

Where is Heaven?

by Jacob Boehme
(edited by Alan Parker)

Jacob Boehme, the slight shoe cobbler from Gorlitz (now part of East Germany), is among the greatest of the Christian mystic writers expounding Union Life themes, and yet probably the least read here in the United States. Most of his writings are long ago out of print or not available in English, and even in English Boehme is extremely difficult to follow. However, in his visionary sight Boehme saw just as far as St. Paul or St. John, and his writings include unique descriptions of the being of God about which Paul and John gave us the fundamental revelation. When one is able to glean understanding from even a portion of Boehme's confusing style, so filled with symbols, the truth usually gushes forth as gleaming glorious light. Boehme wrote about Oneness and Unity from 1612 to 1624, but what he wrote is as modern and revolutionary as the space age. William Law is recognized as Boehme's prime interpreter for the English-speaking world, but Boehme's influence was even more widespread. Copious notes on Boehme's writings were found in Sir Isaac Newton's effects at the time of Newton's death. In addition, many recognize Boehme as the father of German dialectic Christian philosophy, and as a great influence on Hegel, although Hegel gives him only passing credit. What Boehme says is especially relevant to the Union Life perspective, and what follows are a few excerpts from Boehme's writings which Alan Parker has compiled and edited. Alan has paraphrased and amplified some of Boehme's language in order to achieve a more readable introduction to Boehme.

Men have always been of the opinion that heaven is many hundred, no, many thousands of miles distant above the face of the earth, and that God dwells only in that upward heaven. Some have undertaken to measure this height and distance, and have produced many strange and ghastly devices to do so. Indeed, before my knowledge and revelation of God, I believed that, the only true heaven was a round circumference, very azure of a light blue color, which extended above the stars; and I supposed that God had deposited therein His peculiar Being, and that He ruled in this world only in the power of His Holy Spirit.

But when this notion had produced many problems in me and I, at last, found it repulsive, doubtless from the moving of the Spirit, which had a great longing yearning towards me, I at last fell into a very deep melancholy and heavy sadness. Then I beheld and contemplated within my spirit the immense depths and complexities within this world, and of the whole universe. And in this contemplation in myself, I found that evil and good, love and anger, are in all things simultaneously; in the inanimate creatures, in wood, stones, earth and the elements, as well as in men and beasts. And in finding that evil and good were in all things, I became very sad and greatly perplexed and troubled. The Bible could not comfort me, though I was very well acquainted with it and versed in it, and the devil was often beating me with heathenish thoughts which I will not mention here.

In this affliction, I earnestly raised my spirit up into God, wrapping my whole heart and mind and all of my thoughts and my whole will, and without ceasing I wrestled with the Love and Mercy of God, determined not to give up unless He blessed me, that is, unless He enlightened me by His Holy Spirit so that I might understand. So hard did I dig in, within the recesses of my being, towards the life of God and against the gates of Hell, that suddenly my spirit crashed through the gates of Hell and beyond even into the innermost moving of God Himself, and there I was suddenly embraced in love as a bridegroom embraces his dearly beloved bride. The sublimity of the victory within my spirit cannot be expressed either in speaking or writing, neither can it be compared to anything except the regeneration of life out of death. That's it — it is like the resurrection of the dead!

In this Light, my spirit suddenly saw through all, in all, and by all. I discovered God in all of creation, even in the plants and grass; and I realized that I also had discovered the very nature of God, and that I at last knew who God is, and how God is, and what God's will is. Then quite suddenly in that Light of illumination, my will was moved by an immense impulse to describe the Being of God.

From this Light I now have all the knowing, urging, and willing within me to write, and let God work His will in me, though in doing so I should enrage the whole world, the devil, and all the gates of Hell. Even so, I will write and look on and wait what the Lord intends with it.

Now, dear reader, observe: If you want to know about Heaven and what Heaven is and where it is, you do not need to cast your thoughts many thousands of miles off, for that place, that heaven thousands of miles away, is not your Heaven. The true Heaven is not a created place but an uncreated place, and it is not found in a particular place but everywhere, even in the very place where you are standing and going. For when your spirit within yourself is able to penetrate inward through and beyond your own flesh and life, and is able to catch hold of the innermost moving of God, then you are clearly in Heaven. Moreover, if your eyes were but opened, you should see God everywhere in His Heaven, for Heaven is found everywhere. For instance, when St. Stephen saw Heaven open and the Lord Jesus at the right hand of God, his spirit did not suddenly transport itself into outer space, but rather Stephen's spirit had moved inward, within, into the innermost place where Heaven is found everywhere. So you must realize that this world with all of its physical properties is in union with the vast vistas of the heavenly spaces above the earth. There is only one Heart, one Being, one Will, one God, All in all.

