

THE EGYPTIAN ARCH-GNOSIS

THE EGYPTIAN ARCH-GNOSIS

AND ITS CALL IN THE ETERNAL PRESENT

NEWLY PROCLAIMED AND EXPLAINED FROM
THE TABULA SMARAGDINA AND CORPUS HERMETICUM
OF HERMES TRISMEGISTUS

BY

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The Gate of Saturn

Saturn is the ruler of matter and the cause of all processes of crystallisation. As such he is the power of obstruction, deterioration and decline.

It is also Saturn's task to reveal everything the human being has created. That is why he is sometimes depicted as the man with the sickle and the hour-glass, as the hierophant of death. For he brings all the values of dialectical and satanic man, all the results of selfishness and the rampant lover life into the light of day, at a psychological moment. Saturn is Father Time, Chronos, who orders: 'Thus far and no further'.

But Saturn is also the one who initiates. Those who walk the path of life-renewal to live again in harmony with the great, universal law of life, will meet Saturn as the one who reveals everything that has become new: the imperishable values secured within the soul. Saturn, the envoy of death in transient nature then becomes the herald of the resurrected, immortal man.

The first edition of this book appeared in 1962, a Saturn year in which mankind was placed before a clear choice: either to go on following the path of the old Saturn, which leads to grinding and death or, aided by the light-forces of the universal Gnosis, to walk the path of liberation, which leads through the gate towards the new life, the Golden City, the new Jerusalem.

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Preface

Mankind's path of development, which for earthly humanity with its unholy self-will has once more become a fatal course, is demonstrating yet again the inviolability of its laws: The tree is known by its fruits', and As you sow, you shall reap'!

For the present-day world, with its menace and blood-red hate, its shameful degeneration and madness, the picture is one of destruction and judgement, accentuated by the approaching end of this day of manifestation.

There are many who perceive all this and are deeply shaken by what has been created by our so highly prized human talents. Such people are seeking, whether consciously or unconsciously, for a way to alleviate their growing sense of guilt with respect to the hopelessness of things. They are looking for a method that will offer not only liberating insight but also a means of achieving a concrete way of living that will make possible inner reconciliation with the one fount of life.

The third volume of *The Egyptian Arch Gnosis and Its Call in the Eternal Present* explains about the Only Good, which can only be found with God, in the deepest deep of the human being, beyond the senses and the lower mentality. The Only Good offers the key to a liberating way of life via the path of soul-rebirth. Those who, amid the darkness of the approaching night, are truly seeking the light, are shown in this book the practical significance of Christ's words: 'Seek first the kingdom and its righteousness'. And the practical application of these words is explained by the

hermetic law: 'Receive all things, relinquish all things, and thereby renew all things'.

May there, even now, be many seekers who hear the call of the Gnosis to self-realisation, and prepare themselves to use the key to liberation, for their eternal salvation and that of all mankind.

J. VAN RIJCKENBORGH

The Tenth Book

That The Good is to be Found in God Alone and Nowhere Else

- 1 *The Good, Aesclepius, is exclusively in God, or rather: God is The Good, in all eternity. That is why The Good is necessarily the cause and essence of all motion and of all genesis: nothing exists that is without The Good. The Good, in perfect equilibrium, is surrounded by a static force of manifestation: it is the entire plenitude, the primordial fount, the origin of all things. When I call that which sustains everything good, I mean The Good, which is absolute and eternal.*

- 2 *This attribute belongs only to God, for there is nothing He lacks, so that no desire for possession can make him evil. There is nothing He might lose and at the loss of which He might be grieved, because sorrow and grief are part of evil. There is nothing stronger than He that might be able to wage war against him, nor is it in keeping with his nature that indignity might be brought upon him. Nothing excels him in beauty and thus arouses him to the love of the senses. Nothing can deny him obedience and thus move him to anger. There*

is nothing wiser than He which could thus arouse his covetousness.

3 *As none of these emotions is to be found in the All-Being, there is nothing in him other than The Good. And just as none of the other characteristics can occur in such a being, likewise The Good cannot be found in anyone else.*

4 *All the other qualities occur in all beings, in the small as well as in the large, in each of them in a specific way, and even in the world, the greatest and most powerful in all manifested life: for all that has been created is full of suffering,* because genesis itself involves suffering.*

Where there is suffering, The Good is certainly absent. Where The Good is, there is certainly no suffering whatsoever. Wherever day is, there is no night, and wherever night is, there is no day. That is why The Good cannot dwell in what has been created, but only in the non-created.

But since all matter participates in the non-created, it is also part of The Good. In this sense the world is good: insofar as it likewise brings forth all things it is, as such, good. But in all other respects it is not good, being also subject to suffering, and changeable, and the mother of creatures subject to suffering.

5 *Human standards of goodness are obtained by comparison with evil. What is not evil beyond measure is here considered to be good, and what here is held to be good is the smallest part of evil. Therefore, it is impossible, here, for what is good to be free from contamination by evil. What is good, here, is*

* Pathos: suffering, sorrow; also the suffering of the soul, and the suffering of passion; all emotions of the soul are contained in the meaning of this word.

affected by evil and ceases to be good. Thus, this good deteriorates into evil. That is why The Good is in God alone; yes, God is The Good.

- 6 *In men, Aesclepius, The Good can be found only in name but nowhere as a reality. In fact, that is impossible, for The Good cannot find a place in a material body which on all sides is stifled by afflictions and arduous exertion, grief and desire, passion and delusion, and images of the senses.*
- 7 *However, worst of all, Aesclepius, is that everything to which man is driven by what I have mentioned is here considered to be the greatest good, instead of an extraordinary evil. The passionate desire of the belly, the instigator of all malice, is the error which keeps us here remote from The Good.*
- 8 *Therefore, I thank God for what He has revealed to my consciousness with regard to knowledge of The Good, which is not to be found in the world. The world is saturated with evil, just as God is filled with the fullness of The Good, or The Good with the fullness of God.*
- 9 *Around the divine being radiates beauty, which indeed dwells in God in supreme, flawless purity. Let us dare to say it, Aesclepius: the essential being of God, if one may speak of it thus, is The Beautiful and The Good.*
- 10 *The Beautiful and The Good are not to be found within those who are of the world. All things perceptible to the eyes are chimera, resembling shadows. But that which transcends the senses approaches most closely the essence of the Beautiful and The Good. And the eyes are no more capable of seeing God than they are capable of beholding The Beautiful and*

The Good. These are entirely part of God; they belong to him and him alone, being inseparable from his essence and expressions of the highest love of God and for God.

11 If you can comprehend God, you will also comprehend The Beautiful and The Good in their supreme, radiant magnificence, entirely illuminated by God. That beauty is incomparable, that goodness inimitable, as God himself is inimitable. To the extent that you comprehend God, you will also comprehend The Beautiful and The Good. They cannot be conveyed to other beings for they cannot be separated from God.

12 If you are seeking God, you are also seeking The Beautiful, for there is only one road that leads from here to The Beautiful: a God-serving life of action, guided by the Gnosis.

13 That is why Chose who are without Gnosis and do not walk on the path of godliness dare proclaim man beautiful and good; man who has never, even in his dreams, seen what The Good is and is in the grip of all kinds of evil, who considers evil to be good and thus assimilates evil without ever becoming satiated with it, fearing to be deprived of it and striving with all his might not only to keep it, but even to increase it.

14 Thus it is, Aesclepius, with regard to human goodness and human beauty. And we can neither escape nor hate them, for the hardest thing of all is that we need them and cannot live without them.

II

The Mystery of The Good

You probably know the gospel story of the rich young man; the tale of the man who came to Jesus the Lord with the question: ‘Good Master, what must I do to inherit eternal life?’ Before answering the question, Jesus replied: Why do you call me good? No-one is good except God alone.’

When we look at the tenth book of Hermes Trismegistus we notice that these words from the gospel are a quotation from the hermetic philosophy. One can state this quite certainly because the hermetic philosophy existed thousands of years before the Christian gospel. In the very first verse we read:

The Good is exclusively in God, or rather: God is The Good, in all eternity.

These words make clear straight away that for us The Good is an unknowable reality: an allusion to a state we ourselves are unable to approach.

If you think about this idea, you will realise that your good, what you are accustomed to calling ‘good’, has to do with something entirely different. It is a relative concept, of value to the I-being for a limited period only. And you know that what you call good, someone else will sometimes find utterly bad or reprehensible. What one person prizes as the most noble, is rejected by another as the most terrible.

There are as many standards of good and evil as there are human beings. In general, you find good those things which strike you as pleasant or agreeable, or which are in keeping with your insight into life. The opposite you consider evil. The result is an appalling chaos, since in our field of life there are no genuinely good people, any more than The Good, the Only Good, can be found in our life-field.

Dialectical criteria of good and evil provide no basis; they cannot be standards upon which a liberating philosophy can be built. In fact, a deliberate deception prevails in relation to these things. Every nation, every race, every group, every movement is established on a foundation of so-called goodness. People say: 'Good is as we see it, as we do it, so follow our example!' But it is senseless to say such things, and dangerous, too, for those who indulge in such self-adulation will always be disillusioned and brought back to reality by the law of antitheses.

No-one objects to the fact that mankind tries, and will go on trying, to solve its problems in the best possible way; indeed there are countless people who are wholeheartedly willing to help it do so. However, do not expect anything essential from such efforts. Do not expect The Good. What is called 'good' in our field of existence is a deception or an error. This was already established with certainty thousands of years ago.

A great deal of philosophising has been done on the subject. For example, think of Nietzsche, who rightly considered as unrealistic the difference between the concepts of good and evil. Such philosophers as Kant, too, have realised that good and evil are dependent on human interpretation. What you think good is good for *you*; someone else may disagree with you entirely. Those who go no further than this level, then, will never reach a solution. How many discussions have you perhaps had, quite pointless discussions, about your often so very divergent insights into good and evil?

Neither do we intend to bore you with *our* insights into good and evil. No, our aim is to free you from all this and to direct your attention to the one genuine Good, which exists in God alone.

Verse 14, at the end of the tenth book, speaks about man's dilemma with respect to good and evil:

Thus it is with regard to human goodness and human beauty. And we can neither escape nor hate them, for the hardest thing of all is that we need them and cannot live without them.

Our aim is to raise you, if possible, to the hermetic perspective. If you consider all the fuss about goodness made by human beings in various groups the world over, if you become involved in all this turmoil, you will surely not find it in you to love it, if you are a genuine seeker of truth. Certainly, in many respects, you may see in it elements of practical value. Sometimes it may also be agreeable. But if you view it in the light of hermetic philosophy you will immediately realise its inadequacy, its hopelessness, and it will not be possible for you to love such attempts at goodness. The same applies to love as applies to goodness. Just as The Good is in God alone, so love, too, is only in God. Neither are found in human beings bom of nature. Seekers of truth, then, ought not to try to find them where they do not exist.

But neither ought you to hate human goodness and human beauty, for hate burns, destroys. Love, too, is a fire. Love is an astral force which has to do with the heart. When a person who seeks love is disillusioned, he always undergoes a purification and his hunger for the One Thing Necessary becomes that much purer and more urgent. But the fire of hate, which is also an astral radiation in the heart sanctuary, destroys and withers the heart. For the person who hates, nothing is left.

However, there is a third attitude, in which one neither expects nor seeks what is impossible. Instead, one adopts a purely objective standpoint with respect to these things, and in this way

maintains a kind of neutral goodwill, in which one simply accepts things as they are. That is why Hermes says:

We can neither escape nor hate human goodness and human beauty, for the hardest thing of all is that we need them and cannot live without them.

For as long as you are obliged to live the life of nature, you will need that life and its attributes. That is why the advice is given neither to harbour hate on account of life in nature, nor to try to escape it.

But what then? Well, if you neither love nor hate human beauty and goodness, and neither do you try to escape them, your position with respect to dialectical nature will be that of detachment. There will then be nothing that binds you to it, and nothing that can hold you back. You will do your daily duty without grumbling, without sighing, without feelings of vengeance and without rebellious actions.

You are passing through the dismal life of the nature of death as the result of a law which compels you to do so. You cannot deny your birth in the nature of death. So do your duty, because that is what you have to do at this moment, and do it with your head held high — without hate, without running away, without attachment. And if, on life's paths, you meet a fellow seeker of truth, content yourself with an understanding wink.

Where, then, is the seeker of truth heading? He is on his way back to the foundation of things, to the ground of all genesis.

The truth-seeker is returning to the Only Good. Only in God is The Good to be found. And he who finds God, he who gains participation in The Good, is from then on no longer of this world. When you have found God, you will exist with the other brothers and sisters in the new life-field, in the soul-world.

But remember that, although man can participate in The Good, he cannot be The Good, as Hermes says. The Good will always remain distinct from man. In that sense, no-one is good, not even one.

That is why we need to examine what The Good is and to what extent a human being can participate in it. In addition, we will need to understand clearly what kind of living being nature-born man is in actual fact. Between the nature-born human being and The Good lies a path, the path to participation in The Good. Anyone who wishes to walk that path will have to begin by becoming non-attached in the sense we have described. Only when you are no longer attached to the nature in which you were born and bred, neither by love nor by hate, will you be able to travel with the soul from Bethlehem to Golgotha. Then you will walk the path to divine unity, to the Only Good.

So let us place ourselves now, as yearning travellers, before the mystery of The Good. Let us try to unveil this mystery.

III

The Path of Self-Surrender

The Good is exclusively in God, or rather: God is The Good, in all eternity. That is why The Good is necessarily the cause and essence of all motion and of all genesis: nothing exists that is without The Good. The Good, in perfect equilibrium, ie surrounded by a static force of manifestation: it is the entire plenitude, the primordial fount, the origin of all things. When I call that which sustains everything 'good', I mean The Good, which is absolute and eternal.

This attribute belongs only to God, for there is nothing He lacks, so that no desire for possession can make him evil. There is nothing He might lose and at the loss of which He might be grieved, because sorrow and grief are part of evil. There is nothing stronger than He that might be able to wage war against Him, nor is it in keeping with his nature that indignity might be brought upon him. Nothing excels him in beauty and thus arouses him to the love of the senses. Nothing can deny him obedience and thus move Him to anger. There is nothing wiser than He which could thus arouse his covetousness.

Let us take a closer look at these words from the tenth book of Hermes. They show that in hermetic philosophy, the concept of God proceeds from the certainty that there is one autonomous, immutable Godhead. They also make us realise how much the

hermetic teachings have filtered into the doctrines of virtually all major religious groups, despite all the distortions people have made of them.

Imagine for a moment the seven cosmic domains, which are not situated one underneath the other or one beside the other, but concentrically, one within the other. This whole system of creation, this creative plenitude of the seven cosmic domains, with its motion and its activity, is not the Godhead, but finds its foundation and essence in the Godhead. God, the unknowable, The Good, is surrounded by a static power of manifestation, which is the primordial fount, the origin of all things.

The Good, which is absolute and eternal and sustains everything, is an attribute of God alone. There is nothing He lacks. He is everything in himself. From this one, unknowable being emanates a mighty, all-fulfilling radiation. Through this mighty radiation of the one Godhead, which fills the entire All and so is omnipresent, everything has been created and is kept in existence. So on the one hand there is God, the Only Good, and on the other hand creation and creatures in a boundless complexity.

If you can hold onto this as an idea, as a starting point for an attitude to life, if you can reach an understanding of all this, you will at some point be moved to ask why Hermes told all this to Aesclepius. Was it intended to be a lesson in dogma? No, Aesclepius had to become a healer, a priestly human being, so he first had to heal himself, obviously. Aesclepius had to ascend to his highest goal as a creature, a goal which lay exclusively in the Only Good.

But at that moment, Aesclepius still finds himself faced with the boundless complexity of creation and its creatures. After all, there are millions who, strictly speaking, are our fellow creatures. And among all these companions of race and fate there are many who take a certain standpoint with respect to others. Think of the many authorities to be found in the world, who say to you: 'This

is what we say; listen to us. We know all about it; we can do it. Take such and such a course; this is what you must do. 'Indeed, there have often been times in which those in authority have exercised compulsion, posing a threat to life and liberty. The brothers and sisters of the Tri-Unity of the Light, of Grail, Cathar and Cross with Roses, could tell a tale about that!

Today, too, there are again developments which practise coercion of the conscience, in small things as well as in major issues. In many fields of life, with all kinds of motives, coercion of the conscience is flourishing anew. Tyranny is exercised by families, for instance, and in many countries by groups. We are also thinking, here, of the inhabitants of the reflection sphere and the life-waves which populate the etheric domain, of those who dwell on other planets and of the aeons and the archons of the aeons. Among them are those who have become extremely powerful as creatures and who glorify themselves with the names of gods, or are awarded such names by others. There are also the hordes of perpetrators of the Great Game*. In short, there are myriads of creatures with myriads of possibilities for betrayal, deception and coercion. And all of them are telling you: 'We possess The Good!'

And now consider Aesclepius, the seeker, in the ocean of life, as a creature among fellow creatures. It is as if he has been submerged, and is being tossed to and fro by the waves.

Most of our readers, too, have been genuine seekers since their youth. You have been searching everywhere, haven't you? And think of all the vast quantities of literature you have devoured! And isn't it true to say that it was as if by coincidence, through a combination of circumstances beyond your control, that you came into contact with the Spiritual School of the Golden Rosycross?

* See J. van Rijckenborgh, *Unmasking*, Rosycross Press, Haarlem, Netherlands 1958.

What should Aesclepius do amid the fire of his seeking? Where should he go? What is being done to him? Where are the tides of life driving him? Thousands of voices ring in his ears: ‘The Good is here!’ What will become of him? For in the totality of creation evil takes many forms. That is why the observation is made in the tenth book of Hermes that what is considered good here, in the world of dialectics, is at best the smallest part of evil.

Who could distinguish the truth among all those wraith-like forms, among all those shadowy notions which present themselves to us? Who is able to see through all that pretence, all that delusion, all that nefariousness? How could one possibly make sense of all that immeasurable chaos? Who could remain standing in the midst of these wildly proliferating dangers? Surely it just not possible?

Yes, it *is* possible! The contents of the tenth book of Hermes are intended to help you in this, since they are directed to the person who wishes to become an Aesclepius. The fact that the Only Good is autonomous, the fact that the Only Good and its mighty radiation are completely separate from all created things, the fact that the Only Good does not share the delusive nature of creation in any way whatever, the fact that the Only Good is unique in its absolute, eternal purity and that nevertheless the Godhead irradiates the whole of creation, the whole of chaos with its mighty light and no place can be found where it is not present — that, and that alone enables the seeker, Aesclepius, to remain himself and find his way through the labyrinth.

We have already given you the necessary directions. If you wish to become a priestess or a priest of the Gnosis, if you want to be an Aesclepius, a healer of mankind, do not be attached to anything, neither by love nor especially by hate. Be purely objective, well-disposed to the last, but not attached. Do not listen to any voice, any impulse, any suggestion. Our words, too, you should not accept *a priori* as true. Be of goodwill, and remain

unbiased until from within you discover something of the truth.

We repeat: do not listen to any voice, do not pursue the fleeting urges of your sensory organism. Stand without conceit as an autonomous creature amid the All-Manifestation. But at the same time be extremely watchful, for as soon as you begin to enter into detachment, the entire host of aeons and archons will fall upon you. Many gods of creation, many entities who have achieved great power, will take an interest in you.

Only in the way described was it possible for the School of the modern Rosycross to be born and to become what it now is: by standing in non-attachment. Those who began the work of the young gnostic Spiritual School have always maintained that there is nothing good in this world. They have held this point of view right from the beginning, even though they have always been absolutely kind and correct with respect to all things. No-one is good, not even one. Therefore, we stand in non-attachment. The Godhead, the mighty, all-fulfilling Godhead can only touch us with its radiation in this state of objectivity and non-attachment. Only in this way can its radiative plenitude transmit to us in purity the message of the All.

Since the very moment when we began the School, it is true to say that the entire host of aeons and archons has been attacking us, mentally, etherically, verbally and in writing. What allegations have not been made against the School and its workers! Of what have we not been accused in the course of the years! Yet, thanks be to God, we have been able to remain in a state of non-attachment in the face of all this, right until now.

With this example before you, do not be anxious. And let yourself be pervaded with the knowledge that, however you are at this moment, you are potentially a Pistis Sophia.* For, and that

* See glossary.

is the mystery, the all-penetrating, omnipresent rays of the Only Good do exist. And you can enter into a link with these rays. Nothing stands between you and these rays of the Only Good! No creation, no creature, no theologian and no spiritual leader of a Spiritual School. As an autonomous creature you stand before 'It' and 'It' alone.

It is possible to live and to exist out of the radiations of the Only Good. In the power of the Only Good you can occupy a position of strength with respect to all phenomena in the world of creatures, and follow your road to the goal in total freedom.

Now you might make the following observation: 'You have said yourself that one should not bind oneself to anything. So how can one connect oneself with the rays of the Seven-Spirit? Wouldn't this give rise to the possibility of error?'

As long as you still exist in the nature-born state, you should not connect yourself with anything. If you do, you will always be victimised. For instance, if you take the point of view that 'I possess it, I am it, I can do it,' you will be misled, day in and day out, by Authades, 'the power with the lion's head', just as described in the gnostic gospel of the *Pistis Sophia*, the power and the figure that imitate the being of Christ. When a theologian preaches about Jesus the Lord and about Christ, he is nothing else than a servant of the power with the lion's head. But when you enter into not-being and open yourself, taking care to remain detached, you will be touched by the universal radiation of the Only Good and the time will come when you know that you are linked with it.

So you must not link yourself with anything as long as you remain in the nature-born state. Otherwise you will be victimised. Then you will founder in the academic sea, as Johan Valentin Andreae* called it. Then you will never reach the island of

* See J. van Rijckenborgh, *Christianopolis*, published in Dutch by the Rosycross Press, Haarlem, The Netherlands, 1978.

Caphar Salama, the land of peace.

That is why the process of gnostic pupilship includes a phase of preparation for union with the Only Good, a phase of devoting oneself, in autonomy, to the rose of the heart. If you dedicate yourself to the rose of the heart, accepting all the consequences and laws involved with it, you will be devoting yourself to the autonomous self par excellence. This means firstly that you will make yourself, with the seat of the I, with the head sanctuary in its nature-born state, subordinate to the heart sanctuary, in order to bring the soul, your immortal soul, to life.

In the modern Spiritual School we call this devotion of the head to the heart self-surrender. And when, as a result, the soul comes to life, the heart begins to dedicate itself to the head. For when the heart is able to open itself to the light of the Gnosis and is filled with it, the breakthrough, via the heart, to the head sanctuary will be celebrated, and evacuate everything that does not belong there. And then, while the autonomous self controls the entire intelligence and sensory perception, the radiative plenitude of the spirit will manifest itself in the head sanctuary. So the aim of self-surrender is to open the head sanctuary for Pymander, for the radiative fullness of the Only Good. And you can only put self-surrender into practice through non-attachment.

In this way, via the road from Bethlehem to Golgotha, the spirit takes up its position on the throne of the autonomous self. Then you will have reached your goal. Then you will have traversed the sea of folly. Then you will have reached the other shore.

Now, though, you may well have another question, of a practical nature: 'When I deliberately avoid either hating or loving and enter into that so important state of negation, will I not be running the risk of ignoring the true children of God? Surely there are many who have walked the path to the Only Good, or who are

engaged in doing so? Surely we shouldn't have the idea that we need have nothing to do with anything or anyone else, and that we ourselves are the best?'

