go by the right way nor enter by the right door. Therefore it is not opened to them; rather, they are a thief and a murderer, as Christ says.

§ 52.4 · German text · p. 149

Sich, nu mercke, ab man yn vngeordenter freiheit vnd ledikeit vnd vnachtsamkeit, togent vnd vntogent, ordenung vnd vnordenunge vnd dem glich, als yr wol mercket, ab man also den rechten wegk ader czu der rechten thur yn gehe ader nicht. Diß vnachtsamkeit ist nicht yn Cristo geweßen, sie ist auch nicht yn keynem seynem waren nochvolger.

Close translation

See, now observe whether one goes by the right way or enters by the right door in disordered freedom and unboundedness and heedlessness regarding virtue and vice, order and disorder and the like, as you well observe—or not. This heedlessness was not in Christ, nor is it in any true follower of his.

Notes

In § 52.1, the editor adopts *schlaffen*, “sleep”, in place of D’s *schaffen*, restoring the pair waking and sleeping.

For § 52.2 see John 12:26 and compare John 17:24. The address to the Father combines the formulations about being with Christ and about his servant. *Dyner* is singular, “servant”.

For § 52.3 compare John 10:1–3. *Morder* means “murderer”, so the familiar English biblical “robber” has not replaced the German reading. *Schaffhuß* is a sheepfold.

Chapter 53

The second saying: “No one comes to me unless the Father draws them”

Source: the critical text in Hinten, pp. 149–154. The chapter includes the entire concluding prayer and Amen. In the older numbering of C and Pfeiffer’s edition, the ending from “Another brief word” is Chapter 54. Here it is §§ 53.7–53.8; no text has been omitted.

Reading translation in Part I, p. 87

Later manuscript additions: p. 278

Das ander: Nymant kumpt czu mir, der vater czihe yn danne.

§ 53.1 · German text · p. 149–150

Auch spricht Cristus: «Nymant kumpt czu mir, der vater czihe yn dann». Nu mercket: Bey dem vater vorstee ich das volkommen, einfeldig gut, das do alle ist vnd vber alle vnd an das vnde vßwendig dem kein ware weßen noch kein ware gut ist, vnd an das keyne ware, gut wercke nye geschach nach nymmer geschiet. Vnd wan eß nu alle ist, so muß eß auch allem seyn vnde vber alle. Eß mag auch keyns der geseyn, das creatur yn dem also creatur begriffen ader vorsteen kan. Wan was die creatur begriffen ader vorsteen kan als creatur, das ist nach yrer creaturlikeit, das ist alles etwas, diß ader das, vnd das ist dann alles creatur. Vnd were nu das volkommende einfeldige etwas, dis ader das, das creatur vorsteet, ßo wer eß nicht alle noch allem vnd were auch nicht volkommen. Dar vmmb nennet man eß auch nicht. Man meynet, eß sey der keins, das creatur von yr creaturlikeit begriffen, bekennen, gedencken ader genennen mag. Sich, wan diß vollkommen vngenant flusset yn eyn geberende persone, da ynne eß gebirt seynen eyngelborn son vnd sich selber dar ynne, ßo nennet man eß vater.

Close translation

Christ also says: “No one comes to me unless the Father draws them.” Now observe: by the Father I understand the perfect, simple Good that is all and above all, without which and outside which there is no true being or true good, and without which no true, good work ever happened or ever happens. And since it is all, it must also be in all and above all. Nor can it be any of the things that a creature, insofar as it is a creature, can comprehend or understand. For whatever the creature can comprehend or understand as creature, that is, according to its creatureliness, is all

something, this or that, and that is all creature. If the Perfect and simple were something, this or that, which a creature understands, it would not be all or in all, nor would it be perfect. Therefore it is also called nothing. The meaning is that it is none of the things that a creature can comprehend, know, think or name from its creatureliness. See, when this Perfect, unnamed, flows into a begetting Person, in whom it begets its only-begotten Son and itself within him, it is called Father.

§ 53.2 · German text · p. 150

Sich, nu mercke, wie der vater czihe zu Cristo. Wan der sele ader dem menschen etwas entdeckt wirt vnd geoffenbart von dissem volkommen gut als yn eym blicke ader yn eym czuck, ßo wirt yn dem menschen geborn eyne begerunge dem volkommen gut czu nehen vnd sich mit ym czu voreynigen. Vnd ßo disse begerunge großer wirt, so ym meher geoffenbart wirt, vnd ßo ym meher geoffenbart wirt, so er meher begeret vnd geczogen wirt. Also wirt der mensch geczogen vnde gereicht czu der voreynigung des ewigen gutis, vnd diß ist des vaters czihen. Vnd also wirt der mensch geleret von dem selben, das yn czuhet, das er czu der eynikeit nicht kommen mag, er kumme dann durch Cristus leben. Sich, nu nympt er das leben an sich, do von vor gesaget ist. Sich, nu mercke disse czwei wort, die Cristus spricht: Das eyne: «Nymant komt czu dem vater dann durch mich», das ist durch meyn leben, als vor gesprochen ist; das ander wort: «Nymant kumpt czu mir», das ist, das er sich des lebens an nem vnd mir nach volge, «er werde dann beruret vnd geczogen von dem vater», das ist von dem einfeldigen gut vnd volkommen, da von sant Paul spricht: «Wan das volkommen kumpt, so wirt das geteilte alles auß gewustet». Das meynet also vil: yn welchem menschen das selbe volkommen bekant, befunden vnd geschmact wirt, als vil es muglich ist yn der czeite, den menschen duncket alle geschaffen ding nichts seyn wider diß volkommen, als eß auch yn der warheit ist, wann außwendig dem volkommen vnd an eß ist kein ware gut noch ware weßen. Wer dann das volkommen hat ader bekennet ader libet, der hat vnnd bekennet alle vnd alles gut. Was solde ym dan meher ader anders, ader was solden ym die teil, wann die teil alle yn dem volkommende voreyniget synd yn eym weßen.

Close translation

See, now observe how the Father draws to Christ. When something of this perfect Good is uncovered and revealed to the soul or human being, as in a glance or sudden rapture, a desire is born in the human being to draw near

to the perfect Good and unite with it. The greater this desire becomes, the more is revealed to them; the more is revealed, the more they desire and are drawn. Thus the human being is drawn and attracted towards union with the eternal Good: this is the Father's drawing. The human being is taught by the very same that draws them that they cannot come to unity unless they come through Christ's life. See, now they take upon themselves the life spoken of above. Observe these two sayings of Christ: the one, "No one comes to the Father except through me", that is, through my life, as said above; the other saying, "No one comes to me"—that is, to take this life upon themselves and follow me—"unless they are touched and drawn by the Father", that is, by the simple and perfect Good, of which Saint Paul says: "When the Perfect comes, all the divided is destroyed." This means that, in whichever human being this same Perfect is known, experienced and tasted as much as is possible within time, all created things seem nothing to that person beside this Perfect, as indeed is true, for outside the Perfect and without it there is no true good or true being. Whoever has or knows or loves the Perfect has and knows all and all good. What more or other thing would be for them, or what use would the parts be to them, since all the parts are united in the Perfect in one being?

