

EIN GRÜNDLICHER BERICHT
[*VOM IRDISCHEN UND HIMMLISCHEN MYSTERIO*]

A FUNDAMENTAL REPORT

1620

A Fundamental Report¹

Concerning the terrestrial mysterium and the celestial mysterium,² how they stand in one another, and how in the terrestrial a celestial revelation is in progress. In it you will recognize Babel, that great city upon earth with its figure and wonders and comprehend why or from what it came into being and to what end the Antichrist³ is to be exposed. An entirely marvelous revelation from the highest arcanum.⁴ In it shall be made entirely *manifest* what the turba of all beings is. All written for the Children of God who should be induced by such a warning to flee burning Babel so that out of the turba the Children of God⁵ shall be born. All earnestly and faithfully recorded from a knowledge of the great mysterium.

¹ **Gründlich** derives from “Grund,” here a foundation of authority as in *Aurora*’s subtitle “Auß Rechtem Grunde.” **Bericht** evokes a need for reports, as in early “Zeitungen,” the broadsheet tidings or proto-newspapers that mixed fact with marvel, current event with partisan screed. B.’s news and awe-filled letters testify to those same needs.

² *Mysterium* or *Mysterium Magnum* are terms of B.’s mid to late periods of writing. They signal his turn from the fanciful nature observation of *Aurora* and the psychological introspection of *Forty Questions* to the quest for total coherence in his later work. The earthly and celestial worlds are mysteries to be resolved by the correspondences disclosed in the Bible, the Book of Nature, and in the human “book.” Reconciling contradictions takes precedence over creative inspiration. See Intro IV B3. The obscure tone could also camouflage subversive personal opinions.

³ The frequently extolled revelation of the Antichrist is not fixed to particular dates, as with contemporary chiliasts and war propagandists. It calls to mind B.’s sense of real calamity and his global condemnation of the powers that be with his characteristic emphasis on the false clergy. See Intro IV B6; cf. *Boehme*, 130–142, 158.

⁴ Where *mysterium* is universal, *arcanum* is specific, one source of divinely inspired knowledge. See Intro IV B3. B. has long anticipated the final revelation when darkness and light, good and evil, will be separated (see *A* 13:3).

⁵ The “Children of God” frequently mentioned in B.’s letters are neither a sect nor a conventicle but all who meet the informal measure of his friends and personal supporters. A letter coinciding with the *Bericht* to Carl von Ender thanks him for grain and praises its blessings both “for the earthly life” (zum irdischen Leben) and for the path “to the kingdom of God” (in Gottes Reich). The “Kinder Gottes” are those ensnared by the devil in a corrupt craving, yet who “struggle with the *turba*” (“mit der verderbten Sucht, in welcher uns der Teufel gefangen hält mit der *Turba* ringen”—Ep. 6:2–3, 4 May 1620). B. already sees his writing as an inspired Pentecostal tongue that speaks for and to all peoples and as a resistance to the devil’s “Treiber” and “Antichrist,” (Ep. 4:8, 20; 14 Nov. 1619, to Bernhard).

First Text.

The abyss⁶ is an eternal nothing, which nonetheless fashions an eternal beginning that amounts to a craving. For the nothing is a craving after something. Yet since there is nothing there that could give it something, the craving itself is the giving of that which is constituted as nothing but a mere covetous craving.⁷ This is the eternal precondition of the magic⁸ that creates within itself where there is nothing. Out of the nothing it makes something, doing so only in itself. Since this craving is, however, nothing but a mere will, it has nothing. There is nothing to give it anything. Nor does it have any place to abide or repose.⁹

Second Text.

Now since there is a craving in the nothing, it constitutes for itself the will toward something. This will is a spirit that proceeds as a thought out of the craving. It is the craver in the craving.¹⁰ For what it finds is its mother¹¹ which is the craving. Now this same will becomes a magus¹² in its mother. For it

⁶ *Ungrund* is the opposite of *Grund* (ground or reason) and a totalization of *Abgrund* (abyss). It is best understood in its function of explicating the self-generation of the Creator, creation, and creature. Pragmatically speaking, the *Ungrund* grounds the divine in human uncertainty and thereby allows for freedom in both divine and human nature. See Intro IV B5; cf. *Boehme*, 148–149.

