

The Corpus Hermeticum (VIII–XIII)

Hermes Trismegistus



VIII. That No One of Existing Things doth Perish, but Men in Error Speak of Their Changes as Destructions and as Deaths

1. [Hermes:] Concerning Soul and Body, son, we now must speak; in what way Soul is deathless, and whence comes the activity in composing and dissolving Body.

For there's no death for aught of things [that are]; the thought this word conveys, is either void of fact, or [simply] by the knocking off a syllable what is called "death", doth stand for "deathless".

For death is of destruction, and nothing in the Cosmos is destroyed. For if Cosmos is second God, a life that cannot die, it cannot be that any part of this immortal life should die. All things in Cosmos are parts of Cosmos, and most of all is man, the rational animal.

2. For truly first of all, eternal and transcending birth, is God the universals' Maker. Second is he "after His image", Cosmos, brought into being by Him, sustained and fed by Him, made deathless, as by his own Sire, living for aye, as ever free from death.

Now that which ever-liveth, differs from the Eternal; for He hath not been brought to being by another, and even if He have been brought to being, He hath not been brought to being by Himself, but ever is brought into being.

For the Eternal, in that It is eternal, is the all. The Father is Himself eternal of Himself, but Cosmos hath become eternal and immortal by the Father.

3. And of the matter stored beneath it, the Father made of it a universal body, and packing it together made it spherical — wrapping it round the life — [a sphere] which is immortal in itself, and that doth make materiality eternal.

But He, the Father, full-filled with His ideas, did sow the lives into the sphere, and shut them in as in a cave, willing to order forth the life with every kind of living.

So He with deathlessness enclosed the universal body, that matter might not wish to separate itself from body's composition, and so dissolve into its own [original] unordered.

For matter, son, when it was yet incorporate, was in unordered. And it doth still retain down here this [nature of unordered] enveloping the rest of the small lives

— that increase-and-decrease which men call death.

4. It is round earthly lives that this unorder doth exist. For that the bodies of the heavenly ones preserve one order allotted to them by the Father as their rule; and it is by the restoration of each one [of them] this order is preserved indissolute.

The "restoration" of bodies on the earth is thus their composition, whereas their dissolution restores them to those bodies which can never be dissolved, that is to say, which know no death. Privation, thus, of sense is brought about, not loss of bodies.

5. Now the third life — Man, after the image of the Cosmos made, [and] having mind, after the Father's will, beyond all earthly lives — not only doth have feeling with the second God, but also hath conception of the first; for of the one 'tis sensible as of a body, while of the other it conceives as bodiless and the Good Mind.

Tat: Doth then this life not perish?

Hermes: Hush, son! and understand what God, what Cosmos [is], what is a life that cannot die, and what a life subject to dissolution.

Yea, understand the Cosmos is by God and in God; but Man by Cosmos and in Cosmos.

The source and limit and the constitution of all things is God.

IX. On Thought and Sense

1. I gave the Perfect Sermon (Logos) yesterday, Asclepius; today I think it right, as sequel thereunto, to go through point by point the Sermon about Sense.

Now sense and thought do seem to differ, in that the former has to do with matter, the latter has to do with substance. But unto me both seem to be at-one and not to differ — in men I mean. In other lives sense is at-oned with Nature, but in men thought.

Now mind doth differ just as much from thought as God doth from divinity. For that divinity by God doth come to be, and by mind thought, the sister of the word (logos) and instruments of one another. For neither doth the word

(logos) find utterance without thought, nor is thought manifested without word.

2. So sense and thought both flow together into man, as though they were entwined with one another. For neither without sensing can one think, nor without thinking sense.

But it is possible [they say] to think a thing apart from sense, as those who fancy sights in dreams. But unto me it seems that both of these activities occur in dream-sight, and sense doth pass out of the sleeping to the waking state.

For man is separated into soul and body, and only when the two sides of his sense agree together, does utterance of its thought conceived by mind take place.

3. For it is mind that doth conceive all thoughts — good thoughts when it receives the seeds from God, their contraries when [it receiveth them] from the daimonials; no part of Cosmos being free of daimon, who stealthily doth creep into the daimon who's illumined by God's light, and sow in him the seed of its own energy.

And mind conceives the seed thus sown, adultery, murder, parricide, [and] sacrilege, impiety, [and] strangling, casting down precipices, and all such other deeds as are the work of evil daimons.

4. The seeds of God, 'tis true, are few, but vast and fair, and good — virtue and self-control, devotion.

Devotion is God-gnosis; and he who knoweth God, being filled with all good things, thinks godly thoughts and not thoughts like the many [think].

For this cause they who Gnostic are, please not the many, nor the many them. They are thought mad and laughed at; they're hated and despised, and sometimes even put to death.

For we did say that bad must needs dwell on earth, where 'tis in its own place. Its place is earth, and not Cosmos, as some will sometimes say with impious tongue.

But he who is a devotee of God, will bear with all — once he has sensed the Gnosis. For such an one all things, e'en though they be for others bad, are for him good; deliberately he doth refer them all unto the Gnosis. And, thing most marvelous, 'tis he alone who maketh bad things good.

5. But I return once more to the Discourse (Logos) on Sense. That sense doth share with thought in man, doth constitute him man. But 'tis not [every] man, as I have said, who benefits by thought; for this man is material, that other one substantial.

For the material man, as I have said, [consorting] with the bad, doth have his seed of thought from daimons; while the substantial men [consorting] with the Good, are saved by God.

Now God is Maker of all things, and in His making, He maketh all [at last] like to Himself; but they, while they're becoming good by exercise of their activity, are unproductive things.

It is the working of the Cosmic Course that maketh their becomings what they are, befouling some of them with bad and others of them making clean with good.

For Cosmos, too, Asclepius, possesseth sense-and-thought peculiar to itself, not like that of man; 'tis not so manifold, but as it were a better and a simpler one.

6. The single sense-and-thought of Cosmos is to make all things, and make them back into itself again, as Organ of the Will of God, so organized that it, receiving all the seeds into itself from God, and keeping them within itself, may make all manifest, and [then] dissolving them, make them all new again; and thus, like a Good Gardener of Life, things that have been dissolved, it taketh to itself, and giveth them renewal once again.

There is no thing to which it gives not life; but taking all unto itself it makes them live, and is at the same time the Place of Life and its Creator.

7. Now bodies matter [— made] are in diversity. Some are of earth, of water some, some are of air, and some of fire.

But they are all composed; some are more [composite], and some are simpler. The heavier ones are more [composed], the lighter less so.

It is the speed of Cosmos' Course that works the manifoldness of the kinds of births. For being a most swift Breath, it doth bestow their qualities on bodies together with the One Pleroma — that of Life.

8. God, then, is Sire of Cosmos; Cosmos, of all in Cosmos. And Cosmos is God's Son; but things in Cosmos are by Cosmos.

And properly hath it been called Cosmos [Order]; for that it orders all with their diversity of birth, with its not leaving aught without its life, with the unweariedness of its activity, the speed of its necessity, the composition of its elements, and order of its creatures.

The same, then, of necessity and propriety should have the name of Order.

The sense-and-thought, then, of all lives doth come into them from without, inbreathed by what contains [them all]; whereas Cosmos receives them once for all together with its coming into being, and keeps them as a gift from God.

9. But God is not, as some suppose, beyond the reach of sense-and-thought. It is through superstition men thus impiously speak.

For all the things that are, Asclepius, all are in God, are brought by God to be, and do depend on Him — both things that act through bodies, and things that through soul-substance make [other things] to move, and things that make things live by means of spirit, and things that take unto themselves the things that are worn out.

