

## *The Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy (1690)*

### *Chapter VII*

§. 1. *Every body can change into a spirit and every spirit into a body because the distinction between body and spirit is only one of mode, not essence. One reason for this comes from the order of things mentioned above, which consists in only three things. Even the worst creatures, the most dreadful demons, become good after many and long torments and punishments. Furthermore, this crassness and hardness of bodies arose after a fall, and on this account they will return to a subtle and supple state.* §. 2. *Another reason for this comes from the divine attributes, some of which can be communicated to all his creatures.* §. 3. *A third reason comes from the love which spirits have for bodies.* §. 4. *To be penetrable and indivisible applies as much to bodies as to spirits, and to be impenetrable and divisible is equally applicable to spirits as to bodies. For this reason, the difference is only one of degree not of essence, and no creature or created spirit can be intimately present in any other creature because intimate presence pertains to God and Christ alone. Therefore, that philosophical penetration of bodies by created spirits is a pure fiction of the Scholastics.*

*In order to demonstrate this a bit more clearly, namely, that every body is a certain life or spirit in nature and has the principle of perception, having sense and thought, love, desire, joy, and grief insofar as it is affected in one way or another, and consequently, that every body has activity and motion in itself so that it can move itself wherever it wants to be, I claim that every body in its own nature, as it was originally created and will be once again, will return to its primordial state and be freed from that confusion and vanity to which it is subjected on account of sin.*

§. 1. The first reason is derived from the aforementioned order of things which I have already shown to be only three, namely, God as the highest, Christ as the mediator, and the creation as the lowest rank of all. This creation is one entity or substance in respect to its nature or essence, as demonstrated above, so that it only varies according to its modes of existence, one of which is corporeality. There are many degrees of this so that any thing can approach or recede more or less from the condition of a body or spirit. Moreover, because spirit is the more excellent of the two in the true and natural order of things, the more spiritual a certain creature becomes (that is, if it does not degenerate in other ways), the closer it comes to God, who, as we all know, is the highest spirit. Thus, a body is always able to become more and more spiritual to infinity since God, who is the first and highest spirit, is infinite and does not and cannot partake of the least corporeality. Consequently, it is the nature of a creature, unless it degenerates, always to become more and more like the creator. But because there is no being which is in every way contrary to God (surely nothing exists which is infinitely and immutably bad, as God is infinitely and immutably good, and there is nothing which is infinitely dark as God is infinitely light, nor is anything infinitely a body having no spirit, as God is infinitely spirit having no body), it is therefore clear that no creature can become more and more a body to infinity, although it can become more and more a spirit to infinity. And nothing

can become darker and darker to infinity, although it can become brighter and brighter to infinity. For this reason, nothing can be bad to infinity, although it can become better and better to infinity. Thus, in the very nature of things there are limits to evil, but none to goodness. In the same way, every degree of evil or sin has its own punishment, pain, and chastisement appropriate to the nature of the deed itself, by means of which evil turns back again to good. Although the creature does not immediately recognize it when it sins, the punishment or chastisement adheres in the sins which creatures commit in such a way that it appears at the appropriate time. At this time every sin will have its own punishment and every creature will feel pain and chastisement, which will return that creature to the pristine state of goodness in which it was created and from which it can never fall again because, through its great punishment, it has acquired a greater perfection and strength. Consequently, from that indifference of will which it once had for good or evil, it rises until it only wishes to be good and is incapable of wishing any evil.

2 Hence one can infer that all God's creatures, which have previously fallen and degenerated from their original goodness, must be changed and restored after a certain time to a condition which is not simply as good as that in which they were created, but better. The work of God cannot cease, and thus it is the nature of every creature to be always in motion and always changing from good to better and from good to evil or from evil back to good. And because it is not possible to proceed towards evil to infinity since there is no example of infinite evil, every creature must necessarily turn again towards good or fall into eternal silence, which is contrary to nature. But if anyone should say that it falls into eternal torment, I answer: if you understand by eternity an infinity of ages which will never end, this is impossible because all pain and torment stimulates the life or spirit existing in everything which suffers. As we see from constant experience and as reason teaches us, this must necessarily happen because through pain and suffering whatever grossness or crassness is contracted by the spirit or body is diminished; and so the spirit imprisoned in such grossness or crassness is set free and becomes more spiritual and, consequently, more active and effective through pain.

3 Thus, since a creature cannot proceed infinitely toward evil nor fall into inactivity or silence or utter eternal suffering, it irrefutably follows that it must return toward the good, and the greater its suffering, the sooner its return and restoration. And so we see how a certain thing, while always remaining the same substance, can change marvelously in respect to its mode of being, so that a holy and blessed spirit or an angel of light may become an evil and cursed spirit of darkness through its own willful actions. This change or metamorphosis is as great as if spirit changed into body. And if one asks whether these spirits become more corporeal than they previously were in their original state before they fell through their own wrongdoing, I answer, yes, since, as I have already shown, spirit is able to become more or less corporeal in many degrees, although not to infinity. By the same token, spirits can remain for long periods of time without any of the crassness of body characteristic of visible things in this world, such as hard stones or metals or the bodies of men and women. For surely the bodies of

the worst spirits do not have the same crassness as a visible body. And yet all that crassness of visible bodies comes from the fall of the spirits from their original state. Because of this grossness, spirits can become contracted after long and varied periods of time, although they cannot together and at one time fall into a general grossness, such that the entire body of a fallen spirit can be equally crass in all its parts. But some parts become grosser and grosser, and the remaining parts of this corporeal spirit (these are the means by which spirit is intimately united to body) retain a certain tenuousness, without which spirit cannot be so active or mobile as otherwise. The principal spirit (together with its ministering spirits—as many as it can gather together—along with those subtle and tenuous parts of the body) departs from these crasser parts of the body, which it abandons as if they were so many dead corpses which are no longer fit to serve those same spirits in operations which they perform in their present state.