⁷ B's evocation of the will envisions the generation of being out of its nothingness. See Intro IV B2; cf. *Boehme*, 104.

⁸ *Magia*, *arcanum*, and *mysterium* sublimate *learning*, *source*, and *knowledge* to the supernatural. See Intro IV B4.

⁹ With reference to the divine being, B. echoes the thought of Weigel's *Vom Ort der Welt* (1576): in an age of exile, the world and the human being reside in no "place." God and the kingdom of heaven lie within. See *Weigel*, 105.

¹⁰ On the connotations of *Sucht* and its spurious association with German "suchen," see Intro IV B1.

¹¹ Though not used in this work, *matrix* is B's usual term for the birth-giving female principle in nature or divinity (3P 7:28). In *Aurora* (A 21:31), craving one's mother is a metaphor that uses lurid images of incest to cast shame on any human regression to bodily things of the earth in neglect of the spirit. Here the lurid implication is absent. The will asserts itself as "a master and *magus*" in its mother. Real hunger and earthly craving are now more familiar and more spiritualized. This spiritualization of want revives an asceticism alien to B's Lutheranism. See Intro IV C2e.

¹² The *magus* is understood as a subject capable of creating through the power of the will and imagination an object as something out of nothing. By elevating the magician (though not the sorcerer lambasted in A 16:1; cf. note 1), B. defiantly crosses a proscribed cultural divide of the early modern era to take his stand with Paracelsus and Agrippa von Nettesheim against the Protestant common opinion reflected in the Lutheran *Theatrum diabolorum* or the 1587 *Faustbuch* that condemned all magic or sorcery as diabolical.

has found something in the nothing, namely its mother. And having found its mother, it now has a place of abode. You should understand from this how the will is a spirit and something other than the covetous craving.¹³ The will is an insensate und unrecognizable life. The craving, however, is found by the will and is a being within the will. Now it is evident that the craving is a kind of magic and that the will is a magus. Moreover, the will is greater than the mother that has yielded it. For it is the master in its mother. The mother is recognized as mute and the will as a life without beginning. And yet since the craving is a cause of the will, albeit without knowledge or understanding, and since the will is the comprehension of the craving, we are now able to present in brief for your contemplation nature and the spirit of nature: that which from eternity has been without precondition. We conclude here that the will as a spirit possesses no place to rest. Rather the craving is its own place and the will is a bond¹⁴ on it, though this goes without being comprehended.

Third Text.

So now, inasmuch as the eternal will is free of the craving, yet the craving is not free from the will (for the will rules over the craving), we can recognize the will as the eternal omnipotence;¹⁵ for it has nothing equal to itself. To be sure, the craving is an activation caused by attraction or coveting, but this happens without understanding as a life unwitting. Now the will rules the life of craving, disposing over it as it wills. And although the will somehow stirs, this goes without being known until the being is revealed by the will to become a being in the life of the will: then comes the recognition of what the will has performed; and thus [we] recognize the eternal will's spirit as God and the activating life of the craving as nature. Nothing comes before it. Both are without beginning and each is a cause of the other, forming an eternal bond or chain. Therefore, the will's spirit is an eternal knowledge of the abyss, and the life of craving is an eternal being of the will.

¹³ The will arises out of and above blind craving: a self-made God through self-awareness and self-transcendence.

¹⁴ German **Band** can signify either bond as of friendship or in the plural bond as in bondage. The bond that links the soul to God and assures divine immutability is both chain and bond. B.'s "ewiges Band" emerges in an eternal birth and rebirth of the divine essences that generate the life and particularity of the world. See Intro IV B2.

¹⁵ Thus the subject achieves union with and knowledge of God by attaining freedom by mastering its blind craving.

Fourth Text.

Inasmuch as the craving is a coveting and the latter a form of life, the covetous life goes its own way in the craving, perpetually pregnant with it. Moreover, the coveting acts as a strict attracting force, but without having anything but itself, the eternity without a ground. Therefore it attracts magically, contracts its covetousness, turning it into a substance.¹⁶ For the will now takes where there is nothing. It is a master and possesses. It is not a being in itself. Yet it rules in the being. The being makes it covetous, that is, of its being; and in becoming covetous within itself, it acts magically and impregnates itself, namely with a spirit without being. For in its primal condition it is only spirit. Therefore, it consolidates only spirit in its imagination, becoming pregnant with spirit, which is to say, with the eternal consciousness of the abyss in the all-power of life without being.