Thanks be to God, this world is undoubtedly inhabited by many of His children. But it is out of the question that you could fail to recognise them. If you are reborn as to the soul, if this process is already active within you, in your heart and in your head, you cannot possibly be mistaken about such things. From the moment when you are soul-born, you enter into unity with every other reborn soul. Wherever in the world they may be, and whatever the circumstances, you will recognise these brothers and sisters. A soul-community does not need to be formed; it *is!* You only need to enter it by bringing the rose to bloom.

We sometimes hear someone in the School say: 'It is so difficult for me to live in group unity; to enter into group unity as it is meant by the School.' Such observations are in fact rather foolish. To say such a thing proves that one is not yet soul-born. If you are soul-born, if one tiny spark of the new soul-state is present in you, you will no longer find unity a problem. You will even find that you are unable to resist entering into the group. Each soul is one with every other soul, existentially and absolutely. That is the splendour of the great soul-community.

So when, in the young Gnosis, it had become possible to concentrate sufficient new soul-power, a link with the great soul-community of the universal Gnostic Chain immediately came into being. We did not seek this link; we did not ask for it. No letters were exchanged on the subject: we simply met each other! And many brothers and sisters were witness to this. A soul-community does not need to be formed; it *is!* Sofollow the path!

For the rest, bear in mind the familiar warnings in the holy language: 'Be faithful, but trust no-one. Do not believe in every

spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are from God,' says John. These two pieces of advice are very hermetic. If you follow them, no harm will come to you. If you do not, grief and pain will assail you and go on assailing you, for grief and pain are part of evil.

IV

The One Path to Liberation

If you were to begin applying the autonomous method, which lies concealed in the Gnosis, you would be free from sorrow and grief during your life's course through the nature of death. The method we have been describing can be called autonomous because it has to be carried out without help and without the supervision of authorities, and only then can it lead to success. It is the method of non-attachment, which is accompanied by gnostic soul-rebirth. You will then be able to follow your path to the end, without sorrow and without grief for, as Hermes says: *Sorrow and grief are part of evil*. And only by applying the one method of liberation will you be able to participate in the radiations of the Only Good.

We distinguish seven aspects in this radiative plenitude and speak of the holy Seven-Spirit. The Seven-Spirit tells us in a way that can actually be experienced of the glory of the Only Good. Neither sorrow nor grief are to be found in its radiation. Sorrow and grief always result from the activities of creatures who, not knowing the way of liberation, exploit each other from day to day, bound as they are by the laws of the nature of death.

The originators of the hermetic philosophy were able to deduce the characteristics of the Only Good from the nature of the Seven-Spirit. If you were to be struck by the radiations of the Seven-Spirit in a positive sense, you would have the same expe-

rience as Hermes Trismegistus. That is why, when speaking of the Only Good, he testifies that:

there is nothing stronger than He that might be able to wage war against Him, nor is it in keeping with His nature that indignity might be brought upon Him. Nothing excels Him in beauty and thus arouses Him to the love of the senses. Nothing can deny Him obedience and thus move Him to anger. There is nothing wiser than He which could thus arouse his covetousness.

As none of these emotions is to be found in the All-Being, there is nothing in Him other than The Good. And just as none of the other characteristics can occur in such a Being, likewise The Good cannot be found in anyone else.

Consequently, for the seeking person who yearns for a solution, there is only one way out: to form a link with the Only Good. As concerns success for those who seek liberation, all other paths are fundamentally and absolutely closed. Understand well, that everything is freely available to you. Thousands of voices are clamouring: ‘Come with us, follow our path!’ But even should you still have the time to follow all these paths, you would eventually discover that there is but one way out, and that is to form a link with the Only Good. That is why the point of view from which we proceed as a Spiritual School has always remained in essence very simple over the years:

non-attachment,
self-surrender to the rose of the heart,
rebirth *of* the soul and rebirth *by* the soul.

The Living Body of the young Gnosis is like a well-constructed ark. In the ark of which the Old Testament tells, and about which we are informed by the Egyptian mysteries, all genuine values and forces of spirit, soul and matter were to be found, secure and well-preserved. As you have been admitted as a pupil into the

Living Body of the young Gnosis and know the aim towards which our ark must sail in these times, it will be clear why the modern Gnosis has to dissociate itself from everything that exists in the field of ordinary creation. If it were to take an opposite stance, this would contradict the principle of non-attachment.

There is but one path to liberation: the link with the Only Good. All other paths, however beautiful they may appear to be, are negative in their results.

People have often resented the fact of the School's dissociation from sectarianism and scorn has been aroused. However, the School's separatism is only maintained with respect to those people and groups who seek their salvation in the dialectical field of creation and who use the name of the Only Good solely as a flag to cover the cargo.

With respect to the absolute, separatism of course cannot be applied. That would be impossible, because anyone who walks the path to the Only Good enters into soul-birth, and the result of that is always unity with every other soul. So should there be groups of striving people who are walking the same path of liberation, they will find each other at the allotted time, without any possibility of error. Then the weak will always gladly join with the strong, in the certain knowledge that they will not be exploited.

The facts have proved over the years that the modern Spiritual School has always followed this hermetic path. And what began so modestly is now growing rapidly. We do not mean to boast by saying this. We make the observation solely because the School's course of development proves the truth of the hermetic path. He who seeks the Only Good in a state of non-attachment will always overcome. We very much hope that you will realise clearly that the power to do so is present in the Only Good. So if, as an apparently isolated wanderer in these earthly fields, you are able to form a link with the Only Good, you will be stronger than one

who conquers a city. He who seeks the Only Good in non-attachment will always overcome.

And so we state again, following the text of the tenth book: just as there is no evil in the divine being, so The Good cannot be found in any other being.

All the other qualities occur in all beings, in the small as well as in the large, in each of them in a specific way, and even in the world, the greatest and most powerful in all manifested life, for all that has been created is full of suffering, because genesis itself involves suffering.

Among other things, this means that no creature that has been born of the will of man, by the process of reproduction, possesses the Only Good. Only the Other One can do that. The animal state can have no part in the Only Good. Only the soul is capable of that; the soul does not originate from the animal state. When a child is born this does not automatically mean that it will possess a soul. What the philosophy of the modern Spiritual School refers to as soul-birth or soul-rebirth, is the awakening of something that already exists. Such a birth can therefore not be transmitted to others by the process of reproduction.

Neither can you force your child to live out of the soul. You can only influence your children to the good, by your own very personal example. So, the power to awaken the soul cannot be extracted from the nature of death.

The reproductive urge is an astral force; it is a fire that communicates itself to the heart. That is why people speak of the passions of the heart. Passion, in the sense we mean, is not something perverse. No, it is simply a statement of natural law that every birth in nature is the result of passion, of astral con-

centrations in the heart sanctuary. That is why Hermes says in verse four of the tenth book:

Where there is suffering, The Good is certainly absent. Where The Good is, there is certainly no suffering whatsoever. Wherever day is, there is no night, and wherever night is, there is no day. That is why The Good cannot dwell in what has been created, but only in the non-created.

To prevent any misunderstanding: it is impossible for The Good to dwell in what has been born. The Good dwells only in the Only Begotten.

Perhaps you are finding all this difficult to understand, and maybe even more difficult to accept. Surely Hermes and Aesclepius, and all the great ones, and all those striving in the Rosycross were also born of passion? Surely if it were not for passion not a single microcosm would be able to incarnate in this field of existence? So how can Hermes fulminate against it?

He is not fulminating, only making a statement. These words explain what he means:

But since all matter participates in the non-created, it is also part of The Good. In this sense the would is good: insofar as it likewise brings forth all things it is, as such, good. But in all other respects it is not good, being also subject to suffering, and changeable, and the mother of creatures subject to suffering.

By this Hermes means that there is a plan to keep fallen mankind in manifestation in the astral field of the nature of death. Various kingdoms of nature are concerned with this plan. Think, for instance, of the mineral, plant and animal kingdoms, which are so intimately connected with the human kingdom.

The foundations of the plan, to provide fallen microcosms with

new possibilities for manifestation and thus new opportunities for liberation, are in fact absolutely good, for they stem from the divine plan for the salvation of the world and mankind. But the functions, the expressions of the plan must necessarily be carried out via the nature-born creature. Thus the process of maintaining the various kingdoms of nature, and their cooperation, as well as the initial results, have nothing to do with the Only Good.

You should see it in this way. When a child is born and stands at the entrance to life's path, it has various possibilities of liberation. Naturally, these can be called good in a certain sense, but even so, they have nothing to do with the absolute, with the Only Good. To think that man could simply be Good, as has been thought in certain idealistic circles, is an illusion, a dream which Hermes immediately destroys. He says:

Human standards of goodness are obtained by comparison with evil. For what is not evil beyond measure is here considered to be good, and what here is held to be good is the smallest part of evil. Therefore, it is impossible, here, for what is good to be free from contamination by evil. What is good, here, is affected by evil and, thus, ceases to be good. Thus, this good deteriorates into evil.

Imagine that you do something nice, something good in the ordinary sense. Who is to say that you will still be doing good in an hour's time?

Imagine that you are in the temple, and that at a particular moment you take the decision to walk the path. That would be a good decision. But could you be certain that in an hour's time you would not have forgotten your good decision? Do you see that such a decision does not derive from the Only Good? Your good decision is connected with the forces of antithesis and — perhaps today, perhaps tomorrow — may turn into evil. So then you might adopt the following point of view: 'When I was in the

temple I was in a state of euphoria and now I prefer simply to concern myself with the concrete aspects of dialectical existence.’

As Hermes says, all our so-called good is subject to change. And if your good decision is not straight away applied to serving the soul, it will immediately turn into its opposite. Good in nature always invokes its opposite. That is why things are so difficult for you. At one moment, you are full of good intentions. The next moment you are drowning, as it were, in the opposite. *What is good, here, is affected by evil and, thus, ceases to be good*, Hermes observes, laconically. And then verse six gives the judgement, with hermetic precision:

In men, Aesclepius, The Good can be found only in name but nowhere as a reality. In fact, that is impossible, for The Good cannot find a place in a material body which on all sides is stifled by afflictions and arduous exertion, grief and desire, passion and delusion, and images of the senses.

So there is a dividing line, sharp as a razor. In you and in us there is one tiny possibility that at best can be called ‘the smallest part of evil’. This minute possibility, this power, diminishes in size and strength as the years go by. You must use this smallest part of evil, this fleeting possibility, as long as you still have it, for self-surrender, in order to awaken the soul, so that another life may arise which can withdraw from the pool of death. If you do not grasp this opportunity, your entire personality will associate itself increasingly with the manifestations of evil, whatever you may do to avoid it. The whole of your life will then be and remain filled with wearisome exertions, with plagues, sorrows and desires, in myriad forms. And the urges, delusions and misconceptions of the senses will entangle you in all kinds of trouble.

How many snares have you been caught in already? How much suffering and sorrow is already your share? Use your opportunity,

then, as long as you still have it. If you do not, then the end of your life's song will be that you can no longer understand the liberating idea Hermes transmitted to Aesclepius. Who is to say when the last tiny spark of a possibility of liberating action has been extinguished in a human being?

Therefore, make use of your time!

The Delusory Goodness of Evil

The tenth book of Hermes goes on to explain a difficult point, a dangerous hurdle of great relevance to everyone. In verses 7-10 Hermes says:

But worst of all, Aesclepius, is that everything to which man is driven by what I have mentioned is here considered to be the greatest good, instead of an extraordinary evil. The passionate desire of the belly, the instigator of all malice, is the error which keeps us here remote from The Good.

Therefore, I thank God for what He has revealed to my consciousness with regard to knowledge of The Good, which is not to be found in the world. The world is saturated with evil, just as God is filled with the fullness of The Good, or The Good with the fullness of God.

Around the divine Being radiates beauty, which indeed dwells in God in supreme, flawless purity. Let us dare to say it, Aesclepius: the essential being of God, if one may speak of it thus, is The Beautiful and The Good.

The Beautiful and The Good are not to be found within those who are of the world. All things perceptible to the eyes are chimera, resembling shadows. But that which transcends the senses approaches most closely the essence of the Beautiful and The Good. And the eyes are no more capable of beholding The

Beautiful and The Good than they are capable of seeing God. The Beautiful and The Good are entirely part of God; they belong to Him and Him alone, being inseparable from His essence and expressions of the highest love of God and for God.

It is necessary to place these words in the living present. By now you will no doubt agree with us that The Good is not to be found in this world and that life is nothing but trouble and sorrow, that pain and grief are man's lot. But there are optimists as well as pessimists, cheerful people as well as prophets of doom.

There are those who accept life as it is. There are also those who struggle hopelessly against it. There are those who worry all the time, and those who are quite content. But virtually all know in their heart of hearts that, if it comes to the crunch, the good they are searching or think they have found is a shadow, an unreality. And even if that knowledge is not present, there are still feelings of doubt from time to time, and quite often disappointments, too. For the good turns out not to be so good after all, but only a greater or smaller part of evil.

You will understand, though, that what we have said does not apply to life-spark entities, who have no awareness of these things. They are just like animals and do not have an inner life.

Now if you are a pupil of the young Gnosis, take a look at yourself. Great opportunities are available to you, because you participate in the Living Body of the School. However, we would like to ask: 'Are you happy at this moment? Have you raised yourself above the level of grief and pain? Have you freed yourself from sorrow and suffering? Has sorrow gone from you? Are you not subject to all kinds of changing moods? Do you stand, morning, noon and night, in the joy of the children of God? Is it not so that your course through life, particularly in these times, is very burdensome? Could it not be said that you are enmeshed in problems without number and that you have a thousand and

one worries? What is the cause of all this?’

Have you not noticed that many people complain of ill health? This is often also true of pupils of the School. Many do not look well. The main complaint is tiredness. One has the impression that many experience these difficulties because of long periods of stress without sufficient rest. The diet of many pupils, too, is far from ideal.

This is a symptom of our times. In this respect, we feel that pupils of the School are no different from other people. Outside the School, too — all over the world, in fact — this general deterioration can be observed. The state we have entered into now was predicted several years ago in the modern Spiritual School. Pupils were warned about it again and again.

Why were they warned? What can one do about it? As nature-born human beings aren't we all threatened by the same dangers?

No, you were warned repeatedly because there *is* something you can do about it! But one of the difficulties of these times is that people do not listen well and understand so poorly. Moreover, people forget very quickly. Everything we are telling you today, you could well have forgotten entirely by tomorrow, not intentionally, not because you are primitive, but because what you hear, you repress!

The atmosphere in which we live has changed. The Great Game is being played! You observe how world events are affected by the Great Game, how they correspond to the unmasking*. But do you also observe how the Great Game has already begun with respect to *you*?

A general sickening, weakening and poisoning of all mankind has begun. We announced this well beforehand, so that you would not be victimised by it. All those complaints show that all are

* See J. van Rijckenborgh, *Unmasking*, Rosycross Press, Haarlem, Netherlands, 1958.

being swept along in the mighty current of destruction. Coughing and sneezing, anaemic and laden with all kinds of symptoms we are carried along by the current, unable to resist. Uneasiness and despondency prevail wherever you look. People are asking themselves: ‘Where is all this going to lead? What is going on?’

The tenth book of Hermes provides us with the opportunity to give an objective answer to these questions: the human being of this world is unable to perceive! What the eyes see, as Hermes says, are only chimera and shadows of the lower nature.

How so? On account of the condition of your head sanctuary. On account of your sensory faculties. The entire head sanctuary of the nature-born human being is attuned to the nature of death. His sensory faculties, whether coarse or refined, are attuned to dialectics, to ordinary nature. This state of consciousness is forever unsuited to perceive the Only Good; the Only Good that, at the very least, is the living soul-state’s condition of existence. That which most closely approaches the essence of The Good is hidden from our eyes. The most mighty, the most glorious, entirely eludes the centres of consciousness, the sensory organs of the head sanctuary. We are not thinking here of acquiring things like clairvoyance or etheric sight, for these are only extensions of seeing the misery; the defilement and misery of physical nature can be seen in yet greater measure in the reflection sphere.

As the tenth book says: The Good, the Only Good, is not to be found in this world. The radiation of The Good, however, the universal Seven-Spirit, is nevertheless omnipresent. And you can participate in this radiation. In *that* lies the possibility of ascent. But it is not enough simply to know this; that would mean only that you have grasped it intellectually. As long as this knowledge remains mere intellectual cognizance, it will do you no good.

If you are a pupil of the modern Spiritual School, we can describe your situation as follows:

Firstly, you know about the path.

Secondly, you are interested in the path and have set your heart on it.

Thirdly, as a result you have been taken up into a gnostic Living Body.

Fourthly, you are therefore subject to an intense influence emanating from it.

Fifthly, on the one hand you are standing in the midst of the nature of death and its influences, while on the other you are extracting the radiations of the Spiritual School.

Sixthly, it is a fact that the world's atmosphere is becoming increasingly evil and full of misery, while at the same time the influence of the Gnosis, which manifests itself in you and to you in the Living Body, is growing in intensity.

Seventhly, you are therefore bearing a twofold burden and it is as if you are being torn limb from limb: on the one hand there is the nature of death, and on the other the influences of the Living Body.

You are being torn apart, and that is something no-one can endure for long, unless you actually walk the path you know so well in theory, taking all the consequences into consideration. Please understand what we are saying. We are not trying to blame you in any way. We only mean to draw your attention to a factual state which has existed until now, either wholly or in part. You love the School wholeheartedly. You do its work with love. Your devotion is considerable. But what is required now? What is necessary is that you begin immediately to experience the path, and to walk it with the greatest possible speed. What you need is to throw yourself into the actuality of pupilship. You need to experience the path. You need to realise your pupilship, immediately, positively.

In an occult school one might say: 'Today I will take it easy with regard to my exercises. I don't have much time and I don't

feel so well. It does not suit me at the moment.’ But you cannot permit that in a gnostic spiritual school! Here, it is ‘to be or not to be’, particularly in a time like ours. An absolute, immediate application of all the norms conveyed to you by the School of the Rosycross is crucial, and without wasting one single hour.

Just one question: *is* your pupilship so immediate and actual? From morning till night, from hour to hour? Just tell yourself the answer. You cannot maintain for very long the sevenfold state we have outlined. Various occurrences in your own life and beyond will overtake you.

At the moment, your eyes see only shadows, because your consciousness, too, remains as it was created by nature; because you only know The Good in theory. But you should realise that the inner eye is therefore also unable to behold the glory of The Good. Thus you bear the burden of nature *and* the burden of being inwardly torn apart because of the influences of the Gnosis. It is a double burden, without any compensation apart from, perhaps, a conference in one of our foci, in which you are lifted out of the routine of daily life, in which everything is different and you are surrounded by the power of the temple. Maybe that is the only compensation you have. But the rest of the time there is no equilibrium, no harmony in your life.

Is it not so that there are many pupils who have never yet seen what is good, the one genuine Good? On the contrary, by virtue of their birth in nature they are automatically linked with every-thing evil. But no-one can go on living only from theories. And the extent to which what we are about to say applies to you, you must judge for yourself. Hermes points out that people are not only bound to what is evil, but even think that it is good. They consider everything to which earthly nature drives mankind to be the greatest good, instead of an exceptional evil,

fearing to be deprived of it and striving with all their might not only to keep it, but even to increase it.

Do you now understand that in a School like ours the moment will always come when the truth is revealed? Do you also realise, in view of the facts we have mentioned, that many are teetering on the brink of an abyss? That is why, in view of the extremely rapid unfoldment of the course of world events, it is high time you intervened radically in your own state of being. In everything in which you still remain on the negative side of things, you ought to intervene before it is no longer possible to do so.

You know the way. You are familiar with the method. At the same time, the power to break through is at your disposal. Why are you sighing then?

There is nothing to sigh about, because hands are outstretched in their thousands to lift you out of the morass. But if you don't take hold of the outstretched hand, how ever can you be helped?

VI

The Redeeming Song of Repentance

Many know from experience the pain of being inwardly torn apart, as we described it in the last chapter. On the one hand there is dialectics, evil, and on the other the attraction the Gnosis exercises upon you because of your participation in the Living Body of the Spiritual School. A solution is therefore urgently necessary, and as quickly as possible, too. One might now ask the practical question: 'Is such a solution available?'

The School's reply is that a solution does exist, in the form of the path, in the form of the application of the method you have been taught and which is now being shown you yet again. Enter into the state of neither loving nor hating what belongs to the nature of death. Begin practising non-attachment. Take an objective stance with respect to all phenomena. Do your duty in life, do what is correct, but no more than that.

The result will be that the astral forces of the nature of death, the astral forces of the ordinary field of life will slowly but surely cease to be factors in your heart sanctuary.

The heart sanctuary has seven ventricles, seven chambers: four lower ventricles and three higher principles. Indian philosophy speaks of a four-petalled lotus of the heart, and of a seven-petalled lotus, while the Inner School of the young Gnosis speaks characteristically of the triangle and the square of construction.

The four lower heart-ventricles form the square of construc-

tion. Above them blaze three flames, three etheric torches: the three higher principles, each of which has a larger or smaller radius of action. They guide, they activate the lower processes which must unfold on the square of construction.

Now, if you enter into non-attachment, consistently and with perseverance, you will enable one or more, if not all three higher principles of the heart to influence the four lower heart-ventricles in a powerful, stimulating way. In this way, you will enter into an entirely different state of life.

If you love something belonging to the nature of death, you attract it to you. If you hate it, you repel it. For these two processes of attraction and repulsion to come about, you need the astral currents of dialectics. In this way you keep the fire of death alive in the aura of the heart. All your interests in life on the horizontal level, all your rejecting points of view, help maintain the ordinary, nature-born state of the heart sanctuary. So one can speak of 'the passions of the heart', storm waves of an astral nature which stir up the heart sanctuary. These astral currents of ordinary life therefore play an important role in your heart, and thus in your life. If, during a temple service, the aura of your heart is charged in a different way, and you undergo the effects of this both in your body and in your consciousness, but you afterwards switch coarsely back to ordinary life without any self-control, the new astral fire which has begun to shine will immediately be neutralised again, and the old state will reassert itself to the full.

Obviously, the result will be that your entire consciousness, the whole sevenfold candelabrum in the head sanctuary, and the whole of your sensory organism will remain attuned, just like your heart, to the nature of death. It is as if you take prisoner everything that is present in the head.

AH the astral currents from which you live are transformed into etheric forces. Your sensory organism functions through ethers. Ethers are the fuel of the sensory apparatus. Ethers are extracted

from astral substances and that is why, if the astral substances which govern your life are derived from the nature of death, you will remain the nature-born human being you have been from the beginning. That is why Hermes says in verses ten and eleven:

The eyes are no more capable of beholding The Beautiful and The Good than they are capable of seeing God. The Beautiful and The Good are entirely part of God; they belong to Him and Him alone, being inseparable from His essence and expressions of the highest love of God and for God.

If you can comprehend God, you will also comprehend The Beautiful and The Good in their supreme, radiant magnificence, entirely illuminated by God. That Beauty is incomparable, that Goodness inimitable, as God himself is inimitable. To the extent that you comprehend God, you will also comprehend the Beautiful and The Good. They cannot be conveyed to other beings for they cannot be separated from God.

That is why anyone who genuinely seeks for a solution, for liberation, must first enter into a state of non-attachment. Without that, all the work will be in vain. This is quite understandable: you first need to ensure that the fierce raging of the astral fire of the nature of death is brought to a standstill; that it is neutralised as far as possible. As soon as the heart has been freed, you need to make your head sanctuary subordinate to the heart sanctuary in total self-surrender. In this way, the consciousness, which has now become objective, will begin to sing its redeeming song of repentance.

If, in humility and surrender, the consciousness ‘turns in upon the heart’, as the mystics put it, the result will be an immediate influx into the heart of light-forces of the new astral fire. A new heart-aura will then be formed, and it will be as if you become younger. You will enter the new youth, the youth of the new-born soul-state.