§ 53.3 · German text · p. 151

Was hie gesaget ist, das gehoret alles außwendigem leben czu vnd ist eyn wegk vnd eyn czugang czu eym waren, ynwendigen leben; vnde das ynwendig das hebet an noch dissem. Wan der mensch smacken wirt das volkommen, als eß muglich ist, ßo werden alle geschaffen ding dem mensche czu nichte vnd ioch der mensch selber. Vnd so man bekennet yn der warheit, das das vollkommen allein alle ist vnd vber alle, ßo volget von not dar nach, das man dem selbigen vollkommen allein alles guten vorjehen muß vnd keyner creaturen als weßens, lebens, bekennens, wissens, vormugens vnd des glich. Vnd dar noch volget, das sich der mensch nichts an nympt, wider lebens, wesens, vormugens noch wissens, thuns vnd lassens nach alles des, das man gut genennen mag. Vnd also wirt der mensch also arm vnd wirt ioch yn ym selber czu nichte vnnd yn ym vnnd mit ym alles icht, das ist alle geschaffen ding. Vnnd ßo aller erst hebet sich an ein war, ynwendig leben vnd dann vorbaß mer wirt got selber der mensch, also das do nicht meher ist, das nicht got ader gotis sey, vnd auch das da nichts ist, das sich ichts an neme. So ist vnd lebet vnnd bekennet vnd vormag vnd libet vnnd wil vnd thut vnd lesset got, das

ist daz ewig, eyn vollkommen alleyne. Vnd also solde eß yn der warheit seyn, vnd wo eß anders ist, da mochte ym wol baß vnd rechter seyn.

Close translation

Everything said here belongs to outward life and is a way and an approach to a true inward life; the inward begins after this. When the human being comes to taste the Perfect as far as possible, all created things become nothing to them, and indeed the human being themselves. When it is known in truth that the Perfect alone is all and above all, it necessarily follows that all good must be ascribed to that Perfect alone and to no creature: being, life, understanding, knowing, ability and the like. From this it follows that the human being appropriates nothing, neither life, being, ability nor knowledge, doing and leaving undone, nor anything that can be called good. Thus the human being becomes so poor, and indeed comes to nothing in themselves, and in and with them every something, that is, all created things. Only then does a true inward life begin, and henceforth God himself becomes the human being, so that there is no longer anything that is not God or God's, and nothing there that appropriates anything. Then God, that is, the eternal, one Perfect alone, is and lives and knows and is able and loves and wills and does and leaves undone. Thus it should be in truth; where it is otherwise, it could well be better and more right.

§ 53.4 • German text • p. 151

Auch ist eyn guth wegk vnd czugang, das man ware neme, das das beste das libste sey vnnd das man das beste erwele vnd sich dar czu halde vnd sich da mit voreynige. Czu dem ersten yn den creaturen. Was ist aber das beste yn den creaturen? Das merckt: Wo das ewig, vollkommen gut vnnd das seyne, das ym czu gehoret, aller meist scheynet vnd wircket vnd bekennet vnd gelibet wirt. Was ist aber das, das gotis ist vnd ym czu gehoret? Jch sprich: Eß ist alles das, das man von recht vnd mit warheit gut heisset vnd nennen mag. Sich, wan man sich also yn den creaturen czu dem besten heldet, das man bekennen mag, vnd bey bleibet vnd nicht hinder sich gehet, der kumpt aber czu eym bessern vnd aber czu eym noch bessern also lange, das der mensch bekennet vnd smecket, das das ewig, eyn vollkommen an maß vnd an czal vber alles geschaffen gut ist.

Close translation

It is also a good way and approach to attend to the best being the most beloved, and to choosing the best, holding to it and uniting with it, first in

creatures. But what is best in creatures? Observe: where the eternal, perfect Good and its own, what belongs to it, shine and work and are known and loved most. But what is God's and belongs to him? I say: everything that can rightly and truly be called and named good. See, when one thus holds to the best one can recognise in creatures, remains with it and does not go backwards, one comes to something better and then to something better still, until the human being knows and tastes that the eternal, one Perfect is above all created good without measure or number.

§ 53.5 · German text · p. 151–152

Sal nu das beste das libste seyn vnd volget man dem selben noch, so sal das ewig, eyinig gut vber alle vnd allein lieb gehabt seyn, vnnd das sich der mensch czu dem allein halde vnd sich mit ym voreynige, also vil als muglich ist. Vnd sal man nu dem ewigen, eynigen gute alles gutes vorjehen, als man von rechte vnd yn der warheit sal, so muß man ym auch von rechte vnd yn der warheit vorjehen des anhebens vnd vorganges vnnd czu ende czu kommen vnd muß ym joch des selben vorgehen, auch vorgehen, also das dem menschen ader der creature nichts nicht blibe. Also sold eß yn der warheit seyn, man sage ader singe, was man wolle. Also keme man aber czu eynem waren, ynwendigen leben, vnd wie eß danne vorbaß erginge, ader was do gevffenbart wurde, oder wie do gelebet wurde, da singet ader saget nymant von. Eß wart ioch mit munde nye gesprochen noch mit hertzen nye bedacht ader bekant, als eß yn der warheit ist.

Close translation

Now, if the best is to be the most beloved and one follows it, the eternal, one Good should be loved above all and alone, and the human being should hold to it alone and unite with it as far as possible. And if all good is now to be ascribed to the eternal, one Good, as it rightly and truly should be, one must also rightly and truly ascribe to it the beginning and the progress and the coming to the end, and must indeed ascribe this very ascribing to it too, so that nothing at all remains to the human being or creature. Thus it should be in truth, whatever anyone says or sings. So one would again come to a true inward life. How things then went on, what was revealed there or how one lived there, no one sings or tells of it. Indeed, it has never been spoken with the mouth or thought or known with the heart as it is in truth.

§ 53.6 • German text • p. 152

Diße lange, vor gesprochen rede begriffet kurtzlichen, als ym sold von recht seyn vnd yn der warheit, das yn dem menschen nichts nicht were, das sich ichts an neme noch icht wolde ader begeret ader libete ader meynte, sunder got vnd die gotheit alleyne, das ist das ewig, eynig, vollkommen gut. Vnnd ist yn dem menschen etwas, das sich an nympt ader wil ader meynt adder begeret anders ader mer dann das ewig gut, das ist czu vil vnd ist gebrechen.