And rightly so; nay, I would rather say, He doth not have these things; but I speak forth the truth, He is them all Himself. He doth not get them from without, but gives them out [from Him].

This is God's sense-and-thought, ever to move all things. And never time shall be when e'en a whit of things that are shall cease; and when I say "a whit of things that are", I mean a whit of God. For things that are, God hath; nor aught [is there] without Him, nor [is] He without aught.

10. These things should seem to thee, Asclepius, if thou dost understand them, true; but if thou dost not understand, things not to be believed.

To understand is to believe, to not believe is not to understand.

My word (logos) doth go before [thee] to the truth. But mighty is the mind, and when it hath been led by word up to a certain point, it hath the power to come before [thee] to the truth.

And having thought o'er all these things, and found them consonant with those which have already been translated by the reason, it hath [e'en now] believed, and found its rest in that Fair Faith.

To those, then, who by God['s good aid] do understand the things that have been said [by us] above, they're credible; but unto those who understand them not, incredible.

Let so much, then, suffice on thought-and-sense.

X. The Key

1. Hermes: My yesterday's discourse (logos) I did devote to thee, Asclepius, and so 'tis [only] right I should devote toafy's to Tat; and this the more because 'tis the abridgement of the General Sermons (Logoi) which he has had addressed to him.

"God, Father and the Good", then, Tat, hath the same nature, or more exactly, energy.

For nature is a predicate of growth, and used of things that change, both mobile and immobile, that is to say, both human and divine, each one of which He willeth into being.

But energy consists in something else, as we have shown in treating of the rest, both things divine and human things; which thing we ought to have in mind when treating of the Good.

2. God's energy is then His Will; further His essence is to will the being of all things. For what is "God and Father and the Good" but the "to be" of all that are not yet? Nay, subsistence self of everything that is; this, then, is God, this Father, this the Good; to Him is added naught of all the rest.

And though the Cosmos, that is to say the Sun, is also sire himself to them that share in him; yet so far is he not the cause of good unto the lives, he is not even of their living.

So that e'en if he be a sire, he is entirely so by compulsion of the Good's Good-will, apart from which nor being nor becoming could e'er be.

3. Again, the parent is the children's cause, both on the father's and the mother's side, only by sharing in the Good's desire [that doth pour] through the Sun. It is the Good which doeth the creating.

And such a power can be possessed by no one else than Him alone who taketh naught, but wills all things to be; I will not, Tat, say "makes".

For that the maker is defective for long periods (in which he sometimes makes, and sometimes doth not make) both in the quality and in the quantity [of what he makes]; in that he sometimes maketh them so many and such like, and sometimes the reverse.

But "God and Father and the Good" is [cause] for all to be. So are at least these things for those who can see.

4. For It doth will to be, and It is both Itself and most of all by reason of Itself. Indeed, all other things beside are just because of It; for the distinctive feature of the Good is "that it should be known". Such is the Good, O Tat.

Tat: Thou hast, O father, filled us so full of this so good and fairest sight, that thereby my mind's eye hath now become for me almost a thing to worship.

For that the vision of the Good doth not, like the sun's beam, firelike blaze on the eyes and make them close; nay, on the contrary, it shineth forth and maketh to increase the seeing of the eye, as far as e'er a man hath the capacity to hold the inflow of the radiance that the mind alone can see.

Not only does it come more swiftly down to us, but it does us no harm, and is instinct with all immortal life.

5. They who are able to drink in a somewhat more than others of this Sight, oftentimes from out the body fall asleep in this fairest Spectacle, as was the case with Uranus and Cronus, our forebears. may this be out lot too, O father mine!

Hermes: Yea, may it be, my son! But as it is, we are not yet strung to the Vision, and not as yet have we the power our mind's eye to unfold and gaze upon the Beauty of the Good — Beauty that naught can e'er corrupt or any comprehend.

For only then wilt thou upon It gaze when thou canst say no word concerning It. For Gnosis of the Good is holy silence and a giving holiday to every sense.

6. For neither can he who perceiveth It, perceive aught else; nor he who gazeth on It, gaze on aught else; nor hear aught else, nor stir his body any way. Staying his body's every sense and every motion he stayeth still.

And shining then all round his mond, It shines through his whole soul, and draws it out of body, transforming all of him to essence.

For it is possible, my son, that a man's soul should be made like to God, e'en while it still is in a body, if it doth contemplate the Beauty of the Good.

7. Tat: Made like to God? What dost thou, father, mean?

Hermes: Of every soul apart are transformations, son.

Tat: What meanest thou? Apart?

Hermes: Didst thou not, in the General Sermons, hear that from one Soul — the All-soul — come all these souls which are made to revolve in all the cosmos, as though divided off?

Of these souls, then, it is that there are many changes, some to a happier lot and some to [just] the contrary of this.

Thus some that were creeping things change into things that in the water dwell, the souls of water things change to earth-dwellers, those that live on earth change to things with wings, and souls that live in air change to men, while human souls reach the first step of deathlessness changed into daimones.

And so they circle to the choir of the Inerrant Gods; for of the Gods there are two choirs, the one Inerrant, and the other Errant. And this is the most perfect glory of the soul.

8. But if a soul on entering the body of a man persisteth in its vice, it neither tasteth deathlessness nor shareth in the Good; but speeding back again it turns into the path that leads to creeping things. This is the sentence of the vicious soul.

And the soul's vice is ignorance. For that the soul who hath no knowledge of the things that are, or knowledge of their nature, or of Good, is blinded by the body's passions and tossed about.

This wretched soul, not knowing what she is, becomes the slave of bodies of strange form in sorry plight, bearing the body as a load; not as the ruler, but the ruled. This [ignorance] is the soul's vice.

9. But on the other hand the virtue of the soul is Gnosis. For he who knows, he good and pious is, and still while on the earth divine.

Tat: But who is such an one, O father mine?

Hermes: He who doth not say much or lend his ear to much. For he who spendeth time in arguing and hearing arguments, doth shadow-fight. For

"God, the Father and the Good", is not to be obtained by speech or hearing.

And yet though this is so, there are in all the beings senses, in that they cannot without senses be.

But Gnosis is far different from sense. For sense is brought about by that which hath the mastery o'er us, while Gnosis is the end of science, and science is God's gift.

10. All science is incorporeal, the instrument it uses being the mind, just as the mind employs the body.

Both then come into bodies, [I mean] both things that are cognizable by mind alone and things material. For all things must consist out of antithesis and contrariety; and this can otherwise not be.

Tat: Who then is this material God of whom thou speakest?

Hermes: Cosmos is beautiful, but is not good — for that it is material and freely passible; and though it is the first of all things passible, yet is it in the second rank of being and wanting in itself.

And though it never hath itself its birth in time, but ever is, yet is its being in becoming, becoming for all time the genesis of qualities and quantities; for it is mobile and all material motion's genesis.

11. It is intelligible rest that moves material motion in this way, since Cosmos is a sphere — that is to say, a head. And naught of head above's material, as naught of feet below's intelligible, but all material.

And head itself is moved in a sphere-like way — that is to say, as head should move, is mind.

All then that are united to the "tissue" of this "head" (in which is soul) are in their nature free from death — just as when body hath been made in soul, are things that hath more soul than body.

Whereas those things which are at greater distance from this "tissue" — there, where are things which have a greater share of body than of soul — are by their nature subject unto death.

The whole, however, is a life; so that the universe consists of both the hylic and of the intelligible.

12. Again, the Cosmos is the first of living things, while man is second after it, though first of things subject to death.