The astral fire of the Gnosis, of the soul-world, will pervade and fill you entirely; it will surround you like a robe. And the outcome will be that the consciousness, the head sanctuary with all its faculties, will also be touched, filled and transformed, and the 'golden wonder-flower' will be visible in the window of the soul. A far-reaching process of change will begin and equilibrium will come into your life. Suffering and sorrow and problems will remain, for ordinary nature must take its course. But from that moment on it will be as if your position with regard to all these things has totally changed, so that they no longer have such a hold on you. You will no longer find yourself fighting for breath, in a moral or spiritual sense. Harmony will come into your life.

In this way one receives more than sufficient compensation to be able to tolerate all afflictions with a joyful heart. One receives sufficient compensation to remain standing in the nature of death in a state of harmony.

Hermes calls this new state: a *God-serving life of action, guided by the Gnosis*. That is what it means to be filled with the Seven-Spirit, to be filled with God. It is the highest and most noble happiness one can ever experience. It is participation in the Only Good, as far as is possible for a created being; it means being taken up into the radiations of the Seven-Spirit.

You can celebrate this blessedness now, in the present, if you fulfil the consequences of the path. Only then will you have the courage to face life with a cheerful countenance. Only then will you have solved the mystery of the Only Good for, and within, yourself.

VII

The Eleventh Book

About the Mentality and the Senses

- 1 Yesterday, Aesclepius, I taught 'the words of maturity'. And now I deem it necessary, in that connection, to speak in detail about sensory perception. It is thought that sensory perception and mental activity differ in the sense that the former is material and the latter spiritual.*
- 2 I, however, hold that both are most closely connected and by no means different, at least, in human beings. Just as, in the other animals, sensory perception is bound to nature, so, in human beings, the mentality too is bound to it.*
- 3 The cognitive faculty is to mental activity as God is to divine nature. For the divine nature is brought forth by God and mental activity by the cognitive faculty, which is related to the Word.*
- 4 Or better still: mental activity and the Word are each other's instruments, for the Word does not find utterance without mental activity, and mental activity is not manifested without the Word.*

- 5 *Sensory perception and mental activity thus enter human beings together, intertwined as it were. For there is no mental activity without sensory perception and no sensory perception without mental activity.*
- 6 *Nevertheless, it is possible to conceive a form of mental activity without direct sensory perception, like the images that present themselves in dreams.*
- 7 *I hold that both activities are set in motion by images making their appearance in dreams.*
- 8 *Perception takes place in both the physical and the astral bodies. As soon as the two components of perception have become one, thought, called forth in the mentality, is given voice by means of the consciousness.*
- 9 *The mentality brings forth all thought-images: good images when it has received the seeds from God, unholy images when they have originated from one of the demons. For there is no place in the world where there are no demons, that is, demons that lack the light of God. They penetrate into man and sow in him the seeds of their own activities. The mentality is then impregnated with adultery, murder, ungracious treatment of parents, sacrilegious acts, impious deeds, suicide by hanging or casting oneself down from a Cliff, and a variety of other things which are the work of demons.*
- 10 *As far as the seeds of God are concerned, they are few in number, but great and fair and good. They are called virtue, moderation and piety. Piety is Gnosis, the knowledge that is of and with God. He who has this knowledge is filled with all that is good and receives his thoughts, which differ entirely*

from those of the masses, from God.

11 Hence it is that those who walk in the Gnosis are not pleasing to the masses and, on the other hand, the masses are not pleasing to them. They are considered foolish, they are the target of ridicule and mockery, and they are hated and despised, and sometimes even put to death because, as I said before, evil must necessarily dwell here as it originated here. Thus, its domain is the earth, and not the world as some blasphemously maintain.

12 But he who loves and is devoted to God will endure all things, because he participates in the Gnosis. To such a person all things work together for the good, even those things that are evil to others. And when ambushes are laid against him, he conveys everything, as a sacrifice, to the Gnosis, and he, alone, transforms evil into The Good.

13 I now return to my discussion of perception. It is characteristic of man to combine perception with mental activity. As I have mentioned before, however, not every human being has an intellect at his disposal, for there are two kinds of men: physical man and spiritual man. The physical man, connected with evil, receives, as I have said, the seed of his thoughts from the demons; the spiritual man is connected with The Good and is kept by God in His grace.

14 God, the Demi-Urge of the All, forms all His creatures in His own image. But they, though good in origin, deviated in the application of their active power. That is why the grinding, rotating movement of the earth brings forth generations with different qualities, befouling some with evil, purifying others

with The Good. For, Aesclepius, the world too has its perceptive faculty and its mental activity; not like those of men, nor so manifold, but more excellent, simpler, more truthful.

15 The world's perception and cognitive faculty, created to be instruments of the will of God, give form to all things and cause them to perish once more within themselves so that, whilst keeping within themselves all the seeds received from God, they bring forth everything that accords with their own task and vocation, and by disintegrating these things again, grant them renewal. Having made these things disintegrate they grant them renewal, like skilful gardeners of Life, by causing them to be manifested in a different way.

16 There is nothing that has not received life from the world. While it calls everything into existence, it fills it with life. It is both the dwelling place and the creator of life.

17 The bodies are composed of matter of various kinds: partly of earth, partly of water, partly of air, partly of fire. They are all composite, the one more, the other less; the more composite are heavier, the less composite lighter.

18 The rapidity of the form-manifestation here causes the variegated assortment of the species, for the uninterrupted, active breath of the world continuously grants the bodies new faculties and the plenitude of life.

19 So God is the Father of the world, and the world is the creator of everything it contains; the world is the Son of God, and everything that is in the world was brought forth by the world.

- 20 *Rightly is the world called “Cosmos”,* because it orders and adorns the All through the diversity of what is created, through the continuity of life, through the inexhaustability of the power of manifestation, through the swiftness of fate, through the composition of the elements and the arrangement of everything that comes into being. Thus the world is called “cosmos” in view of its fundamental laws as well as its guidance.*
- 21 *Thus perception and intellect enter all living beings from without, as if on the breath of what surrounds them. But the world, when it came into being, received them once and for all from God.*
- 22 *God is not, as some suppose, devoid of perception and mind. Those who say so bring indignity upon God through misguided reverence, since all creatures, Aesclepius, are in God. They have come into being through God and are dependent on Him; whether they manifest themselves in physical bodies, rise as soul-beings, have been vivified by the spirit, or have been received into the realm of the dead, they are all in God.*
- 23 *It is even more precise to say that He does not contain all creatures, but that, in truth, He is them all himself. He does not attach them to himself from without, but brings them forth out of his own being and manifests them out of himself.*
- 24 *This, men, is the perception and the thought-activity of God: the continuous movement of the All; and there will never be a time when even the smallest part of what exists, that is, any part of God, will be lost. God contains everything within*

* Literally: order, adornment.

himself, nothing is outside him, and He exists in everything.

25 *If you can fathom these things, Aesclepius, you will discern that they are true. Should you not understand them, they will seem to you lacking in verity. To understand truly means to possess living faith, while want of faith means want of understanding. It is not, however, the mentality that reaches up to truth, but the soul that is connected to the spirit, having the power to forge ahead to the truth after it has first been guided to this path by the mentality. When it then ponders upon the entire All with a gaze that is all-embracing, finding how everything accords with what the insight-laden mentality has explained, its faith is raised to knowledge and it finds tranquillity in that fair knowledge of faith.*

26 *Those who understand from within the words I have proclaimed, which are from God, will be led by them to faith. For those who lack the living insight they will be the cause of unbelief.*

VIII

The Mind and the Senses

Yesterday, Aesclepius, I taught 'the words of maturity'. And now I deem it necessary, in that connection, to speak in detail about sensory perception. It is thought that sensory perception and mental activity differ in the sense that the former is material and the latter spiritual.

I, however, hold that both are most closely connected and by no means different, at least, in human beings. Just as, in the other animals, sensory perception is bound to nature, so, in human beings, the mind too is bound to it.

We would first like to draw attention to your sensory organism, to the five familiar senses: hearing, vision, smell, taste and touch. Together they form the foundation of the human consciousness. In fact, one could say they are the consciousness. For without the sensory functions there would be no question of any consciousness at all. The senses enable the human being to express himself, to live consciously.

Alongside the senses, there is the cognitive faculty. Ordinary people and authorities associate the thought processes with the human spirit. Anyone who uses his cognitive faculty in a reasonably acceptable way is considered to possess spiritual faculties to a certain extent. However, on closer consideration one has to renounce the idea that the mentality is associated with the human

spirit, because in the nature-born human being the sensory organs are entirely one with the intellectual apparatus. In the words of Hermes, they are *most closely connected and by no means different*.

Consequently, neither the thinking nor the sensory organism of the nature born human being, nor the consciousness that is the result of these, have anything at all to do with the spirit. The nature-born human being only differs from other animals in that, alongside the sensory organism, he also possesses a cognitive apparatus. With animals, it is the sensory perception that is bound to nature, whereas with man it is the mind, too.

So one is brought to the conclusion that man is far more nature-bound, far more nature-orientated, than any other animal. Human behaviour shows that this is genuinely the case. Even the so-called religion, the metaphysics of the human being, speaks in every language of his nature-bound state.

The godhead is supposed to give man health his whole life long. Everything a human being desires he prays for to the godhead. And when, according to human interpretation, the godhead gives these things, he is responded to with gratitude every so often. And when their life comes to an end, people ask the godhead to supply a pleasant place in the hereafter, together with members of their family, other relations and friends, in eternity, in heavenly sunshine and heavenly joy.

All this is quite logical, for the metaphysics of a being of this nature can lead in no other direction. That is why you need to see through this religious disposition, even though people embellish it with the name of Christ and the Christian cross, and many other misconceptions about a quite different idea, which is not of this world.

As far as these things are concerned, animals are far above human beings. The animal is simply one with nature, nothing more. The human refinement of self-maintenance in its countless

forms is quite foreign to an animal. The human being is the most depraved creature of nature, the most nature-bound being, since the sensory organism and the cognitive organism, and therefore the entire consciousness and everything the human being is, is entirely one with nature.

This is neither flattering nor pleasant, but that is how it is. *Sensory perception and mental activity thus enter human beings together, intertwined as it were*, as Hermes says.

Without sensory perception there is no mental activity and without mental activity there is no perception. The animal is orientated towards its natural aim and demonstrates this orientation clearly and openly. In this sense, animals are absolutely honest and honourable. But this much cannot be said of human beings. A human being, too, is orientated towards his natural aim, but he does not demonstrate this clearly nor openly, and in this sense is extremely dishonest and dishonourable. He is compelled to act in this way by the law of self-maintenance. Human beings mislead each other in all kinds of ways, because of the cunning of their mentality. You should observe — starting with yourself! — how people lie to one another, and cheat and fool each other. Notice how they arrange their facial expressions to suit the requirements of the moment, either friendly or stern, cheerful or uplifted. In this respect you need to see the human being as an animal, the most dangerous animal. And you should begin your investigation into these things by looking at yourself.

From time to time movements emerge that recognise the infamous hypocrisy and deceitfulness of the natural human being, and uncover the lugubrious play-acting which characterises the human social apparatus. Such movements make intermittent efforts to unmask all these things and to promote a genuinely uninhibited, unadulterated way of behaving. And in some parts of the world young people actually begin to live in an uninhibited

way; older people do not dare to.

But if you were to observe all this, you would only too quickly say: 'Yes, but this can't be done. You just can't act like that. To be human, in such a genuine, unadulterated way, is just totally unacceptable!' For if the human being of nature were to be really, uninhibitedly human, if he were to give full expression to his dialectical inner being, what a mess, dear people, we would soon find ourselves in! It would be a shambles so horrible that the spheres of the desire world where orgies of passion rage, as an outlet for the tensions of which this world is so full, would pale by comparison.

If young people in the world's larger cities really do begin to behave in a 'natural' way, as they have been trying to do in recent years, just look at how they are hounded by the police. The police act against them if they protest against the tremendous lies of human society. In this way a tension develops which, as we are all experiencing, becomes increasingly difficult to tolerate. For man is *not* called to be the most intelligent and therefore the most dangerous of animals!

But who will explain that to the derailed youth of our cities? For how many ages have young people the world over been thoroughly deceived? They have been born, brought up and educated to be sacrificed on the battle-fields! What high, noble, liberating aim is there left to offer young people these days? Has the world not been engulfed in fire and flames since the beginning of this century? Are there any religious ideals, social or scientific norms that can be considered liberating?

Is it any wonder that the young take as their slogan the words, already ages old: let us eat, drink and be merry, let us give free rein to our animal nature, for tomorrow we die'?

'That's fine,' say the modern theologians, the priests and pastors, 'it's very good to be a genuine, uninhibited human being. We understand young people. Just go ahead, but within our

organisation. Naturally, your behaviour will need to be a little bit decent. But you can ‘let it all hang out’ in our reception centres, under the guidance of the gospel.’

Do you know what all that means? It means nothing less than the collapse of the church in our times. And you should observe how things will go in the near future, and what the result will be. Soon you will see young people ‘rocking and rolling’ their way into church.

We live in the Jatter days. The scientific genius generated by man’s natural passion is manifesting itself in the most gruesome practices, in the most abominable cruelty, in the most powerful blood-passions.

Do you know what has been going on for years now in Africa? The practices of the nazis, that we in Europe have learned to fear so much, the most horrible conditions of the torture chambers and concentration camps, pale beside what has been happening in Africa in recent years. And all this because of the intense self-maintenance of the human animal.

If one realises all this, isn’t it something of a mockery to come along with the words and the light of the Gnosis? For who are we? What are we capable of? We, too, belong to the most ‘perfect’ animal species, don’t we? If our inhibitions were to be lost or torn away from us, how would we behave? Who are we?

Whatever has made us gather together in this School? Surely we, too, are indulging in nothing but speculation? The speculation of the natural instincts?

What is going on with us? Why do pupils come in ever greater numbers to spend a few days at our conferences? Why do they attend our temple services so regularly?

These are important questions in the light of the reality of dialectics, questions well worth asking.

Hermes gives an answer. In the sixth, seventh and eighth verses of the eleventh book he says:

Nevertheless, it is possible to conceive a form of mental activity without direct sensory perception, like the images that present themselves in dreams. I hold that both activities are set in motion by images making their appearance in dreams. Perception takes place in both the physical and the astral bodies. As soon as the two components of perception have become one, thought, called forth in the mind, is given voice by means of the consciousness.

These are important words, although at first sight this may not be apparent. So we would like to discuss them at some length, since they apply so closely to your state of being. They concern your first, perhaps rather stumbling and hesitant efforts to react to the Gnosis. Perhaps there are times when you feel as though you are a living riddle: on the one hand there is the human animal with its various modes of expression, while on the other is the part of you that is truly directed towards the Gnosis. And perhaps this has made you ask yourself: ‘What exactly am I doing in this School?’

Hermes Trismegistus solves the riddle. He explains who and what you are at this moment, and advises you not to leave it at that but to go further and summon up the strength to break through.

IX

Astral Influences

If we consider the behaviour of nature-born mankind, bearing in mind that man is the most perfected of animals and that we, too, are part of nature-born humanity, we are moved to ask how it is that we are gathered together in this School.

Could it not be the case that we are simply engaging in another metaphysical speculation, different from that of the majority? Would it not be true to say that, just as some belong to the catholic church and others to the protestant church, so we belong to an esoteric movement?

Hermes answers this rather disconcerting question with the following words:

It is possible to conceive a form of mental activity without direct sensory perception, like the images that present themselves in dreams.

What does Hermes mean by this?

When your personality enters the state of sleep, it is split into its physical aspect and a more subtle part. The subtle part takes with it a part of the consciousness, more especially, the astral body. This astral body of the split personality then enters and participates in that part of the astral sphere which is in harmony with the state of being of the person concerned. Various impressions from this astral sphere are then etched into some of the

mental centres of the material body.

It is like this: during the night while you are asleep, your personality is split and your astral vehicle is linked with the astral plane that corresponds with your state. Your mental centres are then charged, via that link, just like a battery. And because the mentality and the senses form a unity, it is clear that in the morning, when you wake up, there will be a sensory reaction to all those astral influences which have been transmitted to the mental organism.

This, in principle, explains your interest in this School, your pupilship of this School. Initially, it was a mental and sensory urge, caused by various astral influences, that brought you to the Spiritual School. In other words, you are sensitive to such astral influences. So if you chose to be a pupil, positively and from within, independently of others, this can be accounted for by the fact that certain astral influences to which you were sensitive led you to the School.

Such sensitivity may have been the result of hereditary conditions, originating from your parents or ancestors. In this case, the state of your blood or endocrine system would have been what made you open to these influences.

Or you may have been karmically predisposed, with a powerful concentration of gnostically-directed influences present in your auric being and flowing into your personality. If such a karmic predisposition is combined with hereditary factors, these astral impulses will act forcefully, generally causing a powerful reaction early in the life of the person concerned.

It may also be that a hereditary predisposition is present, with a corresponding, impulsive action, but that a karmic basis is lacking. Then there will be a reaction, but for the time being it will be rather superficial. For a karmic basis is always the result of experience, and if there is, as yet, no experience we know what the results are likely to be.

Or it may be that there is a karmic basis but no hereditary predisposition. In such cases, the body, the blood-type and the nerve-fluid are not so suited for the expression of pupilship, although the karma still exerts a powerful influence on the body, on the personality. Such people generally have quite a difficult time. Usually, many long years pass before they are able to free themselves from hereditary influences. This may be the case until the forty-fifth or fiftieth year, for men and women alike. Such people often only enter the School when they are already rather advanced in years.

You shouldn't make ivory towers of the astral impulses etched into the mental organism during sleep, or of their possible results. For instance, you ought not to think of some call or message from the Brotherhood intended specially for you. Something like: 'You are so excellent, so suitable, do please walk the path.' It isn't at all like that!

All kinds of radiations and influences make themselves felt in the astral sphere of the ordinary, natural life-field. They vary from the lowest and most nefarious kind to the most select and serene. In the astral sphere of our nature one encounters the most terrible things imaginable, but one may also come across the astral influences of the Universal Brotherhood.

In the astral sphere, events take place earlier than they do in the material sphere. In the material sphere things happen at a comparatively slow pace, while in the astral sphere they are manifested much more quickly. In other words, anything that is developing at the moment in the astral sphere, will only become concrete in the material sphere tomorrow, or the day after tomorrow, or even much later than that. That is why the astral sphere, the astral body and astral influences generally set the tone in our lives. Astral influences drive us to realise in matter things that already exist in the astral sphere.

As we said just now, influences from the universal Gnostic Chain are also active in the astral sphere of this nature. These influences are distinguishable on every astral plane. So if a person is predisposed towards these astral influences of the Brotherhood, either by heredity or by karma, these influences can be etched into him and in most cases there will be a reaction. For instance, the person may show an interest in the philosophy and literature of the School of the Rosycross. It may also be that someone reacts to such an extent that he or she straight away enters a School like ours.

Why do you, as a pupil, absorb the influences of the Universal Brotherhood while another person does not? This is, as we have explained, a question of one's hereditary or karmic predisposition. And how has this predisposition come about? You already know the answer.

Firstly, it happens if you react only on the basis of hereditary factors, because of the multitude of bitter experiences of your parents and ancestors. If you expect everything from dialectics, and are thus powerfully and positively orientated towards the horizontal plane, there will come a time in your life when everything slips through your fingers and a whole series of misfortunes afflicts you. When this happens, the astral influences which have motivated you until then will no longer satisfy you. In this way, a longing for something else will emerge within you. It may then happen that, in the midst of this longing, the astral influence of the Gnosis will begin to speak within you. So, if you are in the Spiritual School on account of purely hereditary factors, you will be able to trace a certain causative pattern of behaviour in the lives of your parents and ancestors. They will have drunk from the bitter cup of sorrow.

Secondly, if your reaction is caused exclusively by karma, this karmic influence has been etched into your system because of the bitter experiences of predecessors in your microcosm. To a cer-

tain extent, these have become your own experiences, or at least a chain of events available to you in a very personal way. So for you, too, it was drinking from the bitter cup of suffering through experiences that brought you here. And this applies to an even greater extent to the third type of pupil, who himself has had to drink deep draughts from that same cup.

So, experiences of the first, second or third type, or perhaps a combination of these, brought you to pupilship. Others, countless thousands, have not yet reached that point because, until now, the reactions of their senses during waking hours have led them in other directions. But there was in fact not the slightest difference between your initial state of being and theirs. Honesty compels us to say: when you joined the School it was more often than not the result of mere metaphysical speculation.

Generally speaking, what is the situation with someone who comes to the Spiritual School of the Rosycross? He is looking for peace, for safety; he is searching for a solution to his complicated state of life. He seeks rest. And when it comes to it, he, too, is an animal in search of protection. His instincts drove him in this direction because of an astral impulse. The hunted down, tired or defeated animal seeks safety in the temple of the Gnosis.

Perception takes place in both the physical and the astral bodies, says Hermes. As soon as the two components of perception have become one, thought, called forth in the mind, is given voice by means of the consciousness.

What will happen then, one might ask, when the tired, defeated human animal enters the temple? And what will happen when it has been refreshed, to a certain extent? The human animal will then have adapted itself to its new surroundings and will go back to acting in keeping with its nature. Clothing itself in the delusion of pupilship, it will then revert to acting out of a purely specu-

lative element, armed with the brilliant faculties of the human animal.

Entering the School of the Rosycross in this way, however, will not lead to a solution. The bitter cup of suffering will be placed yet again before you, filled right up to the brim. The astral influences will keep on flowing into you, the senses will be continually activated, and your life's course, with all its experiences, will remain exactly as it was for yourself, your parents and ancestors who gave you your karma. A solution will never come in this way. The human animal was a metaphysical speculator before, and in the School he still is. In the long run, the School will give no satisfaction and the result is easy to predict: you will begin to complain about the School and to find fault with it. You will become full of criticism. And you will go on speculating: these securities haven't yielded sufficient profit; let's try different ones. So a different course is followed or another pastime sought. Poor, foolish human animal!

For when your perception undergoes astral influences in the material body, a thought is born and takes shape in the consciousness and the way you respond is in keeping with your nature and disposition. You drink in the astral influences, and you have to react to them.

When your mental and sensory organism is charged with certain astral influences during the night, you have to respond. It is all very well to say: 'I do not,' but you *have* to! You couldn't possibly do otherwise. Just as fish live in water and are unable to move on dry land, so a human animal cannot lead a gnostic life.

What if you are also affected by gnostic astral influences? Well, then your behaviour will be dichotomous. On the one side there will be an orientation towards the Gnosis and on the other the behaviour of the ordinary human animal.

Does that make sense? The person who is like that deceives

both himself and the Gnosis, without being aware of it and, alas, without being able to do otherwise.

That is why we do not mean to be reproachful when we say all this, but only to state facts. For it has a certain value to face up to reality, divested of all the frills, and to ask oneself ‘What is my reality?’ And now Hermes says, in the ninth verse of our text:

The mentality brings forth all thought-images: good images when it has received the seeds from God, unholy images when they have originated from one of the demons. For there is no place in the world where there are no demons.

We know how accurate this is. The seven chambers of the head sanctuary are charged during sleep, as are those of the heart. Astral values and forces develop which, in the pupil’s case, are of a gnostic, calling nature; they are good values and forces, but there are others, too, of an entirely different nature—the demonic.

In this way pupils, or at least many of them, follow their path through life, a path which is wearisome in the extreme. We would like to look more closely at this path. And when we do, we will inevitably hear yet again the death-cry, the cry of distress of the oppressed human animal. To illustrate this point, we would like to quote the hermetic cry of Paul in Romans 7:

‘So I find this law within me: when I would do good, evil is present with me. O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?’