And since it is indeed pregnant, the generation proceeds within itself and dwells within. For this impregnation cannot grasp the essence¹⁷ of the other life nor can it be its container. Accordingly, this impregnation must go into itself in order to become its own container, a son in the eternal spirit. Since the impregnation has no being, it is a voice or sound, that is, a word of the spirit. It abides in the primal condition of the spirit [for it has no other seat than in the primal condition of the spirit]. Moreover, there is a will in this word¹⁸ that wants to go out into a being. That will is the life of the primal will, the one that proceeds from the impregnation, that is, from the mouth of the will out into the life of magic, that is, out into nature, to reveal thereby the incomprehensible life of magic so that it is a *mysterium* with understanding in it in an essential way: so that it takes on an essential spirit, since every essence is an *arcanum* or *mysterium* of an entire being, and thus a concept, meaning an unfathomable wonder of eternity, in which

¹⁶ The *attracting* force of desire that lacks an external object becomes a *contractive* force and, as such, consolidates being. This occurs by virtue of the *imagination* (which was understood in the sixteenth century, not least by Michel de Montaigne, to effect occult action). In *HGC*, rebirth is effected by an imagination that translates the creature into the divine will. This inner process is the true sense of a faith which is not "historical": it is a "taking or eating from God's being which is introduced into one's soul-fire in order to sate one's hunger" (*HGC* 4:88/ L11:8). Attraction objectified in an ideal free community of the like-minded also contrasts with the compulsion of state power and war.

¹⁷ *Essenz, Essentien* usually refers to the driven particular life in nature, though here it seems to refer initially to the mirrored spiritual rather than the prototypical natural world. See Intro IV B2.

¹⁸ This alludes to the often evoked creator Word of John 1:1.

much life without number is generated. And yet taken all together, it is only a single being. Moreover, the trinitarian spirit without being is its master and owner. And yet, since living in itself it does not possess the right of nature, the word is its center or abode, residing *centrally* as a heart. Moreover, the spirit of the word that arises in the first eternal will discloses the wonders of the essential life so that there are two mysteria, one in the spiritual life and one in the essential life. The spiritual life is recognized as God and properly called by that name; the essential life is recognized as the life of nature that would have no awareness if the spirit or spiritual life were not covetous. In that covetousness, the divine being or eternal word or heart of God is born forever from all eternity.¹⁹ From it, the covetous will eternally proceeds as its spirit into the life of nature, disclosing everywhere therein the mysterium from the essences and in the essences, so that there are two kinds of life, as well as two beings, arising from and abiding in a single eternal unfathomable primal condition. Thus do we understand what God and nature is,²⁰ how the whole in both cases arises from all eternity without ground or beginning.²¹ For there is an everlasting beginning that re-begins itself forever, from eternity to eternity without number. It is the abyss.

Fifth Text.

Given that there have been two beings from eternity, we cannot say that the one stands alongside the other, nor that it is constituted so the one comprehends the other. Nor can we say that one is outside the other or that there is a division. This is no more so. Instead we recognize that the life of the spirit is directed inward. The life of nature is directed outside itself and proceeds for itself, which is why we compare it in its entirety to a round wheel-sphere that moves in every direction, as indicated by the wheel in the Prophet Ezekiel.²² Moreover, the life of the spirit is a complete plenitude

¹⁹ The heart of God is the Son born eternally in the Father.

²⁰ The use of the singular verb is intentional and significant.

²¹ Here B. seems to defy the prime tenet of monotheism that the world is not uncreated but eternal. If he risks heresy in this assertion, it can also be understood as an accentuation of the less patently heretical view expressed in *Aurora*, that there was an eternal version of the life of nature existing in God before the historical creation.