4 We see this excess of subtler and stronger spirits in an alcoholic liquor change from grosser and harder parts into better and more tenuous ones. Such a liquor freezes when the stronger spirits (having left behind the harder parts which are especially exposed to the outside cold) withdraw to the middle of the body which remains tenuous, so that every single drop of that liquor (which does not freeze but always remains liquid in the innermost parts of that frozen body) has in itself the multiplied strength of all those parts which are frozen. We must recognize that the grossness and hardness of bodies is twofold: one sort is visible and palpable to our external sense; the other is invisible and impalpable, but nevertheless just as gross as the other, indeed, often grosser and harder, since it can be perceived internally by our inner senses, although it does not affect our external senses. Therefore, invisible and impalpable grossness and hardness is characteristic of those bodies which are so slight that our external senses cannot perceive them. Nevertheless, they are extremely hard, harder in fact than any flint or metal which our hands can hold. For the most part, visible water is composed of these small, hard bodies, although it appears to us quite soft, fluid, and tenuous on account of the many other subtle bodies which continually stir and move the hard particles, so that to our crass senses water appears one simple, uniform, homogeneous thing. Nevertheless, it consists of many heterogeneous and dissimilar parts, more so than most other bodies. Many of these parts are quite hard and rocky, from which come bubbling sands and all other sorts of gravel and stones, whose origin and birth arise from the water in the depths of the earth. When these little stones or those pebbly particles of water grow into visible gravel and stones, they lose this hardness after a certain period of time and become softer and more tenuous than when they were part of the water. For stones decay and turn into soft earth from which animals come forth. Thus, even decaying stones often turn back into water; but this is a different sort of water than before, for the first is becoming hard and the second becoming soft. By way of example, it has been observed that two kinds of water flow from one and the same mountain in Switzerland. Drinking one sort produces kidney stones, but the other provides a remedy against this. Thus, one kind of water turns to stone and the other comes out of stones when it putrefies and consequently loses its previous hardness and changes. From these examples one may easily understand how the heart or spirit of a wicked man is called hard and stony because his spirit

has indeed real hardness in it like that found in those small, stony particles of water. On the other hand, the spirit of a good person is soft and tender. We can really sense the internal hardness and softness of spirit, and any good person perceives this as tangibly as he can feel the external hardness of crass, external bodies with his external touch. Moreover, those who are dead in their sins lack this sense of the hardness or softness of good or bad spirits, and for this reason they regard these phrases as merely metaphors, when, in fact, they have a real and proper meaning without any figurative sense.

§. 2. From a serious and due consideration of the divine attributes (from which the truth of everything can be made clear, as if from a treasure house stored with riches), I have deduced another reason why created spirits can change into bodies and bodies into spirits. For since God is infinitely good and communicates his goodness to all his creatures in infinite ways, so that there is no creature which does not receive something of his goodness, and this as fully as possible, and since the goodness of God is a living goodness, which possesses life, knowledge, love, and power, which he communicates to his creatures, how can any dead thing proceed from him or be created by him, such as mere body or matter, according to the hypothesis of those who affirm that matter cannot be changed into any degree of life or perception? It has been truly said that God does not make death. It is equally true that he did not make any dead thing, for how can a dead thing come from him who is infinite life and love? Or, how can any creature receive so vile and diminished an essence from him (who is so infinitely generous and good) that it does not share any life or perception and is not able to aspire to the least degree of these for all eternity? Did not God create all his creatures to this end, namely, that they be blessed in him and enjoy his divine goodness in their various conditions and states? Moreover, how could this be possible without life or perception? How can anything lacking life enjoy divine goodness? We will carry this argument even farther.

2 The divine attributes are commonly and correctly divided into those which are communicable and those which are not. The incommunicable are that God is a being subsisting by himself, independent, immutable, absolutely infinite, and most perfect. The communicable attributes are that God is spirit, light, life, that he is good, holy, just, wise, etc. Among these communicable attributes there are none which are not alive and life itself. And since every creature shares certain attributes with God, I ask what attribute produces dead matter, or body, which is incapable of life and sense for eternity? If one says that this conforms with God in his reality or in the fact that he has an essence, I reply: There can be no dead reality of which he is or could be a part, which would imply that he would have his own dead reality. Besides, reality is not properly speaking attributed to something; but what is properly attributed to something is what is predicated or affirmed about that reality. For what attributes or perfections can be assigned to dead matter which are analogous to those in God? If we inquire closely into this matter, we shall discover nothing at all, for every one of his attributes is alive, indeed, is life itself.

3 Moreover, since God's creatures, insofar as they are creatures, must be like their creator in certain things, I ask, in what way is this dead matter like God? If

they say again, "to his pure reality," I reply: There can be nothing like that either in God or in creatures, and therefore it is simply non-being.

4 As for the remaining attributes of matter, namely, hardness, shape, and motion, these can obviously have no place in God. Consequently, they are not among his communicable attributes, but are rather the essential differences or various attributes by which creatures, as such, are distinguished from God, because mutability is also one of those differentiating attributes. Therefore one cannot say that mutability is one of God's communicable attributes. In the same way, hardness, shape, and motion are not among God's communicable attributes but only among those by which creatures differ from him. Since dead matter does not share any of the communicable attributes of God, one must then conclude that dead matter is completely non-being, a vain fiction and Chimera, and an impossible thing. If one should say that dead matter has metaphysical truth and goodness, to the extent that every being is true and good, again, I ask, what is this truth or goodness? For, if it shares nothing of the communicable attributes of God, it will not be true or good and, consequently, will be an utter fiction, as previously said. Furthermore, since one cannot say how dead matter shares in divine goodness in the least, one has even less chance of showing how it is capable of reason and able to acquire greater goodness to infinity, which is the nature of all creatures since they grow and progress infinitely toward greater perfection, as shown above. For what further progress in goodness and perfection can dead matter make? For after it has undergone infinite changes of motion and figure, it is forced to remain dead as before. And if motion and shape contribute nothing to life, then that matter can never improve or ever progress in goodness in the smallest degree. For suppose that this dead matter, or body, has assumed all forms and has been changed into all kinds of shapes, both the most regular and precise. What use is this body or matter since it lacks all life and perception? Thus we maintain that matter has assumed an infinity of motions from the slowest to the fastest, on account of which it becomes better by virtue of a certain inner power to improve itself. An argument for this intrinsic power is that the improvement is such as the nature of the thing requires and which it brings about. However, merely dead body and matter requires no kind of motion or shape, nor does it do anything for itself through one motion or shape more than another. For it is equally indifferent to every motion or shape whatsoever and, consequently, cannot be improved or perfected by any of them. And what benefit will come to it from all these helps, if it remains dead and passive?