Man hath the same ensouling power in him as all the rest of living things; yet is he not only not good, but even evil, for that he's subject unto death.

For though the Cosmos also is not good in that it suffers motion, it is not evil, in that it is not subject to death.

But man, in that he's subject both to motion and to death, is evil.

13. Now then the principles of man are this-wise vehicled: mind in the reason (logos), the reason in the soul, soul in the spirit, and spirit in the body.

Spirit pervading [body] by means of veins and arteries and blood, bestows upon the living creature motion, and as it were doth bear it in a way.

For this cause some do think the soul is blood, in that they do mistake its nature, not knowing that [at death] it is iteh spirit that must first withdraw into the soul, whereon the blood congeals and veins and arteries are emptied, and then the living creature is withdrawn; and this is body's death.

14. Now from one Source all things depend; while Source [dependeth] from the One and Only [One]. Source is, moreover, moved to become Source again; whereas the One standeth perpetually and is not moved.

Three then are they: "God, the Father and the Good", Cosmos and man.

God doth contain Cosmos; Cosmos [containeth] man. Cosmos is e'er God's Son, man as it were Cosmos' child.

15. Not that, however, God ignoreth man; nay, right well doth He know him, and willeth to be known.

This is the sole salvation for a man — God's Gnosis. This is the Way Up to the Mount.

By Him alone the soul becometh good, not whiles is good, whiles evil, but [good] out of necessity.

Tat: What dost thou mean, Thrice-greatest one?

Hermes: Behold an infant's soul, my son, that is not yet cut off, because its body is still small and not as yet come unto its full bulk.

Tat: How?

Hermes: A thing of beauty altogether is [such a soul] to see, not yet befouled by body's passions, still all but hanging from the Cosmic Soul!

But when the body grows in bulk and draweth down the soul into its mass, then doth the soul cut off itself and bring upon itself forgetfulness, and no more shareth in the Beautiful and the Good. And this forgetfulness becometh vice.

16. It is the same for them who go out from the body.

For when the soul withdraws into itself, the spirit doth contract itself within the blood, and the soul within the spirit. And then the mind, stripped of its wrappings, and naturally divine, taking unto itself a fiery body, doth traverse every space, after abandoning the soul unto its judgement and whatever chastisement it hath deserved.

Tat: What dost thou, father, mean by this? The mind is parted from soul and soul from spirit? Whereas thou said'st the soul was the mind's vesture, and the soul's the spirit.

17. Hermes: The hearer, son, should think with him who speaks and breathe with him; nay, he should have a hearing subtler than the voice of him who speaks.

It is, son, in a body made of earth that this arrangement of the vestures comes to pass. For in a body made of earth it is impossible the mind should take its seat itself by its own self in nakedness.

For neither is it possible on the one hand the earthly body should contain so much immortality, nor on the other that so great a virtue should endure a body passible in such close contact with it. It taketh, then, the soul for as it were an envelope.

And soul itself, being too and thing divine, doth use the spirit as its envelope, while spirit doth pervade the living creature.

18. When then the mind doth free itself from the earth-body, it straightway putteth on its proper robe of fire, with which it could not dwell in an earth-body.

For earth doth not bear fire; for it is all set in a blaze even by a small spark. And for this cause is water poured around earth, to be a guard and wall, to keep the blazing of the fire away.

But mind, the swiftest thing of all divine outthinkings, and swifter than all elements, hath for its body fire.

For mind being builder doth use the fire as tool for the construction of all things — the Mind of all [for the construction] of all things, but that of man only for things on earth.

Stript of its fire the mind on earth cannot make things divine, for it is human in its dispensation.

19. The soul in man, however — not every soul, but one that pious is — is a daimonic something and divine.

And such a soul when from the body freed, if it have fought the fight of piety — the fight of piety is to know God and to do wrong to no man — such a soul becomes entirely mind.

Whereas the impious soul remains in its own essence, chastised by its own self, and seeking for an earthly body where to enter, if only it be human.

For that no other body can contain a human soul; nor is it right that any human soul should fall into the body of a thing that doth possess no reason. For that the law of God is this: to guard the human soul from such tremendous outrage.

20. Tat: How father, then, is a man's soul chastised?

Hermes: What greater chastisement of any human soul can there be, son, than lack of piety? What fire has so fierce a flame as lack of piety? What ravenous beast so mauls the body as lack of piety the very soul?

Dost thou not see what hosts of ills the impious soul doth bear?

It shrieks and screams: I burn; I am ablaze; I know not what to cry or do; ah, wretched me, I am devoured by all the ills that compass me about; alack, poor me, I neither see nor hear!

Such are the cries wrung from a soul chastised; not, as the many think, and thou, son, dost suppose, that a [man's] soul, passing from body, is changed into a beast.

Such is a very grave mistake, for that the way a soul doth suffer chastisement is this:

21. When mind becomes a daimon, the law requires that it should take a fiery body to execute the services of God; and entering in the soul most impious it scourgeth it with whips made of its sins.

And then the impious soul, scourged with its sins, is plunged in murders, outrage, blasphemy, in violence of all kinds, and all the other things whereby mankind is wronged.

But on the pious soul the mind doth mount and guide it to the Gnosis' Light. And such a soul doth never tire in songs of praise [to God] and pouring blessing on all men, and doing good in word and deed to all, in imitation of its Sire.

22. Wherefore, my son, thou shouldst give praise to God and pray that thou mayst have thy mind Good Mind.

It is, then, to a better state the soul doth pass; it cannot to a worse.

Further there is an intercourse of souls; those of the gods have intercourse with those of men, and those of men with souls of creatures which possess no reason.

The higher, further, have in charge the lower; the gods look after men, men after animals irrational, while God hath charge of all; for He is higher than them all and all are less than He.

Cosmos is subject, then, to God, man to the Cosmos, and irrationals to man. But God is o'er them all, and God contains them all.

God's rays, to use a figure, are His energies; the Cosmos's are natures, the arts and sciences are man's.

The energies act through the Cosmos, thence through the nature-rays of Cosmos upon man; the nature-rays [act] through the elements, man [acteth] through the sciences and arts.

23. This is the dispensation of the universe, depending from the nature of the One, pervading [all things] through the Mind, than which is naught diviner nor of greater energy; and naught a greater means for the at-oning men to gods and gods to men.

He, [Mind,] is the Good Daimon. Blessed the soul that is most filled with Him, and wretched is the soul that's empty of the Mind.

Tat: Father, what dost thou mean, again?

Hermes: Dost think then, son, that every soul hath the Good [Mind]? For 'tis of Him we speak, not of the mind in service of which we were just speaking, the mind sent down for [the soul's] chastisement.

24. For soul without the mind "can neither speak nor act". For oftentimes the mind doth leave the soul, and at that time the soul neither sees nor understands, but is just like a thing that hath no reason. Such is the power of mind.

Yet doth it not endure a sluggish soul, but leaveth such a soul tied to the body and bound tight down by it.

Such soul, my son, doth not have Mind; and therefore such an one should not be called a man. For that man is a thing-of-life divine; man is not measured with the rest of lives of things upon the earth, but with the lives above in heaven, who are called gods.

Nay more, if we must boldly speak the truth, the true "man" is e'en higher than the gods, or at the [very] least the gods and men are very whit in power each with the other equal.

25. For no one of the gods in heaven shall come down to the earth, o'er-stepping heaven's limit; whereas man doth mount up to heaven and measure it; he knows what things of it are high, what things are low, and learns precisely all things else besides. And greater thing than all; without e'en quitting earth, he doth ascend above.