²² In *Aurora* (13:71), the vision of Ezekiel 1 offered a model of the eternal dynamic in nature. Later this symbol is subsumed in the fearful "wheel of multiplication of the essences" (Rad der Vervielfältigung der Essentien—3fL 11/1:34), driven by fear (179/9:97–98): the cosmic machine of stars and elements rules and compels life, spinning out the hostile particularities to which creatures, seeking peace, fall prey. See *Boehme* 123–124.

of the life of nature, although the life of the spirit is not comprehended by the life of nature. These are two principles abiding together in a single precondition, whereby each has its own mysterium and its own effective action. For the life of nature works toward fire and the life of the spirit toward the light of glory and majesty.²³ By fire, we mean the ferocity by which the essential being of nature is consumed. In the light we recognize the generation of the water that deprives the fire of its violence, as has been indicated in *Forty Questions on the Soul*.²⁴ It has therefore become evident to us that an eternal essential being of nature is like the water and fire which are mixed together to yield a bright blue color, like the flash of fire, appearing as a single phenomenon: as a cherub with crystals²⁵ consolidated into one being; or like yellow, white, red, and blue mixed into dark water; like blue in green, each brilliant with its own gleam. The water opposes its fire so that nothing is consumed. It abides as an eternal being in two mysteries [they are in one another and yet having the distinction of the two principles], as two sorts of life. We understand thereby the being of all beings and discern that it is a magical being, since a will is capable of creating itself in the realm of the essential life to enter into a birth to awaken in the great mysterium a torment of particularity, notably in the primal condition of fire which had not previously been manifest, having lain hidden in the mysterium as a radiance in the multiplicity of colors: we have a mirror of this in devils and in all wickedness.²⁶ We recognize the origin of all things evil and good in the power of such an imagining into the great mysterium. A wondrous essential life thereby brings itself to light. We can gain a sufficient knowledge of this from the creatures of this world, which the divine life once aroused and awakened to be the life of nature, yielding in the process miraculous

²³ Fire without light is the primal manifestation of life within the eternal self-generation of being. Redeemed, it is the light of the Son; unredeemed, the dark fire-world of hell, fallen nature, and worldly conflict.

²⁴ The ferocity of fire is cooled by water which, in its transparency, symbolizes freedom by allowing the light free passage (40Q 3:10/1:10). In the cosmic depths, water arises not from the ferocity of fire but from the fire's gentle light that craves ("seeks") a mirror for itself ([die] Sucht ... suchet ihm einen Spiegel—40Q 3:51/1:213, 215). Freedom in this context is therefore tantamount to self-knowledge and openness to enlightenment.

²⁵ A comparison with the evocation of crystals as an image of the burgeoning life in the eternal world as depicted in *Aurora* (12:11–14) hints that observed alchemical transformations of an unknown variety served here as a prototype.

²⁶ In *Aurora* (12:9), multiplicity and variety betoken harmonious plenitude. Here hellish strife prevails in variety; however, the two aspects of plurality, plenitude and strife, are the good and evil variants of a single total reality.

creatures from the essential mysterium. This then allows us to understand how each essence has mutated into a mysterium, a life. We can understand from this, moreover, how there is a magical craving in the great mysterium, a craving which crafts a mirror for each essentia so that it may see and recognize itself therein. When it then comprehends the craving (meaning the mirror) and introduces it into its imagination, realizing that this is not of its own life, repulsion arises, nausea, since the craving would reject the mirror but cannot do so: at that point the craving craves after the end of the beginning and departs from the mirror so that it shatters. This shattering is a turba, that is, a death of the composed life. We recognize sublimely how it happens that the imagination of the eternal nature has the turba in the midst of the craving in the mysterium, but unconsciously, so that the creature, being the mirror [of eternity], arouses itself in the ferocity that lay hidden within the mysterium in eternity. It is therefore evident that, when the eternal nature moved and aroused itself with the creation of the world, the ferocity was aroused as well: we can see this in vegetation and trees, in worms, toads, snakes, and their kind. The eternal nature is repulsed by this. The wickedness and poison are nourished solely by their essences. This is why eternal nature seeks the end of wickedness to depart from it, descending into the turba as into a dying, yet it cannot die. Rather there is a spitting out into the mysterium where the wickedness must abide alone with its life in darkness.²⁷ Nature abandons it and pours it out. It abides alone within itself as an evil, a poisonous and fierce mysterium. And it is itself a magic unto itself, a craving of poisonous fear.

²⁷ B. evokes here the spitting out of the lukewarm church in Revelation 3:16 (cf. A 23:93).

