



Historic Material

Magical knowledge is, by its very nature, *mysterious*. Magical knowledge, or *gnosis*, must come through a combination of theory and experience in such a way that the gnosis comes as a genuine, unique, and original *discovery* on your part of something that had been up to that moment *hidden* and outside your conscious mind. This is why real Mysteries cannot be “revealed” in profane words, but only through extended metaphors, methodological discourses, and personal experience. The “trick” is to focus on actual Mysteries and to avoid concentration on “false-mysteries.” False mysteries are things that are secret simply because someone decides not to tell you about them. Real Mysteries are those things that can only be revealed or discovered *mysteriously*.

Background

Much of the development of the Hermetic tradition is lost in the relatively undocumented centuries before the birth of Jesus. It is clear that the tradition was being developed over these centuries, and that what we have in the oldest of the magickal papyri is, in fact, a mature synthesis of the various magical and philosophical streams that had been crisscrossing the Nilotic culture for centuries.

The most significant development in the final stages of the history of ancient Egypt was its conquest by the Romans in 30 BC. With this development, Hellenic and Egyptian cultures were forced together more than they had been before during the Hellenistic period – now both were subject peoples in the Roman Empire. In some respects, the Hermetica could be considered philosophical reactions to cultural oppression.

By the 2nd century AD, a well-documented combination of elements had come together, which became the basis for the continuing development of the Hermetic tradition.

The Hermetic tradition, while taking much from the Gnostic stream, differs from it in many respects. Where the Gnostic viewed things material, including this world, as “tainted” or even “evil,” the Hermetic saw it as a yet another manifestation of the Divine (As above, so below). This carried too, to their view of those powers- Beings called “Archons,” standing between Earthly manifestation and the Divine Fullness (Pleroma). The Gnostics viewed these beings as powerful prison guards, keeping man’s soul entrapped in vile matter. The Hermetic view, on the other-hand was that they were Sentinels, guardians of the Path of Return.

The Initiatory path, therefore passed through each Archontic realm in succession, assimilation in each realm being requisite before passage into the next.

This progression is demonstrated in the following diagram:



It should be noted that while this progression is displayed as external one, it is simultaneously Inward, thus conforming to the Hermetic Maxim (As above, so below).

Also, the "Sacred Flame" of which the Friary makes such importance (indeed, those members of the Third degree and higher comprise the "Ordo Sacrae Flammae" or "Order of the Sacred Flame"), is the Divine Illumination- the Spark of Life residing within us from the Fullness, the Pleroma, which recalls its Divine origin and pulls us ever onward and inward along the Initiatory path.

Poimandres (Corpus Hermeticum)

[1] "Once, thoughts came to me of the things that Are and my thoughts soared and my bodily sense were quieted, as though heavy with sleep from too much food or labor, and an Great Being unbound is in any extent appeared to me, calling my name, and said: "What is it that you desire to see or hear? What do you wish to learn, to know, or to understand?"

[2] "Who are you?" I asked.

"I am Poimandres, Mind of Sovereignty, knowing what you want, with you everywhere."

[3] I said, "I desire knowledge about That Which Is, to Understand the things that Are, to Know God. How my heart desires to Know!"

Then said that Great Being, "Very well, remember then what it is you wish to learn, stray not, and I will teach you."

[4] Saying this, the appearance changed, in an instant, everything was opened to me, I saw an endless Vision in which all was Light--clear, joyful, divine--seeing the Vision, and I came to love It. Then, after a time, darkness arose, separately, and descended--fearful, gloomy and dark--coiling in sinuous waves, serpentine in form or appearance. This darkness became watery in nature, agitated; smoking like Fire, producing an unspeakable Wail; and from the Fire came an inarticulate Cry. [5] But from the Light came a Holy Word which rose up and an untempered Fire leapt up from the watery nature to the Height. This Fire was nimble, dancing on the watery nature, piercing and active, and the Air was light, following after Spirit, rising up away from Earth and Water, until, suspended from the Fire, only Earth and Water remained, mingled and mixed, stirred and agitated by the Word that moved them.