§. 3. My third argument is drawn from that great love and desire which spirits or souls have for bodies, and especially for those bodies with which they are united and in which they dwell. Now, the basis of all love or desire, which brings one thing to another, is that they are of one nature and substance, or that they are like each other or of one mind, or that one has its being from another. We find examples of this among all animals which produce their own offspring in the same way as human beings. For they clearly love whatever they bring to birth. Thus even wicked men and women (if they are not extremely perverse and profligate) love their own children and cherish them with natural affection. The

reason for this is surely that their children are of one nature and substance, as if they were part of them. And if their children look like them, either in body, spirit, or manner, love for them grows greater because of this. We also see that animals of the same species love each other more than animals of a different species. Thus cattle of one species graze together, birds of one species fly in flocks, fish of one species swim together, and men prefer to associate with men rather than with other creatures. In addition to this particular love, there is also a certain universal love in all creatures for each other, in spite of that great confusion which resulted from the Fall. This surely should follow from the same basic principle, that all things are one in virtue of their primary substance or essence and are like parts or members of the same body. Furthermore, we see in every species of animal that males and females love each other and that in all their matings (which are not monstrous and against nature) they care for each other. This comes not only from the unity of their nature but also because of their remarkable similarity to each other. There are two foundations for the love between men and women expressly mentioned in Genesis. One refers to the unity of their nature, for example, when Adam says of his wife: "She is bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh, etc." (Genesis 2:23). For she was taken from him and was part of him and therefore loved him. The second refers to their similarity, because no helpmeet was found for him before she was made. As it says in Hebrew, among all creatures he saw no one like himself with whom he could associate, until Eve was created for him. But there is yet another reason for love, when beings which love each other are not one substance, but one has given being to another and is the genuine and real cause of it. So it is between God and the creatures. For he gave existence, life, and motion to everything and he therefore loves everything and is unable not to love everything. Indeed, when he appears to hate them and to be angry with them, this anger and what comes from it, namely, punishment and judgment, are for their good because he saw they needed them. Those creatures, on the other hand, which are not altogether degenerate and lost to every sense of God, love him. This is a certain divine law and instinct with which he has endowed all rational creatures so that they love him, which is the fulfillment of all the commandments. Moreover, those creatures which are most like God love him more and are more loved by him. But if one maintains that there is yet another reason for love, which is the principal one, namely, goodness, which is the strongest attraction of love and the reason why God must be loved as much as possible by all things because he is the best, then where there is also such goodness, either real or apparent, in his creatures, their fellow creatures love them. I answer that one must concede that goodness is the great, indeed, the greatest cause of love and its proper object. This goodness is not, however, a reason distinct from those already mentioned but included in them. For the reason why we call something good is because it really or apparently pleases us on account of its similarity to us, or ours to it. This is why good people love good people and not others. For good people cannot love bad people, nor bad people good. For there is no greater similarity than between good and good. Therefore, the reason why we call, or think, something good is that it does us good and we share its goodness. Consequently, similarity remains the first cause of love. Thus when anything gives being to another, as when God

and Christ give being to creatures (indeed, true essence comes from them alone), they are similar to some extent. For it is impossible for a creature not to have some similarity to its creator or to agree with it in certain attributes and perfections.

2 Taking this as a touchstone, let us now return to our subject, that is, let us examine whether or not spirit and body are of one nature and substance and therefore able to change into each other? I ask, then, for what reason does the soul or human spirit so love the body and so unite with it and so unwillingly depart from it that, as is widely known, the souls of certain people remain with their bodies and in their power after the death of the body and until it decomposes and turns to dust. The reason for this love cannot be that the spirit or soul gave a distinct being to the body, or the body to the spirit, for this would be creation in a strict sense, properly speaking. Moreover, it is solely the function of God and Christ alone to give being to things. Therefore, love necessarily occurs because of the similarity or affinity between their natures. But if one says that there is a certain goodness in the body which moves the spirit to love it, then this goodness will necessarily correspond to something which is similar to it in the nature of the soul. Otherwise, the body could not be brought to the soul. Indeed, let them tell us, then, what is that goodness in the body on account of which the soul loves it so much? In what attributes or perfections is body similar to spirit, if the body is nothing but a dead trunk and a certain mass, which is altogether incapable of any life or degree of perfection? If they say that the body agrees with the soul or spirit in its manner of being, that is, that just as the spirit has being, so does the body, this has already been refuted in the previous argument. For, if this being has no attributes or perfections like those of spirit, then this is a mere fiction. For God has created no bare being, which is only mere being and without attributes, which can be predicated of it. Moreover, being is merely a logical term and concept, which logicians call the most general genus and which, as a bare and abstract notion, does not exist in things themselves but only as a concept or in the human mind. For this reason, every being has an individual nature with certain ascertainable attributes.