Sixth Text

When we reflect and comprehend, we discover the antagonism of all beings²⁸ that causes each to be repulsed by and hostile toward the other. For each covets a purity without turba in the other being, even though it has the turba within itself and is repulsive to the other. Now the power of the greater rises up over the lesser and oppresses it by force unless it flees. Otherwise the strong dominates the weak. For this reason the weak runs forth and seeks the goal of the driver;²⁹ for it wants to be free from compulsion. Hence do all creatures seek the object that abides concealed in the mysterium. Thus and so arises all the violence of this world: in that the one dominates the other. This has not been preordained or ordered in the beginning by the highest good but has rather emerged from the turba. Since it has subsequently recognized nature as its being, having been born from it and having submitted to the law that, within the constituted order of things, it should go on breeding and since this generation has ascended as far as *royal* dominion,³⁰ seeking even further, alone, the abyss, to the point of becoming MONARCHIA or empire; and since it is still ascending, wanting to be one, not many: in consequence the first torment of particularity out of which all has arisen wants to rule over everything, to be the exclusive ruler over every regime. Moreover, since in the beginning the craving was but a *single* order that then split in accordance with the essences, the multiplicity seeks again after the one. It will certainly come into being in the sixth number of the crown, that is in the six-thousandth year of the figure; not at the end, but rather in the hour of the day when the creation of the wonders has been completed.³¹ When the marvels of the turba are at an end, a lord will be

²⁸ B.'s vision of animosity in nature blends the natural struggle of beasts with the civil strife of persons and parties.

²⁹ On the context of B.'s term "driver" (Treiber), see Intro IV A, B6.

³⁰ See Grimm, *Regal*, *Hochheitsrecht*: royal legitimation. Both Friedrich of the Palatinate and Ferdinand of Styria claimed the crown of Bohemia. The image of ascending power suggests the potent and popular image of the wheel of the goddess Fortuna. The striving and ascent of power arises from the wellsprings of a divine and natural being.

³¹ Full of allusions to Revelation, this text nonetheless avers that the end will come only when all unfolding marvels have been revealed. Not the external sword of punishment but the depletion of wonders sets the world's limit. The world will end when wonders cease. The rise or fall of power, the self-sprouted authority (a reference to sprouting on one's own tree or unrooted line of descent), the prospect of a lord ruling the entire world in this age of attempted hegemony; the allusion to a decision which can no longer be resisted or revoked—all of these intimations certainly reflect the dramatic events and expectations of B.'s moment, though his point remains in a mode of insinuation.

born to rule the entire world, doing so, however, with many offices.³² Then the self-sprouted authority will be sought after as well as the driver. For the lesser that had to submit will have chased no less after the object. Now the two will part, for the object has been reached and there is no more resisting or revoking it. Thus will the turba be sought after as the ferocity of all creatures. For it too will have run with the revulsion of the creatures to the object, and will now be manifest at its object in the number of the crown, in the six-thousandth year, a bit more, but not less: on that day and in that hour as the creation became complete in the the mysterium and went into the mysterium as a mirror of eternity, transformed into the wonders. On the sixth day, past noon: that is when the mysterium will be manifest with the wonders to be seen and recognized, when the purity will expel the turba for a time, until the beginning merges with the end, at which point the mysterium will be a marvel in figures.

Seventh Text

Since in the mysterium of eternal nature there lay an arcanum of a kind so that all creatures were born and created both evil and good, we can recognize this as a magical power. For continually one magic has aroused and empowered the other by desire, so that everything has aggrandized itself and carried itself to the point of its highest potency. For the spirit of God is no fabricator within nature but rather a discloser and seeker of the good. This is why evil has always sought and found itself in the mysterium, as well as through its magical craving. It too has been disclosed without the intent of God. For ferocity is a harshness that rules over what is simple. Therefore everything has grown on its own tree without predestination.³³ For the first discloser, God did not preordain wickedness for his regime. Reason and awareness were to disclose the wonders. She was to act as a guide of life. We are confronted here by the great secret that has lain within the mysterium

³² *Ämbtern* suggests centers of secular authority, perhaps a decentralized state or confederation.