Close translation

This long discourse above is briefly comprehended thus: as it rightly and truly should be, there would be nothing at all in the human being that appropriated anything, or willed or desired or loved or intended anything, but God and the Godhead alone, that is, the eternal, one, perfect Good. And if there is anything in the human being that appropriates or wills or intends or desires anything other or more than the eternal Good, that is too much and is a deficiency.

§ 53.7 • German text • p. 152–153

Eyn ander kurtze rede: Mag der mensch dar czu werden, das er gotte sey, als dem menschen seyne hant ist, ßo laß er ym genugen, vnd das sal werlieh seyn. Vnnd eyn itlich creatur ist das selb von rechte vnd yn der warheyt got schuldig, vnd besunder eyn iglich redelich creatur, vnd aller meist der mensch. Das mercket bey eym, das yr vor geschriben habt.

Close translation

Another brief word: if the human being can come to be to God what a human being's hand is to them, let that satisfy them; and this should truly be so. Every creature rightly and truly owes this to God, especially every rational creature, and most of all the human being. Observe this from an example you have written above.

§ 53.8 • German text • p. 153–154

Auch sal man mercken: Wan der mensch also verre kumpt, das er wenet vnd yn duncket, das er hir czu komen sey, das dann der teufel nicht aschen dar yn sehe, also das die natur yr gemach vnnd ruw vnd yr frede vnd yr wol hir ynne suche vnd neme vnd gehe yn eyn torecht, vngeordnete freiheit vnd yn vnachtsamkeit, das eym waren, gotlichen leben czumal fremde vnd verre ist. Das geschit dem menschen, der nicht gegangen hat noch gehen wil den rechten weg vnd czu der rechten thure yn, das ist durch Cristum, als vor gesaget ist,

vnd wenet, er wol ader muge anders ader eyn andern wegk kommen czu der obirsten warheit, ader er wenet, er sey villichte dar czu kommen. Er enist werliehen. Das beczuget man mit Cristo, der da spricht: «Wer anders yn gehe wil dann durch mich, der kommet nymmer czu recht ein noch czu der obirsten warhey, sunder er ist eyn dip vnd eyn morder». Das wir vns selber ab gehen vnd vnsers eygen willen sterben vnd gote vnd seynem willen leben alleyn, des helff vns der, der seynen willen seynem hymmelischen vater auff gegeben hat, der do lebt vnd herrschet mit got, dem vater, yn eynikeit des heiligen geistes yn volkommer dreyvaldikeit ewiglich. Amen.

Close translation

One should also observe: when the human being comes so far that they suppose and think they have attained this, let the devil not sow ashes into it, so that nature seeks and takes its ease, rest, peace and well-being within it, and enters into a foolish, disordered freedom and heedlessness wholly alien and far from a true, divine life. This happens to the human being who has not gone and will not go by the right way and enter by the right door, that is, through Christ, as said above, and supposes that they will or can come to the highest truth otherwise or by another way, or supposes that perhaps they have already come to it. Truly they have not. This is attested by Christ, who says: “Whoever will enter otherwise than through me never enters rightly or comes to the highest truth, but is a thief and a murderer.” May he help us to go out of ourselves and die to our own will and live to God and his will alone: he who gave up his will to his heavenly Father, who lives and reigns with God the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit, in perfect Trinity eternally. Amen.

Notes

Section 53.1 cites John 6:44. In the words rendered “be in all”, the critical edition adopts *allem* from C instead of D and another branch’s *allein*, “alone”. Pfeiffer’s text of C gives the first phrase explicitly as in *allem* (p. 112), supporting this interpretation of Hinten’s shorter construction. *Allem* occurs again below. Reading “alone” would give a different argument.

“Nothing” in § 53.1 names what is none of the particular things accessible to a creature; it does not assert God’s non-existence. *Geberende persone* is a begetting Person, followed by the names Father and only-begotten Son.

Section 53.2 draws on John 14:6; 6:44; and 1 Corinthians 13:10. Blick and czuck indicate a brief disclosure, a glance and sudden rapture. Auswüsten is the strong “destroy”, retained in place of a familiar English biblical wording.

The repetition in § 53.5 matters: not only beginning, progress and completion belong to God, but also the act of acknowledging or ascribing them to him. That acknowledgement cannot be claimed as the person’s own. Vorgehen here has the sense of vorjehen, “acknowledge, ascribe”, not the ordinary “go forward”.

The words about how one would live in § 53.5 are restored by the critical editor from other witnesses where D omits them (p. 152, line 80). In § 53.8, the editor adopts nicht, “not”, instead of D’s icht: “let the devil not...”.

The image of sowing ashes in § 53.8 is retained. It warns of self-seeking nature returning under the appearance of attained freedom. The following words of Christ develop John 10:1 in the author’s own formulation. The closing prayer follows the earlier basis; C has a different ending.

Appendices

Early readings, later additions and reference material

These sections distinguish the earlier main text, other manuscript readings and the English equivalents used in this book.

The Early Witness of 1453

H: Augsburg, Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. III 1 8°22, fols. 12v–18r, containing Chapters 7–9. Its dating note names Johannes the bookbinder and the eve of Saint John the Baptist in 1453. The distinctive introduction and significant readings below follow Hinten's published apparatus, pp. 77–82. They are not a facsimile or a new complete transcription of H.

The introduction precedes Chapter 7. Before discussing the soul's two eyes, it explains the limits of the outer human being. It is absent from the main text of D. Its presence in H establishes that it existed by 1453; the manuscript's age alone does not prove that the original author wrote it.

Introduction before Chapter 7 · H, 1453

Hie ist von ettlichen dingen gesprochen das zü fleisch vnd blüt nach der vsser mensche nit komen mag alle die wile das es besebelich vnd berürlich ist sol es dar zu komen vnd es müs anders werden jo der vsser mensch Cristi moht nit dar zu komen alle die wile das er besebeliche vnd liplich leben hat er must sterben vnd erkläret vnd erfronet werden

Close translation

Here certain things have been spoken of to which flesh and blood, according to the outer human being, cannot come as long as it is visible and touchable. If it is to come to this, it must become otherwise. Indeed, Christ's outer human being could not come to this as long as he had visible and bodily life; he had to die and be made radiant and glorified.

About the Introduction

Erkläret and erfronet indicate being made radiant and glorified. The uncertain reference of es, "it", is kept close to the German. Read the introduction beside the main text of Chapter 7, which distinguishes Christ's soul from his outward humanity.