3 Now, what are those attributes of the body which are similar to those of the spirit? Let us examine the principal attributes of the body insofar as it is distinct from the spirit. According to the sense of those who maintain that body and spirit are so infinitely distant in nature that one cannot become the other, the attributes are the following: that the body is impenetrable by all other bodies, so that their parts cannot penetrate each other. Another attribute of the body is that it is discernible, or divisible. The attributes of spirit, however, as these people define them, are penetrability and indiscernibility, so that one spirit can penetrate another or a thousand spirits can exist within each other, taking up no more space than one spirit. Moreover, spirit is so simple and unified that it cannot be separated or really divided into parts separated from each other. Now, if we compare these attributes of body and spirit, they are so far from having any similarity to each other or of having any natural affinity—yet the true basis of love and unity consists in this, as has been said—that they are clearly opposites. Indeed, nothing in the entire universe can be conceived of as so contrary, as

body and spirit are in the minds of these people. For in all their attributes they are utterly contrary because impenetrability and penetrability are more opposite than black and white or hot and cold, since black can become white and hot can become cold. But, as they say, what is impenetrable cannot become penetrable. Yet God and creatures are not so infinitely different in their essence as these doctors make body and spirit, for there are many attributes which God and creatures share. But we can find no attribute of body which agrees in any way with spirit and, therefore, with God who is the highest and purest spirit. Therefore, body could not be one of God's creatures, but must be merely non-being or a fiction. Moreover, just as body and spirit have different attributes of impenetrability and penetrability, so they differ in terms of discernibility and indiscernibility.

4 But if they allege that body and spirit agree in certain attributes, such as extension, motion, and shape, with the result that spirit has extension and is able to reach from one place to another, move from one place to another, and also change itself into whatever shape it pleases, in such cases it agrees with the body and the body with it. To this I respond with my first supposition, that spirit can extend (which nevertheless many, in fact, most people deny, who claim that body and soul are essentially different). Yet the extension of spirit and body, as they understand it, differs in an astonishing way. For the extension of the body is always impenetrable. In fact, in respect to the body, to be extended and to be impenetrable are only one real attribute stated in terms of two mental and logical notions or ways of speaking. For what is extension unless the body is impenetrable, wherever it is, in its own parts? Remove this attribute of impenetrability from the body and it can no longer be conceived of as extended. Furthermore, according to the notion of those people, the extension of body and spirit differ infinitely. Whatever extension a body has is so necessary and essential to it that it is impossible for it to be extended more or less. However, according to these people, spirit can be extended more or less. And since mobility and the capacity for having a shape follow from extension—spirit has a far different shape and mobility than body because spirit is able to move and shape itself, which the body cannot do—by the same reasoning, what is valid against one attribute is valid also against the others.

§. 4. Moreover, how can they prove that impenetrability is an essential attribute of the body or penetrability an essential attribute of the spirit? Why can the body not be more or less impenetrable and spirit more or less penetrable, as can happen, and indeed does, with other attributes? For example, a certain body can be more or less heavy or light, dense or rare, solid or liquid, hot or cold. Therefore, why can it not also be more or less impenetrable and penetrable? If one says that we always see in these changes that the body remains impenetrable, just as iron when it is tempered remains impenetrable, I concede that it remains impenetrable by any other equally coarse body. But it can be penetrated and is penetrated by a more subtle body, namely, by fire, which enters it and penetrates all its parts. It thus becomes soft, and if the fire is strong, it completely liquefies. If against this they object that the fire does not enter the iron in a philosophical sense, as if the fire and the iron occupy only one place and are consequently

most intimately present one to the other, since it is clearly not true that tempered iron swells and takes on greater mass than when cold, or that when cooled it becomes hard again and returns to its former dimensions. To this I reply that if they understand by penetration what we call intimate presence, as when a certain homogeneous substance enters into another of an equal size, which should not increase in size or weight, this appears altogether irrational, and it would be an utter impossibility and contradiction to endow creatures with such intimate presence. This belongs to God and Christ alone as creators, who possess the privilege of being intimately present in creatures. No creature can have such intimate presence in a fellow creature, because otherwise it would cease to be a creature and would obtain one of the incommunicable attributes of God and Christ, which is this intimate presence. This, I say, should be attributed primarily to God and secondly to Christ inasmuch as he is the mediator between God and creatures. And as Christ shares mutability and immutability and eternity and time, he can be said to share spirit and body and consequently place and extension. For his body is a different substance from the bodies of all other creatures. (Indeed, he is the beginning of them and closest to God.) Therefore, it can be truly said that he is intimately present in them, yet is not to be confounded with them.

2 But to suppose that one creature can be intimately present in another so that it mingles or unites with it in a most perfect way, while not adding to its weight or extension, confounds creatures and makes two or more into one. Indeed, this hypothesis would imply that the whole creation could be reduced to the smallest grain or particle of dust because any part might penetrate another without adding more extension. If it is said that this only proves that spirits can be reduced to a tiny space, but not bodies, because bodies are impenetrable, I reply that this is begging the question because they have not yet proved that body and spirit are different substances. Unless they are different, it would follow that one nature is no more penetrable than another, according to their opinion. It certainly appears reasonable that time is extended in such a way into its due measures and distinct lengths that it cannot exceed those limits and therefore cannot be intimately present in each—as, for example, the first day of the week cannot be present in the second, nor the first hour of the day in the second, nor the first minute of the hour in the second minute of the same hour, because it is the nature and essence of time to be successive and to have one part after another, although God is really and intimately present in all times and does not change. It cannot be said, however, of a creature that it exists in all or many times and does not change, since a creature always changes with time; for time is nothing but the motion or change of creatures from one condition or state to another. Just as this is the condition of time and of a creature in time, the same applies to place or to mass or quantity. For just as there is no time in God, so there is no mass or corporeal quantity. But in creatures there is both time and corporeal quantity because otherwise they would be either God or nothing, which is impossible. Therefore, as every creature has quantity, mass, or extension, it necessarily retains that attribute as something essential to it, just as the essence of time consists of many parts and these as parts of others and so on to infinity. Nevertheless, one can easily understand how a lesser time exists in a greater time through

an example: so many minutes exist in an hour and so many hours in a day. Moreover, one hour immediately borders upon the next but cannot be present in it. This is the condition of creatures because of their mass and size. Indeed, one creature can touch another but not be present in all its parts, but a smaller body can be in a larger and a more subtle body in a grosser.