³³ B. adapts his great symbol of the tree of revelation to human life in order to suggest that the evil of his time has not been intended by God. This symbol serves as a gloss for the "self-sprouted authority" above (see note 31).

from all eternity with its colors four in number. The fifth does not pertain to the mysterium of nature. It is rather the mysterium of the divinity that shines forth in the mysterium of nature as a living light. Those are the colors where all things lie within: blue, red, green, and yellow; the fifth, being white, pertains to God, and it also has its gleam in nature, but it is the fifth essence: a pure, unblemished child that can be contemplated in gold and *silver*, as well as in any bright clear [crystal-]stone capable of withstanding fire. For fire is the test of all colors.³⁴ In it none but the white prevails, for it is the radiance of God's majesty. [The black color does not pertain to the mysterium: it is instead the cover, a darkness in which all things abide.]

Moreover, we also discover in this the tree of tongues, of languages, indeed with four alphabets comprised as one, with the characters of the mysterium designated. In it abides the language of nature that is the root in all languages, though it is not understood in the generation of multiplicity [or of the many languages] by its own children. For its understanding is granted only by the mysterium. It is a wonder of God [this alphabet of the language of nature abides in the black color concealed beneath all things. For the black color does not pertain to the number of colors. It is a mysterium, remaining opaque except for the one who possesses the language of nature, which has been disclosed by God's spirit]. The second alphabet is the Hebrew, which discloses the mysterium and names the tree with its branches and twigs. The third alphabet is the Greek, which names

³⁴ Alchemy has taught B. that fire tests or purifies gold. The political-apocalyptic context suggests an allegory: the "fire-world" will test the aforementioned colors (which perhaps refer also to nations or parties of conflict).

the tree with its fruit and full adornment. Only it properly gives voice to the true awareness. The fourth alphabet is the Latin, which assists the tongues of many peoples and gives voice to the tree with its powers and virtues. The fifth is God's spirit, a discloser of all the alphabets: it can be learned by no human being, unless it discloses itself in the human spirit.³⁵

Thus these alphabets originate from the colors of the great mystery, dividing themselves further in the sum of seventy-seven languages, of which we only recognize five as the chief languages. In the seventy-two, Babel is comprehended as one single mouth of a confused being, whereby reason has taken leave of its guide, intending to go on its own to ascend into the mysterium, as we can see in the children of Nimrod at the Tower of Babel³⁶ when they fell from obedience to God and into their own reason, thereby losing their guide and confounding their reason, to the point of not understanding their own languages with the result that many other languages grew out of the seventy-two of the confused Babel, each then becoming absorbed in itself and always seeking knowledge in its own reason and wickedness. For they became heathens and abandoned God, who let them proceed further in their own marvels. For they did not care to adhere to him. They wanted to have their own tree. Their own reason which was mixed with all colors should rule them. Now the turba was born: they were no longer of one mind. For each wanted to live from his own color. Yet these were not the true main colors,³⁷ but only their evil self-hatched children, who had hatched themselves out in their reason. They ran forth without the true leader who had fashioned them all in one tongue so that no more than one would disclose a tree with its branches, powers, and fruit. For those four alphabets abide in one single tree, spreading asunder. Yet the multiple languages must aid one another with their characters as housemates. Yet since they all want to be their own, they sprout contrary to the tree.

³⁵ A keen philosopher of language and in this sense a child of his age, B. is determined to assign special roles in the unfolding revelation to each of the sacred languages. The nature language or revelation of nature comes first and last.

³⁶ The beginning of the kingdom of the mighty hunter Nimrod is Babel. Its tower and his hunting are symbols of the confusion and persecution of the age. Babylonian confusion and multiplicity are heightened since from the outset of war nations from Spain to Hungary and from Sweden to Turkey are coaxed or expected to play a role in the conflict.

³⁷ According to Grimm, *Farbe* (1), antiquity and the Middle Ages did recognize black among the six main colors. B. presumably has in mind the colors of the rainbow which pertained to God's symbolic covenant with Noah.

Eighth Text.