Selected Readings and Dating Note

In the quotation from Dionysius (§ 8.2), F/H/I/A add after Timothy's name: "and says: friend Timothy". This group also clarifies the connection in the list of sensory and rational faculties. This does not justify expanding the quotation with words from a modern translation of Dionysius.

In § 9.1, F and H expand the explanation of God's intention and purpose for a person: after "God" they add *meinte vnd war zu jn got*, "had in mind, and for what God [would use] them". In § 9.2, E/F/H give finding and knowing the simple Good where the main text of D has feeling it. These differences show why even closely related early witnesses cannot be presented as verbally identical.

H's closing note reads: *joh[ann]es büchbinder an sant johans des töffers aubent 1453*—"Johannes the bookbinder, on the eve of Saint John the Baptist, 1453". The brackets in the name expand the abbreviation in the published reading.

Later Manuscript Additions

Selected substantial expansions and replacements from C (1497), known through Pfeiffer's edition of 1851. Translated directly from their German wording, they make the later version accessible while keeping it distinct from the earlier main text. This selection does not reproduce every difference in C.

The passage number identifies the passage in Part II to compare. The source description specifies the position of an addition or replacement; its page reference belongs to the German printed edition.

For Chapter 1

Main German text and translation, p. 92

Compare § 1.2. C (1497), addition after § 1.2; Hinten, p. 72, reading after line 19; compare Pfeiffer (1851), Chapter 1.

For the deficiency is entirely in us, not in him. Just as the sun illuminates the whole world and is as near to one person as another, yet no blind person sees it, the deficiency is in the blind person, not in the sun. As the sun cannot conceal its clear radiance but must illuminate the world, provided the sky is purified and clear, so God, the highest Good, will hide from no one, provided he finds a devout soul wholly cleansed of all creatures. As much as we free ourselves from creatures, so much, neither less nor more, do we become receptive to the Creator. If my eye is to see something, it must be cleansed or free of all other things. If heat and light are to enter, cold and darkness must necessarily depart. There is no other way.

For Chapter 5

Main German text and translation, p. 102

Compare § 5.1. C (1497), replacement spanning § 5.1 and the opening of § 5.2; Hinten, p. 75, lines 7–12; Pfeiffer, Chapter 5.

The meaning is that a person should truly recognise that they have and can do no good of themselves, and that all their knowledge, wisdom and skill,

their will, love and good works, neither come from them nor belong to the human being or any creature. They all belong to the eternal God, from whom they come, as Christ himself says: “Without me you can do no good.” Saint Paul also says: “What good do you have that you have not received from God?”—as though he said: nothing. If you have received everything from God, why boast as though you had not received it? He also says: “We can think no good of ourselves, but our perfection comes from God.” When a person truly recognises these things within themselves, they and the creature step aside, claiming nothing as their own. The less one claims these things, the more perfect they become.

For Chapter 7

Main German text and translation, p. 108

Compare § 7.2. C (1497), addition at the end of § 7.2; Hinten, p. 79, after *beschauunge*; Pfeiffer, Chapter 7.

Therefore whoever wishes to have the one must let the other go, for no one can serve two masters.

For Chapter 8

Main German text and translation, p. 111

Compare § 8.2. C (1497), addition within § 8.2, after *wil*; Hinten, p. 80; Pfeiffer, Chapter 8.

When something at first seems very difficult, unfamiliar and wholly impossible, but a person applies all their diligence and earnestness to it and perseveres, what seemed impossible afterwards becomes easy and simple. For no beginning is of any use unless it has a good end.

Compare § 8.2. C (1497), addition at the end of § 8.2, after *creatur*; Hinten, p. 80; Pfeiffer, Chapter 8.

As soon as a person turns inward again with their mind and their whole will, turning their spirit into God's spirit beyond time, everything previously lost is restored in an instant. If a person could do this a thousand times a day, each time there would be a new and true union. In this delightful and divine work is the truest and purest union that can ever be in

this present time. Whoever comes to it asks no further, having found the kingdom of heaven and eternal life on earth.

For Chapter 9

Main German text and translation, p. 113

Compare § 9.1. C (1497), addition in § 9.1 after the statement that good remains outside the soul; Hinten, p. 81, line 3.

That is, as long as the person occupies themselves outwardly with their senses and reason, and does not turn into themselves and learn to know their own life, who and what they are.

Compare § 9.1. C (1497), addition in § 9.1 after *boßheit*; Hinten, p. 81, line 4.

For all sins and wickedness never make us evil while they remain outside us: that is, while they are not carried out by us and as long as we do not consent to them.

Compare § 9.1. C (1497), addition in § 9.1 after *nicht*; Hinten, p. 81, line 10.

Truly and properly knowing oneself surpasses every art, for it is the highest art. If you know yourself well, you are better and more praiseworthy before God than if you did not know yourself but knew the courses of the heavens and all the planets and stars, the powers of every plant, every person's constitution and inclinations, and the nature of all animals, and possessed all the learning of everyone in heaven and on earth. For it is said that a voice came from heaven: "Human being, know yourself."

For Chapter 10

Main German text and translation, p. 116

Compare § 10.2. C (1497), expanded wording in § 10.2; Hinten, p. 83, lines 23–25.

We continually seek ourselves and what is ours, always wanting sweetness smeared around our mouths. When we feel this, we are content and imagine that all is well with us. Yet we are still far from a perfect life. When God would draw us higher, into deprivation and the loss of our own in spirit and nature, and withdraws his comfort and sweetness, we waver

and suffer. We cannot reconcile ourselves to it, forget God and abandon our practice.

Compare § 10.2. C (1497), addition in § 10.2 after gleich; Hinten, p. 83, line 28.

For such a person seeks God's honour alone and nothing of their own, in either spirit or nature, and therefore always remains equally unmoved in all things.

For Chapter 11

Main German text and translation, p. 119

Compare § 11.1. C (1497), selected expanded wording in § 11.1; Hinten, p. 84, lines 5–11.

The person comes into such deep humility and contempt for self that they think themselves unworthy of the earth bearing them. They consider it right that all creatures in heaven and on earth should rise against them, avenge their Creator upon them, and inflict every suffering and torment upon them. Even all this is too little beside the sins they have so often and in so many ways committed against God their Creator.

Compare § 11.2. C (1497), expanded wording in § 11.2; Hinten, p. 85, lines 31–32; compare Pfeiffer, Chapter 11.

No one can fully fathom or express its delight, comfort and joy, peace, rest and contentment. The person seeks neither themselves nor anything of their own, but only God's honour in all things.

For Chapter 12

Main German text and translation, p. 123

Compare § 12.1. C (1497), selected additions in § 12.1; Hinten, p. 86, lines 2–4.