So vast a sweep doth he possess of ecstasy.

For this cause can a man dare say that man on earth is god subject to death, while god in heaven is man from death immune.

Wherefore the dispensation of all things is brought about by means of there, the twain — Cosmos and Man — but by the One.

XI. Mind Unto Hermes

1. Mind: Master this sermon (logos), then, Thrice-greatest Hermes, and bear in mind the spoken words; and as it hath come unto Me to speak, I will no more delay.

Hermes: As many men say many things, and these diverse, about the All and Good, I have not learned the truth. Make it, then, clear to me, O Master mine! For I can trust the explanation of these things, which comes from Thee alone.

2. Mind: Hear [then], My son, how standeth God and All.

God; Aeon; Cosmos; Time; Becoming.

God maketh Aeon; Aeon, Cosmos; Cosmos, Time; and Time, Becoming.

The Good — the Beautiful, Wisdom, Blessedness — is essence, as it were, of God; of Aeon, Sameness; of Cosmos, Order; of Time, Change; and of Becoming, Life and Death.

The energies of God are Mind and Soul; of Aeon, lastingness and deathlessness; of Cosmos, restoration and the opposite thereof; of Time, increase and decrease; and of Becoming, quality.

Aeon is, then, in God; Cosmos, in Aeon; in Cosmos; Time; in Time, Becoming.

Aeon stands firm round God; Cosmos is moved in Aeon; Time hath its limits in the Cosmos; Becoming doth become in Time.

3. The source, therefore, of all is God; their essence, Aeon; their matter, Cosmos.

God's power is Aeon; Aeon's work is Cosmos — which never hath become, yet ever doth become by Aeon.

Therefore will Cosmos never be destroyed, for Aeon's indestructible; nor doth a whit of things in Cosmos perish, for Cosmos is enwrapped by Aeon round on every side.

Hermes: But God's Wisdom — what is that?

Mind: The Good and Beautiful, and Blessedness, and Virtue's all, and Aeon.

Aeon, then, ordereth [Cosmos], imparting deathlessness and lastingness to matter.

4. For its beginning doth depend on Aeon, as Aeon doth on God.

Now Genesis and Time, in Heaven and upon the Earth, are of two natures.

In Heaven they are unchangeable and indestructible, but on the Earth they're subject unto change and to destruction.

Further, the Aeon's soul is God; the Cosmos' soul is Aeon; the Earth's soul, Heaven.

And God in Mind; and Mind, in Soul; and Soul, in Matter; and all of them through Aeon.

But all this Body, in which are all the bodies, is full of Soul; and Soul is full of Mind, and Mind of God.

It fills it from within, and from without encircles it, making the All to live.

Without, this vast and perfect Life [encircles] Cosmos; within, it fills [it with] all lives; above, in Heaven, continuing in sameness; below, on Earth, changing becoming.

5. And Aeon doth preserve this [Cosmos], or by Necessity, or by Foreknowledge, or by Nature, or by whatever else a man supposes or shall suppose. And all is this — God energizing.

The Energy of God is Power that naught can e'er surpass, a Power with which no one can make comparison of any human thing at all, or any thing divine.

Wherefore, O Hermes, never think that aught of things above or things below is like to God, for thou wilt fall from truth. For naught is like to That which hath no like, and is Alone and One.

And do not ever think that any other can possibly possess His power; for what apart from Him is there of life, and deathlessness and change of quality? For what else should He make?

God's not inactive, since all things [then] would lack activity; for all are full of God.

But neither in the Cosmos anywhere, nor in aught else, is there inaction. For that "inaction" is a name that cannot be applied to either what doth make or what is made.

6. But all things must be made; both ever made, and also in accordance with the influence of every space.

For He who makes, is in them all; not stablished in some one of them, nor making one thing only, but making all.

For being Power, He energizeth in the things He makes and is not independent of them — although the things He makes are subject to Him.

Now gaze through Me upon the Cosmos that's now subject to thy sight; regard its Beauty carefully — Body in pure perfection, though one than which there's no more ancient one, ever in prime of life, and ever-young, nay, rather, in even fuller and yet fuller prime!

7. Behold, again, the seven subject Worlds; ordered by Aeon's order, and with their varied course full-filling Aeon!

[See how] all things [are] full of light, and nowhere [is there] fire; for 'tis the love and the blending of the contraries and the dissimilars that doth give birth to light down shining by the energy of God, the Father of all good, the Leader of all order, and Ruler of the seven world-orderings!

[Behold] the Moon, forerunner of them all, the instrument of nature, and the transmuter of its lower matter!

[Look at] the Earth set in the midst of All, foundation of the Cosmos Beautiful, feeder and nurse of things on Earth!

And contemplate the multitude of deathless lives, how great it is, and that of lives subject to death; and midway, between both, immortal [lives] and mortal, [see thou] the circling Moon.

8. And all are full of soul, and all are moved by it, each in its proper way; some round the Heaven, others around the Earth; [see] how the right [move] not unto the left, nor yet the left unto the right; nor the above below, nor the below above.

And that all there are subject unto Genesis, My dearest Hermes, thou hast no longer need to learn of Me. For that they bodies are, have souls, and they are moved.

But 'tis impossible for them to come together into one without some one to bring them [all] together. It must, then, be that such a one as this must be some one who's wholly One.

9. For as the many motions of them [all] are different, and as their bodies are not like, yet has one speed been ordered for them all, it is impossible that there should be two or more makers for them.

For that one single order is not kept among "the many"; but rivalry will follow of the weaker with the stronger, and they will strive.

And if the maker of the lives that suffer change and death, should be another, he would desire to make the deathless ones as well; just as the maker of the deathless ones, [to make the lives] that suffer death.

But come! if there be two — if matter's one, and Soul is one, in whose hands would there be the distribution for the making? Again, if both of them have some of it, in whose hands may be the greater part?

10. But thus conceive it, then; that every living body doth consist of soul and matter, whether [that body be] of an immortal, or a mortal, or an irrational [life].

For that all living bodies are ensouled; whereas, upon the other hand, those that live not, are matter by itself.

And, in like fashion, Soul when in its self is, after its own maker, cause of life; but the cause of all life is He who makes the things that cannot die.

Hermes: How, then, is it that, first, lives subject to death are other than the deathless ones? And, next, how is it that Life which knows no death, and maketh deathlessness, doth not make animals immortal?

11. Mind: First, that there is some one who does these things, is clear; and, next, that He is also One, is very manifest. For, also, Soul is one, and Life is one, and Matter one.

Hermes: But who is He?

Mind: Who may it other be than the One God? Whom else should it beseeem to put Soul into lives but God alone? One, then, is God.

It would indeed be most ridiculous, if when thou dost confess the Cosmos to be one, Sun one, Moon one, and Godhead one, thou shouldst wish God Himself to be some one or other of a number!

12. All things, therefore, He makes, in many [ways]. And what great thing is it for God to make life, soul, and deathlessness, and change, when thou [thyself] dost do so many things?

For thou dost see, and speak, and hear, and smell, and taste, and touch, and walk, and think, and breathe. And it is not one man who smells, another one who walks, another one who thinks, and [yet] another one who breathes. But one is he who doth all these.

And yet no one of these could be apart from God. For just as, should thou cease from these, thou wouldst no longer be a living thing, so also, should God cease from them (a thing not law to say), no longer is He God.

13. For if it hath been shown that no thing can [inactive] be, how much less God? For if there's aught he doth not make (if it be law to say), He is imperfect. But if He is not only not inactive, but perfect [God], then He doth make all things.