Don't think that God is only in some far away heaven, and that the soul, when it departs the human body, must soar aloft many hundred thousands of miles off in order to reach Heaven. No, it need not do that to reach Heaven, because when the soul in Christ departs the body, it is already present in Heaven and there the soul is with God and in God, and also with all the holy angels, and the soul can suddenly be above and suddenly beneath; it is not hindered by anything. For in the unity of God there is no separation of seeming distance. Indeed, in what place should the departed soul of man rather be than with its King and Redeemer Jesus Christ? The fact is that near and far off in God are one thing, one comprehensibility; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, everywhere.

Moreover, this unity is found throughout the universe, for all that there is both here and throughout the universe is, in essence, one Person manifesting Himself. This seemingly outward universe is nothing more than the Godhead playing the joyous melody of His life through His creative instruments which are all of the varied physical forms found throughout the universe, especially the form known as man which He always intended to be His highest song of praise to His eternal and uncreated glory! So you see that wherever you are in this world, you are in Heaven. But you must surely be warned that not only Heaven, but Hell also is present within you, and only in Christ Jesus are you safe from the wrath of God, which is the source of the fires of Hell. For the Wrath of God is summed up in the cross, because it is through the cross that God eternally dies to His Wrath. The Heaven of Love is called patience, for the Father of spirits waits for all His children to choose His Life and Love, not wishing that any should be lost, and the Spirit of Truth reigns in the Heaven of Love and is called Faith and Hope, for He is the source of all faith and hope.

Now finally, little children of flesh, I urge you to open the eyes of your spirits and your hearts, for I want earnestly to show to you the true and proper way to the gates of God's Heaven. Behold! God is the True, the One, the only Being out of whom you yourselves were created, and within whose Life you are living even now. Therefore, Oh child of man, when you behold in your flesh the depths of the universe, the stars and the complexity of

the earth, and all that is in heaven and earth, you are in fact truly in the presence of God. For He is All, and in Him you live and have your being; and that same God reigns and rules over you as well, because He is your King and Creator. It is from this God that you receive even your senses and your ability to have consciousness and to know and think and express yourself. Don't you see? You are a part of Him, and your entire being is a derivative of Him. You are His offspring, you came from Him, and you truly exist in Him. If this were not true, you would never have been.

And so little children, if you now want and desire to draw near by faith to the Life of God, Listen! You must enter inward to the depths within yourselves wherein Christ dwells — not without For within you there exists an eternity, even as there is an eternity within Him. So you must go in to the depths of the hidden secret place within you, to the very depths of the abyss of the Eternal Willing in the Father, which is God's Desire and the source of all things (although this Desire is in no place; it is in fact nothing and also it is nowhere, yet it is present everywhere and in all things because all things come out of it), For it is within this Will or Desire that Wrath and Love eternally struggle against each other, and in which Love is the eternal victor out of the fiery dark wheel of selfishness, through the eternal cross in God's Heart, into regeneration bursting forth as the eternal glorious light of God's nature. His nature is Light, Gentleness, Mercy, Wisdom and Love forever, and it is expressed to us by His Voice, the Word, the Son, our Lord, Saviour, and God. And out of this eternally immense depth of God's Desire, there forever streams forth the light and Love which is the uncreated glory. And this is the true Heaven.

For in this depth within you, God eternally rules in Holiness in His uncreated Heaven. And His Willing within you expresses itself as the willing to all goodness, not wrath, and this willing ever reigns in everlasting dominion, the Sovereign God of Love in victory through the eternal cross on which was slain the Lamb of God before ever a single atom was created. And when you comprehend this, that is, the tragedy which forever occurs in the eternal depths of the Heart of God, and when you know that our God is safe forever, True forever, Merciful forever, and the Being of Love forever (because He forever dies to Himself on the cross in His own heart to all wrath and selfish desire), then my brothers and sisters, you will have crossed through and penetrated into the very and holy heart of God.

And when you comprehend this, you shall know that in this Heaven within you, you are in Christ Jesus, always in union with God. And since you are in oneness with Him, you also shall experience in your flesh, soul, and spirit the same eternal struggle in which you shall forever die to wrath and to self, and through the cross, always being crucified with Him, you shall eternally flash brilliantly with the fire of new life and Love, as you by faith, hope, and love replace wrath with love, evil with good, and the negative with the positive in all aspects of your life. You too shall, as He did, surely fill the gap and take up the office of High Priest with Him ever living to make intercession for others; and then you shall walk on this earth bringing peace into the midst of the storms that shall always come in this life as long as the present world remains. And when this is done, then God, whose very being is for others and who has now forever made you to be His Sons for others, shall truly reign and control in oneness with you in your regenerated being. Then my friend, you shall be as God is who Himself is Heaven, earth, stars, the molecules and atoms. All in all, and for all. Hallelujah! Amen.