They do not know how to escape from it. Whoever considers this in truth recognises that true peace and rest do not lie in outward things; otherwise even the devil would have peace. Yet this is by no means so, for the Lord says through the prophet: “The evil and unfaithful have no peace.”

Compare § 12.1. C (1497), replacement in § 12.1 continuing into the opening of § 12.2; Hinten, p. 87, lines 6–9.

These words show that Christ did not mean bodily and outward peace. From the beginning, his beloved disciples and all who love and follow him have suffered great tribulation, persecution and torment, as Christ himself said: "In this time you will have affliction." He means the true inward peace of the heart, which begins here and lasts eternally there. Therefore he said, "Not as the world gives it", for the world is false and deceptive in its gifts, promising much and fulfilling little. No one on earth always has rest and peace without tribulation and adversity, with everything always going according to their will. However one turns it, suffering must be borne here. When one temptation is escaped, two others may take its place. Surrender willingly to this and seek only the true peace of the heart, which no one can take from you and through which every temptation is overcome.

Compare § 12.2. C (1497), addition at the end of § 12.2; Hinten, p. 87, line 15.

So that what was formerly bitter would become sweet, the heart would always remain unmoved in all things, and after this life the person would come to eternal peace. Amen.

For Chapter 13

Main German text and translation, p. 125

Compare § 13.1. C (1497), expanded ending of § 13.1; Hinten, pp. 87–88, lines 2–5.

They can therefore scarcely grasp true truth, or perhaps never again. Such people refuse to follow anyone, rely on their own understanding and want to fly before they have feathers. They want to ascend to heaven at once, though Christ did not do so: after his resurrection he remained with his beloved disciples for forty days. No one can become perfect in a day. A person must first deny themselves completely, willingly relinquish all things for God, give up their own will and every natural inclination, and cleanse and purify themselves of every vice and sin. Then they should humbly take up the cross and follow Christ. They should receive examples, discernment, guidance, counsel and teaching from God's devout and perfect servants, instead of following their own head. Then the work can endure and come to a good end. When a person thus breaks through and passes beyond temporal things and creatures, they may afterwards become perfect

in a contemplative life. Whoever wants the one must let the other go; there is no other way.

For Chapter 14

Main German text and translation, p. 126

Compare § 14.1. C (1497), addition after voreynunge at the end of § 14.1; Hinten, p. 88; Pfeiffer, Chapter 14.

Purification belongs to the beginner or penitent and takes place in three ways: contrition and sorrow over sin, complete confession, and perfect penance. Enlightenment belongs to those progressing and likewise takes place in three ways: rejecting sin, practising virtue and good works, and willingly bearing every temptation and adversity. Union concerns the perfect and also takes place in three ways: purity and clarity of heart, divine love, and contemplation of God, the Creator of all things.

For Chapter 15

Main German text and translation, p. 127

Compare § 15.2. C (1497), replacement within § 15.2; Hinten, p. 89, line 9.

They should make as little of themselves as if they did not exist and as if someone else had performed all their works. Nor should they make anything of all creatures.

Compare § 15.4. C (1497), addition after weiß at the end of § 15.4; Hinten, p. 90.

That is, God himself, who can indeed do all things.

For Chapter 16

Main German text and translation, p. 130

Compare § 16.1. C (1497), additions to § 16.1; Hinten, p. 90, lines 3–5.

A relinquishment and denial of self and all temporal things, seeking only God's honour in everything and seeking nothing of one's own, in either spirit or nature.

Compare § 16.2. C (1497), expanded wording in § 16.2; Hinten, p. 90, lines 8–9.

Human pleasure, comfort, joy, desire, I-ness, selfhood and everything of that kind within a person must die: whatever they cling to, still rest in with contentment or make something of, whether themselves or any other creature. All this must depart and die if things are truly to be right with the person.

Compare § 16.6. C (1497), replacement in § 16.6; Hinten, p. 93, line 58.

For even if everyone were against that person, all of them together could neither move nor grieve them.

For Chapter 17

Main German text and translation, p. 136

Compare § 17.2. C (1497), expanded wording in § 17.2; Hinten, p. 94, lines 15–16.

They wish to lay all the guilt upon the evil spirit and remain wholly pure and innocent themselves, as our first parents, Adam and Eve, did while still in paradise, each laying the guilt upon the other. This is entirely wrong, for it is written: “No one lives without sin.”

For Chapter 19

Main German text and translation, p. 141

Compare § 19.1. C (1497), addition after *liebste* at the end of § 19.1; Hinten, p. 96.

Thus they never come to truth.

For Chapter 21

Main German text and translation, p. 145

Compare § 21.1. C (1497), replacement in § 21.1; Hinten, p. 98, line 5.

Let them strive with all diligence to become this. Then they will know and find what no human mouth has ever expressed.

Compare § 21.1. C (1497), addition after *nu* at the end of § 21.1; Hinten, p. 98.

For a person creates much unrest and temptation for themselves from which they could well be free.

For Chapter 23

Main German text and translation, p. 151

Compare § 23.2. C (1497), expanded ending replacing *diß leben* in § 23.2; Hinten, p. 102.

The humble life of Jesus Christ. Follow it with constant perseverance, and you will undoubtedly reach the goal that endures eternally. For whoever perseveres to the end will be blessed.

For Chapter 26

Main German text and translation, p. 160

Compare § 26.5. C (1497), expanded and replacement wording in § 26.5; Hinten, p. 107, lines 40–43.

For those who are perfect are under no law. Ordinances, laws, commandments and the like are therefore only instruction for people who understand no better and know no other way. The perfect take up these practices together with such simple people.

Compare § 26.6. C (1497), additions to § 26.6; Hinten, pp. 107–108, lines 52–53.

“I have not come to break the law or statute, but to fulfil it.” Yet he says that one must go further, to something higher and better: “Unless your righteousness is greater and more perfect than that of the scribes and hypocrites, you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.” The law forbids evil deeds, but Christ condemns evil thoughts as well. The law permits revenge upon enemies, but Christ commands love of enemies. The law permits temporal goods, but Christ counsels despising them all. He confirmed all this by his holy life, teaching nothing that he had not first fulfilled in deeds. Yet he kept the law and remained subject to it until bodily death.

Compare § 26.6. C (1497), replacement ending of the statement about Christ’s grief in § 26.6; Hinten, p. 108, lines 63–64.

He never had a single good day, but only tribulation, suffering and adversity. It is therefore entirely fitting that the same should be true of his servant.

For Chapter 28

Main German text and translation, p. 169

Compare § 28.2. C (1497), addition at the end of § 28.2; Hinten, p. 111, line 23.

That person does themselves great harm; this should be known.