Thus we recognize the origin of two religions from which Babel has emerged as a goddess.³⁸ We can see this in the heathens and Jews. For Babel is in both: they are two races in one, the one proceeding from reason, from the life of nature and its spirit, seeking self-aggrandizement and fashioning a path for itself in its own being. For its will proceeds from its own craving, seeking its magic as a great number for its regime, a multiplicity: it proceeds out of itself and advances, while its will remains in its multiplicity in which its god and leader resides. And should it be confronted and castigated by the free will of God,³⁹ its false god simply plays up the hypocrite to the free will, that is, to the spirit of God, with assertions honoring its will in the number of the multitude. For the will of the latter has emerged from its treasure which is its magic. It does not comprehend the free will of God, having been born of the flesh and blood of its own nature, a child of this world who regards its treasure as its love. For this reason, it has become a hypocrite and a confused Babel. For the numbers of multiplicity, its own peculiar magic, are confusing it, so that it proceeds out of the one number into the many. Now this multiplicity is a confounded Babel and with it is its hypocritical opinion offering good words to the spirit of unity with much praise: an Antichrist and liar. For it says one thing and does another. Its heart is a craving and the spirit of its heart has regressed into the craving. Thus, the magus of the multitude is now a *proud, arrogant, greedy*, wicked consumer, a spirit of the covetous multitude, a false idol. It does not adhere to the free will of nature which holds the power of the wonders in its grasp. Nor does it have any understanding of the divine mystery. It does not adhere to its spirit with its will. If its will were directed to freedom, the spirit of God would disclose

³⁸ *Abgöttin* is literally a female idol, though goddess conforms better to B.'s denunciations of Babel.

³⁹ *(D)er freie Willen Gottes*, the free will of God, embodies Evangelical freedom: the kingdoms of spirit and power are confounded by confessional alliances and wars: this freedom, and indeed the entire tract itself, argues against the will of the multitude and its chaotic notion of freedom. The conflicting sense of freedom is pivotal to the work.

its magical mysterium and his wonders and works with the will of God. But insofar as they only advance out of themselves, the beginning merely seeks that end, and the middle the turba. For it does not abide in the free will of God but rather grows out of itself, raising itself up as a proud tree. Since God can only be one in will, in the eternal desire, meaning in the eternal magic so that the craving of the eternal magic can only surrender to the eternal will to draw its life from it, the will of its spawn is a discordant, perjurious whore. It is a breeder of falsehood that does not adhere to the free will: we understand by this a separation from God, caused on the whole by Lucifer who rendered the magic of nature mendaciously covetous: thus are two eternal lives born, one submitting to the will of God and the other to the will of the devil and ferocity.

And this is Babel with the Antichrist on earth: everything that proceeds out of God's will into its own will pertains to Babel: you can see this in the Jews and heathens and indeed in all peoples.⁴⁰ The heathens persist in their own magic, having gone out of their craving for corruption into the light of nature, because they did not know God, and lived in purity: they were children of the free will in whom the spirit of freedom disclosed great wonders in their mysterium as can be seen in their extant wisdom.

The others who only lived by their own magic will of flesh and blood found it drowned in the turba. It swirled up in their will and gave them a spirit governed by the compulsions of greed and ferocity: they sought only the number of multiplicity, that is, governments and kingdoms; and when, due to violence, the turba was able to advance no further, it became enraged

⁴⁰ Extended tirades against Jews and heathens are uncharacteristic of B. and unmotivated here. B. is presumably constructing a type to refer to the Calvinist-led Bohemian Confederation into which the Lutheran Lusatians and Silesians had been thrust against their consciences and to their peril (see Intro II A1–2). Precedents in *Aurora* equate heathens to “distorters of Scripture” (see A 21:34). The Confederation was a “Babel” of contending religions which had departed “God’s will into its own will” by usurping the royal power. Its Calvinists lived by their own “magic of flesh and blood” denying the Lutheran doctrine of Communion and mixing two kingdoms in the sense that spiritual freedom was yoked to power, an error denounced by Luther (cf. Intro IV A). B. avers that this might be equally true for all “houses.” However, if the house of Bohemia is no more sinful, B. could feel as an affected party that, “worst of all is the crowned whore and her sponsors” (der ärgeste ist die gekrönete Hure / und ihre Paten). Friedrich, his motives dubious, had been crowned by a multitude of illicit selfish interests.

and initiated conflict and war: this is the source of the war, arrogance, and greed of the multitude. With its number, it pertains to the mysterium of ferocity.