Black Demonism

The mentality brings forth all thought-images: good images when it has received the seeds from God, unholy images when they have originated from one of the demons. For there is no place in the world where there are no demons, that is, demons that lack the light of God. They penetrate into man and sow in him the seeds of their own activities. The mentality is then impregnated with adultery, murder, ungracious treatment of parents, sacrilegious acts, impious deeds, suicide by hanging or casting oneself down from a cliff, and a variety of other things which are the work of demons.

As far as the seeds of God are concerned, they are few in number, but great and fair and good. They are called virtue, moderation and piety. Piety is Gnosis, the knowledge that is of and with God. He who has this knowledge is filled with all that is good and receives his thoughts, which differ entirely from those of the masses, from God.

Hence it is that those who walk in the Gnosis are not pleasing to the masses and, on the other hand, the masses are not pleasing to them. They are considered foolish, they are the target of ridicule and mockery, and they are hated and despised, and sometimes even put to death because, as I said before, evil must necessarily dwell here as it originated here. Thus, its domain is the earth, and not the world as some blasphemously maintain.

As we saw in previous chapters, the nature-born human being is open to two different spheres of astral influence: that of the earth and that of the world.

When you reflect on hermetic philosophy you should always bear in mind that a distinction is made between the earth and the world. The earth is our life-field or, more precisely, the small part of the world we inhabit. The world is the holy planet, the unsailable manifestation of God's universal plan. That is why verse eleven says:

Evil must necessarily dwell here as it originated here. Thus, its domain is the earth, and not the world as some blasphemously

So, as nature-born human beings we are of the earth, earthly; as microcosms we are of the world. So it is logical that there are two astral spheres of influence which, at least for the time being, present us with problems it is hardly possible to solve. Hence Paul's cry, uttered in the crisis brought about by these problems: 'So I find this law within me: when I would do good, evil is present with me. O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?'

From time to time you, too, will have sent this lament out into the void, in all possible variations, because of the fact that you are affected by two influences; by the good as well as the demonic astral forces.

Let us assume for the moment that, driven and purified by ruin and disgrace, you finally wish to find a solution. The first thing you will need to know is the law Paul refers to: when we want to do good, evil is with us.

Let us try to understand the background to all this.

What is a demon? A demon is nothing but a natural force. Ancient wisdom states that before a life-wave can be generated, demons

are created. This may sound strange, but in fact it is quite logical.

Every manifestation originates in an astral field. This is because ethers emanate from the various astral fires, and these ethers form themselves into manifestations, in cooperation with material atoms. Therefore, the idea underlying a manifestation must first be etched into an astral field. As soon as this happens, activities, foci and vortices of forces come into being. These then begin to develop: the demon of the beginning begins its work. These forces of nature, or demons, in the original meaning of the term, impart a certain character to the manifesting idea. They realise and concretise the plan.

And that is how the plan began to call human entities into being on earth; and note, we are using the word 'earth'! It was a very delicate matter, since these human entities would have to be equipped with their own cognitive faculty.

This faculty should not be seen simply as an intellectual apparatus, but also, and more importantly, as an ability to comprehend the nature and aims of God. That is why the cognitive faculty includes mind and reason. Reason, divine reason, makes use of the mind.

The entities who were called into existence were intended to become in certain respects like the Father. And as we said before, the time came when this hazardous plan was set in motion on earth. The earth is the divine world's great and perfect field of manifestation. According to hermetic philosophy, the earth is a field of birth in which man must spend his embryonic phase. Our situation and that of our fellow creatures on earth is that we have not yet passed beyond the embryonic phase. That is why Jesus the Lord said: 'I came to you on earth to cause you to ascend into the highest heaven of God's wide, glorious world.'*

Many, countless numbers, have already preceded you on this

* See *The Gospel of the Piscis Sophia*.

path; as those who have been truly born, as those who have been genuinely liberated, they have entered the holy, divine world. But you are still wandering in the embryonic field. It is as if you are imprisoned there.

This is caused by the still negative effects of your innate divine nature. Your divine nature, your divine faculty, the divine attribute, is the mighty cognitive faculty, with the help of which you will one day be able to become truly man and truly God. Something of that flame is beginning to glimmer within you, and that is why you have been and still are being confronted by enormous difficulties. For those who are in the process of becoming true human beings can only be redeemed from the earth when this true human state has genuinely emerged within them.

They are, thanks be to God, equipped with the divine cognitive faculty, albeit still in an embryonic state. This means, firstly, that they possess an astral body. Secondly, they have access, via the astral body, to the astral sphere of the earth. Thirdly, there is a constant interchange between them and the astral sphere of the earth with its natural forces, its demons. Moreover, they exercise an influence on the astral sphere, its nature and quality, by means of the faintly glimmering flame of their cognitive faculty.

See this situation clearly in your mind's eye, for it constitutes the drama of your life.

In the astral field, in the astral fire, the ideas of human beings are etched. And since thoughts are active forces, vortices arise in the astral substance from which processes of realisation develop: creation.

You have access to this very special astral field, and that is what is so tragic! For it is precisely because of that, that you prevent your awakening from the embryonic state. For you are and have always been engaged in populating the astral sphere of the earth with all kinds of natural forces, with all kinds of demons. And it is in the nature of these demons, myriad of form and construction and

active in a variety of spheres, to influence the ethers and the forms they manifest.

In this way, a fathomless, orderless chaos and degeneration has come into being in our earthly field of life. In this way animal men have come into existence, bound to their passions, afflicted by their self-created demons — all those animal human beings, swarming over each other like ants on an anthill. They kick and bite, they damage and violate each other. And from time to time various demonic forces assert themselves in a very pronounced way, as is the case today, for instance, with the current wave of counternatural sexuality with which the world is inundated. That is how it has always been in history: whenever a civilisation is perishing, whenever the earth is about to succumb to a cosmic night, the most ghastly demons rise out of the sewers of the astral field of fallen dialectics and the fiery flame of counternatural sexuality erupts over mankind.

Counternatural sexual practices are one issue. Promiscuity is quite another. Sexual energy is a creative force, one of the divine faculties with which mankind is equipped. The true destiny of this force, as it exists in the embryonic field, was to have been the development into the genuine, divine creative faculty, which is related to the throat chakra. So you can imagine that promiscuity is detrimental, in the first place to the idea underlying sexuality.

As we said before, people kick and bite, they damage and violate each other. And above all that noise and swell, above that cacophony of misery, the cry of distress of seeking man reverberates: ‘O unhappy man that I am, who will save me from the body of this death?’

We live in a field of genesis in which the original, pure demons, the original, pure, fiery astral forces still go on performing their task. However, through the misuse of astral forces of which all dialectical mankind is guilty, there comes a point when the earth's astral sphere becomes so dark, so full of devilishness, so laden with absurdity and depravity, and the material field of life degenerates into a region of so much blood and tears, that it can no longer be tolerated. For what develops in the astral sphere *must* manifest itself on earth. And when you become involved with a particular astral force, this has to manifest itself in your life and in your body. The result is that, in the end, the earth, the creation-field of the world, has to be thoroughly purified, right from the astral sphere to the material sphere. All microcosms present in it are then emptied of their uncleanness and brought into a state of forgetfulness. All microcosms are divested of their karma. They have to begin anew; for the Logos does not forsake the works of his hands.

In this way, the original, embryonic processes of genesis can take place again, right from the beginning. How much time can be lost in this way! But nevertheless, thanks be to God, each new microcosmic re-animation represents a new opportunity for the entity concerned.

See the situation clearly before you. What is your reality? As we explained, you are subject to two astral spheres of influence, that of the original, pure astral sphere, and that of the demonism of dialectics. You therefore find this law in you: When I want to do good, evil is near me, since owing to my birth in nature, owing to my past, owing to my entire dialectical state, I am bound to all the filth of the earth's astral sphere.

You are a pupil of the Spiritual School, you participate in

the Spiritual School, as a result of which the original call, the original power, still maintains a link with you. But how long will it last, under the scourge of demonism? ‘At the very moment I want to do good, evil is near me.’ Naturally, because all the hordes of astral demons are your companions of fate. You brought them to life, and therefore you participate in them, be it intimately or from a certain distance.

So, there is the one, but also the other. How terrible! Hence the cry: ‘O unhappy man that I am, who will save me from this death, from this most dreadful misery? Must I, too, sink once more into the chaos of a cosmic night, through which the embryonic field of the earth will be cleansed?’ And Hermes laments:

The demons penetrate into man and sow in him the seeds of their own activities. The mentality is then impregnated with adultery, murder, ungracious treatment of parents, sacrilegious acts, impious deeds, suicide by hanging or casting oneself down from a cliff, and a variety of other things which are the work of demons.

We could add all sorts of things to this list, without it ever being complete. And we ask you: ‘Does it have to be that way for you? For you who, honestly speaking, have fled into the Spiritual School as a refuge from your demons? Is there no solution?’

Yes, there is. But then you will need to take yourself very firmly in hand. The School has pointed out to you the existence of that solution on many occasions. But have you listened carefully enough? The way, the path, is shown you word by word, as it were, day in and day out. But isn't it so that all this instruction, all this good advice and helping influence sent out continually by the School, goes in one ear and out the other? In this way, the

demons, who have such a great influence on you, are able systematically to destroy or render negative the seed of The Good which has been sown in you. However, as long as you are still alive there is hope, and you can begin every day anew. But then ... begin anew now! And place yourself objectively and resolutely before the mighty problem of your life, as if you had never studied it before. And then you may strengthen yourself in the knowledge of which Hermes speaks in verse twelve:

But he who loves and is devoted to God will endure all things, because he participates in the Gnosis. To such a person all things work together for the good, even those things that are evil to others. And when ambushes are laid against him, he conveys everything, as a sacrifice, to the Gnosis, and he, alone, transforms evil into The Good.

So you are able to transform completely your relationship to the astral sphere. In principle, you are capable of neutralising and reversing your entire astral condition. You can restore yourself to the pure, embryonic state and re-establish your connection with the demon of the beginning. You can be reborn as a true Man in the divine world.

In view of your present situation, this may sound like a fairytale, a miracle. But we are permitted to unveil this wonder for you. However, we must add that you will need to apply to the letter the formula the School will give you. If you feel a line pain somewhere, you generally run straight to the doctor and follow faithfully the prescription he gives you. So why don't you do this with respect to the most important problem of your existence? As a dialectical human being, you have never been so beset with difficulties as you are now. The human life-wave has never been so seriously sick and degenerate as it is at this moment.

So if, yet again, we give you, a pupil of the Gnostic Spiritual School, the prescription of the path that leads to life, will you follow its requirements faithfully?

XI

The Formula of the Path to Life

You will have understood how your special relationship to the astral sphere of the earthly life-field is the cause of all your suffering and sorrow. Some have very difficult lives; they have only themselves to blame. Everything you project into the astral field will eventually come back to you in the form of various problems.

So your relationship to the astral world is the cause of all your suffering and sorrow, your inner dividedness and your delusion, because until now you have always made the wrong use of your cognitive faculty, even though you are called and chosen to become a divine human being. Even though the cognitive faculty is as yet extremely faulty and imperfect, people create via their mentality all kinds of forces and demons in the earthly sphere; forces that will take control of them in the end, because as nature-born creatures they are bound to react to them. In this way they are unable to pass beyond the embryonic state and they remain infants. Thus they are unable to free themselves from the earth and remain bound to the law of dialectics.

If one wishes to save oneself from this misery, one must destroy one's current astral state by opening oneself completely to the light-forces of the Gnosis, to the 'divine seed', as Hermes calls it.

The Alchemical Wedding of Christian Rosycross tells how

C.R.C. was able to counterbalance all the weights during the trial on the scales because he was wearing a wonderfully beautiful, glorious robe. C.R.C.'s habit is spotless. It represents the astral body. You can set yourself free from the earth and enter into the liberating life providing you purify your 'habit', your astral vehicle, by means of the divine seed.

The divine seed to which Hermes refers is the pure astral fire. It is the original force of nature, which governs the astral field of our embryonic state. Paul's cry of anguish: 'O unhappy man that I am! Who will free me from the body of this death?' is then answered: 'Thanks be to God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.' We are not thinking, here, of a historic figure, of the god and the delusion of the church, but of what is testified to in the prologue of the Gospel according to John by the words: 'The light shines in the darkness.'

The entire earth has been entrusted to that light. Without that light we can do nothing. All holy language testifies of that certainty: Jesus Christ is the redeeming, sanctifying astral light, the pure astral light out of and through which the true birth must awaken.

And now we are all being confronted very clearly with the great problem. The solution to all our problems is being offered to us. Birth as a true human being is being held out to us as a prospect.

Paul speaks the words: 'Thus I find this law in me: when I want to do good, evil is present with me. Who will free me from the body of this death? Thanks be to God, Jesus Christ our Lord,' the pure, divine astral light. And then, in Romans 7 verse 26 there follows the accurate conclusion that he serves the law of God with his mind (which means to say, his soul), but that with his flesh (which means to say the nature-born personality), he serves the law of sin.

If we analyse this conclusion, we realise that many are in the same situation. As far as the mind, the soul is concerned, most

of us are engaged in awakening in the Gnosis. By virtue of their soul-state, such persons are being led into the life of the children of God, into the life of glorification, and one can say of virtually all pupils of the young Gnosis that the life of the soul is a real joy to them. One cannot only say this, but one can also prove it. As pupils, they cannot get enough, as it were, of the one truth, of the Gnosis. The life of and in the Spiritual School has become an absolute inner need for them. This is demonstrated, for instance, by the fact that our conferences are always fully booked, and that the number of applications is growing continually.

So a mighty development of the soul-aspect is underway in our School. Pupils have an unmistakable, intense inner need to participate in the spiritual work and most spare no effort to do so. All this is wonderful and we feel deeply grateful, because it proves that virtually all stand in the awakening life of the soul. With their minds they are serving God's law. However, many remain in a state of miserable dividedness. With their minds they serve the law of God as far as it is possible for them to do so, but with the personality they are often driven by their earthly demons. With their personalities, they remain firmly attached to their type, to the character which has typified them since their youth. Thus they are not yet free of their earthly personality, which is so much subject to the law of sin. As far as the soul is concerned, they are engaged in becoming newly born, but as regards the personality they are still entirely driven by their earthly demons.

Where lies the solution to this problem? Paul answers this question too, in Romans 8, a beautiful chapter in which he says 'There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus; who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit. For they that are after the flesh mind the things of the flesh, but they that are after the spirit mind the things of the spirit.'

The full extent of the difficulty is explained in these words. You know a life of the needs of the awakening soul, in which you

are completely satisfied. Quite apart from that is the life of every day, your life at home and in your position in society, and the intimate life behind the curtains of your own room, far, very far away from the Gnosis; completely one with your own type, your own character and the motive power of your earthly demons; the life, governed by the astral currents of the nature of death. Thus — and there is no denying it — you live two lives.

This threatens to lead to your down-fall. Although you may love the Spiritual School ever so much, although you may never miss a single conference, the divided state we have described will increase your misery hour by hour. For mind you, the astral influences of the nature of death are constantly increasing in strength so that, if you do not intervene radically in your own life, you will be lost, even though you are soul-bom.

How should you intervene? What is the formula? Apart from living the life of the soul, you should no longer live according to the flesh, and you should apply yourself to this very consciously, scientifically and decidedly. That is the only solution, however young or old you may be. The younger you are when you begin, the better, because if you lack resilience, if you can no longer summon up the necessary vitality in your nature-bom state, it will be an almost impossible task.

‘If you remain living according to the flesh, you will die.’ Understand well what Paul means by this: in that case you will remain imprisoned in the embryonic field and you will perish in the cosmic night. All the valuable soul-karma that has accumulated in your microcosm will then be destroyed. And in time, perhaps in a few hundred thousand years, you will be able to begin again. We say ‘you’, but we mean ‘your microcosm’.

‘If you remain living according to the flesh, you will die. But if, through the spirit, you mortify the deeds of the body, you will live,’ as a true human being in God’s great, joyful world.

Can one do that? Generally speaking, there is no answer to this

question. So let us alter it and ask: 'Can you do that, as a serious pupil of a gnostic Spiritual School?' And then one can say in reply: 'Yes, you are able to do so.' We have shown you how. We have tried to make it clear that you possess the ability, and you can trace within yourself the extent to which this is so. But whatever your conclusion, you do possess an awakening new soul-life. And in Romans 8, verse 11, Paul says: 'If the spirit of Christ dwells in you, He will also give life to your mortal body;' your body will be taken up in this mighty process of regeneration. So, as a pupil of the gnostic Spiritual School, as a person who is engaged in unfolding the soul, you are able to complete this work because the power to do so has already been given to you; because this power already dwells in you.

The only question now is whether you are willing to use that power, and if you are, whether you will really do so, straight away. And whether you will have sufficient strength and perseverance to break through the first difficult obstructions of a demonic nature when they arise. For some people have spoiled and damaged their personality and their state of life to such an extent that in the initial stages it will prove very difficult to restore a certain elementary order.

However, let us assume for the moment that you are willing to undertake all this. Then Hermes says to you:

As far as the seeds of God are concerned, they are few in number, but great and fair and good. They are called virtue, moderation and piety.

What should we understand by virtue? Virtue, in the hermetic sense, is a consistent behaviour in harmony with and on the basis of the powers of the new soul which are being manifested in you. Are you sensitive to the soul? Do you understand, do you experience what the light of the Gnosis is transmitting to you? Well then, a consistently practised way of life, in harmony with what

you thus experience, feel and understand, is virtue in the hermetic sense. You must begin to believe in that mode of behaviour which is thus revealed to your inner vision. You must open yourself to that way of life with your innermost yearning. You must long for it, as the Beatitudes say: 'Blessed are those who yearn for the spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.'

Are you already familiar with that mighty, all-consuming desire to begin to live in harmony with what is projected into your soul? When you attend a temple service, something does happen in you, doesn't it? Your soul, your being, your heart, is moved by the light-power of the Gnosis, isn't it? Well then, when you drink of that word, when you absorb that light-power, you will begin to yearn from the depths of your being to be able to live in accordance with these things. When you then truly begin to practise this virtue, there will arise within you a powerful binding with the astral power of the beginning, with the astral fire-power into which the Logos has etched the idea underlying human creation.

The important thing now is that you believe from within in the light-power that has touched you, that you have faith that you will be able to enter the new life-field. If you desire, yearn and believe in this way, if you have faith in your own soul, in the possibilities within you, in the love of God, in the divine impulse to true birth, then you will be driven to different thoughts. Then order will be established in your thought-life. Then you will think other thoughts, because you are yearning for the new Kingdom.

When a person desires something, his thoughts are always drawn in the direction of what is desired. So if one orientates oneself, full of yearning, towards the new state of life, other thoughts are attracted in accordance with that yearning. And the moment your new mentality purifies you in this way, the astral bonds with all the demons of destruction are broken. To the extent that they are your personal demons, they are dissolved entirely.

And to the extent that you participate in collectively created and maintained demons, you will be utterly freed from them. So reflect, in this light, on the hermetic virtue, on the new way of life.

What does Hermes mean by moderation? He means that you must dissociate yourself from dialectics, carefully and consistently. Moreover, he means that you must no longer allow yourself to be victimised by dialectics. Hermetic moderation means being 'in the world, but no longer of the world'.

The opposite of moderation is immoderation. To be immoderate in the sense of the Gnosis means to throw oneself fully into ordinary life. To be moderate means to take a responsible course, taking into account all conditions, all situations, so that any obstacles to the progress of the new soul-forces are removed as far as possible from the personality-system.

The new way of life presents one with many facets. Think, for instance, of the erotic element which is so powerful in the average person, the sexual urge to which he is subjected. In present-day mankind, at least, the sex urge is connected with the most terrible demons of the astral field.

This proves anew, then, that the end is nigh. Therefore, you who possess a living soul-power: do make use of the possibilities that have been realised within you! The virtue Hermes recommends and the moderation of which he speaks are extremely necessary. If you enter into these things, divine salvation and the perfect knowledge of God will come to you. *That* is the true birth of man; *that* is liberation.

If, on the basis of the soul-power which now exists within you, on the basis of the light-power of Jesus Christ our Lord, you choose the new way of life and cast aside everything that holds you back, in unconditional yearning and faith, you will win the prize of the true soul-man: absolute liberation.

One could of course go on speaking for a very long time about these things, in much more detail than we have done. However, we will not do so. If you have understood us, the issue is whether you will try, with us, to apply the formula we have given? Will you enter, with us, into the new way of life? If not, your pupilship will not make any sense at all. However, if you are willing to take, with us, the decision to walk this path, steadfastly and consistently, you will one day discover, as a pious human being, that the dialectical, embryonic field has been rendered evil, and kept that way, by delusion and ignorance. But he who annihilates this delusion within himself will see and experience everything in great purity. In this way, in keeping with Hermes' words, he will turn all the evil into The Good, into the original.

A group of people who have been raised up as to soul and spirit, will be able to perform the most grand and magnificent things in a world such as ours.

XII

The Earth, Womb of the World

In our discussions of the first part of the eleventh book of Hermes, we explained that Hermes makes a clear distinction between the earth and what he calls the world. In hermetic philosophy, the world is the perfect, holy planet created by God, while the earth is only a very small part of the world. It is only one aspect, the part we call the embryonic field, the womb of the world, in which human beings must be born to become true Men.

This embryonic field has become materialised owing to a number of incidents in the process of human genesis. Hermes calls this process of materialisation and all its results a process of evil, a process of un-divine genesis, for materialisation is crystallisation; a process that ends in petrification and therefore leads to total stagnation. The time will come when a crystallised, petrified earth can no longer serve as a life-field for embryonic beings, for entities who are still in the process of development. That is why the earth's history has always been one of rising and declining, where things crystallise increasingly and are constantly broken up, so that the earth can again become a field of development.

Hermes says that the cause of this ever-recurring materialisation lies in the seed, which the mentality has received from demons. A demon is a natural force. Seen from a purely technological-philosophic point of view, demons are astral power-

principles created by our intellectual brain-consciousness, as we explained earlier. As far as we, human beings, are concerned, this is one of the most important causes of demonic developments, although in fact there are other causes capable of generating them.

We repeat: demons are astral power-principles generated by man's intellectual brain-consciousness. A group of people can create such an astral power-principle in the earth's astral field; a single human being can do this in his own astral body.

The seed of the mentality is intellectual thinking, the activity of the brain. Mental activity goes on unceasingly, and what is produced via the brain has an immediate effect on the astral body. In this way, through the mental activity of the brain, one has access to one's own astral body, but also to the astral body of the earth. Through mental activity, one gives rise to a rapidly rotating, fire-spitting, light-emitting principle both in one's own astral body and in that of the earth. This principle radiates inwards, as well as outwards. These forces, these astral activities, are manifested in the centre of the microcosm and in the heart as an animating influence.

So the animating influence of our personality and of our microcosm is nothing but an astral activity, through which the entire personality is brought into equilibrium, into harmony with the nature of the rotation caused in the astral body.

So now, you will easily be able to imagine the process: you engage in a certain mental activity; through it you cause a certain condition to develop in the astral body which surrounds you on all sides, and from the astral body, the centre of your personality, the centre of your microcosm, is animated. And the centre of the microcosm coincides with the heart.

If the astral fire-principles you create are speculative, originating from the spontaneous, chaotic activity of the brain of embryonic man, the force that animates you will rapidly cease to be in harmony with any law or order whatsoever, and it will

certainly not be in keeping with divine law and order. It will be obvious, then, that all this disorder will have its repercussions, particularly if you think that the activity of man's brain is almost entirely chaotic. Just follow your own thoughts in the course of a day; see where they lead, see what tensions they arouse in you, what mental protests are invoked. Just think for a moment of all your critical thoughts, and their subsidiary, inferior effects. Then you will be able to imagine what a turbulence you are causing in your astral body and what the animating element of your being looks like.