For Chapter 34

Main German text and translation, p. 187

Compare § 34.1. C (1497), addition to § 34.1; Hinten, p. 119, line 6.

For nothing burns in hell except own will. Therefore it is said: “Remove own will, and there will be no hell.”

Compare § 34.2. C (1497), addition to § 34.2 after meyne; Hinten, p. 119, line 13.

In nothing, whether in spirit or nature, but only God's praise and honour and his divine will.

Compare § 34.3. C (1497), addition to § 34.3 after vorlüst; Hinten, p. 119, line 20.

And gives up their own will and fulfils God's will alone.

For Chapter 37

Main German text and translation, p. 195

Compare § 37.3. C (1497), addition at the end of § 37.3; Hinten, p. 122, line 30.

But all this belongs to God alone.

For Chapter 38

Main German text and translation, p. 198

Compare § 38.2. C (1497), addition at the end of § 38.2; Hinten, p. 124, line 31.

But one true lover is dearer to God than a thousand hirelings or workers for pay.

For Chapter 40

Main German text and translation, p. 204

Compare § 40.9. C (1497), replacement ending of § 40.9; Hinten, p. 129, lines 106–108.

As Christ also says: “Whoever loves their soul must lose it.” This means leaving and dying to the seeking of one's nature, following neither one's own will nor the body's desire, but God's commandments and one's superiors. One should seek nothing of one's own in any matter, in spirit or nature, but only God's praise and honour in everything. Whoever loses their soul in this way will find it again in eternal life. That is, a true and perfect lover finds together in God alone all the good, love, help, comfort and joy present in every creature in heaven and on earth—indeed, inexpressibly more, and as much nobler and more perfect as God the Creator surpasses the creature in goodness, nobility and perfection. In these things the false light is deceived, seeking only itself and its own in everything. It therefore never comes to the right way.

For Chapter 53

Main German text and translation, p. 258

Compare § 53.6. C (1497), addition after § 53.6; Hinten, p. 152, line 88.

This hinders a person from a perfect life. They never attain this perfect Good without relinquishing all things, first of all themselves. No one can serve two masters who oppose one another. Whoever wishes to have the one must let the other go. If the Creator is to enter, every creature must go out. Know this as true.

Compare § 53.7. C (1497), expanded wording in § 53.7, numbered Chapter 54 in C; Hinten, pp. 152–153, lines 90–93.

Let them seek no further; this is my faithful advice, and let them remain with it. We should strive and intend to be so obedient to God and his commandments at every time and in every matter that no resistance is found in spirit or nature. Soul and body, with all their members, should be as willing and ready for what God created them for as a person's hand is willing and ready for them. The hand is in their power, turned wherever they wish in an instant. Wherever we find ourselves otherwise, we should correct it with all diligence, from love and not from fear. In everything, whatever it may be, we should intend God alone and seek his praise and

honour, never our own in spirit or nature. This is necessary if things are to be right. The human being owes this especially to God: by God's ordinance all creatures are subject to and serve the human being, so that the human being may be subject to and serve God alone.

Compare § 53.8. C (1497), addition after "thief and murderer" in § 53.8; Hinten, p. 153, line 105.

A thief, because they steal God's praise and honour, which belong to God alone, claiming them and seeking and intending themselves. A murderer, because they kill their own soul and take away its life, God himself: as the body lives from the soul, so the soul lives from God. Through teaching and example they also kill everyone who follows them. Christ says: "I have not come to do my will, but the will of my heavenly Father who sent me." He also says: "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord', yet not do what I tell you?" As though he meant: it helps you nothing towards eternal life. Again: "Not everyone who says 'Lord, Lord' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does the will of my heavenly Father." And again: "If you wish to enter eternal life, keep God's commandments." What are God's commandments? Love God in all things with your whole heart, and your neighbour as yourself. All the other commandments are contained in these two. Nothing is dearer to God or more useful to a person than humble obedience. One good work arising from true obedience is dearer to God than a hundred thousand arising from own will against obedience. Whoever has this obedience need not fear: they are on the right path and follow Christ.

Compare § 53.8. C (1497), variant concluding prayer and scribal closing note; compare § 53.8; Hinten, p. 154, lines 105–109.

May he who surrendered his will to his heavenly Father help us thus to deny and leave ourselves, relinquish all things for God, give up and die to our own will, and live to God and his will alone: Jesus Christ our beloved Lord, blessed above all things eternally. Amen. Here ends The Frankfurter. Praise and honour be to God the Lord and to the noble Queen and Virgin Mary, Mother of God. Amen. In the year 1497, on the day of the holy martyrs Cosmas and Damian.

Glossary of Terms

These entries explain words as used in this treatise. The headwords bring together historical spelling variants; English equivalents depend on context. The chapter references lead from the explanation to the author's argument.

Abkehren / abkeren — Turn away; fall away

Turning from the eternal Good towards self and what is partial. In Chapters 2–3 it is the fall remedied by a return to God.

An, ane — Without; at, in or on, according to construction

The old preposition frequently means “without”: an creatur, without creature; an sunde, without sin. Automatically reading “in” can reverse the meaning. Chapters 3, 31–32, 36–37.

Annehmen, sich etwas annehmen — Appropriate; claim as one's own

To claim what comes from God: being, good, knowledge, will or work. It extends beyond ownership of possessions. Chapters 1–5, 17, 51.

Armut des Geistes — Poverty of spirit

Freedom from claiming perfection and goodness as one's own, opposed to spiritual riches and pride. Chapters 25–26, 35.

Befinden, empfinden, befühlen — Experience; perceive; feel

Directly experiencing or recognising something, distinguished from merely hearing or reasoning about it. The close version preserves separate verbs where they form a list. Chapters 8–9, 24, 48.

Begehren / begern, Begierde — Desire

The word is not always negative. Its object and motive matter: appropriation for oneself, or good for God's sake. Chapters 5, 10, 21.

Bekennen, Erkenntnis / Bekenntniß — Know; recognise; knowledge

Knowing or recognising truth, distinguished from claiming one's knowledge as one's own and from loving what is known. Chapters 5, 19, 31–32, 41–42.

Besitzen — Possess; take possession of

Chapter 22 uses the same verb for the evil spirit and God's spirit possessing a person. The account explains possession through governance of action and will.

Bild — Image

A sensory or mental representation. Chapter 13 warns against dismissing images prematurely, not against every use of them.

Blick, Zuck / czuck — Glance; glimpse; sudden rapture

Brief disclosure of eternity and movement towards it. The words do not name a prescribed spiritual technique. Chapters 8, 53.

Büssen / büßen, bessern — Atone for; make good; remedy

Words for dealing with sin and remedying the fall. They occur together and are not reduced to one word. Chapters 3, 16.