[6] Poimandres said to me, "Have you comprehended, understood, realized the meaning of this Seeing?"

"I shall strive to Know," was my reply. "I am the Light you beheld, Mind, Deity, who existed before the watery substance, before the darkness of the Light, the Word that comes from Mind is the true child of Divinity."

"Please continue," said I. "Here is what must be known: what sees and hears in you is that very Word of Divinity, the Son, but the Father, your own Mind, is God; they are not divided from one or the other, but united, joined, one reality." "Thank you," said I.

[7] Poimandres then looked me in the face for so long that I trembled at his appearance. But as he raised his head, I saw within my mind a Light of Powers beyond counting, a boundless Cosmos, coming thus to Be, yet limitless. The Fire, encompassed by power and subdued, held its place. These perceptions were inspired by the words of Poimandres.

[8] Seeing me frightened, amazed and beyond my ordinary mind, he spoke again.

"Through your own mind you have beheld the archetypal form, the primary pre-principle, existing before the beginning and without end," thus Poimandres spoke.

I asked, "But these elements of nature, how have they come to be?"

"From the designs of Divinity," he replied, "which they imitate, having seen the Beauty of the Cosmos, and through an inherent feminine nature and an abundance of soul (psyche)."

[9] "That Divinity, also called Mind, being Androgynous and both light (phos) and life (zoe), by speaking gave birth to a second Mind, a craftmaker (demiourgon), who as divinity of Fire and Spirit, crafted seven governors [Sun, Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn] who encompass and encircle the visible, sensory world and their governance is called Destiny or Fate."

[10] "From the elements weighing downward, the god-word leapt straight to the light elements of feminine nature, uniting with the craftmaker -mind, being of similar substance. The heavy elements of female nature, left below, without the benefit of Mind became simple materiality."

[11] "The craftmakers-mind, with word conjoined, encompassed the seven circles, spinning them with a rush, set them in motion with no beginning and no end, so that both beginning and end are the same. Revolving as Mind so desired, from the heavy elements living beings arose lacking reason (having no words within them) and the air gave birth to the winged and the sea to the swimmers. Earth and Water separated and she, Gaia, brought forth from Herself all the living beings--four-footed, crawling, wild and tame."

[12] "Mind, father of all, who is life and light, gave birth to a man (anthropos), similar to himself, loved as his own child. And the man was fair and had his father's image, and Mind, being in love with his own image, gave him all his craftworks."

[13] "And this man, observing the creations of the craftmaker (demiourgon) made with the Father's help, also wished to do craftwork, and the father agreed. Entering into the sphere of the craftsman, and being granted authority, he observed his brother's handiwork; and the governors of the [seven] sphere's loved the man and each gave him a share of their own sphere. Learning well their essence and entering deeply into their nature, the man desired to break through the boundaries of the spheres to observe the rule of the one given power over Fire."

[14] "Having authority in the cosmos, the man thus broke through the heavenly circles, bending low to peer into the celestial frames, thus revealing to Nature, the fair form of a god. When Nature beheld him, she smiled with love for his unending beauty that held the energies of the spheres and the form of god, for in the water she divined the shape of his fairest form and on the earth, its shadow. And he, seeing the his own form in the water through Nature, loved it and wished to inhabit the form; wish and action occurred as one and he joined with this unreasoning form. And Nature grasp her beloved and held him and hugged and embraced him and joined with him, and they were united as lovers."

[15] "Because of this, humanity is twofold--a mortal body but immortal in essentiality. Yet, even though immortal in essentiality, and having authority throughout the spheres, it is still mortal and affected by Destiny or Fate; thus, though more than the celestial frames, it becomes enslaved from within. Androgynous, from the Androgynous Mind, from the One that never sleeps, nevertheless, passion and oblivion have still mastered humanity."

[16] Poimandres said: "This is a mystery kept hidden until this very day: when feminine Nature united with Anthropos, she gave birth to marvelous marvel. He had in him the seven frames of heaven, made of Fire and Spirit (pneumatosis), as I told you, and Nature immediately bore seven males, androgynous and erect with natures like those of the seven governors."