In deepest essence, there is but one universal order, there is but one plan of genesis, the plan of God, of the Father of all things, the divine plan for the world and mankind. But the divine plan for the earth and mankind is disrupted by man's arbitrary, speculative, disorderly, irrational brain activity, by the demonic seed of the mentality. The human being in genesis is ejected from his proper situation, ordained by God, and becomes subject to crystallisation and petrification, to sickness and death, until the end comes. It is in this sense that matter is evil, as the hermetic philosophy states.

In an earthly field which again, in our day, has become extensively materialised and evil, so evil that breaking up and purification are once more imminent, we, as ordinary people, also take good and evil into account. We speak about 'bad' people and 'good' people. But what we mean by these terms has nothing at all to do with what Hermes had in mind.

Those who exist in evil in the hermetic sense — the sense of materialisation — may call a criminal bad, for example. A good person, then, is someone who is well-mannered, honest and, for instance, humane. But whether good or bad, such persons live in crystallisation, in materialisation, in petrification. So both types live in evil! And just as there is a hermetic concept of evil — that is to say, existence in materialisation and crystallisation — so there

is also a hermetic concept of goodness, which is evident. Hermes calls it, simply, 'The Good', and he means the goodness, the absoluteness, which is of God, the Logos, the All-Father. He means the goodness which encompasses the perfect order of the divine plan, with which the true, spiritual man lives in absolute equilibrium.

Hermes says of such a human being, that *he is connected with The Good and is kept by God in His grace*. Perhaps you will now understand these words. As soon as the crystallising human being, perishing in evil, genuinely turns to The Good, to the divine order, to the Gnosis, his decline will be converted into an ascent. The crystallisations and their results will then be transformed in a process of total transfiguration. And then, as the eleventh book emphasises, *he transforms evil into The Good*.

You will be able to understand how this is possible if you bear in mind that by the term evil, Hermes understands all aspects of crystallisation; the petrification, which is the cause of all sickness and death. If we turn to The Good, crystallisation comes to an end and makes way for the processes that lead to glorification.

In verse fourteen Hermes says: *God, the Demiurge of the All, forms all his creatures in his own image*. The meaning of this is clear. The innermost essence of every phenomenon in the entire All has originated from or been made possible by the Architect of all things. So when the materialised human being, so tainted by evil, turns back again to the Only Good, he will be purified by it. For The Good is essential, whereas evil is delusion, the non-essential.

Hermes addresses these words to Aesclepius, the human being who wishes to become a self-healer. And they are truly glad tidings. He who deflects the course of his crystallisation by turning to The Good, transforms all evil into good.

Everything which possesses form is born from the astral field.

The world, too, has an astral field and our earth, as a particular aspect of the world, also has one. The earth's astral field has been made very dark and dangerous by the behaviour of mankind. Natural forces appear there that are not to be explained from the Logos.

Nevertheless, the earthly astral field will one day become completely akin to the pure, serene astral field of the divine world. Neither fundamentally nor in principle is there any difference between the holy astral body of the world and the astral body of our darkened, dismal earth. Though the degeneration and materialisation are indeed rendered possible by the astral fields, they are not an essential part of it. In other words, when a person turns fundamentally towards The Good, and The Good begins to cleanse his astral field, then it cannot be otherwise than that evil will be transformed into The Good. 'Evil will then be washed by The Good', as the holy language puts it. That is the mystery of salvation Hermes seeks to convey to Aesclepius.

As an embryonic being, man lives out of the darkened field of the earth, and all its blemishes are manifested down to the very blood. However, when man turns back to the Only Good, he gradually gains participation in the astral field of the holy world, the holy Mother Earth, the original planet created by God. And that astral force cleanses him of all sinful miasmata.

That is the mystery of salvation! That is why, for instance, the first Epistle of John says: 'Every man who has hope in Him, purifies himself, even as He is pure.' These words refer to the Planetary Spirit, the Christ-Being, so they are purely hermetic. He who has sought and found the Gnosis, and consequently has absolute faith in it, will set his hopes on it and direct his heart to it. He will be filled with the mighty radiance of grace, a fire that provides the power to cleanse oneself of everything evil. The

fifteenth verse of the eleventh book advises those who wish to follow this path that:

The world's perception and cognitive faculty, created to be instruments of the will of God, give form to all things and cause them to perish once more within themselves so that, whilst keeping within themselves all the seeds received from God, they bring forth everything that accords with their own task and vocation, and by disintegrating these things again, grant them renewal. Having made these things disintegrate they grant them renewal, like skilful gardeners of Life, by causing them to be manifested in a different way.

These words convey the mightiest hermetic counsel of all times. Let us consider them further. Their aim is to make us understand how the materialised and increasingly crystallising human being must live if he is to escape the grip of evil and belong to The Good.

In our times we may, and indeed must, reflect upon the way of life fundamental to the achievement of this state. We should see this as a very special privilege. For the earth, the earthly field in which we sigh, is again being subjected to a great atmospheric and cosmic revolution. That is why we are being permitted to reflect on this way of life, and why we are able to do so, because by putting such a way of life into practice, we may yet escape the decline.

So there exists a way of life which will be decisive for our ascent, our liberation, or our further decline. It will therefore be necessary for us to study it, for the hermetic philosophy sets out its principles quite clearly. However, while taking these principles into account, one should also consider the time and social conditions in which one lives. From the remotest past until now, all gnostic brotherhoods have reflected on this hermetic principle of life, on this one, all-decisive way of life. But in so doing, they

all had to take into account the circumstances under which they were living at the time.

This hermetic life-principle, this way of life, is comprised in the maxim:

Receive all things, relinquish all things, and thus renew all things. Preserve all the seeds received from God, make all things manifest, and by dissolving them again, renew them.

XIII

Receive All Things, Relinquish All Things and thereby Renew All Things

The world's perception and cognitive faculty, created to be instruments of the will of God, give form to all things and cause them to perish once more within themselves so that, whilst keeping within themselves all the seeds received from God, they bring forth everything that accords with their own task and vocation, and by disintegrating these things again, grant them renewal.

When we read these words we would like to examine first of all the nature of the world. So let us remind you again that Hermes makes a distinction between the world and the earth: the world is the divine manifestation, while the earth is a part of the world, mankind's field of genesis. The world, Hermes says, is an instrument of God. The world is a wonderfully grand and glorious system with various aspects, of which the earth is one. God, says Hermes, as the Father of the World, has created a perfect system.

The world is a mighty institute of education and development, a school for fully fledged human entities, as well as for other life-waves. Once the human being in the earthly field has really been born as to his highest essence, he has to pass through all the

other domains of the world to complete his development, as if he were in a kind of cosmic university. In a higher sense, then, the world is also a field of genesis, a divine institute of education, just like the earth. For remember, *The world's perception and cognitive faculty give form to all things and cause them to perish once more within themselves.* So the world is not the final goal of human genesis, but is used by God to guide man on to the ultimate aim.

There are innumerable solar systems in the universe, and untold myriads of planets. Every planet is a field of genesis, bringing the divine plan into manifestation. The world's perception and cognitive faculty give all things form and cause them to perish once more within themselves; it manifests them, then dissolves them, but then it renews them all. In short, all life manifested in the world is characterised by dialectics, by rising, shining and fading, and then rising again.

The dialectics of the world is in fact *the* dialectics, and it differs from ours. For the world, dialectics is divine, innate, essential; for us it is an affliction, a castigation, the proof of fruitlessness.

If we consider dialectics from a higher standpoint, guided by hermetic insight, we will discover that it is because of dialectics that the world is the great training school of eternity. Dialectics involves the continual movement, the constant rotation of all phenomena. It manifests all things, then makes them dwindle away again.

There is in the world an almost endless diversity of forms, bodies, forces and phenomena. The world reveals them to us, dissolves them again, and then reveals them once more, renewed. This proves that the world is intended to demonstrate certain abilities, certain values, to reveal the fact that certain forces are present, but without seeking actually to be all those forces, abilities and values. For what is essential, what is divine, lies behind all these things. Just as the gnostic Spiritual School does not set

itself up as reality itself, but tries to show that reality, so the world is the forecourt to the divine itself. If we see it in this way, dialectics becomes something grand, glorious and mighty. We will then understand verse nineteen:

So God is the Father of the world, and the world is the creator of everything it contains; the world is the Son of God, and everything that is in the world was brought forth by the world.

We are made of the substance of this world. We are children of the world, and all its values, forces and possibilities are manifested around us and within us. So everything we are is determined by that high dialectics of the world.

Yes, as children of the world, we ourselves are dialectics, until the essential aim is manifested: the childship of God. The childship of God leads us out of the world and into to God's majestic eternity. The spirit of God will one day be breathed into us by the Seven-Spirit. Then we will leave the training school and enter eternity.

It will cost you no trouble to understand all this intellectually. But it will require an almost superhuman effort to apply everything this path demands and to bring it to a good end. This is what is meant by the hermetic life-principle. Since God is the Father of the world, and we are children of the world, it is clear that the core essence of the Godhead is also present in us; it slumbers in us. That is why you need to accept the world, with its necessary dialectics, as a training school. The training school is not the aim, but the true life that follows it; not the world, but everything that lies behind it.

Your whole life, your entire behaviour, should therefore be brought into conformity with this idea. Everything in you that belongs to the world, your whole personality, including the intellectual brain-consciousness, is one complexity of dialectics.

In other words, one may only speak of a reality that comes and goes, that is not lasting. However, everything that God is and does, the entire divine plan for the world and mankind:

orders and adorns the All through the diversity of what is created, through the continuity of life, through the inexhaustibility of the power of manifestation, through the swiftness of fate, through the composition of the elements and the arrangement of everything that comes into being. Thus the world is called "cosmos" in view of its fundamental laws as well as its guidance. Thus perception and intellect enter all living beings from without, as if on the breath of what surrounds them. But the world, when it came into being, received them once and for all from God.

So the world demonstrates only what is universal, what is from God, what is reality, 'it'. The creature, too, is called to this. Therefore, if you, as a creature, do not accept the world, which has been created by God, as a training school; if you do not experience it as such, then things will go completely wrong. Then the other dialectics, the avenging dialectics, will come into operation.

Through the world you are filled with the seed of God, that is, if you possess a pure soul cooperating with a purified intellectual brain-consciousness. If not, you will be fatally poisoned by the seed of the demons. Then the other dialectics will come into effect.

The crux of the matter, then, is whether or not you accept the divine plan and its activity, with all the consequences. If not, you will enter into evil, into the creation of crystallisation, of materialisation. So you must choose between the divine good, and the demonic evil. The demonic evil arises when a creature turns against the dialectics necessary in the world, in himself, and in all things. Then crystallisation arises, petrification, and ultima-

tely pulverisation, destruction. Until, with the greatest difficulty, one has to begin all over again.

We all know the tragic and so extremely painful dialectics of the nature of death. Instead of the mighty, dynamic rhythm of the world, deceleration prevails, caused by crystallisation, until eventually total stagnation occurs in what can rightly be called the nature of death.

The nature of death is a caricature of the dialectics which was introduced into the world by God. You can free yourself from this caricature and its effects, from all that is demonic, by persevering in the new way of life and associating yourself with what the world is in reality, namely, the Son of God. So to say that Jesus Christ is the planetary spirit of the world is nota merely mystical or metaphoric statement.

You can participate immediately in Christ, in the being of the divine planet, because you yourself are of that world. You are able to turn straight away to The Good, to the divine plan for the world and mankind. If you understand all this, if you recognise and follow it as truth, this will prove that your soul and brain consciousness have been purified and that you therefore possess the hermetic mind. And the way of life you will then need to adopt consists in: 'receiving all things, relinquishing all things, and thereby renewing all things'. In this way, you will apply and experience the dialectics of the divine world.

Obviously, this task presents the greatest problems, problems you should not take too lightly, and which in fact you will not be able to take too lightly. If you consider the reality of our society, you will discover that the situation is extremely complicated, because the essential purity of the world is totally intertwined with evil.

If you want to live entirely in accordance with the standards of the dialectics imparted to the world by God, receiving every-

thing in order to use it as it was meant to be used, will you not run the risk of receiving and using what is evil and demonic? And if you relinquish, let go of, or simply reject certain things, values and possibilities, will you not run the risk of rejecting what originates from the laws of the world itself? Many people do these kind of things in absolutely good faith, misguided as they are by their authorities. So if you do not understand and carry out this task in a highly intelligent way, it will be impossible for everything necessary to be renewed in the right way, in the right place and at the right time.

Furthermore, your personal stance with regard to these things is of the utmost importance. Are you willing to accept a way of life that is perhaps not in your nature at all? Many people are extremely conservative with regard to lots of things. But conservatism has no place in the new way of life, for it requires you, while receiving all things, to be immediately willing to relinquish them again.

So you will realise clearly that it is a way of life that needs to be studied and explained in great detail. We will need to consider very carefully how all this can be applied in our modern times.

As we said before, every gnostic Brotherhood has been faced, in its time, with just such a task. So it is not surprising that we, too, are being confronted with this great task after our years of struggle to win the soul, on which the new way of life has to be based. In the coming months and years, the group of the young Brotherhood will have to give expression to a completely new signature.

XIV

Man' s One and Only Aim

Naturally, the problem we outlined in the previous chapter cannot be presented to the hard, nature-directed human being. The soul has not yet been born in such a person; he is immature, of the earth, earthly. He cannot yet see the horizons of the true human birth and is therefore unable to long for them. The problem we mentioned only applies to those who are soul-born, who live out of a heart that has been purified and linked with the intellectual brain consciousness. Only such persons can justifiably begin to reflect on the process of becoming a child of God which, though it must be begun in this world*, is not of this world.

As we have seen, the world in the hermetic sense is a school, a university, the training school of eternity. It is unable to keep us imprisoned, nor does it want to do so, because the world is the Son of God, and the divine plan is thus carried out in it to its full extent. And it is unable to hold us prisoner because its essence and activity are entirely dialectical. In other words, it manifests all things, relinquishes all things, and then renews them again.

Let us suppose you understand all this from within, and that in this way you enter the new world order, the true world order of the living soul-state. You will then see before you the various aspects of the true world. And then you will be unable to do

* Here: the earth.

otherwise than desire to cooperate with the meaning and essence of that world. Indeed, you will experience this as necessary. For you will then have arisen from the earth and entered the great training school of God. In this condition, we now place before you the axiom of the true, gnostic way of life: 'Receiving all things, relinquishing all things, and thereby renewing all things.'

All things, forces and possibilities in the higher world are characterised by a certain rhythm. Via the soul we receive the pure astral forces with the help of which we are enabled to realise everything required of us by the divine plan; thus we can build our great, eternal home. Via the purified intellectual consciousness, which cooperates with the soul, we receive the divine suggestions, the divine messages of those who stand behind the world, as is portrayed in *The Alchemical Wedding of Christian Rosycross*.

However, in and around you is an actual situation, an actual existence, an environment via which these forces and ideas come to you. And you should remember that neither this actual situation, nor this existence, nor this environment are real in the divine sense. For the present reality is in no way the final reality, the ultimate crowning of your development. The present reality will undergo countless transmutations, and you will be subjected to transfigurations.

That is why the candidate in the gnostic mysteries may not and cannot consider or value his present reality as something static. If we were to do that, if we sought to anchor in the present the things we now possess, we would be forming an immediate link with evil. For then we would be slowing down the smoothly flowing, high dialectics of the world. The forces of deceleration would then assert themselves and begin to materialise, petrify and disintegrate everything. That is why, when the candidate has received everything, when he has breathed in everything he needs for his grandiose course of development, he must relinquish it

again, immediately. There is no point at which the candidate is allowed to stand still. There is nothing of which he may say: 'This is mine.'

There is only one goal that counts, and that is to become divine. The actual situation, existence, only counts to the extent that it enables the candidate not only to receive, to inhale power and insight, but also to use it straight away and in a concrete fashion to the building under construction. For the rest, there is no point whatsoever in all that exists. And the candidate is therefore prepared, at any instant, to relinquish all that exists, and will not call a single thing his own. He does not even think about it. As such, the task is not a problem for him.

If one receives all things in this way, and does not offer any resistance, the great process of renewal, the process of constant transformation will go on unhindered, until the final end. 'You have received everything freely; therefore, give it away freely,' says the Sermon on the Mount. This applies not only to gross matter, but also to everything you long for; it applies to everything that will serve your true peace.

Imagine now that you have embarked on this way of life, that you have accepted this hermetic mode of behaviour as yours, spontaneously and without any reserve. How marvellous that would be! But as long as you still live in the order of our nature-birth, you will need to associate in many respects with people who are still of the earth, earthly; with people who, through ignorance and possessed by their demons, refuse to walk the path of higher human genesis.

If, without any hindrance, you were to become a living example of that new way of life, your children, at least, might be expected to follow your example. But before your children ever participate in life, they have generally already been largely spoiled by all the methods of education to which you have subjected them.

Your point of view is that: 'I must prepare my children for life

in society. I am concerned with a humanity which is still of the earth, earthly, and highly conservative, protectionist and grasping. I am faced with people who are quite happy to receive, but not at all willing to give up.'

In addition, there is the need to take up a position in society, in order to provide for your material needs and those of your family. The result is that you are involved every day with the world of evil. And then there are the laws which regulate human society, however good or bad it may be. You have to comply with these laws, and obey the authorities who make and maintain them.

In one of his letters to the Corinthians, Paul makes an interesting observation in which he associates the law with the essence of sin, and thus with the essence of evil, of materialisation: 'The proof of sin is the law.' The laws which regulate our society proceed from the assumption that man's natural inclination is to run wild, that human nature constitutes an obstruction to social behaviour, that people are constantly engaged in undermining the principles of society. Virtually every law regulating our society has been inspired by the knowledge that people are always trying to break such laws.

And it is worth mentioning that the gnostically-directed person, too, will find himself in conflict with these laws, from second to second. Not because he actively wants to break society's laws, but because he wishes to rise above that society and ascend into the world of God. But the lawgiver cannot be concerned with all that. Every transgression of the law is punished. Therefore one is bound to accept the laws of one's society, at least if one wishes to remain at peace with the world.

However, tremendous problems are connected with all this, and they are not so easy to solve. In this respect it was much easier for the ancient Brotherhoods, the preceding Brotherhoods, than it is for us. Their society was not industrialised, not governed by

technology. The ancients were craftsmen or tillers of the soil.

The earth was not so densely populated, so it was easy for the Brotherhoods to gather in communities and colonies in uninhabited areas. In this way they were easily able to segregate themselves from the society they had rejected, and they came into conflict with no-one. The Cathars sought the solitude of the caves even before they were persecuted. They built up communities all over the south of the Cathar-land, protected by numerous like-minded noblemen.

You may also be familiar with the history of the Bogomils, who were related to the Cathars. They formed agricultural communities in the Slavonic countries. They lived on the produce of their farms, practised the necessary crafts, and in this way supplied all their needs. These communities had their own laws. They had no dealings with other people or with the authorities, and so were able to live in accordance with hermetic wisdom. And that is what they did. They formed genuinely pure, gnostic communes, which should in no way be confused with what we in the nature of death know as communism. For there was no question of rulership by a communist, fascist or totalitarian state. There was only a practical application of: receiving all things, relinquishing all things, and in that way ascending into the divine life of constant renewal. Nothing could hold them back. With respect to the nature of death they lived in a state of absolute detachment.

The time came when the Cathars were persecuted and wiped out, and the same thing happened to the Bogomil communities. And just as the Cathars who survived in Western Europe continued their work in secret under the sign of the Rosycross, so the work of the Bogomils went underground, to rise again later in the east, in the Slavonic countries.

If we look at this second page of Bogomil history, we discover that it was no longer so easy for them to follow their former way of life with its strict rules. The authorities in the countries where

they lived at that time may not have persecuted them in the beginning, but they did impose their laws. Why should the rest of the populace have to obey the law, and not the Bogomil Brotherhood!

So, as citizens of the state, they were under compulsion to obey the laws of the land. However, with that stood or fell the entire Bogomil way of life. So they were forced to leave, to migrate to inaccessible areas. In certain parts of the world, such as Siberia, the local wisdom bears traces of the Bogomil way of life. These traces are found everywhere, even under metres of snow and ice. But even in these places the law opposed them, and even today this is so. As far as we know, a Bogomil sect emigrated to Canada at the end of the last century and built there a close, pure and noble community, surrounded and protected by deep forests and mountain ranges. But in recent years this community, too, has come into conflict with the Canadian authorities. For the authorities seek to impose agricultural laws and other regulations. For instance, almost all countries have laws concerning the felling of trees and woods, and agriculturalists, too, have vested interests they want to see promoted. In addition, railways are under construction. That is why this sect has withdrawn even further to the north in the last fifty years, until now the unavoidable has happened yet again, and their problem has once again become immediate.

If we planned to set up such a community, where would we go in our so densely populated lands? Therefore, the problem lies clearly before us: how should the gnostic who wishes to live in accordance with the hermetic law conduct himself in relation to the people of the nature of death, who see this world as the aim of their existence? Do you realise that this problem is not so simple? There is no doubt that the prevailing situation is very difficult for us. That is why a choice will have to be made. There must be a definite, new way of life. And under present-day conditions

there is no possibility of being able to segregate oneself from society, as the ancients did.

So the question remains: how do we solve this problem?

*Our Way of Life and
Present-Day Circumstances*

‘Receiving all things, relinquishing all things, and only in this way renewing all things,’ is the axiom of the gnostic way of life. This way of life, as we have seen, has remained the same through out the ages, and has been held in high esteem by all gnostic brotherhoods. Only the mode of application of this fundamental principle has to vary according to time and circumstances.

In former times groups were very isolated. They had no access to modern means of communication, or to present day methods of gaining publicity. Thus, their material radius of action was very narrow. So one cannot but express amazement that the Bogomils, for instance, were able to influence the whole of the Balkans in their time, and even large areas of Russia, and that for a long time the Cathars were the leading group in almost the whole South of France, where their influence surpassed that of the official church.

It is also quite astounding to know how, later on, the idea and mission of the Rosicrucians spread like lightning over the whole of Europe, even though at that time the journey from Calw to Haarlem, for instance, seemed like a world tour. How was it possible for the message of the Rosycross to travel to the north

so quickly in those days, and to be answered equally rapidly?

We would like to try to answer this question, and to show how it was possible, without any of the means of publicity or communication available to us nowadays, for the Gnosis to begin its work practically simultaneously all around the Mediterranean, and for it to spread like rays in all directions. Such a development would not be possible nowadays.

Well, the ancient brotherhoods followed a certain strategy. Certain individual participants in the great work possessed higher faculties, and a number of these travelled to areas where the work had to be established, in accordance with specific plans. All the brothers and sisters responsible for leading the work possessed higher faculties. Wherever they found themselves, they were able to remain in telepathic, intuitive contact with each other. In addition, they were able to take up soul-contact with each other during the hours of sleep. In this way, a splendid coordination of the entire work was ensured in advance.

Further, it is interesting to note that the racial body of the man of the masses was in those days not nearly as dense or crystallised as it is now. Also, people lived then in the peace and quietness of medieval times. Nowadays, we can hardly imagine such conditions. The people of that period were still open, because the cognitive faculty, the intellectual brain-consciousness, had not yet become defiled. Also, the astral sphere had not yet become as dark as it is now. And when the persecutions came, by the state in alliance with the church, and by the church in alliance with the state, many were able to slip through the nets and continue the work in various other ways. So there has never been one day or one hour in the course of history when the holy work has been interrupted.