Christusleben — Christ's life

The life of perfect obedience and love realised within a person. It means more than external knowledge of Jesus's earthly history. Chapters 16, 18–20, 30–31, 45, 52.

Creatur / Kreatur — Creature

A created being or thing, or creaturely existence as distinct from God. A singular form need not designate one particular person. Chapters 1–2, 31–32, 36.

Dank, Undank — Approval and disapproval; thanks and their opposite

The deliberate pair in Chapter 17 concerns the response due to the person's conduct. "Approval" and "disapproval" retain the opposition in English.

Demut / demutikeit — Humility

True knowledge of one's position before God, opposed to confidence in one's superiority. Chapters 26, 35.

Eigen, das Eigene — Own; what is one's own

Central to claims of possession, willing for oneself and self-attribution. Not every use is sinful: the author also names what properly belongs to God. Chapters 24, 32, 44, 51.

Eigenschaft / eigenschafft — Property; appropriation; ownness

Context determines the sense. Chapter 40 discusses properties of the false light; Chapter 51 chiefly discusses appropriating will and self. One fixed English equivalent would obscure the distinction.

Eigenwille / eygen wille — Own will; self-will

Will retained as one's own and directed towards one's own concerns. Chapter 51 distinguishes the creation of free will from its appropriation. Chapters 34, 36, 44, 49–51.

Einfalt, einfältig / eynfeldig — Simplicity; simple; one

Freedom from division and composition, rather than lack of intelligence. Some phrases combine simplicity and unity. Chapters 27, 32, 43, 53.

Einung / eynung — Union

Union with God and his will, chiefly explained through relinquishing one's own will. Chapters 8, 14, 24, 27–28.

Erbarmung / erbarmunge — Compassion; mercy

A distinct quality beside humility. In Chapter 23 it governs the response to all creatures, including those causing harm.

Ere und Glorie — Honour and glory

The two words in Chapter 4. Appropriating good encroaches upon God's honour; the list is not expanded with additional qualities.

Ewigkeit, das Ewige — Eternity; the Eternal

What is not limited by temporal succession. The pairs eternity and time, the Eternal and the transitory, retain the author's distinction. Chapters 1, 5–8, 11.

Freiheit, freier Geist — Freedom; free spirit

These expressions may be praised or condemned. True freedom relinquishes appropriation; false freedom claims independence from order, obedience and grief over sin. Chapters 20, 25–26, 28–29, 39–43, 51.

Friede; Welt — Peace; world

Friede is peace or concord; Welt is the world in which one lives. The distinction is especially important in Chapter 12.

Gebrauchen, Gebrauchung — Enjoy; enjoyment or fruition; use

Enjoyment of God in Chapter 7 is opposed to enjoyment of oneself and one's ease in Chapter 20. "Use" fits some other contexts, but must not erase this opposition.

Gehorsam — Obedience

Relinquishing a will opposed to God. Obedience through acting and through undergoing are distinguished; they do not mean obeying every external demand. Chapters 15–17, 23, 26, 46.

Gelassen, lassen — Surrendered; relinquish; leave; allow

Letting go of one's own and surrendering to God. The object matters: one may relinquish self-will, or wrongly abandon Christ's life. Chapters 10, 27, 30–31, 46.

Gewissen, Conscientz — Conscience; consciousness of guilt

Chapter 40 defines conscience through acknowledging guilt. Christ being without it means innocence; the devil's lack of it means failure to acknowledge guilt. Context distinguishes the same expression.

Glaube — Faith; belief; accepting on trust

In Chapter 42 it can mean accepting hearsay or written information, as distinct from direct knowledge. Chapter 48 separately discusses the articles of Christian faith.

Gnade — Grace

The created yet divine true light distinguished in Chapter 31. The word is not inserted wherever the source speaks more generally of divine action or pouring in.

Gott, Gottheit — God; Godhead

Chapter 31 distinguishes "God as Godhead" and "God as God". Both designations remain rather than being merged into a general paraphrase.

Grund, grundlich — Ground; depth; deep; fundamental

The inward ground or foundation. Chapter 35's deep humility differs from outward or supposed humility. A literal spatial "bottom" does not fit every use.

Gut, das Gute — Good; a good; the Good

May name goodness, a particular good or a quality. God is the simple, perfect Good, not reducible to this or that. Capitalisation sometimes identifies a divine name without replacing contextual distinctions. Chapters 1–6, 32, 43, 53.

Himmelreich; Hölle / helle — Kingdom of heaven; hell

Alongside their usual religious meanings, the author describes their foretaste within time: comfort and abandonment. Conditional movements between them remain conditional. Chapters 10–11, 49–51.

Hoffart, geistlicher Reichtum — Pride; spiritual riches

The conviction that perfection has already been attained and teaching, order and obedience are no longer needed. Chapter 25; contrasted with Chapters 26 and 35.

Icheit — I-ness

Centredness on the “I”, claiming oneself and one’s actions. Derived from ich, “I”, and distinct from ichtheit. Chapters 15–16, 22, 32, 44.

Ichtheit — Somethingness; being a separate something

From iht or icht, “something”: the creature’s particular this-or-that existence in Chapter 1. The reading version often explains it descriptively. It is not a variant spelling of I-ness.

Ingiessen — Pouring in; infusion

Connected with preparation in Chapter 22. The author does not explicitly identify what is poured in; the translation does not supply an object.

Kunst, Vernunft — Art; skill; learning; reason

Kunst includes acquired skill or knowledge, not only artistic production. Vernunft is the capacity for understanding and reasoning. Chapters 19, 22, 31.

Leiden, leidend — Undergo; suffer; bear; undergoing

Ranges from allowing God’s action to experiencing pain and grief. Got leiden, “undergo God”, is retained and explained by its context. Chapters 3, 7, 16–17, 23, 26, 37, 46.

Leidlich, unleidlich, unleidenlich — Capable or incapable of suffering

The forms require attention to context and the adopted reading. Unleidlich can also mean unbearable. Our choice in § 16.7 is bracketed and explained. Chapters 16, 29.

Licht, wahres und falsches — True and false light

Knowledge is assessed through its relation to love and Christ’s life. Knowing good does not by itself make the knower good. Chapters 19, 31–32, 40–43.

Lichte — Perhaps; light or easy, according to context

In § 16.6 it expresses possibility; in the saying about the burden (§ 43.6), lightness. The same spelling does not require the same translation.

Liebe, Lieb / lib, lip — Love; dear; delightful

The meaning varies. Lip und leid in Chapter 51 is delight and grief, or what pleases and pains, rather than necessarily love and hatred.