Give thou thyself to Me, My Hermes, for a little while, and thou shalt understand more easily how that God's work is one, in order that all things may be — that are being made, or once have been, or that are going to be made. And this is, My beloved, Life; this is the Beautiful; this is the Good; this, God.

14. And if thou wouldst in practice understand [this work], behold what taketh place with thee desiring to beget. Yet this is not like unto that, for He doth not enjoy.

For that indeed He hath no other one to share in what He works, for working by Himself, He ever is at work, Himself being what He doth. For did He separate Himself from it, all things would [then] collapse, and all must die, Life ceasing.

But if all things are lives, and also Life is one; then, one is God. And, furthermore, if all are lives, both those in Heaven and those on Earth, and One Life in them all is made to be by God, and God is it — then, all are made by God.

Life is the making-one of Mind and Soul; accordingly Death is not the destruction of those that are at-oned, but the dissolving of their union.

15. Aeon, moreover, is God's image; Cosmos [is] Aeon's; the Sun, of Cosmos; and Man, [the image] of the Sun.

The people call change death, because the body is dissolved, and life, when it's dissolved, withdraws to the unmanifest. But in this sermon (logos), Hermes, My beloved, as thou dost hear, I say the Cosmos also suffers change — for that a part of it each day is made to be in the unmanifest — yet it is ne'er dissolved.

These are the passions of the Cosmos — revolvings and concealments; revolving is conversion and concealment renovation.

16. The Cosmos is all-formed — not having forms external to itself, but changing them itself within itself.

Since, then, Cosmos is made to be all-formed, what may its maker be? For that, on the one hand, He should not be void of all form; and, on the other hand, if He's all-formed, He will be like the Cosmos. Whereas, again, has He a single form, He will thereby be less than Cosmos.

What, then, say we He is? — that we may not bring round our sermon (logos) into doubt; for naught that mind conceives of God is doubtful.

He, then, hath one idea, which is His own alone, which doth not fall beneath the sight, being bodiless, and [yet] by means of bodies manifesteth all [ideas]. And marvel not that there's a bodiless idea.

17. For it is like the form of reason (logos) and mountain-tops in pictures. For they appear to stand out strongly from the rest, but really are quite smooth and flat.

And now consider what is said more boldly, but more truly!

Just as man cannot live apart from Life, so neither can God live without [His] doing good. For this is as it were the life and motion as it were of God — to move all things and make them live.

18. Now some of the things said should bear a sense peculiar to themselves. So understand, for instance, what I'm going to say.

All are in God, [but] not as lying in a place. For place is both a body and immovable, and things that lie do not have motion.

Now things lie one way in the bodiless, another way in being made manifest.

Think, [then,] of Him who doth contain them all; and think, that than the bodiless naught is more comprehensive, or swifter, or more potent, but it is the most comprehensive, the swiftest, and most potent of them all.

19. And, thus, think from thyself, and bid thy soul go unto any land, and there more quickly than thy bidding will it be. And bid it journey oceanwards; and there, again, immediately 'twill be, not as if passing on from place to place, but as if being there.

And bid it also mount to heaven; and it will need no wings, not will aught hinder it, nor fire of sun, nor aether, nor vortex-swirl, nor bodies of the other

stars; but, cutting through them all, it will soar up to the last Body [of them all]. And shouldst thou will to break through this as well, and contemplate what is beyond — if there be aught beyond the Cosmos; it is permitted thee.

20. Behold what power, what swiftness, thou dost have! And canst thou do all of these things, and God not [do them]?

Then, in this way know God; as having all things in Himself as thoughts, the whole Cosmos itself.

If, then, thou dost not make thyself like unto God, thou canst not know Him. For like is knowable unto like [alone].

Make, [then,] thyself to grow to the same stature as the Greatness which transcends all measure; leap forth from every body; transcend all time; become Eternity; and [thus] shalt thou know God.

Conceiving nothing is impossible unto thyself, think thyself deathless and able to know all — all arts, all sciences, the way of every life.

Become more lofty than all height, and lower than all depth. Collect into thyself all senses of [all] creatures — of fire, [and] water, dry and moist. Think that thou art at the same time in every place — in earth, in sea, in sky; not yet begotten, in the womb, young, old, [and] dead, in after-death conditions.

And if thou knowest all these things at once — times, places, doings, qualities, and quantities; thou canst know God.

21. But if thou lockest up thy soul within thy body, and dost debase it, saying: I nothing know; I nothing can; I fear the sea; I cannot scale the sky; I know not who I was, who I shall be — what is there [then] between [thy] God and thee?

For thou canst know naught of things beautiful and good so long as thou dost love thy body and art bad.

The greatest bad there is, is not to know God's Good; but to be able to know [Good], and will, and hope, is a Straight Way, the Good's own [Path], both leading there and easy.

If thou but settest thy foot thereon, 'twill meet thee everywhere, 'twill everywhere be seen, both where and when thou dost expect it not — waking, sleeping, sailing, journeying, by night, by day, speaking, [and] saying naught. For there is naught that is not image of the Good.

22. Hermes: Is God unseen?

Mind: Hush! Who is more manifest than He? For this one reason hath He made all things, that through them all thou mayest see Him.

This is the Good of God, this [is] His Virtue — that He may be manifest through all.

For naught's unseen, even of things that are without a body. Mind sees itself in thinking, God in making.

So far these things have been made manifest to thee, Thrice-greatest one! Reflect on all the rest in the same way with thyself, and thou shalt not be led astray.

XII. About The Common Mind

1. Hermes: The Mind, O Tat, is of God's very essence — (if such a thing as essence of God there be) — and what that is, it and it only knows precisely.

The Mind, then, is not separated off from God's essentiality, but is united to it, as light to sun.

This Mind in men is God, and for this cause some of mankind are gods, and their humanity is nigh unto divinity.

For the Good Daimon said: "Gods are immortal men, and men are mortal gods."

2. But in irrational lives Mind is their nature. For where is Soul, there too is Mind; just as where Life, there is there also Soul.

But in irrational lives their soul is life devoid of mind; for Mind is the in-worker of the souls of men for good — He works on them for their own good.

In lives irrational He doth co-operate with each one's nature; but in the souls of men He counteracteth them.

For every soul, when it becomes embodied, is instantly depraved by pleasure and by pain.

For in a compound body, just like juices, pain and pleasure seethe, and into them the soul, on entering in, is plunged.

3. O'er whatsoever souls the Mind doth, then, preside, to these it showeth its own light, by acting counter to their prepossessions, just as a good physician doth upon the body prepossessed by sickness, pain inflict, burning or lancing it for sake of health.

In just the selfsame way the Mind inflicteth pain on the soul, to rescue it from pleasure, whence comes its every ill.

The great ill of the soul is godlessness; then followeth fancy for all evil things and nothing good.

So, then, Mind counteracting it doth work good on the soul, as the physician health upon the body.

4. But whatsoever human souls have not the Mind as pilot, they share in the same fate as souls of lives irrational.

For [Mind] becomes co-worker with them, giving full play to the desires toward which [such souls] are borne — [desires] that from the rush of lust strain after the irrational; [so that such human souls,] just like irrational animals, cease not irrationally to rage and lust, nor are they ever satiate of ills.

For passions and irrational desires are ills exceeding great; and over these God hath set up the Mind to play the part of judge and executioner.

5. Tat: In that case, father mine, the teaching (logos) as to Fate, which previously thou didst explain to me, risks to be overset.

For that if it be absolutely fated for a man to fornicate, or commit sacrilege, or do some other evil deed, why is he punished — when he hath done the deed from Fate's necessity?