We are saying all this to show that the hermetic way of life can be conducted without many disturbances. To the extent that the group of pupils of the young Gnosis makes progress in the

manifestation of salvation, it will be possible to discuss all this in greater detail. The group will always be able to carry out the work, under all circumstances, and without attracting undue attention. So the question now is: how can we, in these modern times, adapt our way of life so that it complies with the minimum requirements, whilst taking all the circumstances into consideration? This question raises the problem of a new way of life to which the group will have to become accustomed in the coming years. We need to reflect on the underlying principle of this future way of life, through which our group will need to proceed until the glorious end is reached, taking into consideration all the current conditions, all the aspects of our modern times, without becoming absorbed by the nature of death.

What should we do, for instance, to avoid being considered extremists or enemies of the state? What should we do to ensure that our pupilship will lead to more practical results, to liberation, to the reality of renewal? We should take into serious consideration the fact that our lives are so interwoven with society and the establishment that we cannot just withdraw from it. On this point, we will need to apply the golden rule of the ancient Brothers of the Rosycross, that every brother or sister should wear the garment of the country in which he or she lives.

However ... on the basis of the living soul-state! Be sure never to forget this, for if the soul within you is not free, if the soul within you is not manifest, you will never succeed with the new way of life and you will keep on coming into conflict and getting stuck. Only the soul will make you free. In the years that lie behind us we have often emphasised that fact, and it is expressed abundantly in our literature: in the first place it is necessary to win the soul, to make it free through rebirth. Once we have the soul, we possess the basis on which to overcome everything that obstructs the path of pupilship.

On this basis, every pupil will succeed in complying fully with the so-called democratic laws of his country, or at least as long as freedom of the press, of religion and conscience, and the right of assembly are not restricted. But as soon as people are deprived of these rights to freedom, another, different phase begins. Then the group has to carve out a path for itself by means of gnostic magic and continue its outer work illegally, as had to be done during the years 1940-1945.

The work of the School was forbidden by the authorities of that time. Yet the work did not stagnate for one minute, one second. When that situation began there were, of course, pupils who withdrew, and were quite honest about it. Some came to us and said: 'You will understand that in view of my position in society I can now no longer remain in the School. We support the School, we feel very warm-hearted towards you, but it is impossible for us to continue with our pupilship.'

It would have been possible, but the friends concerned did not understand that at the time. In this way, although preserving friendship, people left us to stand alone when the time came.

There were others, though, real bricks, if we may call them that, who remained faithful to the School by day and by night. In this way, we were able to continue the work until in 1945 the School was no longer illegal and could function once again in the ordinary way.

If, as brothers and sisters of the Rosycross, one has to act illegally, it is necessary to examine things with one's conscience, and thus with one's soul-state, in order to arrive at a certain clarity. For in such periods, when such dark pages of world history are turned, there must be no hate whatever in the pupil. He must face everyone openly, full of soul and full of love. And then the pupil can and may persist in illegality without one single hair on his head being affected.

In this context it must be emphasised that, as is stated in our constitution, the brother or sister of the Golden Rosycross will always refrain from any political activity in whatever form, at all times and under all circumstances. For by engaging in political activity one takes responsibilities upon oneself in which one may later become ensnared, and which may seriously hinder one's course in the service of the Gnosis.

There was once a time in history when a gnostic accepted a high position in the state. But this was for very exceptional ends, in the service of the one gnostic goal, and it thus lay entirely outside the sphere of politics.

The gnostic will have to take his place in social life. That goes without saying. However, it will be with the proviso that he is able to perform his work with complete integrity and honesty. An example may clarify this point. In modern business life we more often than not encounter all kinds of dishonest practices. You could probably tell some tales about this yourself. It is one of the primary causes of the decline of social life. Commerce starts from a desire for possession, not so much the desire to possess what is useful and necessary for one's own life, as well a desire which is exercised as a kind of sport. You will know that in mythology, Mercury is the god of merchants and thieves. Mercury — commerce — thieves: all spoken of in one breath.

Do you know who Mercury really is? Mercury is Hermes Trismegistus, the Thrice Great. Hermetism is the wonderful, glorious Mercury-idea. It is the religion of cognition, the religion of the spirit. It means to serve the Father. And man has been given an intellectual brain consciousness to enable him to realise this mighty cognition, which functions in cooperation with the spirit.

However, the depravity, the sinfulness of man, has made him misuse the cognitive faculty, which would have helped him to become a Mercury, a Hermes, a servant of the divine hierarchy.

The result is that he has become a slave of commerce, the culture of the urge for power and possessions, the cult of service to the I which affects almost all mankind. Mercury, the god of merchants and thieves! Doesn't this prove the truth of the words: 'The corruption of the best results in the worst'?

So the great wound from which mankind is bleeding to death is the spirit of commerce, which is a spirit of evil. For what happens? The intellect is used to find markets, and when they have been found and businesses set up, then the markets must be kept open, whatever the cost. This even goes on at an international level, even if it would cost millions of lives. If anyone investigates the causes of many wars, or the origins of the first and second world wars, his heart will stop with terror. A corner of the veil has been lifted by literature like the book *The Days to Come* by the American journalist Pierre van Paassen. Businessmen control the state, they control religion and philosophy. In short, they make sure that everything serves their own ends.

Mercury, Hermes Trismegistus, the god of merchants and thieves! How terrible, how indicative of mankind's depraved state. If you become involved in all that, you will not only be engaging in dishonest practices, but you will be corrupting your entire personality. If you have to think about how you can make a profit, and you are willing to employ unscrupulous practices to achieve this, the direction of your thoughts will have an immediate, detrimental effect on your astral vehicle. Your astral vehicle will be brought into harmony with your corrupt thoughts and desires, and this in turn will result in the attunement of your entire blood-state.

So you will understand that, if this kind of behaviour is practised, pupilship may well be possible in a philosophical sense: you may be able to attend meetings and conferences, read a book and talk with others about the Gnosis, but what good will it do

you? You must win freedom! You must win the fullness of eternity! *That* is what the School is there for!

That is why you really need to consider your way of life. In situations like the one we have described, your pupilship may not be entirely useless, but it will never bring you liberation. Anyone who, as a businessman, does not conduct himself in an absolutely honest and upright fashion, in keeping with the norms of the School, harms the Living Body and himself. If you are in business, if you have your own business, then see it in the same light as craftsmen saw their trade in former times. Do not conduct your business to become rich quickly, for then your soul will suffer, particularly in a School like ours. And if you cannot escape this dilemma, choose another job.

We also feel that one should not accept posts in companies involved in any way in harming the world and mankind. Arms factories, for instance, would not be acceptable, and neither would laboratories involved in nuclear tests and similar things. In our opinion, posts in such places should not be accepted by pupils of the Spiritual School. Even simply writing a letter or holding a telephone conversation can, by its nature and by the kinds of thoughts and feelings activated, damage the astral body very seriously indeed.

Be that as it may, every one of us needs to reflect on these things and arrive at a decision. This will be easy if the decision is made on the basis of the living soul state. Your thoughts must be pure, your intellectual consciousness must be completely cleansed. If not, then you will be making your pupilship into an illusion. Parents should take care that the education their children receive serves to protect their receptivity to the merciful help of the Gnosis. It is important to preserve this receptivity from degeneration and harm, before it is too late.

For remember that ordinary life in society can become a deadly

danger, particularly for those who strive for the Gnosis. That is why the modern Spiritual School and its pupils need to concern themselves with the problem of social functions, to protect the School and its pupils' lives from being made unnecessarily difficult.

In this connection, it would be good to draw your attention to the question of fear. Many people are living in fear; they are anxious about everything and more. They are afraid to break with what is immoral, afraid of situations which are not good, and fall below the norms they usually set themselves. In the light of the hermetic axiom: 'receiving all things, relinquishing all things, and only in this way renewing all things', such an attitude of fear is quite out of place. If one lives in accordance with one's principles, in harmony with one's soul-power, in keeping with the requirements of the liberating life, there is no need to worry oneself about anything.

Fear is a delusion. If you stand in the soul, not a hair on your head will be touched without the will of your heavenly Father. That is why the Sermon on the Mount commands: 'Do not be anxious. Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all other things will be added unto you.' Anxiety, worry and fear seriously damage the astral vehicle and make it open to demons, so that one's pupilship becomes an illusion.

Another important point is conservatism, which is perhaps still present in you. You are unable or unwilling to let go of everything that does not serve the great aim. Conservatism takes different forms in different people. We only wish to say that detachment, which is so necessary, is not yet absolute in you. Your attachment to things, to matter, to money perhaps, to situations, to people, in so far as it exceeds the norms of the Gnosis, harms the astral body, with all the results of that. The astral body is very fiery and with

that fire you can burn yourself and affect others, too, with unholiness.

If you wish to bring your journey to the liberating life to a good end, you will have to begin this most important journey of your life as Christian Rosycross did, with four roses on your hat.

The Circulation of the Gnostic

Light Forces

Before we can deal with the central issue of our discussions, we must emphasise that the problem of the new way of life only applies to those who are soul-born and who, with a pure heart, have established the link between the new soul-forces and the intellectual brain consciousness, and in this way are in control of it. Without this control it is not yet possible to strive for astral purity and it will not be possible for the pupil to withdraw from evil and follow the Only Good. The circulation of the gnostic light forces in the candidate's system must first be ensured. That is the central issue of every truly gnostic development.

The process we would now like to explain has ten aspects.

The first aspect calls to mind the Beatitude: 'Blessed are those who yearn for the spirit.' The foundation must be a life of earnest striving and yearning for liberation. When we become genuinely seeking people, our thoughts result in an astral activity. It is impossible to yearn for the Gnosis without a corresponding effect on your thoughts. If a genuinely seeking longing is present in you, the resulting mental activity will in turn give rise to an astral activity in your system, which will be manifested outwardly as

well as inwardly. When a new power has been ignited in the astral field of the human system, a light is produced which radiates inwards as well as outwards. In the midst of the microcosm a fiery tension develops, a light-field in keeping with the desires of the pupil; this light-field extracts and assimilates gnostic light-power.

So if a pupil perseveres in his yearning and striving, in spite of all the unavoidable hindrances, the concentrated light-power will touch the centre of his heart sanctuary; it will break through into the heart sanctuary and mingle with the blood. The blood, now charged in this way, then flows through the brain and influences various centres in the head sanctuary, including a number of latent ones. What matters now is whether the brain-system with its various centres will be able to react to this intervention, to the gnostic influences introduced into it by the blood. If it can, then a new kind of thinking will come into being in the head sanctuary. This new development of the intellectual brain-consciousness will in turn influence the astral body.

This is how the astral body is purified. You can only purify the astral body through a new thinking born of the blood. Then new astral forces are liberated, which differentiate into the four pure ethers, the four holy foods. These ethers affect the etheric body and go out to all the organs and fluids in the physical body that make us live and act, until finally, they are manifested once more in the blood.

That is how the circulation comes about. The process begins in the blood, is manifested in the mentality, then in the astral body, then in the etheric body, and then again in the material sheath and in the blood. Thus, as a result of this new ensoulment, the Gnosis gains control of the pupil's entire system. If this tenfold process has been brought about by a way of life orientated towards it, it will be possible to maintain this way of life without the need to force anything. When the circulation of gnostic light forces,

which the ancient Chinese Gnosis called ‘the retrograde movement’, has been born in the system, you will have not the slightest difficulty in persevering in the gnostic way of life.

When the new way of life has become a fact, the candidate will notice that it is what his system needs. It is a way of life which completely rejects the dialectica of the nature of death, and which incorporates the following: firstly, unwavering devotion; secondly, creative harmony; thirdly, practical intelligence; fourthly, priestly service.

If you consider this way of life, you will discover that it begins in the first place with the soul. That is obvious. Only a person imbued with the soul will be able to enter into such a way of life and put it into practice.

But in the second place this way of life must begin with the head sanctuary. We have continually spoken about the heart sanctuary during recent years, explaining the new soul-state that must be born in it, as if in Bethlehem. But now the time has come to draw your attention more to the new birth, the resurrection, which must be brought about in the head sanctuary.

The intellectual brain-consciousness will become the basis for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, driven to that point by a tenfold process. This is a new process which can be referred to as an alchemical marriage with the Spirit, with God, with the Father. Then the candidate will have taken his first fundamental step in the religion of cognition or, as the ancients called it: ‘maneism’, a word derived from manas, which means thinker.

It means to stand in service to the great, holy work; to be in the world, but no longer of the world so that, by means of one’s ultimate kingship of the spirit, one may perform the great work, whatever it may require of the pupil. It is the sole aim of the Gnosis to guide you to this victory, after the birth of the soul.

The new way of life of the four roses is the gate to that victory,

the gate to and of maneism, the gate to the mystery-temple of our Father Brother Christian Rosycross. We hope and pray that you may enter through that gate.

XVII

The Twelfth Book

*The Key of Hermes Trismegistus**

- 1 *HERMES: Yesterday, Aesclepius, I explained my reflections to you, and it is fair to address today's reflections to Tat, because they are a summary of the more general exposition I gave him.*
- 2 *God, the Father, and The Good are of the same nature, or rather of the same active power.*
- 3 *The word 'nature' comprises everything that is called into being and grows through the will of God; the mobile and changeable things as well as the immobile and unchangeable things, the divine as well as the human things.*
- 4 *But the active power in divine things differs from that in human things, as we have shown elsewhere; this you should keep in mind.*

* The reader should bear in mind that the twelfth book is perhaps the most damaged of all hermetic writings.

- 5 *God's active power is his will, and his essence is the desire to call all things into being. What else is God, the Father, The Good, than the foundation of existence of all things, even of those that do not yet exist? Indeed, God, the Father, The Good, is the basis of the existence of the All, and no other name is more applicable to Him. Although the world and the sun also are co-begetters of living beings, yet for them they are not, to the same extent as God, the cause of The Good, and of life. And insofar as they are its cause, they are so only through the inescapable action of the will of The Good, without which nothing can exist or come into being.*
- 6 *The Father is the cause of his children, of their conception, growth and development; they receive the desire for The Good from the sun, for The Good is the creator of the All. This cannot be said of anyone but him who never receives any-thing, but desires that everything should exist.*
- 7 *I am not saying, O Tat, 'He who makes everything', because he who makes something is sometimes inadequate because of the changeability of quantity and quality, or because at times he makes one thing and at others something entirely opposite. God, the Father, The Good, however, is himself the existence of the All.*
- 8 *For him who is able to see', it is like this: God wills existence, and He is existence. And everything that is, Tat, exists for the sole reason that The Good, in accordance with its intrinsic nature, shall make itself known.*
- 9 *TAT: You have so entirely filled us, O Father, with this magnificent, beautiful vision, that the eye of my Spirit-Soul, by such a direct approach, has come nearer to sanctification.*

10 HERMES: *Certainly, for such an inner vision of The Good is not like the fiery; radiation of the sun which, through its light, blinds our eyes and forces us to close them. Inner reflection has an enlightening effect, and the more so to the extent that one is receptive to the influx of the insight-giving radiance. It penetrates us with great force, will never be harmful and is entirely full of godliness.*

11 *Those who can draw fully on such an inner vision, are often absorbed, in complete bodily tranquillity, by a most beautiful contemplation, just as happened to our forefathers Uranus and Chronos.*

12 TAT: *Would that we too might attain to it, Father!*

13 HERMES: *May God grant it, my son. But at present we are not yet ready for such contemplation. We are not yet capable of opening the eyes of our Spirit-Soul and of being absorbed by the contemplation of the imperishable and inconceivable beauty of The Good. You will only see it when you have learned not to talk about it, because the Gnosis of The Good is both divine silence and the stilling of all the senses.*

14 *He who has once found it can no longer pay attention to anything else. He who has once beheld it, will no longer see anything else, nor can he listen to anything else, and even his body participates in this immobility. Where all physical perceptions and stimuli have vanished from his consciousness, he remains in tranquillity.*

15 *When the Gnosis enlightens the entire consciousness, it also makes the soul blaze up again, raising it by detaching it from the body. Thus it transforms the entire human being into its*

tree nature ,for the deification of the soul, which accompanies the contemplation of the beauty of The Good, cannot be accomplished in a mortal body.

16 TAT: *What do you mean by deification, Father?*

17 HERMES: *Every detached soul passes through changes, my son.*

18 TAT: *And what does 'detached' mean?*

19 HERMES: *Have you not understood from my general discourses that all souls who revolve in the world, as if sown in places assigned to them, emanated from the one soul, the All-Soul? These souls undergo many changes, some in an ascent imbued with grace, others being subject to the opposite.*

20 *Creatures that crawl change into those that dwell in water, those that dwell in water change into beings that dwell on land, those dwelling on land into beings of the air, and beings that dwell in the air change into men. And men, ultimately, enter immortality by changing into demons and joining the choir of the gods.*

21 *There are two choirs of gods: the choir of the mobile or changeable gods, and that of the immobile or unchangeable gods.*

22 *The latter is the perfect and highest glory of the soul.*

23 *But if the soul which has entered a human body persists in sin, it will not taste immortality and does not partake of The*

Good, but hastens back on the road which lies behind, the path that returns to the state of the crawling animal. This is the punishment of the sinful soul.

24 *The wickedness of the soul is its ignorance, its lack of Gnosis, of the knowledge which is of God. If the soul is ignorant regarding the essential nature of things and is totally blind to The Good, it is violently entangled and attacked by physical passions.*

25 *The soul, seized by wickedness for lack of knowledge regarding its own being, is subjected to strange bodies, unworthy of man. As a burden it carries a body over which it does not rule, but by which it is ruled. Such is the wickedness of the soul.*

26 *But then, the virtue of the soul is the Gnosis, the living knowledge of God. He who possesses this knowledge is good and dedicated to God, and already divine.*

27 *TAT: What kind of person is he, Father?*

28 *HERMES: A person who speaks little and does not lend his ear to much talk.*

29 *He who spends time in arguing and listening to arguments fights against shadows. For God, the Father, The Good, cannot be verbalised, nor understood by the sense of hearing.*

30 *Although all beings have senses, because without them they cannot exist, the living knowledge of God differs greatly from sensory perception. Sensory perception is brought about by*

influences or impressions which gain power over us. Gnosis, however, is the completion of knowledge, the knowledge which is a gift of God.

31 All Gnosis is incorporeal. The Spirit-Soul is its instrument which, in turn, has the body as its instrument. So both the activities of the Spirit-Soul and Chose of matter take place in the body, for all things must come into being through antithesis and contradictions. It cannot be otherwise.

32 TAT: Who then is the material God?

33 HERMES: It is the world, which is beautiful and efficient but not good, as it is material and very prone to suffering. It is the first of all things that are subject to suffering and the second of all beings; and it does not exist in itself. Its genesis had a beginning; nevertheless it is eternal, because its essence is everlasting genesis. And the motion of its eternal genesis creates qualities and quantities, for all material motion is genesis, birth.

34 The divine immobility causes the motion of matter as follows: The world is spherical, like a head. There is nothing material above this head, just as nothing spiritual lies beneath the feet: everything is matter. But the spirit is also spherical, just like the head, which moves in the manner of a sphere. Now everything that, in the head, touches the membrane within which the soul is situated is immortal, because the body has been created, as it were, inside the soul, and the soul is more than the body. But everything that is at a distance from this membrane is mortal, as it is more of the body than of the soul. In this way everything that lives is composed of matter and spirit, just like the universe.

- 35 *The world is the first creation; after the world, man is the second living being, but he is the first among mortals. He shares the ensouled element with the other living beings. He is not only no longer good, but even evil, because of his mortal state.*
- 36 *Because it moves the world is not good, but as it is immortal it is not in what is evil.*
- 37 *Man, however, is twofold in evil, because he is both mobile and mortal.*
- 38 *The human soul is manifested as follows: the consciousness manifests in the mind, the mind in the power of desire, the power of desire manifests in the vital fluid; the vital fluid spreads through the arteries, the veins and the blood; it sets the animal creature in motion and sustains it, as it were.*
- 39 *That is why some people think that the soul is the blood, thus misjudging the nature of these two. For they do not know that, first, the vital fluid withdraws into the desire body, that the blood then coagulates and that, after the arteries and veins have emptied, it is this which makes the creature die. In this way the death of the body occurs.*
- 40 *Everything is based on the one principle which, in turn, derives from the One and Only.*
- 41 *This principle is subject to motion so that, in turn, it shall constitute the ground for the movement of the All. The One, however, is invariable and immobile.*
- 42 *So there are these three: God, the Father, The Good; the*

world; and man. God encompasses the world and the world encompasses man. The world is God's son; man is the son of the world, God's grandson, as it were.

43 It is not as if God does not know man. On the contrary, He knows him perfectly and wishes to be known by him.

44 This alone is liberating, redeeming, and healing for man: the Gnosis, the knowledge of and with God. It is the path on which to climb Olympus. It is solely through Gnosis that the soul becomes truly good. Not at times good and then again evil, but good out of an inner need.

45 TAT: What do you mean to say by that, O Trismegistus?

46 HERMES: Just think of the soul of a child, my son. If it has not yet completely separated from the self, and the body is still small and not yet fully grown, how beautiful it is to behold. It is not yet blemished by bodily passions and still largely connected to the world-soul.

47 But when the body is full-grown and the soul drawn into the burdens of the body, the separation from the self becomes absolute and the soul falls into oblivion. Then it no longer partakes of The Beautiful and The Good. And oblivion brings forth evil in it.

48 The same also happens to those who leave the earthly body. Then, when the soul has returned into itself, the vital breath contracts within the blood, while the I contracts within the vital breath. But when the Spirit-Soul has divested itself of its apparel and adopted a fiery body, since it is divine by nature,

it traverses the whole of space and leaves physical matter to judgement.

49 TAT: *What do you mean by this, Father? I thought you said that the Spirit-Soul is separated from the soul and the soul from the vital breath, but you also said that the soul is the Spirit-Soul's garment, and the vital breath the garment of the soul.*

50 HERMES: *He who listen, my son, should be of the same consciousness as he who speaks to him, and should follow him in his thoughts. His sense of hearing should even be sharper and quicker than the voice of the speaker.*

51 *The composition of the garments, my son, is realised in the earthly body, since the Spirit-Soul, because of its essence, cannot possibly establish itself in an earthly body without a garment. For the earthly body cannot bear so great a divinity, nor can such a glorious, pure force endure being directly linked to a body, subjected to passions.*

52 *That is why the spirit has cloaked itself with the soul; the soul which, in a way, is also divine, makes the vital breath subservient, while the vital breath then guides the creature.*

53 *Now when the Spirit-Soul has detached itself from the earthly body, it accepts forthwith its proper garment. It is a fiery garment which it could not retain when it took up its abode in the earthly body. For the earth cannot endure fire; even one little spark is enough to set it all ablaze. That is why the earth is entirely encircled by water, as a bulwark, protecting it from the fiery flames.*

- 54 *The spirit, the most rapid of all divine thought-creations, has for its body also the most rapid of all elements: fire. The spirit, the creator of all things, uses fire as an instrument for its creative work.*
- 55 *Thus universa! thought creates the All. The thoughts of human beings create only what is of the earth. Since man's cognitive faculty does not possess a garment of fine, it is not capable of calling into being divine things and is confined by its vehicles to what pertains to man.*
- 56 *The human soul — not every soul however, but the soul truly devoted to God — is in a certain sense good-demonic and divine. When such a soul, after having walked the path of true piety — a path that leads to knowledge of what is divine and to refraining from injustice or harm towards any man — has detached itself from the body, it becomes Spirit-Soul throughout.*
- 57 *But the godless soul does not change its nature, it curtails and punishes itself and reeks to enter a new, earthly body; a human body, however, as no other body could house a human soul. Divine ordinance does not permit a human soul to debase itself so as to inhabit an anima! body, void of reason. This is a divine law which protects the human soul from such a great outrage.*
- 58 *TAT: But how, thee, is the human soul punished, Father?*
- 59 *HERMES: Is there, my son, a greater punishment for the human soul than godlessness? What fire consumes like the flame of godlessness? What wild animal ruins the body as godlessness ruins the soul? Can you not perceive all the pain*

the godless soul has to suffer when, crying for help, it exclaims: 'I am burning, the flames are scorching me. I do not know what to say or what to do. Wretch that I am, I am being devoured by the wickedness that governs me. I no longer see anything, I no longer hear anything'.

