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Created Date: October 16, 2024  
Acknowledgments: The life of Jakob Böhme  
from April 1575 to November 1624.

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1: Title  
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Jacob Boehme  
The Clavis

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2: Preface  
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It is written, The Natural Man, receives  
not the Things of the Spirit,  
nor the Mystery of the Kingdom of God.

They are Foolishness unto him,  
neither can he know them:  
therefore, I admonish and exhort  
the Christian Lover of Mysteries.

If he will study these High Writings, and read,  
search, and understand them,  
that he do not read them outwardly only.

With sharp Speculation and Meditation;  
for in so doing, he shall remain  
in the outward Imaginary Ground only,  
and obtain no more than  
a counterfeited Color of them.

For a Man's own Reason, without the Light of God,  
cannot come into the Ground of them.

It is impossible.

Let his Wit be ever so high and subtle,  
it apprehends but as it were  
the Shadow of it in a Glass.

For Christ says, without me you can do nothing;  
and he is the Light of the World,  
and the Life of Men.

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Now if any one would search the Divine Ground,  
that is, the Divine Revelation,  
he must first consider with himself,  
for what End he desires to know such things.

Whether he desires to practice that which  
he might obtain, and bestow it to  
the Glory of God and the Welfare  
of his Neighbor.

And whether he desires to die to Earthliness,  
and to his own Will, and to live  
in that which he seeks and desires,  
and to be one Spirit with it.

If he have not a Purpose, that if God should reveal  
himself and his Mysteries to him,  
he would be one Spirit and have  
one Will with him,  
and wholly resign and yield  
himself up to him,  
that God's Spirit might do  
what he pleases with him,  
and by him,

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and that God might be his  
Knowledge, Will, and Deed,  
he is not yet fit for such  
Knowledge and Understanding.

For there are many that seek Mysteries  
and hidden Knowledge, merely that  
they might be respected and highly  
esteemed by the World, and for their  
own Gain and Profit;  
but they attain not this Ground,  
where the Spirit searches all Things,  
as it is written,  
even the deep Things of God.

It must be a totally resigned Will,  
in which God himself searches and works,  
and which continually pierces into God  
in yielding and resigned Humility.

Seeking nothing but his Eternal Native Country,  
and to do his Neighbor Service with it;  
and then it may be attained.

And he must begin with effectual Repentance  
and Amendment, and with Prayer,  
that his Understanding might be  
opened from within;  
for then the inward will  
bring itself into the outward.

But when he reads such Writings,  
and yet cannot understand them,  
he must not presently throw them  
away, and think it is impossible  
to understand them.

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No, but he must turn his Mind to God,  
beseeching him for Grace and Understanding,  
and read again; and then he shall see more  
and more in them, till at length  
he be drawn by the Power of God  
into the very Depth itself.



And so come into the supernatural  
 and supersensual Ground, namely into  
 the Eternal Unity of God;  
 where he shall hear unspeakable and  
 effectual Words of God,  
 which shall bring him back  
 and outward again, by the Divine Effluence,  
 to the very grossest and meanest  
 Matter of the Earth, and back and inwards  
 to God again.

Then the Spirit of God searches all Things with  
 him, and by him, and so he is rightly taught  
 and driven by God.

But since the Lovers of them desire a Clavis,  
 or Key of my Writings,  
 I am ready and willing to pleasure  
 them in it, and will set down  
 a short Description of the Ground  
 of those strange Words.

Some of which are taken from Nature and Sense,  
 and some are the Words of strange  
 uncommon Masters, I have tried  
 according to Sense,  
 and found them good and fit.

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Reason will stumble, when it sees  
 Heathenish Terms and Words used  
 in the Explanation of Natural Things.

Supposing we should use none but Scripture  
 Phrase (or words borrowed from the Bible);  
 but such words will not always apply  
 and square themselves to the fundamental  
 Explanation of the Properties of Nature,  
 neither can a Man express the ground  
 with them.

Also the wise Heathen and Jews have hid  
 the deep Ground of Nature under such Words,  
 as having well understood that the Knowledge  
 of Nature is not for every one,  
 but it belong to those only,  
 whom God by Nature has chosen for it.

But none need stumble at it;  
 for when God reveals his Mysteries  
 to any Man, he then also brings him  
 into a Mind and Capacity how to  
 express them, as God knows  
 to be most necessary and profitable  
 in every Age, for the setting of  
 the confused Tongues and Opinions  
 upon the true Ground again:  
 Men must not think that it  
 comes by Chance,  
 or is done by human Reason.

The Revelations of Divine Things are opened  
 by the Inward Ground of the  
 Spiritual World, and brought  
 into visible Forms,  
 just as the Creator  
 will manifest them.

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I will write but a short Description  
 of the Divine Manifestation,  
 yet as much as I can comprehend  
 in brief; and explain the unusual  
 Words for the better Understanding  
 of our Books.

And set down here the sum of those Writings,  
 or a Model or Epitome of them,  
 for the Consideration and Help  
 of Beginners: The further Explanation  
 of it is to be found in the other Books.

Jacob Boehme,  
 1575-1624