Hermes: All works, my son, are Fate's; and without Fate naught of things corporal — or good, or ill — can come to pass.

But it is fated, too, that he who doeth ill, shall suffer. And for this cause he doth it — that he may suffer what he suffereth, because he did it.

6. But for the moment, [Tat,] let be the teaching as to vice and Fate, for we have spoken of these things in other [of our sermons]; but now our teaching (logos) is about the Mind: — what Mind can do, and how it is [so] different — in men being such and such, and in irrational lives [so] changed; and [then] again that in irrational lives it is not of a beneficial nature, while that in men it

quencheth out the wrathful and the lustful elements.

Of men, again, we must class some as led by reason, and others as unreasoning.

7. But all men are subject to Fate, and genesis and change, for these are the beginning and the end of Fate.

And though all men do suffer fated things, those led by reason (those whom we said Mind doth guide) do not endure like suffering with the rest; but, since they've freed themselves from viciousness, not being bad, they do not suffer bad.

Tat: How meanest thou again, my father? Is not the fornicator bad; the murderer bad; and [so with] all the rest?

Hermes: [I meant not that;] but that the Mind-led man, my son, though not a fornicator, will suffer just as though he had committed fornication, and though he be no murderer, as though he had committed murder.

The quality of change he can no more escape than that of genesis.

But it is possible for one who hath the Mind, to free himself from vice.

8. Wherefore I've ever heard, my son, Good Daimon also say — (and had He set it down in written words, He would have greatly helped the race of men; for He alone, my son, doth truly, as the Firstborn God, gazing on all things, give voice to words (logoi) divine) — yea, once I heard Him say:

"All things are one, and most of all the bodies which the mind alone perceives. Our life is owing to [God's] Energy and Power and Aeon. His Mind is good, so is His Soul as well. And this being so, intelligible things know naught of separation. So, then, Mind, being Ruler of all things, and being Soul of God, can do whate'er it wills."

9. So do thou understand, and carry back this word (logos) unto the question thou didst ask before — I mean about Mind's Fate.

For if thou dost with accuracy, son, eliminate [all] captious arguments (logoi), thou wilt discover that of very truth the Mind, the Soul of God, doth rule o'er all — o'er Fate, and Law, and all things else; and nothing is impossible to it — neither o'er Fate to set a human soul, nor under Fate to set [a soul] neglectful of what comes to pass. Let this so far suffice from the Good Daimon's most good [words].

Tat: Yea, [words] divinely spoken, father mine, truly and helpfully. But further still explain me this.

10. Thou said'st that Mind in lives irrational worked in them as [their] nature, co-working with their impulses.

But impulses of lives irrational, as I do think, are passions.

Now if the Mind co-worketh with [these] impulses, and if the impulses of [lives] irrational be passions, then is Mind also passion, taking its color from the passions.

Hermes: Well put, my son! Thou questionest right nobly, and it is just that I as well should answer [nobly].

11. All things incorporeal when in a body are subject unto passion, and in the proper sense they are [themselves] all passions.

For every thing that moves itself is incorporeal; while every thing that's moved is body.

Incorporeals are further moved by Mind, and movement's passion.

Both, then, are subject unto passion — both mover and the moved, the former being ruler and the latter ruled.

But when a man hath freed himself from body, then is he also freed from passion.

But, more precisely, son, naught is impassible, but all are passible.

Yet passion differeth from passibility; for that the one is active, while the other's passive.

Incorporeals moreover act upon themselves, for either they are motionless or they are moved; but whichsoe'er it be, it's passion.

But bodies are invariably acted on, and therefore they are passible.

Do not, then, let terms trouble thee; action and passion are both the selfsame thing. To use the fairer sounding term, however, does no harm.

12. Tat: Most clearly hast thou, father mine, set forth the teaching (logos).

Hermes: Consider this as well, my son; that these two things God hath bestowed on man beyond all mortal lives — both mind and speech (logos) equal to immortality. He hath the mind for knowing God and uttered speech

(logos) for eulogy of Him.

And if one useth these for what he ought, he'll differ not a whit from the immortals. Nay, rather, on departing from the body, he will be guided by the twain unto the Choir of Gods and Blessed Ones.

13. Tat: Why, father mine! — do not the other lives make use of speech (logos)?

Hermes: Nay, son; but use of voice; speech is far different from voice. For speech is general among all men, while voice doth differ in each class of living thing.

Tat: But with men also, father mine, according to each race, speech differs.

Hermes: Yea, son, but man is one; so also speech is one and is interpreted, and it is found the same in Egypt, and in Persia, and in Greece.

Thou seemest, son, to be in ignorance of Reason's (Logos) worth and greatness. For that the Blessed God, Good Daimon, hath declared:

"Soul is in Body, Mind in Soul; but Reason (Logos) is in Mind, and Mind in God; and God is Father of [all] these."

14. The Reason, then, is the Mind's image, and Mind God's [image]; while Body is [the image] of the Form; and Form [the image] of the Soul.

The subtlest part of Matter is, then, Air; of Air, Soul; of Soul, Mind; and of Mind, God.

And God surroundeth all and permeateth all; while Mind Surroundeth Soul, Soul Air, Air Matter.

Necessity and Providence and Nature are instruments of Cosmos and of Matter's ordering; while of intelligible things each is Essence, and Sameness is their Essence.

But of the bodies of the Cosmos each is many; for through possessing Sameness, [these] composed bodies, though they do change from one into another of themselves, do natheless keep the incorruption of their Sameness.

15. Whereas in all the rest of composed bodies, of each there is a certain number; for without number structure cannot be, or composition, or decomposition.

Now it is units that give birth to number and increase it, and, being decomposed, are taken back again into themselves.

Matter is one; and this whole Cosmos — the mighty God and image of the mightier One, both with Him unified, and the conservator of the Will and Order of the Father — is filled full of Life.

Naught is there in it throughout the whole of Aeon, the Father's [everlasting] Re-establishment — nor of the whole, nor of the parts — which doth not live.

For not a single thing that's dead, hath been, or is, or shall be in [this] Cosmos.

For that the Father willed it should have Life as long as it should be. Wherefore it needs must be a God.

16. How then, O son, could there be in the God, the image of the Father, in the plenitude of Life — dead things?

For that death is corruption, and corruption destruction.

How then could any part of that which knoweth no corruption be corrupted, or any whit of him the God destroyed?

Tat: Do they not, then, my father, die — the lives in it, that are its parts?

Hermes: Hush, son! — led into error by the term in use for what takes place.

They do not die, my son, but are dissolved as compound bodies.

Now dissolution is not death, but dissolution of a compound; it is dissolved not so that it may be destroyed, but that it may become renewed.

For what is the activity of life? Is it not motion? What then in Cosmos is there that hath no motion? Naught is there, son!

17. Tat: Doth not Earth even, father, seem to thee to have no motion?

Hermes: Nay, son; but rather that she is the only thing which, though in very rapid motion, is also stable.

For how would it not be a thing to laugh at, that the Nurse of all should have no motion, when she engenders and brings forth all things?

For 'tis impossible that without motion one who doth engender, should do so.

That thou should ask if the fourth part is not inert, is most ridiculous; for the body which doth have no motion, gives sign of nothing but inertia.

18. Know, therefore, generally, my son, that all that is in Cosmos is being moved for increase or for decrease.

Now that which is kept moving, also lives; but there is no necessity that that which lives, should be all same.

For being simultaneous, the Cosmos, as a whole, is not subject to change, my son, but all its parts are subject unto it; yet naught [of it] is subject to corruption, or destroyed.