60 Are not these the cries of a soul that is being punished? You, my son, will certainly not believe, as the masses do, that the soul acquires the shape of an animal after it has left the body? That is, indeed, a very great error.

61 For the soul is punished as follows: every time the spirit has become a demon, it is bound to assume a fiery; body so as to serve God; and then, when this demon has entered a very godless soul, it punishes this soul with the scourges of sin; subjugated to this scourging the godless soul then plunges into all sorts of human wickedness, such as murder, baseness, godlessness and all kinds of violence.

62 If, however, the spirit enters a God-fearing soul, it leads that soul to the light of the Gnosis. Such a soul never wearies of declaring God's praise in jubilation and, following the example of the Father, of doing good to all men in various ways, in word and deed.

63 Therefore, my son, when you are giving thanks to God, you should pray to be allowed to receive a noble spirit. Thus the soul rises to higher good and its decline becomes impossible.

64 There exists a soul-community: the souls of the gods are linked with those of men, and the souls of men with those of beings void of reason. The higher beings are set over the lower: gods over men, men over the life-forms void of reason.

And God takes care of all: He stands above all; all are less than He.

65 *So the world is subjected to God, man to the world, the irrational being to man; and God stands above everything and everyone, and includes in his care everything that is.*

66 *God's actively manifesting forces are the rays of his sun. The forces of nature are the radiative activities of the world. Manual dexterity and the urge for knowledge are the radiative activities of man.*

67 *God's radiations manifest themselves through the world and affect man by means of the world's natural radiations; natural forces manifest themselves by means of the elements; human beings manifest by means of their manual dexterity and urge for knowledge.*

68 *Thus the All is governed in keeping with the essence of the One whose spirit pervades all things.*

69 *There is nothing more sublime and active than his spirit, and nothing that promotes more the unification of man with the gods, and the gods with man. His spirit is the good demon. Blessed the soul which is entirely pervaded by him; wretched the soul which is entirely devoid of him.*

70 *TAT: What do you mean by that, Father?*

71 *HERMES: Do you think, my son, that every soul has the spirit of The Good? For it is about this spirit I am speaking, and not about the subordinate spirit I mentioned before, and which is sent down by divine justice.*

- 72 *Without the spirit the soul can neither speak nor act. Often the spirit flees from the soul, and in this state the soul does not see anything, does not hear anything and resembles an irrational animal. So great is the potential power of the spirit. But the spirit does not tolerate a soul that is powerless to understand, and leaves it behind, bound to the body, and, down here, deprived of its voice by the body.*
- 73 *Such a soul, my son, possesses no bond with the spirit, and such a being can no longer even be called 'man', for man is a divine being that should not be compared with other creatures living on earth, but rather with those who are from on high, the heavenly ones who are called gods.*
- 74 *Or more precisely, if we may dare to express the truth: the man who is truly 'man' is above the gods or at leastfully equal to them in power.*
- 75 *For none of the heavenly gods will leave the boundary of heaven to descend to earth. But man raises himself to heaven and measures it. He knows both the sublime things in heaven and the things down below; he assimilates everything with great precision and, what is greatest of all: to ascend to heaven he need not leave the earth. So magnificent and majestic is that which his consciousness encompasses.*
- 76 *Therefore, let us dare to say: earthly man is a mortal god; the heavenly god is an immortal man.*
- 77 *That is why everything is manifested through these two: the world and man, but all things are from the One.*

XVIII

Seek First the Kingdom and Its Righteousness

In the eleventh book Hermes gave Aesclepius a general overview of a very serious problem, which concerns all who feel the inner need to heal themselves, and to understand the deep meaning of this question before being able to undertake liberating action.

The twelfth book, addressed to Tat, goes further into all this. Tat is the person who, having attained insight, seeks to break through to liberating action. Anyone who wishes to follow the same path as Tat will need to understand very clearly that although a sharp distinction is to be made between divine and human things, there is nevertheless no fundamental division between God and his creation, between God and his creature.

There is no vacuum between God and creation, because a radiation emanates from the Godhead, a stream of power, which pervades the entire All. Hermetic philosophy calls this radiation The Good, or the Only Good, or the fundamental nature. This refers to the divine activity in its highest state of purity. The Only Good can only bring forth The Good. It does include a process of volatilisation, as the eleventh book explains, but it always renews itself in ceaseless repetition.

There is also another kind of good, as we know. It is a good

which always reverts into its opposite, into evil, whatever the situation. Nevertheless, both the Only Good and the kind of good that always changes into its opposite originate from one and the same nature. The stream of power which emanates from the Godhead, filling and irradiating the void and everything that exists, is the fundamental nature, which is omnipresent.

At the same time a tremendous variety of natures is manifested in the All. But if we want to understand the twelfth book of Hermes, we should realise that there is only *one* fundamental nature. Any nature existing in conflict with it will be broken down and ultimately returned to the one nature. This awe-inspiring, comforting thought, this consoling certainty, is given to us at the beginning of the twelfth book.

The word 'nature' is used to refer to the divine stream, which encompasses everything which has been called into being, and is in the process of growth. Every movement, every activity, whatever it may be, is brought about with the help of the seven-fold stream of the divine nature. However, just remember that the active power in divine things differs entirely from that in human things, as the fourth verse of our text explains. It does not *need* to be different, but under present conditions it *is* different.

What is the cause of the fact that, although there is only one fundamental nature, there are so many expressions of human nature which are so utterly regrettable and evil? Surely one might expect that everything would be in keeping with that fundamental nature? Why is it, then, that the opposite is so very often true?

To account for this we must understand that the fundamental nature has two aspects. Hermes calls them 'desiring' and 'willing', and he says that the essence of the fundamental nature is desire, and that its active power is volition.

Take a look at yourself for a moment. You originate from nature; you are its creature, a being of nature. For this reason, the

two aspects of the fundamental nature are present within you, too. Ever since your birth, ever since your first cry, you have been driven by a certain desire. That is the keynote of nature, in its divine as well as its earthly form.

You are, in fact, one great desire. And now you need to attain the object of your desire by means of the will, a magic power which exercises its impulsion in you, also. Through the exercise of the will, as a magic power, what is essential to your nature is, or at least can be, attained. These two aspects are present in all creatures.

So it is quite certain that you will penetrate to the liberating life, providing your desiring, your longing, your aspiration is attuned to the desire of the fundamental nature. If your longing, your desire-nature, is completely in harmony with the fundamental desire of nature, you will experience and possess the power to attain what you desire.

The Bible says: 'Thou shalt not covet', and the Universal Doctrine speaks of 'desirelessness'. Both these ideas indicate an orientation which deviates from the twofold character of the fundamental nature, and which would therefore cause the formation of a counternature in the midst of nature.

If you can understand all this, you should consider deeply the meaning of the fifth verse:

What else is God, the Father, The Good, than the foundation of existence of all things, even of those that do not yet exist?

Before you can will anything, you first have to desire it. An action or manifestation always follows not a desire, but an act of will. The act of will, however, is preceded by a desire. Volition develops as a result of desire, which carries with it the idea, the touch, of the universal plan; it is an astral radiation.

This is the essence of nature in its entirety. The forces which are concentrated in the astral body also concentrate around the

heart. The heart's aura is of a purely astral nature. All the forces and radiations circulating around the personality, entering and being radiated out again via the liver, are of an astral nature. It is by means of astral forces that we live. That is why the organ on the right side of the body is called the 'liver'. The liver is the gate through which astral forces enter the physical organism.

Your desire nature, everything you long for, emanates from and takes shape in your astral body. That is why desire is an astral radiation; it is the essence of nature. Desire is that which is not yet fulfilled, for what has been fulfilled no longer needs to be desired, but only maintained.

So it is clear that when one attunes oneself to the essence and the desire of the fundamental nature — when, as a pupil of the Spiritual School of the Golden Rosycross, you attune yourself to the pure, serene astral field of the Living Body — you will absorb the pure, fundamental essence of nature. And at the same time you will be equipped with a mighty power, a pentecostal power which will enable you to achieve what has been desired. For after the desire comes the act of will. Then you will learn to know the volitional aspect of the fundamental nature in a liberating sense. That is why it is said, for instance, in the prologue of the Gospel according to John: 'To all those who accept Him, He gives the power to become children of God again.'

When you attune your being to the essence of the fundamental nature, when your desire is in harmony with it, you will receive the power to become a child of God again.

Herein lies a lesson of the utmost importance for all who wish to labour in the vineyard of the Lord; for all who wish to serve the Spiritual School in whatever way. The power to carry out the task, the power to bring the task to a good end, will only be received by the worker if he attunes his entire being to the fundamental nature and absorbs himself in its essence. Every Tat

should be very much aware of this. The words from the Sermon on the Mount: 'Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all other things will be added unto you,' should also be understood in this light. If you reverse these two aspects you will never succeed. Then you will never reach the aim: your work will fall apart in your hands.

Another aspect of this truth is that it enables you to account for all the tensions in your being. From time to time many find themselves in the midst of great inner tensions. This can now be explained, as can the many tensions that develop in our field of existence, in our life in society. And you know that the time must always come when every tension results in an explosion. Well, you can avoid and neutralise all these tensions, and their explosive results, whether they arise in your own personal life, or in the lives of your circle or group. As we have tried to show, you are entirely one with nature by virtue of your being. Your entire existence, including your existence as a microcosm, is to be explained from nature.

That is why your nature, too, possesses two aspects: desire and volition, the essence and the action. Without the fundamental nature and its two aspects you would not exist. So when your being — which means your desires, your yearnings — is not in harmony with the essence of the fundamental nature, the immediate result is tension. If you then persist in your faulty orientation, the tension will increase hour by hour; and finally there comes the explosion, the open conflict in your own being or with others.

All this is quite natural and obvious, particularly if you realise that desire is a force of attraction, whereas volition is radiative. Thus the fundamental nature, by its very being, attracts every creature to itself. That is why Rosicrucian philosophy calls it 'the mother' or matrix.

The fundamental nature draws every creature to itself in order to fill it with the fundamental thought underlying manifestation. If the creature resists, however, tension will necessarily arise. The tension mounts in accordance with a law, and when the extreme is reached, an explosion will always follow. Then things break apart, and this breaking up is the essence of death, the perishing of the deviating force. What is left returns to the fundamental; the fundamental draws it back to itself. So one can say: it may take a long time or a short time, but the fundamental nature will always have the victory; the Only Good will always conquer in the end.

The nature of the field of creation can now be defined. One often hears nature-religious people say in ignorance that God has created everything, and that therefore the existence of everything must be maintained. This is a serious, and sad, misconception. That is why verse seven says with such emphasis:

I am not saying, O Tat, (that God) makes everything, because he who makes something is sometimes inadequate because of the changeability of quantity and quality, or because at times he makes one thing and at others something opposite. God, the Father, The Good, however, is himself the existence of the All.

Hermes is trying to show Tat that the world of phenomena, the All-Manifestation, does not function automatically; it does not leave only one way, only one possibility, open. No, a variety of courses are open to a creature who has become aware that he possesses two fundamental forces.

When the Gnosis transmits to you its counsel of love, you have the choice whether to follow it or not. There are always a variety of options open to you. Time will tell, though, whether what has been realised is in harmony with or runs counter to the fundamental nature.

If the latter, then tension will develop, an explosion; then the essence of death will have been generated. Understandably, the dangers and possibilities implied by all these things are so tremendous that we will need to explain them to you in greater depth.

XIX

The Sancta Democratio

For an unimaginably long time, the Gnosis of Hermes has been there to inform us with respect to the Sancta Democratio; with respect to the ‘equal opportunities for all’, anchored in the fundamental nature since the foundation of the universe. These ideas were set out in the Gnosis of Hermes long before human rights had ever been thought of. The essence of the fundamental nature, its basic characteristics — desire and volition — are present in everyone, and their aim is to impart to every creature the idea of participation in the sublime, divine-human state, and also the power to achieve this.

In fact, it is completely impossible not to realise this intense divine grace sooner or later. Through the essence and characteristics of the fundamental nature, everyone is enabled to work on one’s own realisation. If it turns out that what has been realised opposes the fundamental plan, the result will be tension and a process of correction, as explained.

So every mistake will come to light at the source. Thus the Sancta Democratio may be thought of as a miracle. Any obstruction on the path of self-realisation automatically gives rise to self-corrective processes, so that the final self-realisation is irresistibly ensured. He who sees this will understand Tat when he says:

You have so entirely filled us, O Father, with this magnificent, beautiful vision, that the eye of my Spirit-Soul, by such a direct approach, has come nearer to sanctification.

The fundamental nature is the all-encompassing and all-pervading Word that was from the beginning. It is the Word spoken of in the prologue of the Gospel according to John: ‘In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and it was God. All things were made through the Word, and without this Word was not anything made that was made. In the Word’ — in the fundamental nature — ‘was life and life was the light of men.’

This life must become your life. Do you understand, do you experience, that this grandiose divine faculty, which is knowable within you, even if its expressions may be somewhat contorted, is the divine faculty, present within you from the beginning? Your entire being is one dynamo of desiring and willing, which are the divine foundations laid in every human being. So the divine faculty is knowable within you and much more directly than, for instance, the world or the sun. The twelfth book of Hermes makes clear that the world, the holy world, and Vulcan, the spiritual light that stands behind it, have also come from the Father and as such are equally divine. But the fifth verse says:

Although the world and the sun also are co-begetters of living beings, yet for theet they are not, to the same extent as God, the cause of The Good, and of life.

The world, the sun and the other heavenly bodies are obviously the decision, the product of the Only Good, of the fundamental nature. So how could one set the world, which has been generated by the fundamental nature, above the fundamental nature itself, with which all can establish a personal, living connection! Such an idea would be irrational, quite apart from being wrong.

Although the world is the mother of us all, of which we are born

and bred, there are still many embryonic developments, many spectral and sub-human fields in its totality. Think, for example, of our nature of death. Obstructing influences emanate from all these embryonic developments. Think, for instance, of what is brewing in the countries around the Mediterranean! Think of all the tensions currently developing in time-worn Europe. Obstructing radiations are emanating from all these nations, races and groups.

Countless people have not yet achieved equilibrium with the Sancta Democratia. Untold numbers have not yet understood its essence. So neither are they able to live in harmony with the fundamental nature. So when they turn to groups, races and nations, and set their hopes in the multiplicity of ideas, they will without doubt run into great confusion. In other words: radiations emanate from the world as a field of genesis and development of the children of God, the members of the human lifewave, which radiations, on the one hand, belong to the Only Good, but on the other hand oppose it. Moreover, the radiations of the world are combined with those of the sun and a number of other heavenly bodies, each of which possesses its own field of development, and on many of these heavenly bodies, too, the most serious problems are developing.

The result is that in our nature, in our life-state, there is a formidable tangle of influences: from our own world, from the inhabitants of our planet, and from myriads of other heavenly bodies. All this is complicated and confusing in the extreme. What Hermes means to say is that an opposing development on any one planet in the solar system will also have a powerful influence on the radiations of all the other planets, as well as the sun, of that system. That is why, as he says, the light of the sun can blind the eyes.

To avoid these difficulties, which will always victimise the creature if he allows himself to be drawn into them, there are the

fundamental nature of the beginning, the word, the life and the light. In its essence the entire plan of genesis lies enclosed; the fundamental idea is submerged in it as a mighty, pulling desire.

There is, moreover, an activity in the fundamental nature, a willing, a power of realisation, a power unto life. This life is an unwavering light. It is the light to which we are all called, the light of the divine-human state. And is it not a glorious, consoling thought that in the midst of the teeming profusion of things, in the midst of the countless radiations by which we are bombarded, a divine, twofold unity is hidden within us which can bring us into connection with the fundamental nature? Is it not a wonderful thing to possess this immeasurable treasure, beyond all those myriads of influences, beyond all those dangers, beyond all the radiations of countless developments? Perhaps you will now understand Tat's cry of jubilation even more clearly.

You have so entirely filled us, O Father, with this magnificent, beautiful vision, that the eye of my Spirit-Soul, by such a direct approach, has come nearer to sanctification.

Hermes adds to this by saying:

Such an inner vision of The Good is not like the fiery radiation of the sun which, through its light, blinds our eyes and forces us to close theet. Inner reflection has an enlightening effect, and the more so to the extent that one is receptive to the influx of the insight-giving radiance. It penetrates us with great force, will never be harmful and is entirely full of godliness.

What a sublime, pentecostal gospel we are permitted to bring you! There is so much around us that blinds us, that hinders and opposes us. And what confusing and disappointing results these things can have. Well, you can free yourself from all that, com-

pletely and immediately. You can dissociate yourself from it, quite definitively. For near you, around you and within you are the word, the life and the light. The apparently abstract prologue of the Gospel according to John turns out to be as concrete as anything could possibly be. For, via the Living Body of the young Gnosis, all pupils are connected with the fundamental nature in its absolute untaintedness.

The School addresses you with this concrete fact so that you may participate in it as quickly as possible. And you will participate in it as soon as you enter the new way of life. Free your thinking, your intellectual brain-consciousness, from everything obstructive and experimental and in this way renew the retrograde movement.

There is more, however, as verse eleven of our text shows. If you were able to understand fully the ideas developed here, not in the intellectual sense (for anyone who possesses an intellectual brain-consciousness can do that much); if this grand and glorious truth and reality were to stir, move, and inspire you, right into every fibre of your being, then you would, as Hermes says: *often be absorbed, in complete bodily tranquillity, by a most beautiful contemplation, just as happened to our forefathers Uranus and Chronos.*

Uranus and Chronos personify the sublineic light-powers in which time and eternity were united to form an exquisite unity. These light-powers formed a link with mankind at the close of the Atlantean epoch and the opening of the Aryan dispensation. They were divine, spiritual manifestations which were maintained and established by these entities many millions of years ago. These 'sowers' or Satumalians (Chronos = Saturn) brought the golden grain to a newly manifested mankind. They were in the world but not of the world. They lived in bodies, but were also

able to move outside them, to bear witness, from first-hand experience, of the glory and majesty of the fundamental nature to those who still lived outside it.

The retrograde movement should begin in one's thinking. Your thoughts, your intellectual brain-consciousness, must be purified and brought into equilibrium with the fundamental idea. Everything confusing, everything impure, everything critical, everything earthly in your thinking must disappear from the mental, functional organ in your head sanctuary. On the basis of such purified thinking, the retrograde movement can then begin.

If you think in a pure way, as indeed you are called to do, your astral body will be ignited in a way that is in keeping with your mentality. The astral body reacts in a fraction of a second to every one of your thoughts. Like a flash of lightning, every thought gives rise to a mighty, measureless fire in your astral body. Via the astral body, the etheric body is then brought into a condition which corresponds with the astral body's state. Ethers are liberated and penetrate your entire physical organism, affecting all its organs and all its fluids, up to and including the blood. And when the blood is thus laden with the results of your flash of thought, it flows back through all the brain-cells and brings what you yourself have unleashed back into the intellectual brain-consciousness again.

Are you aware of this retrograde movement? Thinking, astral body, etheric body, physical body, blood, and then back again, via the blood, to the head sanctuary. This is the course along which the retrograde movement circulates. And if your thoughts are directed entirely towards the earth, the result can be a prison wall, an impenetrable dungeon. However, if you purify your thoughts, if you learn to think in a pure way, in harmony with the fundamental nature, you will knock down the prison walls. The walls will collapse and you will stand in total freedom. Then, as

you step outside your prison, you will behold the glory. You were not given a brain — that wondrous organ of your cerebral system — so that you could concentrate on the earth and cram your head with all those worthless things of dialectical nature. You were given a brain so that it could serve as a basis for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, to fulfil the fact of pentecost. Do you understand that? Anyone who has purified the retrograde movement within his system and thereby opened himself to the fundamental nature, will enter into sensory contact with that nature. And he will be able to behold the inner, true nature in exactly the same way as we are able to see the outer nature with our eyes. And of course you will understand that this kind of vision has nothing at all to do with being able to see into the reflection sphere, for the reflection sphere is nothing but a sewer, the refuse bin of dialectical nature.

The establishment of an intimate relationship with the twin forces of the fundamental nature is always accompanied by the immediate awakening of new, inner senses. That is the signature of true pupilship, of the discipleship of the Only Good. So we will now understand Tat's cry for salvation: *Would that we too might attain to it!*

XX

*From Living Soul to
Life-Giving Spirit*

As we have discussed, the formation of a close relationship with the twin forces of the fundamental nature is accompanied by the awakening of new, inner senses. One then becomes a disciple of the Only Good. However, this discipleship, and the attributes to which it leads, will be impossible as long as the candidate is unable to enter into silence. This is a new phase of pupilship, which begins as soon as all the effort of orientating oneself, the continual reconsideration and struggle on the path, has passed. Only then does one become suitable for the development of new senses. Only then is the voice of the silence heard. That is why Hermes says: . . . *the Gnosis of The Good is both divine silence and the stilling of all the senses.*

The fundamental nature, a perpetual silence, maintains an immutable current, arising from its essence — desire — and from its will, the result of which is activity.

Its desire encompasses the whole divine idea, the Father's plan of manifestation, the absolute wisdom. The activity of this current reveals what animates the idea as images, thought-forms. It is the high reality of the divine cognition, the divine thoughts, which must be fulfilled by perfect human beings. The fundamental

nature speaks, as it were, to the candidate. That is why the prologue of the Gospel according to John testifies of 'the Word'. The Word of God is not some written or printed language, composed with a great deal of wrangling and debate by a council of church-fathers; the Word of God is the voice of the fundamental nature.

This need not surprise you in any way, for you can do the same yourself. When you produce thoughts, these are manifested as images. When you think of a tree, or a flower, or a plant, or a human being, the corresponding image immediately forms in the aura of your head sanctuary. You speak by means of these thought-images. You can enter into contact with fellow creatures merely through the exchange of thought-images.

Well, that is 'the Word', as it is meant here. The Word of God is the voice of the fundamental nature. The divine thought works in cooperation with the fundamental nature. In this way, whole series of divine thought-images arise. And this voice, this Word, can only be understood in silence.

By this we do not mean meditation, or concentration, or yoga exercises, or a life of continuous prayer. We mean the absolute, inner silence of the entire being, which may or may not be engaged in performing its ordinary daily work. One can only become silent in this way as a result of the renewed, retrograde movement discussed earlier. This, in turn, is only possible through the new way of life, which means: possessing the soul as the result of yearning for liberation, and on the basis of this soul essence renewing the cognition, via the blood. In other words, it means, on the basis of the pure soul-state, to establish the intellectual brain-consciousness in purity; in non-attachment, in abstention from criticism, in a life of harmony and in love.

Then the Spirit-Soul (as Hermes calls the heart and the head when functioning in combination) awakens, and then the system experiences an intense, inner peace. Then one undergoes, sen-

sorially, the fathomless silence of the fundamental nature.