3 This is the penetration which more properly applies equally to bodies and souls; for example, when a less gross body is able to penetrate a more gross body. But two bodies of equal grossness cannot penetrate one another. The same thing may be said about spirits, which also have their own degrees of greater or lesser grossness and subtlety inasmuch as they have bodies. Nor is there any difference between body and spirit (if body is taken not in their sense, who maintain that it is merely a dead thing lacking life and the capacity for life, but in a proper sense, as an excellent creature of God, having life and sensation, which belong to it either actually or potentially), except that body is the grosser part and the spirit the more subtle. Thus the word “spirit” comes from air, which is the most subtle nature in the visible world. Spirit is better defined in the *Kabbala Denudata* as the central nature, which has the ability to emit a luminous sphere and to enlarge and to shrink it, which appears to be the meaning of Aristotle’s *entelechy*. Matter is defined as a pure center or a point without a radius, which Aristotle understands as privation. From this we must conclude that the impenetrability of creatures must be limited to their centers. The Hebrew word *ruach*, which means spirit, also signifies air. And because air has such swift motion, all the swiftness of motion is attributed to the spirit which is in a moving body. When common people perceive no motion in bodies, they call them from ignorance dead bodies without spirit and life. But truly there is no body anywhere which does not have motion and consequently life or spirit. Therefore, every creature has its own due weight or extension, which it cannot exceed and which cannot be diminished.

4 This does not stop us from seeing how a very small body can be extended into a space a thousand times larger than it had, as gunpowder when ignited expands miraculously. For all this extension occurs through the division of parts into ever smaller and smaller parts, which do not truly fill the whole space as great as it seems since every part has no greater or lesser extension than it had before. One must conclude from this that all created spirits, which are present in bodies, are either in the pores of those bodies or in certain concavities, such as moles make in earth; or else the created spirits make the bodies swell and acquire greater extension, as when fire enters into iron and makes it swell and stretch notably. Although this swelling of bodies cannot always be observed by our external senses, it cannot however be denied. For it is possible that a body can increase notably in its dimensions and become greater, and yet this increase escapes all external observation. In fact, it may be so subtle that it cannot be expressed in numbers. For example, let us imagine a body whose volume contains 64 parts and another of 100 parts. The root of the first body, whose cube is 64, is 4, so the side of that body contains 4 equal lengths. But the side or root of the other body, whose cube is 100, cannot be expressed as a number, for it is greater than 4 and less than 5 and no fraction can determine it. Bodies, therefore, as said

above, can swell notably, if many spirits or more subtle bodies enter into them, even though our crass senses judge that they have not become larger.

5 Now let us turn to the second attribute which is said to belong to a body but not to a spirit, namely, divisibility. If they understand by this that one body, even the smallest conceivable (if we can conceive of such a body) can be divided, this is plainly impossible, for it is a contradiction in terms and implies that the smallest creature may be divided into smaller parts. Thus if a body is understood as one single individual, then it is indivisible. What we commonly mean by the divisibility of bodies is that we can divide one body from another by placing a third between them. In this sense, spirits are no less divisible than bodies. For although one single spirit cannot become two or more spirits, nevertheless, a number of spirits coexisting in one body can be separated from each other as easily as bodies can. However, in whatever way bodies or spirits may be divided or separated from each other throughout the universe, they always remain united in this separation since the whole creation is always just one substance or entity, and there is no vacuum in it. Therefore how can anything be separated from itself, that is, from its own nature as it was originally, primordially, or in its first being? There exists a general unity of all creatures one with another such that no one can be separated from his fellow creatures. There also exists a more special and peculiar unity among the parts of one species in particular. Thus when a body is divided and its limbs are moved apart a certain distance, as long as the limbs remain uncorrupted and unchanged to another species, they always send out subtle particles to each other and to any body which these particles reach; and that body emits similar particles (which we call spirits and bodies, or spirits, for they are both). Through their mediation, the limbs and parts so apparently separated always retain a certain real unity and sympathy, as many examples show, especially the following two. The first is this: if someone without a nose has a nose made for him from the flesh of another man and it is fastened to him like a twig grafted to the trunk of the tree in which it is inserted, when that other man dies and his body rots, that nose also rots and falls from the body of the living man.<sup>11</sup> The second example is of a man whose leg is amputated. When a surgeon amputates the leg and moves it a considerable distance away from the body, the man is overcome by pain and feels it in that part of the leg which was severed. This clearly proves that there is a certain union of parts, even when separated a certain distance from each other. Likewise individuals of the same species, or which have an affinity in some species, have a special unity among each other, even though they are distant from each other. This is even more evident in the case of human beings. For if two people love each other very much, they are so closely united by this love that no distance can divide or separate them, for they are present to each other in spirit and a continual flux or emanation of spirit passes from one to the other, by means of which they are united and tied together as if by ropes. Thus, whatever someone loves—whether it is a human being, an animal, a tree, silver, gold—is united with him, and his spirit goes out into it. It should be noted here that although the spirit of man is commonly said to be one single thing, yet this spirit is composed of many spirits, indeed, countless ones; as the body is composed of many bodies and has a certain order and government in all its parts, much more so is the spirit, which is a great army of

spirits, in which there are distinct functions under one ruling spirit. It is now apparent that impenetrability and indivisibility are no more essential attributes of body than of spirit, because in one sense these attributes apply to both, and in another sense they apply to neither body nor spirit.

6 Against this infinity of spirits in every spirit and against this infinity of bodies in each body, one may oppose the following statement from Scripture: “God made all things by number, weight, and measure” (Wisdom 11:20). Consequently a countless multitude of spirits cannot exist in one human being nor a countless multitude of bodies in one body. I respond, however, that this infinity or countless number of spirits and bodies must be understood only in relation to an intelligent creature, even though no intelligent creature can enumerate that infinity or measure the outward extension of a body or spirit which can occur inside it. It is freely granted, moreover, that God perfectly knows the number and measure of all created things. For if God made everything in number, measure, and weight, then every creature will have its number, measure, and weight; and consequently, we cannot say of any creature that it is only one single thing because it is a number, and number is a multitude. Truly, it is the nature of a creature that it cannot be merely singular if it has to act and enjoy that good which the Creator prepared for it. For example, let us suppose one atom separated from all fellow creatures. What can it do to perfect itself and become greater or better? What can it see or hear or taste or feel, either within or without? It cannot have internal motion because all motion has at least two ends or extremes, namely a beginning and an end. And since this atom is one thing, its center can certainly not have a motion from a beginning to an end; and since therefore it does not see, hear, taste, or feel within itself, it clearly cannot receive these from other creatures outside it. For if it were to see, hear, taste, or feel any other creature, it would have to receive an image of that other creature within itself, which it cannot do because it is only an atom and so small that it cannot receive anything inside itself. For just as the organs of the external senses are made up of many parts, so are the organs of the internal senses.