It is the terms employed that confuse men. For 'tis not genesis that constituteth life, but 'tis sensation; it is not change that constituteth death, but 'tis forgetfulness.

Since, then, these things are so, they are immortal all — Matter, [and] Life, [and] Spirit, Mind [and] Soul, of which whatever liveth, is composed.

19. Whatever then doth live, oweth its immortality unto the Mind, and most of all doth man, he who is both recipient of God, and co-essential with Him.

For with this life alone doth God consort; by visions in the night, by tokens in the day, and by all things doth He foretell the future unto him — by birds, by inward parts, by wind, by tree.

Wherefore doth man lay claim to know things past, things present and to come.

20. Observe this too, my son; that each one of the other lives inhabiteth one portion of the Cosmos — aquatic creatures water, terrene earth, and aery creatures air; while man doth use all these — earth, water air [and] fire; he seeth Heaven, too, and doth contact it with [his] sense.

But God surroundeth all, and permeateth all, for He is energy and power; and it is nothing difficult, my son, to conceive God.

21. But if thou wouldst Him also contemplate, behold the ordering of the Cosmos, and [see] the orderly behavior of its ordering; behold thou the Necessity of things made manifest, and [see] the Providence of things become and things becoming; behold how Matter is all-full of Life; [behold] this so great God in movement, with all the good and noble [ones] — gods, daimones and men!

Tat: But these are purely energies, O father mine!

Hermes: If, then, they're purely energies, my son — by whom, then, are they energized except by God?

Or art thou ignorant, that just as Heaven, Earth, Water, Air, are parts of Cosmos, in just the selfsame way God's parts are Life and Immortality, [and] Energy, and Spirit, and Necessity, and Providence, and Nature, Soul, and Mind, and the Duration of all these that is called Good?

And there are naught of things that have become, or are becoming, in which God is not.

22. Tat: Is He in Matter, father, then?

Hermes: Matter, my son, is separate from God, in order that thou may'st attribute to it the quality of space.

But what thing else than mass think'st thou it is, if it's not energized? Whereas if it be energized, by whom is it made so? For energies, we said, are parts of God.

By whom are, then, all lives enlivened? By whom are things immortal made immortal? By whom changed things made changeable?

And whether thou dost speak of Matter, of Body, or of Essence, know that these too are energies of God; and that materiality is Matter's energy, that corporeality is Bodies' energy, and that essentiality doth constituteth the energy of Essence; and this is God — the All.

23. And in the All is naught that is not God. Wherefore nor size, nor space, nor quality, nor form, nor time, surroundeth God; for He is All, and All surroundeth all, and permeateth all.

Unto this Reason (Logos), son, thy adoration and thy worship pay. There is one way alone to worship God; [it is] not to be bad.

XIII. The Secret Sermon on the Mountain

1. Tat: [Now] in the General Sermons, father, thou didst speak in riddles most unclear, conversing on Divinity; and when thou saidst no man could e'er be saved before Rebirth, thy meaning thou didst hide.

Further, when I became thy Suppliant, in Wending up the Mount, after thou hadst conversed with me, and when I longed to learn the Sermon (Logos) on

Rebirth (for this beyond all other things is just the thing I know not), thou saidst, that thou wouldst give it me — "when thou shalt have become a stranger to the world".

Wherefore I got me ready and made the thought in me a stranger to the world-illusion.

And now do thou fill up the things that fall short in me with what thou saidst would give me the tradition of Rebirth, setting it forth in speech or in the secret way.

I know not, O Thrice-greatest one, from out what matter and what womb Man comes to birth, or of what seed.

2. Hermes: Wisdom that understands in silence [such is the matter and the womb from out which Man is born], and the True Good the seed.

Tat: Who is the sower, father? For I am altogether at a loss.

Hermes: It is the Will of God, my son.

Tat: And of what kind is he that is begotten, father? For I have no share of that essence in me, which doth transcend the senses. The one that is begot will be another one from God, God's Son?

Hermes: All in all, out of all powers composed.

Tat: Thou tellest me a riddle, father, and dost not speak as father unto son.

Hermes: This Race, my son, is never taught; but when He willeth it, its memory is restored by God.

3. Tat: Thou sayest things impossible, O father, things that are forced. Hence answers would I have direct unto these things. Am I a son strange to my father's race?

Keep it not, father, back from me. I am a true-born son; explain to me the manner of Rebirth.

Hermes: What may I say, my son? I can but tell thee this. Whene'er I see within myself the Simple Vision brought to birth out of God's mercy, I have passed through myself into a Body that can never die. And now I am not as I was before; but I am born in Mind.

The way to do this is not taught, and it cannot be seen by the compounded element by means of which thou seest.

Yea, I have had my former composed form dismembered for me. I am no longer touched, but I have touch; I have dimension too; and [yet] am I a stranger to them now.

Thou seest me with eyes, my son; but what I am thou dost not understand [even] with fullest strain of body and of sight.

4. Tat: Into fierce frenzy and mind-fury hast thou plunged me, father, for now no longer do I see myself.

Hermes: I would, my son, that thou hadst e'en passed right through thyself, as they who dream in sleep yet sleepless.

Tat: Tell me this too! Who is the author of Rebirth?

Hermes: The Son of God, the One Man, by God's Will.

5. Tat: Now hast thou brought me, father, unto pure stupefaction. Arrested from the senses which I had before,... for [now] I see thy Greatness identical with thy distinctive form.

Hermes: Even in this thou art untrue; the mortal form doth change with every day. 'Tis turned by time to growth and waning, as being an untrue thing.

6. Tat: What then is true, Thrice-greatest One?

Hermes: That which is never troubled, son, which cannot be defined; that which no color hath, nor any figure, which is not turned, which hath no garment, which giveth light; that which is comprehensible unto itself [alone], which doth not suffer change; that which no body can contain.

Tat: In very truth I lose my reason, father. Just when I thought to be made wise by thee, I find the senses of this mind of mine blocked up.

Hermes: Thus is it, son: That which is upward borne like fire, yet is borne down like earth, that which is moist like water, yet blows like air, how shalt thou this perceive with sense — the that which is not solid nor yet moist, which naught can bind or loose, of which in power and energy alone can man have any notion — and even then it wants a man who can perceive the Way of Birth in God?

7. Tat: I am incapable of this, O father, then?

Hermes: Nay, God forbid, my son! Withdraw into thyself, and it will come; will, and it comes to pass; throw out of work the body's senses, and thy

Divinity shall come to birth; purge from thyself the brutish torments — things of matter.

Tat: I have tormentors then in me, O father?

Hermes: Ay, no few, my son; nay, fearful ones and manifold.

Tat: I do not know them, father.

Hermes: Torment the first is this Not-knowing, son; the second one is Grief; the third, Intemperance; the fourth, Concupiscence; the fifth, Unrighteousness; the sixth is Avarice; the seventh, Error; the eighth is Envy; the ninth, Guile; the tenth is Anger; eleventh, Rashness; the twelfth is Malice.

These are in number twelve; but under them are many more, my son; and creeping through the prison of the body they force the man that's placed therein to suffer in his senses. But they depart (though not all at once) from him who hath been taken pity on by God; and this it is which constitutes the manner of Rebirth. And...

the Reason (Logos).

8. And now, my son, be still and solemn silence keep! Thus shall the mercy that flows on us from God not cease.

Henceforth rejoice, O son, for by the Powers of God thou art being purified for the articulation of the Reason (Logos).

Gnosis of God hath come to us, and when this comes, my son, Not-knowing is cast out.