"O Poimandres, now I long greatly to hear, do not digress!"

And Poimandres replied, "Silence! I have yet to unfold the first of my discourses."

Ironically, said I, "As you see, I am silent."

[17] "Very well, the birth of the seven was as follows: Earth was female, Water gave fertility, and Fire the vitality of maturation. Female Nature took Spirit from the aether and brought forth bodies in the form of Anthropos. From Zoe (life) and Phos (light) came Psyche (soul) and Nous (mind), from Psyche, Zoe, from Phos, Nous. Within the cosmos of perception, all things remained thus for one complete cycle; then, various beings began to manifest."

[18] "Hear then, the rest, the words you long for. When the first cycle was complete, that which bound each thing together was split by the intent of Divinity. All living beings, androgynous, the Anthropoi among them, were separated into male and also into female. And Theos, Divinity, spoke holy words, "Increase your increasing and multiply your multitudes, all creatures and craftworks, and let the mindful recognize their immortality, knowing desire as the cause of death, let each recognize the All that Is."

[19] "With these words spoken, through Providence, Fate and the celestial frames, sexual unions occurred, and acts of birth resulted and each multiplied according to its kind. Those who truly recognized their Self attained the chosen Good, but those who loved only the body, led astray by desire, continued on in darkness, reaching eventually, suffering and death."

[20] "Those who lacked knowledge, what great wrong had they done," asked I, "to be denied immortality"

"You behave like one not giving thought to that which they have heard. You must think!"

"I am thinking, I remember! And I am grateful as well."

"Then tell me, why do they deserve death who are in death?"

"Because that which gives rise to the body is darkness, materiality, born from the watery nature of which the body is composed in the visible cosmos, from which death drinks."

[21] "Yes, you have understood. But why is it that "those who understand advance toward god" as Divinity has said?

"Because," said I, "the father of All was constituted from Light and Life, and from this Anthropos came to be."

"Your speech is well said. Life and Light are both divinity and father, from whom Anthropos, humanity, came to be. So if you learn that you come from Light and Life, coming from them, you shall advance toward them yet again."

"But tell me, O mind, great Nous," I exclaimed, "how shall I advance to Life, for Divinity has said, "Let those who are Mindful, recognize the Self" for all persons have mind, do they not?"

"Hold your tongue, neophyte! Enough talk! I myself, Mind, the Great Nous, am present to the blessed, the pure, the good and the merciful, to the reverent, my Presence is a help--they quickly recognize everything, they propitiate the father [or mother] lovingly, giving thanks, praising, singing joyfully, with affection and love, in a manner most appropriate. Before giving up the body to its proper death, they reject the senses and see their [limited] effects. Or rather, I, Nous, do not permit those effects of body to strike or work their results. I, the Gatekeeper, refuse entry of what is evil or shameful effects, cutting off the anxiety that comes from them."

[23] "From all these I remain distant--the thoughtless, evil, wicked, greedy, envious, slothful, violent and irreverent--and this looses the avenging Daemon, who sensibly assails them with passion and fire, arming them all the better for lawless deeds which call only greater vengeance and rebuke. Such a person never ceases to long, driven by unsatisfied appetites, struggling in darkness, unsatisfied, tormented by an ever-increasing fire."

[24] Spoke I, "You taught me all things well, O Nous, just as I desire. But now tell me again the way up, tell me how it occurs."

Thus Poimandres responded, "First, in releasing the physical form, you must give the body over to transformation, so that the old form is seen no more. To the Daemon, you give your temperament, allowing it to subside. The bodily senses flow back into their own sources, becoming distinct and uniting again with the primal energies, while feelings and desires are reunited with female Nature."

[25] "Thus the Anthropos [as reborn person], ascends with a rush through the cosmic spheres, the celestial frames, at the first zone [Moon] surrendering the energy of expansion and contraction; at the second zone [Mercury], destructive or harmful intents; at the third zone [Venus], s/he gives up illusional desires, now inactive; at the fourth zone [Sun], the arrogance of rule or dominion, now free of excess; at the fifth zone [Mars], unholy audacity, presumption, and reckless daring; at the sixth zone [Jupiter], the acquisitive greed of wealth and surplus; and at the seventh zone [Saturn], s/he renounce lies, deceit and misdirection, that which lies in wait and causes harm."