7 Consequently, all knowledge requires a variety or multitude of things as the subject or receptacle of that knowledge. Moreover, I understand all creaturely knowledge as knowledge received or aroused by the things or objects which are known (whereas God’s knowledge is neither received nor aroused by creatures, but is innately in him and comes from him). Since there are various objects of our knowledge, and since every object sends us its own image and that image is a real entity, it follows that we have many images in us, all of which cannot be received in an atom, but they need their own distinct places in us for their distinct form and shape. Otherwise, not only would confusion follow but many things would be present one to another without any extension, which is against the nature of a creature. Moreover, although the objects of our knowledge are many and we know that I, for example, am a multiple being who receives many images from objects, it does not follow that if I am a multiple being who knows something, I should consequently see one object as if it were multiple, so that instead of one man I would see many. When many men see one man, they do not see him as many men but only as one. Thus, when I look at something, I see it with

my two eyes (unless, perhaps, there is some defect in my vision), and two things do not appear to me, but one. And if I could see something with ten thousand eyes, just as I see with two, that thing, whether it be a horse or a man, would not appear as anything but one single thing. This seems to be the great difference between God and the creatures. For he is one, and this is his perfection, namely to have need of nothing outside himself. But a creature, because it needs the help of its fellow creatures, must be multiple in order to receive this help. For whatever receives something is nourished by it and thus becomes part of it. Therefore it is no longer one thing but many, and as many indeed as the things which it receives and even greater than that. Thus there is a certain mutuality between creatures in giving and receiving, through which one supports another so that one cannot live without the other. What creature in the entire universe can be found which does not need its fellow creatures? Certainly none. Consequently, every creature which has any life, sense, or motion must be multiple or numerous; indeed, from the perspective of every created intellect, it must be numerous without number or infinite. But if someone says, it is necessary that a central or ruling spirit be a single atom, for why else is it called a central or principal spirit having dominion over all the rest, I answer, no. For this central, ruling, or principal spirit is multiple, for the reasons stated above. It is called central because all the other spirits come together in it, just as lines from every part of the circumference meet in the center and go forth from this center. Indeed, the unity of spirits composing this central predominant spirit is firmer and more tenacious than that of other spirits, which are like angels or servants of the principal spirit and leader. This unity is so great that nothing can dissolve it (although the unity of the greater number of ministering spirits which do not belong to the center may be dissolved). Thus it happens that the soul of every human being will remain a whole soul for eternity and endure without end, so that it may receive proper rewards for its labor. The universal law of justice inscribed in everything requires this. This law is like a most strong and unbreakable bond in keeping this unity. For what can agree better with this infinite justice and wisdom than that those who agreed and united in doing good or bad will receive their reward or due punishment together, which cannot happen if they are separated from each other? For the same reason, the central spirit of all other creatures remains indissoluble. And although new central spirits are continually formed in the production of things, nevertheless no central spirit is dissolved; it can only be further advanced or diminished according to its current worthiness or unworthiness, capacity or incapacity.

### Chapter VIII

§. 1. *It is further proved by three additional proofs that spirit and body, insofar as they are creatures, do not essentially differ. And a fourth reason is taken from that intimate union or bond which exists between spirits and bodies.* §. 2. *If the way in which the soul moves the body is illustrated by the way that God moves creatures, this comparison is altogether false.* §. 3. *The union and sympathy of soul and body can be easily demonstrated, as can the way in which the soul moves the body, from the above mentioned principle that spirit is body and body spirit.* §. 4. *A fifth argument is taken from earth*

*and water, which continually produce various kinds of animals from rotting and corrupt matter.* §. 5. *How gross matter is changed into spirit and becomes, as it were, the mother of spirits. An example is drawn from our corporeal nourishment, which through various transmutations in the body is changed into animal spirits and from these into more subtle and spiritual spirits.* §. 6. *Concerning the good and bad angels of men, which are properly human angels, and which proceed from him just like branches from roots.* §. 7. *The sixth and last argument is taken from some passages of Scripture.*

§. 1. The fourth argument, to prove that spirit and body do not differ in essence but in degree, I take from that intimate union or bond which exists between spirits and bodies, by means of which spirits have dominion over bodies with which they are united, so that they move them from one place to another and use them as instruments in their various operations. For if spirit and body are so opposed to each other that while spirit is alive or a living and perceiving substance, body is merely a dead mass, and if spirit is penetrable and indivisible, while body is impenetrable and divisible—all of which are opposing attributes—then what, I ask, is it that unites and joins them so much? Or what are those chains or ties which hold them so firmly together and for such a length of time? Furthermore, when a spirit or soul has been separated from a body, so that the spirit no longer rules over it or has power to move it as before, what is the cause of this separation? If one says that the vital affinity of the soul for the body is the cause of this union and that this vital affinity ceases with the corruption of the body, I answer that one must first ask in what this vital affinity consists? For if they cannot tell us in what this affinity consists, they are talking foolishly with inane words which have sound but not sense. For, surely, according to the sense in which they take body and spirit, there is no affinity whatsoever. For body is always dead matter lacking life and perception, no less when spirit is in it than when spirit leaves it. Thus there is no affinity at all between them. But if some affinity does exist, it would clearly remain the same whether the body is whole or corrupt. If they deny this because spirit requires an organized body to perform the vital actions of the external senses and to move the body and transfer it from place to place, which organization is lacking in a corrupt body, this does not solve the difficulty. For why does spirit require such an organized body? For example, why does the spirit require a corporeal eye so wonderfully formed and organized that I may see through it? Why does spirit need corporeal vision so that it may see corporeal objects? And why is it necessary for the image of an object to be transmitted through the eye so the soul may see it? If it were altogether spirit and in no way body, why does it need such different corporeal organs, which differ from its nature so greatly? Furthermore, how can a spirit move its body or any of its members if the spirit (as they affirm) is of such a nature that no part of its body may resist in any way, as one body usually resists another when, as a result of its impenetrability, it is moved by it? For if spirit so easily penetrates every body, why, when it moves from place to place, does it not leave the body behind since it can so easily pass through it without any or the least resistance? Clearly, this is the cause of all those motions which we see in the world when one thing moves another, namely that the two are impenetrable, in the sense already explained. For were it not for this impenetrability, one creature could scarcely move another because they would not oppose or resist each