Gnosis of Joy hath come to us, and on its coming, son, Sorrow will flee away to them who give it room. The Power that follows Joy do I invoke, thy Self-control. O Power most sweet! Let us most gladly bid it welcome, son! How with its coming doth it chase Intemperance away!

9. Now fourth, on Continenence I call, the Power against Desire. This step, my son, is Righteousness' firm seat.

For without judgement see how she hath chased Unrighteousness away. We are made righteous, son, by the departure of Unrighteousness.

Power sixth I call to us — that against Avarice, Sharing-with-all.

And now that Avarice is gone, I call on Truth. And Error flees, and Truth is with us.

See how [the measure of] the Good is full, my son, upon Truth's coming. For Envy is gone from us; and unto Truth is joined the Good as well, with Life and Light.

And now no more doth any torment of the Darkness venture nigh, but vanquished [all] have fled with whirring wings.

10. Thou knowest [now], my son, the manner of Rebirth. And when the Ten is come, my son, that driveth out the Twelve, the Birth in understanding is complete, and by this birth we are made into Gods.

Who then doth by His mercy gain this Birth in God, abandoning the body's senses, knows himself [to be of Light and Life] and that he doth consist of these, and [thus] is filled with bliss.

11. Tat: By God made steadfast, father, no longer with the sight my eyes afford I look on things, but with the energy the Mind doth give me through the Powers.

In Heaven am I, in earth, in water, air; I am in animals, in plants; I'm in the womb, before the womb, after the womb; I'm everywhere!

But further tell me this: How are the torments of the Darkness, when they are twelve in number, driven out by the ten Powers? What is the way of it, Thrice-greatest one?

12. Hermes: This dwelling-place through which we have just passed, my son, is constituted from the circle of the twelve types-of-life, this being composed of elements, twelve in number, but of one nature, an omniform idea. For man's delusion there are disunions in them, son, while in their action they are one. Not only can we never part Rashness from Wrath; they cannot even be distinguished.

According to right reason (logos), then, they naturally withdraw once and for all, in as much as they are chased out by no less than ten powers, that is, the Ten.

For, son, the Ten is that which giveth birth to souls. And Life and Light are unified there, where the One hath being from the Spirit. According then to reason (logos) the One contains the Ten, the Ten the One.

13. Tat: Father, I see the All, I see myself in Mind.

Hermes: This is, my son, Rebirth — no more to look on things from body's view-point (a thing three ways in space extended)... though this Sermon (Logos) on Rebirth, on which I did not comment — in order that we may not be calumniators of the All unto the multitude, to whom indeed God Himself doth will we should not.

14. Tat: Tell me, O father: This Body which is made up of the Powers, is it at any time dissolved?

Hermes: Hush, [son]! Speak not of things impossible, else wilt thou sin and thy Mind's eye be quenched.

The natural body which our sense perceives is far removed from this essential birth.

The first must be dissolved, the last can never be; the first must die, the last death cannot touch.

Dost thou not know thou hast been born a God, Son of the One, even as I myself?

15. Tat: I would, O father, hear the Praise-giving with hymn which thou didst say thou hearest then when thou wert at the Eight [the Ogdoad] of Powers
Hermes: Just as the Shepherd did foretell [I should], my son, [when I came to] the Eight.

Well dost thou haste to "strike thy tent", for thou hast been made pure.

The Shepherd, Mind of all masterhood, hath not passed on to me more than hath been written down, for full well did he know that I should of myself be able to learn all, and hear what I should wish, and see all things.

He left to me the making of fair things; wherefore the Powers within me. e'en as they are in all, break into song.

16. Tat: Father, I wish to hear; I long to know these things.

Hermes: Be still, my son; hear the Praise-giving now that keeps [the soul] in tune, Hymn of Re-birth — a hymn I would not have thought fit so readily to tell, had'st thou not reached the end of all.

Wherefore this is not taught, but is kept hid in silence.

Thus then, my son, stand in a place uncovered to the sky, facing the southern wind, about the sinking of the setting sun, and make thy worship; so in like

manner too when he doth rise, with face to the east wind.

Now, son, be still!

The Secret Hymnody

17. Let every nature of the World receive the utterance of my hymn!

Open thou Earth! Let every bolt of the Abyss be drawn for me. Stir not, ye Trees!

I am about to hymn creation's Lord, both All and One.

Ye Heavens open and ye Winds stay still; [and] let God's deathless Sphere receive my word (logos)!

For I will sing the praise of Him who founded all; who fixed the Earth, and hung up Heaven, and gave command that Ocean should afford sweet water [to the Earth], to both those parts that are inhabited and those that are not, for the support and use of every man; who made the Fire to shine for gods and men for every act.

Let us together all give praise to Him, sublime above the Heavens, of every nature Lord!

'Tis He who is the Eye of Mind; may He accept the praise of these my Powers!

18. Ye powers that are within me, hymn the One and All; sing with my Will, Powers all that are within me!

O blessed Gnosis, by thee illumined, hymning through thee the Light that mond alone can see, I joy in Joy of Mind.

Sing with me praises all ye Powers!

Sing praise, my Self-control; sing thou through me, my Righteousness, the praises of the Righteous; sing thou, my Sharing-all, the praises of the All; through me sing, Truth, Truth's praises!

Sing thou, O Good, the Good! O Life and Light, from us to you our praises flow!

Father, I give Thee thanks, to Thee Thou Energy of all my Powers; I give Thee thanks, O God, Thou Power of all my Energies!

19. Thy Reason (Logos) sings through me Thy praises. Take back through me the All into [Thy] Reason — [my] reasonable oblation!

Thus cry the Powers in me. They sing Thy praise, Thou All; they do Thy Will. From Thee Thy Will; to Thee the All. Receive from all their reasonable oblation. The All that is in us, O Life, preserve; O Light, illumine it; O God, in-spirit it.

It is Thy Mind that plays the shepherd to Thy Word, O Thou Creator, Bestower of the Spirit [upon all].

20. [For] Thou art God, Thy Man thus cries to Thee through Fire, through Air, through Earth, through Water, [and] through Spirit, through Thy creatures.

'Tis from Thy Aeon I have found praise-giving; and in thy Will, the object of my search, have I found rest.

Tat: By thy good pleasure have I seen this praise-giving being sung, O father; I have set it in my Cosmos too.

Hermes: Say in the Cosmos that thy mind alone can see, my son.

Tat: Yea, father, in the Cosmos that the mind alone can see; for I have been made able by thy Hymn, and by thy Praise-giving my mind hath been illumined. But further I myself as well would from my natural mind send praise-giving to God.

21. Hermes: But not unheedfully, my son.

Tat: Aye. What I behold in mind, that do I say.

To thee, thou Parent of my Bringing into Birth, as unto God I, Tat, send reasonable offerings. O God and Father, thou art the Lord, thou art the Mind. Receive from me oblations reasonable as thou would'st wish; for by thy Will all things have been perfected.

Hermes: Send thou oblation, son, acceptable to God, the Sire of all; but add, my son, too, "through the Word" (Logos).

Tat: I give thee, father, thanks for showing me to sing such hymns.

22. Hermes: Happy am I, my son, that though hast brought the good fruits forth of Truth, products that cannot die.

And now that thou hast learnt this lesson from me, make promise to keep silence on thy virtue, and to no soul, my son, make known the handing on to thee the manner of Rebirth, that we may not be thought to be calumniators.

And now we both of us have given heed sufficiently, both I the speaker and the hearer thou.

In Mind hast thou become a Knower of thyself and our [common] Sire.