[26] "Thus stripped of the effects of the celestial spheres, the cosmic frames, this reborn humanity enters the region of the eighth sphere, the Ogdoad ["eight"] in the pure possession of spiritual power and there chants praises to the father. There are many who rejoice in this new arrival and together, they all are as companions; and s/he hears that which lies beyond the Ogdoad, and their hymns form sweetest melody. And they rise up, one after the other, to the father, surrendering themselves to holy Powers, and, having become those Powers, they fuse with Divinity. This is the highest Good, the true receiving of Gnosis, to become One with God. Why do you delay? Having learned this, should you not be a guide to the Worthy, so that through you, humanity might be transformed into Divinity?"

[27] Having said this, Poimandres joined with the Powers, and sent me forth, empowered and instructed on the supreme visionary height and the depths of the All, after which I gave thanks to the father and praised him. And I began to proclaim the beauty of reverence and Gnosis, to all humanity saying, "People, earthborn beings, do not surrender yourselves to drunkenness and sleep and the denial of God; make yourselves sober, awaken, and overcome your sickness and disease for you are entranced by an unreasoning sleep."

[28] When they heard these words they gathered around me, with one accord, and I said, "Why surrender yourselves to Death? You Earthborn Beings have a share in immortality, even you who have journeyed in error, who have made a partner of denial, please, think again! Escape the shadowy light and leave materiality behind, take your share of the Immortal."

[29] But some of them, surrendered to the ways of death and denial resumed their mocking, and withdrew while those desiring to learn, sat about my feet. And making them rise, I became a guide, teaching them the sacred words--how to be redeemed and in what manner--and I sowed words and wisdom among them, they were nourished with ambrosial waters. When evening came, with the sun's light fading, beginning to disappear, I directed them to give thanks to Divinity, and after each completed their praises, they each returned to their own beds.

[30] Within myself, I recalled the kindness of Poimandres, profoundly happy that I was filled with what I desired most, for my sleep had become utter sobriety, clear wakefulness of soul [psyche] and closing my eyes induced visions and the silence was pregnant with Good and the birth of words became a wealth of goodness. This happened because of a receptivity of mind--by Poimandres, that is, the words of Sovereignty. I had attained by the inspired and holy breath of Spirit, Truth. Thus I prayed to Divinity, the father, from the depths of my soul, with all my strength:

[31]"Holy is all Divinity, Father of the All Holy is Divinity, whose guidance is born Of inner powers, Holy is Divinity who Wishes to be Known, and Is Known, by Those he calls his Own. Holy art Thou Who through the Word has constructed All; Holy art Thou, from whom Nature is born As Thy Image; Holy art Thou, whom Nature Has not made as mere Figure or Form; Holy art Thou, who is stronger than All and Every Power, Holy art Thou, who surpasses all Excellence, Oh Holy Art Thou who is beyond all Praising!"

"You whom we address in Silence, the Unspeakable, the Unsayable, accept pure speech as offerings from the heart-soul that reaches longingly to Thee."

[32] "Grant my request, not to fail in seeking the true Gnosis that befits our Essence; give us power, and with this gift, let us enlighten those who are caught in darkness, brother and sisters of my race, but Your sons and daughters. Thus I believe and bear witness. Advance toward Life and Light! Blessed is Divinity! He who is your creation wishes to join, unite with Thee, in the work of holiness since you have given him the power!"

Mind Unto Hermes (Corpus Hermeticum)

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 <or Genesis>.

The Good - the Beautiful, Wisdom, Blessedness - is <the> essence, as it were, of God; of Aeon, <the essence is> 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 <or is accomplished> 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 <or Becoming> 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 <is> 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 <i.e., Soul> fills it <i.e., the Body of the Cosmos> 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 ever 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 established 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 <from the maker of the immortals>, 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 beseem 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 <i.e., God is the One Life> - 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, nor 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 <literally, Aeon>; 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.