The same happened with the Jews: God had revealed himself to them; but they adhered to two wills, the one part with their will directed toward God's commandment in his will, as with the patriarchs and all the pious faithful of Israel; the others performed with the *heathens* the work of the law, adhering with their will to their poisonous magic, meaning greed, and seeking only their numbers of multitude. Their opinion was a Jew and their heart a Babylonian whore, a hypocrite and Antichrist with good words and a false and greedy heart. Thus in Christendom and among all peoples, the whore of Babel became established, wherever in a single people two kingdoms dwell simultaneously and refuse to become mingled internally to become one in spirit, just as clay and iron would not merge. They might indeed merge in body, but their spirits remain two distinct races, as the Prophet Daniel says.⁴¹

So whoever wants to know the Antichrist need only seek and find him in all houses. Yet worst of all is the crowned whore and her sponsors who have christened her from whoredom in order that they too might live in the number of the multitude. They are the screamers who would lead the single will of God over into many wills in order to inherit the number of the multitude and feed their terrestrial bellies.

Those of the other part of the free will of God proceed with their magic will out of themselves into freedom, meaning the unique incomprehensible will of God. They stand looking backward in the magical figure. Their life seeks bread and goes forth; but their will is not in bread: it instead goes out of itself, out of the craving, and into God. They live with their will in God, in one number. They are the children of the eternal true [magia]. For God's spirit dwells in their will and discloses to them the eternal wonders of God

⁴¹ This refers to Daniel's prophecy of Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Dan 2:43): "As you saw the iron mixed with clay, so will they mix with one another in marriage, but they will not hold together in marriage, just as iron does not mix with clay" (Luther: "Aber sie werden doch nicht an einander halten / Gleich wie sich eisen mit thon nicht mengen lesst"). This portends ill for the marriage of "two kingdoms" ("da in einem Volke zugleiche 2. Reiche wohnen").

and the spirit of their life, the wonders of this world. They are free of Babel and the Antichrist, even if they are sitting in his very lap. For the true image of God abides in the will's spirit, born out of the soul's spirit.

Ninth Text.

So since two magics are thus in one another, there are also two *magi* leading them, that is, two spirits. One is God's spirit, the other is the spirit of reason into which the devil has insinuated himself. In God's spirit there is love of unity. Moreover, the human being cannot submit to a better validation than by heeding earnestly that to which his desire and pleasure compel him. For that is his guide and he is its child. As it stands now, he has the power to break and change that same will. For he is magical and holds the power. But he must be earnest in order to tame the sidereal spirit that prevails within him.⁴² What is needed is a sober and quiet life perpetually infused into God's will. The torment of the stars cannot be tamed by any wisdom or art. Only moderation in life with perpetual avoidance of influences will do. The elements will always cast the craving of the stars into the will so that it will not be easy to become a child of God. Great effort and many pains and sufferings will be needed. The Antichrist might call himself a child of God, but Christ says, "Not all will enter heaven who say, 'Lord, Lord, have we not cast out devils and done works.'" For he will say to them, "Get away from me, you stinking goats. I do not know you. You acted out of false magic and were never recognized in my spirit and will. In your spiritual figure, you are goats, tyrants, misers, arrogant, lustful. You have had my name on your tongue while sacrificing your heart to the lust of the craving flesh. You have been born in the turba. You must be tested by fire so that each kind of fruit will come into its proper realm."

⁴² Christian stoicism had a broad appeal in B.'s age of calamities. Montaigne might have confirmed B.'s advice. The stars rule human destiny and wreak disasters, but imagination as the inner star empowers change from within. The medieval trope that a wise man is not subject to the stars does not go far enough for B.'s notion of restraint.

Therefore, you beautiful world, look at yourself in these writings that have been placed before you by the eternal ground. Think about it deeper and further. Otherwise you will get ensnared in your turba. With your being you are to pass through the fire of God. Whatever is a work outside of God's shall remain in the fire. But what has been born in God's will shall abide to his honor and wondrous work and to the eternal joy of the human image. Think about what you are doing. For Babel already stands in flames and has begun to burn.⁴³ It can no longer be extinguished. There is no medicine. It has been found out as evil. Its empire is coming to an end. Hallelujah.

8. May 1620

⁴³ The exhortation that it is time to depart from a Babel in flames is a refrain of B's letters and treatises. It suggests less an intention to embrace exile than a sense of the urgency of rebirth and renewal.