other in any way. We have an example of this in the sails of ships by means of which the wind drives the ship—and all the more strongly the fewer the openings, holes, and passages there are in the sails. On the contrary, if instead of sails, a net were unfurled through which the wind would pass freely, the ship would barely move, even though a great storm was blowing. Thus we see how this impenetrability causes the existence of this motion and produces it. Moreover, if there were no impenetrability, as in the case of body and spirit, then there could be no resistance, and consequently spirit could not cause any motion of a body.

§. 2. If they object that God, who is completely incorporeal and intimately present in all bodies, nevertheless moves whatever bodies he pleases and that he is the prime mover of all things, yet has nothing impenetrable about him, I answer that this motion by which God moves a body is completely different from the way a soul moves a body. For the will of God, which gave being to bodies, also gave them motion. Hence motion itself comes from God, through whose will all motion occurs. For, just as a creature cannot give being to itself, so it cannot move itself. But in him and through him we move, live, and have our being (Acts 17:28). Therefore motion and being come from the same cause, God the creator, who nevertheless remains unmoved himself and does not go from place to place since he is equally present everywhere and bestows motion on creatures. But it is a very different case when the soul moves the body, for the soul is not the author of motion but merely limits it to this or that particular thing. And the soul itself moves together with the body from place to place, and if the body is imprisoned or bound with chains, the soul cannot depart from the prison or chains. If anyone wishes to illustrate the motion of the body produced by the soul through the example of God moving his creatures, the comparison is very inappropriate; indeed, they are as dissimilar as if someone wished to describe how an architect builds a ship or house by giving the example of God creating the first substance or matter. In this case the dissimilarity is clearly great. For God gave being to creatures, but a carpenter does not give being to the wood from which he builds a ship.

2 Indeed, no one thinks that because I say that the motions of every creature come from God that he is or could therefore be the author or cause of sin, for although the power to move comes from God, yet sin in no way comes from God but from the creature which has abused this power and directed it to something other than it should. Thus sin is ataxia, or a disorderly direction of motion or the power of moving from its appropriate place or state to another. If, for example, a ship is moved by wind but is steered by a helmsman so that it goes from this or that place, then the helmsman is neither the author nor cause of the wind; but the wind blowing, he makes either a good or bad use of it. When he guides the ship to its destination, he is praised, but when he grounds it on the shoals and suffers shipwreck, then he is blamed and deemed worthy of punishment.

3 Furthermore, why does the spirit or soul suffer so with bodily pain? For if when united to the body it has no corporeality or bodily nature, why is it wounded or grieved when the body is wounded, whose nature is so different? For since the soul can so easily penetrate the body, how can any corporeal thing

hurt it? If one says that only the body feels pain but not the soul, this contradicts the principle of those who affirm that the body has no life or perception. But if one admits that the soul is of one nature and substance with the body, although it surpasses the body by many degrees of life and spirituality, just as it does in swiftness and penetrability and various other perfections, then all the above mentioned difficulties vanish; and one may easily understand how the soul and body are united together and how the soul moves the body and suffers with it and through it.<sup>q</sup>

§. 3. We may easily understand how one body is united with another by that true affinity which one has for another in its nature. Thus the most subtle and spiritual body can be united with a very gross and dense body by means of certain mediating bodies, which share the subtlety and crassness in various degrees between the two extremes. These median bodies are truly the ties or links through which such a subtle and spiritual soul is connected to so crass a body. The union is broken when these mediating spirits are absent or cease.<sup>12</sup> From this basic principle, we easily understand how the soul moves the body just as one subtle body is able to move another crass and dense one. And since the body itself is sentient life or perceiving substance, it is no less easily understood how one body can wound or bring pain or pleasure to another body, because things of one or of a similar nature can easily affect each other. And this argument can be used to answer similar difficulties, namely, how spirits move other spirits, and how spirits contend or struggle with other spirits, and also how good spirits promote unity, harmony, and friendship with each other. For if all spirits can be intimately present within each other, how can they contend or struggle about their location and how can one expel another? And yet a few people who know their own hearts have learned from experience that there is such an expulsion and struggle of spirits, especially of good spirits against evil ones. But if one says that the spirit of God and Christ is intimately present in all things and that it wages war and contends against the devil and his spirits in the human heart, I answer that this comparison is invalid when the operations of God and his creatures are compared. For God's ways are infinitely superior to ours. Nevertheless, one valid objection remains. For when the spirits of God and Christ struggle against the devil and the evil spirits in the human heart, they unite with certain good spirits whom they sanctify and prepare for this union and which serve as a vehicle or chariot in their struggle and conflict with wicked spirits. And so far as these evil spirits struggle against those good spirits in the human heart, they struggle against God and Christ. These good spirits are the spirits of that pious and faithful person who was made good even though he was wicked before. God and Christ help every pious person in this struggle so that they may prevail over evil spirits; however, God allows those who are evil and unfaithful to be captured and vanquished by evil spirits. For God helps no one who does not fear and love him, and who does not obey him and believe in his power, goodness, and truth. When he unites with these people, then the good spirits of such men are like so many arrows and swords which wound and drive back those dark and impure spirits.