Lohn / lon; Loner, Mietling — Pay; reward; hireling

Service motivated by one's own gain, opposed to love of good for its own sake. It is not a general rejection of ordinary work or wages. Chapters 10, 38–39.

Meinheit / myneheit — Mineness

The claim of “mine”, appropriating good and self. Related to, but distinct from, somethingness and I-ness. Chapters 1, 43.

Menschheit — Humanity; human nature

Used of Christ and of human nature generally, not always the whole human population. Its contrast with Godhead, God or spirit clarifies the meaning. Chapters 7, 16, 33.

Natur — Nature

Creaturely nature as such, or its self-directed inclination, according to context. Polemical identifications with the devil must be read beside the goodness of created being. Chapters 20, 31–32, 36, 43.

Nichts / nicht — Nothing; not

In the account of God beyond names, nothing means no particular thing accessible to a creature, not God's non-existence. The same historical spelling also serves as ordinary negation. Chapters 1, 32, 53.

Ordnung, Weise, Mass — Order; ordinance; form or practice; measure

The order, manner and measure of life and action. Weise does not always mean an image in the sense of Bild. Rising above forms does not authorise discarding them at will. Chapters 30, 39.

Person, Personlichkeit — Person; personhood

The distinction of divine Persons in Chapter 31; the qualifications about what personhood requires in Chapters 32 and 43. Those qualifications remain when selfhood is relinquished.

Ruchlos — Careless; heedless

In the polemic, lacking due care for what ought to be done, rather than merely peaceful or rested. Chapters 18, 20, 28, 40.

Seligkeit — Blessedness

Blessedness in God and its foretaste, rather than simply a pleasant feeling or good fortune. Chapters 7–11.

Selbheit, Selbstheit — Selfhood

Making self one's ground and the object of seeking. The author also paradoxically applies it to that with which God enters a person; see the end of Chapter 24.

Smacheit — Humiliation; dishonour; insult

Humiliation undergone in Chapter 12; dishonour offered to God in Chapter 44. It does not mean physical weakness here.

Sünde — Sin

Explained chiefly through appropriation and a will opposed to God. This does not erase the wrongful deeds the author also lists. Chapters 2, 36, 44, 47, 49–51.

Teil; das Geteilte; das Vollkommene — Part; the divided or partial; the Perfect

Parts depend on the whole and are not complete in themselves. The author returns to 1 Corinthians 13:10. The reading version often uses “partial” where the close version has “divided”. Chapters 1, 18, 53.

Tun und Lassen — Do and leave undone

Performing an action or allowing it to remain undone. This repeated pair encompasses conduct generally and does not always mean simply activity versus inactivity.

Vergotten, vergottet — Deified

A person in whom God acts, living a divine life. The translation retains the word's force instead of substituting the broader “devout”. Chapters 3, 31–37, 41–46.

Verjehen / voriehe, vorgehen — Utter; acknowledge; ascribe

An older verb. Truth acknowledges in § 24.1; God utters himself in § 31.2; everything is ascribed to God in § 53.5. Distinguish ordinary vorgehen, “go before”, in Chapter 29.

Vorburg, Vorstadt / vorstad — Outer court; surrounding quarter; approach

Images of the present world as an approach to heaven, with the orientation of will decisive. Chapters 50–51.

Wahn — Mistaken supposition; false conviction

In Chapter 5, the belief that knowledge and good belong to oneself. It is not simply low intelligence.

Wesen / weßen — Being; a being; essence

What exists, or its mode of being, distinguished from activity, manifestation and a particular this or that. Chapters 1–2, 31–32, 53.

Widerwille, Widerwilligkeit — Opposing will; willing against

Will directed against God. Alongside self-will, the difference between willing otherwise and willing against is retained. Chapter 36.

Zeit — Time; the present life

May mean temporal human existence as distinct from eternity. “After time” in Chapter 11 means after this life, not simply the next event in the account.

Chapter Numbering

Chapters 1–53 follow the numbering of Hinten’s critical edition. Use the table to compare Pfeiffer and the older division into 54 chapters. The number of chapters does not indicate a loss of text: the conclusion is included in full in Chapter 53.

This book	Pfeiffer, 1851 / C	Explanation
1–52	1–52	The numbers agree. C expands several chapters; substantial additions appear separately.
53, §§ 53.1–53.6	53	The account of being drawn by the Father.
53, §§ 53.7–53.8	54	The brief concluding word and prayer. The earlier form is translated in full; C’s expanded ending is in the additions.

D’s own numbering sometimes differs from the critical edition. The text of the present Chapter 24 is joined to Chapter 23 in D; the present Chapter 25 corresponds to D 24, and the present Chapter 26 to D 25. From Chapter 27 the numbering agrees again. The manuscript’s final Chapter 52 is divided by the editor into the present Chapters 52 and 53. These differences do not indicate omissions.

Sources and Manuscripts

The letters follow Hinten's critical edition. They identify particular witnesses to the transmission of the text. The dates and extent given below refer to the sources described in that edition.

Key	Date	Extent	Role in this book
H	1453	Chapters 7–9	Early partial witness; published readings and its introduction appear separately.
E	1465	Complete	Earliest complete copy among the editor's witnesses; contributes to establishing readings.
D	1477	Complete	Principal manuscript of the critical edition and this translation, corrected from other witnesses.
C	1497	Complete, expanded	Later version edited by Pfeiffer in 1851; selected significant additions appear separately.
F	Late 15th century	Chapters 1–28	Source of early readings, including the question supplied in § 3.2.
G	Late 15th century	Prologue and contents excerpts; Chapters 1–3	Partial witness included in the critical edition.
I	1490	Chapters 7–28	Partial witness belonging to another branch of transmission.
K	Late 15th century	Chapters 22–23, 25–33, 35, 38, 48–51	A selection of passages used in the critical comparison.
A	1516	Chapters 7–28	Luther's first, partial printing.
B	1518	Complete	Luther's complete printing; a source of critical corrections and our adopted reading in § 16.7.

Principal manuscript D: Dessau, Cod. Georg. 8°44, fols. 4r–71r, 1477. Manuscript E: Eger (Cheb), Franciscan monastery library, Cod. 45/330, fols. 59r–154v, 1465; Hinten's description places it in the historical library at Teplá. These shelfmarks follow the edition used here and do not claim to verify present custody.

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The Expanded Version C

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Historical Word Meanings

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Verjehen

Glossary of the critical electronic edition of Ulrich Richental's chronicle: meanings include uttering, acknowledging, confessing and publicly declaring. *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*.

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Biblical References

Biblical books, chapters and verses are identified in the chapter notes. Sirach's Latin and modern verse numbering sometimes differ. For § 41.4 compare Sirach 2:14 in the older Vulgate numbering and 2:12 in modern English editions.

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