2 If one asks, how can the human soul, even in the highest state of purity, be united with God, since God is pure spirit, whereas the soul, though pure in the highest degree, always partakes of corporeality? I answer that this happens through Jesus Christ, who is the true and appropriate medium between the two. Christ and the soul can be united without any other medium because of their great affinity and likeness, which those learned men cannot demonstrate who say that the nature of body and spirit are completely contrary to each other.

§. 4. I take the fifth argument from what we observe in all visible bodies such as earth, water, stones, wood, etc. What an abundance of spirits are in all these things! For earth and water continually produce animals, as they did in the beginning. Hence a pool full of water produces fish, although there were no fish put there to propagate. Since all other things come from earth and water originally, it necessarily follows that the spirits of all animals are in the water. For this reason Genesis says that the spirit of God hovered over the face of the waters, so that from the waters he would bring forth whatever was created afterwards.

2 One might say that this argument does not prove that all spirits are bodies, but only that all bodies have in themselves the spirits of all animals; hence every body has a spirit in it, and although spirit and body are united, they always remain different from each other in their natures and cannot therefore be changed into each other. I reply, however, that if every body, even the smallest, has in itself the spirits of all animals and other things, just as matter is said to have all forms within itself, does a body have all these spirits in it actually or only potentially? If actually, how is it possible that so many spirits essentially different from the body can actually exist in these different essences in a small body (even in the smallest conceivable) unless by intimate presence, which cannot be communicated to any creature, as proved above? Furthermore, if all kinds of spirit exist in any body, even the smallest, how does it happen that such an animal is produced from this body and not from another? Indeed, how does it happen that all kinds of animals are not immediately produced from one and the same body? This is contrary to experience, for we see that in all its operations nature has its order according to which one animal is formed from another and one species proceeds from another, either ascending to a higher perfection or descending to a lower state. But if one says that all spirits are contained in every body in their different essences, not actually but only potentially, then one must concede that the body and all those spirits are the same; that is, that body can be changed into them, as when we say that wood is potentially fire (that is, is changeable into it) and water potentially air (that is, is changeable into it), etc. Yet if spirits and bodies are so inseparably united to each other that no body can be without spirit, indeed without many spirits, this is surely a weighty argument that they are of one original nature and substance. Otherwise, we could not comprehend why they would not finally separate from each other in various and startling dissolutions and separations, as we see when subtle matter separates from grosser matter.

3 How, finally, does it happen that when a body putrefies, other species are generated from this putrefaction? Thus animals come forth from putrefying water or earth. Even rocks, when they putrefy, turn into animals. Thus mud or other putrefying matter generates animals, all of which have spirits. How does

the corruption or dissolution of the body lead to the new generation of animals? If one should say that the spirits of these animals are, as it were, released from their chains and set free by this dissolution, and they then form and shape new bodies for themselves from the aforesaid matter by means of their plastic natures, I reply, how did the first body hold those spirits captive to such a degree? Was it because it was so hard and dense? From this it follows that those spirits are nothing but subtle bodies because the hardness and denseness of the body could imprison them so that they could not escape. For, if spirit could as easily penetrate the hardest body as the softest and most fluid, it could as easily go from one to the other without need of putrefaction or death to generate new life. This captivity of spirits in certain hard bodies, and their liberation when the bodies become soft, offers a clear argument that spirit and body are of one original nature and substance, and that body is nothing but fixed and condensed spirit, and spirit nothing but volatile body or body made subtle.

§. 5. Let it be noted here that in all hard bodies, such as stones (whether common or precious), and also in metals, herbs, trees, and animals, and in all human bodies, there exist many spirits which are as if imprisoned in gross bodies and united with them because they cannot flow out or fly away into other bodies until death or dissolution occurs. There are also many other very subtle spirits which continually emanate from them and which, because of their subtlety, cannot be contained by the hardness of the bodies in which they dwell; and these subtle spirits are productions or conjunctions of the grosser spirits detained in the body. For although these are detained therein, they are not idle in their prison since the body serves as their work place to make those more subtle spirits, which then emanate in colors, sounds, odors, tastes, and various other properties and powers. Therefore the gross body and the spirits contained in it are like the mother of the more subtle spirits, who take the place of children. For nature always works toward the greater perfection of subtlety and spirituality since this is the most natural property of every operation and motion. For all motion wears away and divides a thing and thus makes it subtle and spiritual. In the human body, for example, food and drink are first changed into chyle and then into blood, and afterwards into spirits, which are nothing but blood brought to perfection. These spirits, whether good or bad, always advance to a greater subtlety or spirituality. Through those spirits which come from blood, we see, hear, smell, taste, touch, and feel, indeed, think, love, hate, and do everything we do. From these spirits also come the semen, through which the race propagates, and especially the human voice and speech, which is full of those good or bad spirits made and formed in the heart. As Christ taught: "The mouth speaks from a full heart and the good man produces good deeds from the good treasure of the heart" (Matthew 12:34-5). Likewise, that which goes into a man does not defile him (Mark 7:15), but that which proceeds from him returns to him in the same way it left him.

§. 6. And these are the proper angels of men or their ministering spirits (although there are other angels, both good and bad, which come to men) mentioned by Christ when he says of the little ones who believe in him, "Their an-

gels look upon the face of my heavenly father” (Matthew 18:10). These are the angels of believers who become like little children.

§. 7. I draw the sixth and final argument from certain texts of both the Old and the New Testament, which prove in clear and certain words that everything has life and is truly alive in some degree. As it is said in Acts 17:25, “He gives life to all things,” etc. In 1 Timothy 6:13 it is said of God that “he makes everything live.” Furthermore in Luke 20:38 it is said, “He is not called the God of the dead but of the living” (although this applies primarily to human beings, it is nevertheless generally true of everything else). Certainly, he is the God of those things which have their resurrection and regeneration in their own species, just as human beings have theirs within their species. For the death of things is not their annihilation but a change from one kind or degree of life to another. For this reason the apostle proves the resurrection of the dead and illustrates it with the example of a grain of wheat which, having fallen to the ground, dies and rises again exceptionally fruitful (John 12:24).