In this silence, the fire of the astral body is kindled in mildness. The fierceness of the astral fire, and all its results fade away. The aura around the heart begins to give evidence of this. And via the astral body, via this new state, the etheric body is irradiated and assuaged. The four holy ethers are liberated as four sanctifying foods which nourish the body and all its organs, including the blood, with the newly-born silence, with inner peace.

Only in this way is the whole of one's being made receptive to the voice of the silence, to the Word of the twofold, fundamental nature. And without having to say a single thing about it, you will then see, you will recognise.

This inner understanding does not involve struggle. If you prepare your being, you will understand the voice of the silence. Then you will recognise Him, who wishes to be recognised. And you will be able to direct your life accordingly. He who begins to live from this state, he who has found the Gnosis of The Good,

can no longer pay attention to anything else. He who has once beheld it, will no longer see anything else, nor can he listen to anything else, and even his body participates in this immobility. Where all physical perceptions and stimuli have vanished from his consciousness, he remains in tranquillity.

In the midst of all the hustle and bustle of the nature of death, he stands in fundamental silence.

When the Gnosis enlightens the entire consciousness, it also makes the soul blaze up again, raising it by detaching it from the body. Thus it transforms the entire human being into its true nature, for the deification of the soul, which accompanies the contemplation of the beauty of The Good, cannot be accomplished in a mortal body.

You will observe how fundamental the new way of life is. If you

want to advance on the path, if you really wish to participate in liberation — and that, surely, is why you entered the Spiritual School — then practise the retrograde movement with the utmost diligence. Purify your intellectual brain-consciousness on the basis of the heart, on the basis of the soul and, step by step, you will enter the silene. And when you have attained tranquillity in this way, the light will illumine your soul; it will raise the soul up and regenerate it, and guide it into the being of God.

This brings us back to the very foundation of this whole new development: the soul. Only the living soul can go on to become a life-giving spirit, to deification, as Hermes calls it. But to achieve this the soul must attune itself to the fundamental nature and participate in it. Then it will be possible for the soul to be united with the spirit, and the alchemical wedding of Christian Rosycross can be celebrated. So the pupil's great task is first to bring the mortal soul, the soul that sins, to rebirth, and from rebirth to deification. So, assuming that by now you have experienced soul-rebirth, what you now need to consider is the problem of deification.

As Hermes says, every separated soul undergoes changes of form. These transmutations may lead in either an upward or a downward direction. The way of tension and dissolution described earlier exists to keep the downward development of the soul within limits. If the stirrings of your soul, and thus of your mentality and hence the retrograde movement, deviate from the fundamental nature, tension will develop in your life, and it will increase until the time has come for an explosion. And then it may be that you have to begin all over again. In this way, the down-ward development of the soul is kept within the limits of the law, not to punish you, but only to draw you back into the process, time and time again; only to keep on providing you with fresh opportunities to begin anew. Just think how many times you, as a microcosm, have already had to begin anew!

So, motivated by your own painful experiences of these things, take the decision, now, at last, to enter the other form of soul-transmutation in an upward direction, on the basis of rebirth.

You will need to understand the mystery of the soul very thoroughly indeed if you wish to walk the path with success. Hermes made the utmost effort to explain and unveil this mystery to Tat in the twelfth book:

All souls who revolve in the world, as if sown in places assigned to them, emanated from the one soul, the All-Soul. These souls undergo many changes, some in an ascent imbued with grace, others being subject to the opposite.

An explanation is necessary to show how souls originate, a somewhat doctrinal, scholastic explanation, but you will be able to follow it if you keep in mind the facts you already know.

A soul is really nothing else than a microcosm. As you know, the Gnosis teaches that the rose of the heart is the soul-nucleus, the central point of the microcosm. The rose of the heart is not some mysterious physical organ, but the mathematical centre of the microcosmic sphere. Around this centre, around this soul-nucleus, is a field of manifestation, an open space which in turn is enveloped by the sevenfold auric being.

Take an atom, for instance. Every atom contains a nucleus around which various electrons orbit, like planets around a sun.

Similarly, the microcosmic atom, too, has a nucleus with a radiation-field, a field of manifestation around which seven 'microcosmic planets' rotate — the sevenfold auric being. And the personality develops in the open space, the radiation-field around the nucleus of the microcosmic atom. The nucleus, or soul, of the microcosm then associates itself with the heart of the personality. In this way, one can also speak of the soul of the personality, or the soul which is in the blood, for the radiative power of the rose not only develops in the heart, but is also manifested in the blood.

All this has often given rise to confusion. An ensouling power is indeed present in our personality. However, it emanates from the nucleus of the microcosm. Hereditary factors, too, play their part in the blood and endocrine system, and all the karma that has been stored up in the microcosm comes to us from the sevenfold auric being.

So the question we now need to answer is: How does a microcosm come into being? Where does it originate?

The microcosm originates from the fundamental nature. As we have seen, the divine nature comprises a twofold current, a stream of being and will, of desiring and activity. This stream is not God, but it originates from God.

This twofold, omnipresent, all-encompassing stream of the fundamental nature is a mighty, very fiery astral field which fills the entire All. A human being creates his own astral body by means of his mental activity. When you produce thought-images, these cause certain astral activities to develop in your body. This enkindling then gives rise to a sparking in the astral body, with all the result of the retrograde movement.

So perhaps you will be able to understand how the divine cognition, which is exterior to the fundamental nature, irradiates the mighty astral field of the fundamental nature with its thoughts. In this way, astral sparks, astral Hames come into being in the fundamental nature. In this way, too, lifewaves come into existence; they are awakened and brought into manifestation by the divine cognition. That is why microcosms are also called spirit-sparks or divine sparks.

So a microcosm is an astral spark originating from the fundamental nature. All of us are therefore linked in the closest possible way with the fundamental nature. A microcosm, a spirit-spark, bears its characteristics, because that is where the spark has originated.

Ethers are liberated within the spark through the desiring and willing of the mother-field, for behind the spark is the impulsion of the divine thought by which the mother-field is enkindled. A life-wave bursts into the All-Manifestation as if in an explosion of astral Eire, and every spark of that Eire is irradiated with the divine thought. The ethers generated by the sparks concentrate around the nucleus of the microcosmic atom, the rose, the soul of the microcosm.

In the midst of this concentration of ethers a form-manifestation arises, a system of lines of force which model themselves into the human form. Through this process the divine thought is manifested around the rose. In this way, the etheric cloud moulds itself into a reflection of the fundamental idea present in the mother-field. Thus the tree, original soul-man, in whom the soul or nucleus of the mother-field is reflected, appears in a glorified, etheric form.

Since this process develops in harmonious cohesion with the spark-igniting divine thought, the divine thought is also connected with the soul-nucleus and the being of etheric-physical substance. Thus we see how in the pre-human being a complete unity exists between spirit and soul. On the basis of this state, the living, Adamitic soul can progress to ever higher good and ultimately become a life-giving spirit.

We hope all this will have given you some idea of how the microcosm comes into existence and how a human being is formed from such a microcosm, by a quite different process of birth and maintenance

It will now be easy to imagine how much this glorious, divine process has been disturbed with respect to nature-born man. For his personality has to be born by means of the earthly process of propagation and brought into connection with an emptied, powerless microcosm. By means of this emergency order system

we know so well, an attempt must be made to restore the former existence, at least for some time, during which the original eth-eric-physical form of the soul-man is subjected to many crys-tallisation processes. The soul-man, together with the microcosm surrounding him, then constitute nothing more than a faint glim-mer of the original intention of the Logos. Hence the cry: 'Return, O sons of the fire!'

Are you not a child of the fire? Is the original, divine spark not active in you? Return, then, O sons of the fire! And make full use of your time!

The Seven Periods of Creation

We hope you will now be able to see clearly how a lifewave of souls is brought forth from the fundamental nature by a movement of the divine thought. Such souls are sparks of an astral nature and form the nuclei of a corresponding number of microcosms.

On differentiation from the primordial substance, the microcosm and its soul-nucleus pass through various metamorphoses before a divine-human entity can live and manifest itself in such a microcosmic system.

As you may know, transfiguration begins after the soul has been reborn. In the first place, it comprises the restoration of everything that has become crystallised and degenerate in the microcosm. But when that restoration has become a fact, transfiguration proceeds from power to power and from glory to glory, in continual transformations. So it is logical to conclude that in prehistoric times, before our present state was reached, part of the lifewave to which we belong had the experience of quite different microcosmic forms. As soon as spirit-sparks have been created, they undergo many changes, *some in an ascent imbued with grace*, as Hermes says, *others being subject to the opposite*. Let us now examine how such an opposing state can arise; let us consider its causes and effects, and where the solution is to be found.

The incidents which led to the formation of an opposing nature, the results of which we experience to this day, occurred in pre-historic times.

Ancient accounts tell of a Saturn period, which was followed by a Sun period, then by a Moon period, and finally by an Earth period. Each of these periods consisted of seven cycles or eras.

The Earth period, in which we live now, began with the Hyperborean era. This was followed by the Lemurian era, and then by the third cycle of the Earth period, the Atlantean era. We have now reached the middle of the Aryan era. So three and a half cycles of the Earth period lie behind us, and we are now living through the second half.

You can read about all these things in *The Rosicrucian Cosmoconception*, the cosmology of Max Heindel, or in anthroposophical literature. The teachings of Max Heindel, in fact, are also along anthroposophical lines, because he was a pupil of Rudolf Steiner. We possess a copy of the first American edition of Heindel's cosmology, on the title page of which is a handwritten dedication by Max Heindel to his teacher, Rudolf Steiner. You can also find out about these things from *The Secret Doctrine* by Madame H. P. Blavatsky. This work also gives information about many of the ancient racial types, in an overwhelming series of shapes and forms.

Hermes speaks about all these metamorphoses of souls in verse twenty:

Creatures that crawl change into those that dwell in water, those that dwell in water change into beings that dwell on land, those dwelling on land into beings of the air, and beings that dwell in the air change into men. And men, ultimately, enter immortality by changing into demons and joining the choix of the gods.

Don't be put off by the term 'demons', because the original meaning of the word is: 'astral principle'. So what the hermetic

text means by all this is that human souls who have become participants in immortality are changed into fire-principles and eventually enter the choir of the gods. Hermes also observes that before the state of immutable god is reached, the human souls pass through developmental phases in which they are movable, or changeable gods. The state of immobility, however, is the most perfect and highest glory of the soul.

This summary expounded by Hermes puts us strongly in mind of the theory of evolution as stated by material science, which tries to prove that human beings evolved from crawling animals, although scientists admit there is still a missing link in their deductions. But Hermes is referring to something entirely different. We would like to try to explain this.

When a soul-spark is created, so that one can speak of a microcosm, and the etheric-physical structure of lines of force has been manifested around the soul-nucleus, the soul is not as yet capable of making choices and decisions, in this nascent microcosmic phase. Activity is present, but in a more or less chaotic state. This gives rise to astral discharge-phenomena in the microcosm, without an individual consciousness being present. So there is only a force, which has to manifest itself in accordance with natural laws. One can compare this first manifestation with that of a creeping, crawling animal, with the hissing serpent, driven into manifestation by a dull, dark desire. The soul-spark in its early stages is neither a reptile, nor a crawling animal, but is comparable with them as far as its possibilities of manifestation are concerned. For the soul-spark does not yet possess any organs capable of radiating and manifesting in a rational way. There is only a force which makes itself felt and causes a certain movement.

After this first period the soul-spark is brought into contact with the apocalypse of the four elements. The first period is called

the Saturn era, as we said before. In this connection, think of what Hermes says of Uranus and Chronos. The mention of Saturn puts one in mind of the Saturnalians, the sowers of the seed, and one speaks of the Saturn era because at that time the microcosm was formed and certain forces were brought into manifestation in it; they were 'sown' in it.

After this initial period, the soul-spark was linked first with the element water. This can only be compared symbolically with the present-day fish, for in the Universal Doctrine, the element water represents the first entrance into a more or less ordered life. We speak of a Sun era because, after the Saturn era, light was enkindled. And with the light came the first entrance into life. Whereas the first period was one of hovering over the waters, of the preparation of the seed, the second period was one of entrance into life and its manifestations, into the great aim of the soul-spark. In the third period, a link was formed with the earth, on which and with the help of which the soul's journey had to be accomplished. We speak of a Moon period because the work for the soul-man then began, under the guidance of the Moon Angels or powers of the Holy Spirit.

So, having come forth from the fundamental nature, the life-wave reached its intended home, the intended place of work: the earth. That is why we speak of the Earth era. The earthly destination, the place of work, has been reached and in that place of work one must first prepare for the great journey of liberation and then carry it through. Then, when the work has been completed, the soul-entity leaves this place of work and enters the fourth period, in order to realise a link with the element air. The element air is the symbol of the spirit. Think of the dove, inhabitant of the air, which represents the descent of the Holy Spirit. So, in the fourth period, the soul entity is linked with the spirit. The soul celebrates its alchemical wedding with Pymander, with the spirit.

Now you will also be able to understand the aim of the alche-

mical wedding of Christian Rosycross: the person who is as if imprisoned in the earth, in the Earth period, has to be liberated and guided on his journey towards the next period.

Then the bride and groom enter the fifth period. Only now that the soul has been united with the spirit can it genuinely be a soul-man, a manas, a thinker, that is, a thinking being in the highest sense of the word. It is in this state that man then enters the fire-element. He has completed the journey. As once he was bom of the astral fire, he now returns to it as a divine, self-creating, immortal entity, and is completely one with the astral nature-principle, the demon of the fundamental nature, in essence and activity.

Thus he enters the sixth period, the sixth day of creation. It is the day of creation of fulfilment; he joins the multitude of unchangeable, immortal gods.

The seventh period, the seventh day of creation, is the day of rest, when the eternal, immutable tranquillity of the true people of God is established.

It is this sevenfold creative plenitude that Hermes seeks to depict in the twentieth verse. It is the soul journey of the entity who has been called, from the spark right to the final goal of things.

You should not understand ‘the tranquillity of the people of God’ in a dialectical sense. It has to do with the great and glorious equilibrium with the Father himself. Two choirs of gods arise from this harmony, as Hermes says: the mobile and the immobile, the hosts of those labouring in the manifestation, in the harvest fields of the world, and the hosts of those who withdraw from that and are ascending to higher aims.

However, there is one dark, distressing thing about this glorious process of development, and that is the possibility of a disturbance arising in the course of development, a delaying factor

which can give rise to evil and the opposing element. We know this from experience, since all of us have sinned on the soul-journey to the Father. 'No one is good, not even one,' says Jesus the Lord. We have all gone astray. We belong to the fallen part of our life-wave, and that is why it is of the highest importance for us to know about the causes of this fall. Once we know the causes, then the solution, the way out, will be nearer than hands and feet.

The possibility of such an incident, of which we were the victims, arose between the third and fourth periods. As we have seen, the third period involved admission to the designated place of work, when our lifewave entered the Earth era. The aim of the fourth period was the entry of the spirit into the head sanctuary, the continuation of the journey from the earth to the element of air. In this fourth period the spirit gave us the ability to celebrate with it the alchemical wedding in the head sanctuary. But before the spirit could enter there, an intellectual brain consciousness had to be developed as a basis in the head sanctuary, and to be fully established there in an organic way.

From the moment when man entered the third period, the foundations were laid on an organic level for the development of the intellectual brain-consciousness in the Earth era, so that, on this basis, man would be able to progress to the air period.

But then, as soon as the soul-spark entity became a mentally conscious being, at the moment when the etheric-physical form became a conscious being equipped with an intellect, a danger developed, the danger of denial, of ignorance through having been severed from the Gnosis:

The wickedness of the soul is its ignorance, its lack of Gnosis, of the knowledge which is of God.

When a soul-man who has been equipped with an intellectual consciousness enters the earthly field of work, he is inclined to

think that he has already reached the great aim. That is why, when they have ‘arrived’ in the social sense, people are inclined to build themselves a little nest, and maybe later a mansion, appropriately named with some label that corresponds to their psyche. Our inclination, as people who belong to our part of the lifewave, is to see the earth, the Earth era, as the final goal. In that situation lies the denial, and that denial is the greatest danger. People cling to the clods of this earth, they try to found an earthly kingdom and do not want to go further. Man tries every means in his power to maintain himself here.

Judas, one of the most beloved disciples, one of the most intelligent servants and followers of the Lord, tried to force his Lord to found an earthly kingdom, motivated by the delusory idea that ‘Now we have arrived; let us stay here. We are equipped with the intellectual brain-consciousness, we can think along our own lines. What more could we desire?’

This is the danger of ignorance, of being severed from the Gnosis: that one will not wish to go any further. The result was that the form in which the man of etheric-physical substance manifested himself began to crystallise. And then there developed all those difficulties we know only too well, and about which we have been telling you for many years.

The fall is nothing else than the delaying of our course of development. And the delay becomes a process of coagulation, of crystallisation, in which death functions as an ever-correcting, ever-dissolving factor.

In the first place, the solution to this conflict lies in withdrawing from ignorance, from denial, and proceeding to recognition.

For a very long time it remains possible for a soul-entity to break the delaying factor himself, and to regenerate and transfigure what was crystallised and damaged, so that then he can continue on the path of the divine plan until the final aim is reached. If this process of breaking and self-correction does not

occur, the ascent of the spirit-spark turns into a descent and the microcosm returns to its origin: then it is taken back to the first phase of its development, back to the Saturn era, to the field of the fundamental nature from which it originated. That is why verse twenty-three says:

But if the soul which has entered a human body persists in sin, it will not taste immortality and does not partake of The Good, but hastens back on the road which lies behind, the path that returns to the state of the crawling animal. This is the punishment of the sinful soul.

Such is the doom of evil souls, of those who refuse to proceed on the path. They have to go back, driven by the laws of nature. Progress is the fundamental law of manifestation. So we will understand that the ignorance described, the state of severance from the Gnosis, is in fact a denial of oneself:

The soul, seized by wickedness for lack of knowledge regarding its own being, is subjected to strange bodies, unworthy of man. As a burden it carries a body over which it does not rule, but by which it is ruled. Such is the wickedness of the soul.

This, then, is the evil of souls, divested of all mystical embellishment and of heil and damnation. And among our myriad sins, that is the most fundamental, the most deadly: the negation of the self, the denial of the fact that we are called to be children of God.

He Must Increase, I Must Perish

Denial, as explained, unavoidably brings stagnation into the process of sevenfold consummation. It also gives rise to many disharmonious astral activities and developments. For, as we have seen, the microcosm which originates in the astral field of the fundamental nature and is equipped with many mighty powers derived from that field, will cause a disturbance in that field through the mere fact of denial. This, then, is the cause of the tremendous misery both in our own personal existence and in that of society. Astral extremism poisons man's life, as well as the life of the other kingdoms of nature, with which he has to work. If we do not follow our calling, if we deny it, we bring about an astral eruption in our so fiery astral body, through which the entire personality is disturbed. If you think back over our discussion of the retrograde movement, you will surely understand this.

If this disturbance lasts for long, man's intellectual brain-consciousness is dimmed and there comes a time when he is no longer even aware that he *is* denying his calling. Denaturation then begins, and from that moment on, the struggle for existence develops. Man clings to the clods of this earth, because he thinks that is what he *has* to do. He is no longer aware of his high vocation. The intellectual consciousness, which was to have been the basis for the spirit, the foundation of wisdom, is subjected to

cultivation so as to be able to carry on the fierce struggle for existence. The methods we use to educate our children are designed to equip them for that struggle.

In this way, great savagery and hate, and deplorable suffering develop. And since everything originates from and is caused by astral confusion, to such an extent that the astral field of our domain of life has become disorganised and poisoned, nothing can unfold harmoniously in any of the four kingdoms of nature any longer. We are supposed to work in harmony with the three other kingdoms of nature, but owing to mankind's degenerate behaviour, the four natural kingdoms have become totally disorganised and now exist in mutual enmity.

For the proper course of development of the mineral kingdom, as well as of the plant and animal kingdoms, has been impeded and disrupted, and it very much increases our guilt. Evil makes itself felt in the animal kingdom and in the plant kingdom. And wretched mankind, its consciousness dimmed by its denial, tries to reach a solution in all kinds of irrational ways. Foodstuffs, for instance, already poisoned even in the seed, are sprayed and irradiated with yet more poisons. Environmentalists try to cultivate foods in the natural way. But, don't you see? There are no natural foods any more! People say things like: 'You should eat this, but not that, because that is not good for you.' But what is good and what is not good? Warm or cold, freshly squeezed or not freshly squeezed, cultivated with artificial fertilizers or with cowdung, it comes to the same thing. That is why Jesus said so rightly: 'Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man, but what comes out of it!' Then why do we in the young Gnosis abstain from eating meat? Not for vegetarian or environmental reasons. We refrain from ingesting animal blood and uric acid because we want to turn the process of denial into a process of acceptance. The intake of animal blood and its contents would seriously hinder this process. Furthermore, we refuse to inflict suffering on

our relations, our younger relations of the animal kingdom. And for that matter, we have to say that if we were able to live without eating members of the plant kingdom either, we would do so without hesitation. Because what we derive from the plant kingdom also hinders our recovery from the fundamental disease of denial, and that in the fullest sense of the word. The more raw the state of the vegetable food you eat, the more powerfully and positively it will bind you to the rock-hard nature of denial.

So remember that we do not live to eat, but eat to live. And we live in order to discharge, if possible, the debts we have incurred, including those we have incurred by defiling the kingdoms of nature.

We will need to arrive at a totally new orientation with respect to these things, and a totally new way of life. A great deal remains to be said about all this, for we must consider deeply, very deeply, the essence of recognition, and discover its many consequences.

For soul-liberation consists in practising the virtue of the soul, with the Johannine personality that knows and carries out the precept: 'He, the heavenly Other One, must increase, and I must perish.'

Man and the Path

We have been trying to penetrate deeply into essential things, into the immense and so very complex problem of true human existence. We have seen how a lifewave emerges from the fundamental nature and how every entity of that lifewave is a microcosm with a nucleus or soul at its central point, its heart. And we have seen how the divine thought underlying the plan of creation is reflected and manifested in that nucleus or soul. Ethers are abstracted around this nucleus, which is composed of astral fire, and they flow out from it. These ethers mould themselves into an expression of the spirit contained in the soul-nucleus.

In the beginning, the etheric form-manifestation was the true man, the heavenly man, the human being originating from God. On the basis of this etheric matrix a more material manifestation also came into being, because of the fact that etheric atoms attract material atoms. The metabolic process of the pre-human being was so ideal, and the orientation of the spirit-soul so perfect, that no crystallisation occurred and the permanent existence of the total human being was ensured.

We use the term 'total human being' because the entire microcosm participated and existed in that being. The higher self was analogous to the lower self, and both were in absolute equilibrium. There was only the self, which was manifested in and by the microcosm as a whole.

At the beginning of its manifestation, the self followed a path leading to the fulfilment of a glorious plan of eternal plenitude, of eternal genesis, a journey from glory to glory: the never-ending unfoldment of the plan of God-in-him; provided the entity was willing to devote itself undeviatingly to this great, glorious aim in absolute recognition, from within, in freedom and love.

However, amid the majesty of existence, in the dizzying grandeur of the divine-human kingship, man forgot that he was a creature; he forgot that from the outermost parts of his microcosmic field to his innermost nucleus, and from that nucleus to every aspect of his manifestation, he had to dedicate himself totally to the law on which his being was founded.

With his tremendous capacities, he stepped outside the law. He experimented with his divine faculties and thus entered into denial'. In this way, crystallisations developed, densifications; the results of infringing the law made themselves felt. Other, false astral fires began to burn, and denial, the sin of ignorance, was succeeded by death. In other words, in the early stages, the crystallisations, the alien configurations of elements and forces were broken up and destroyed as soon as they had reached their culmination. Man witnessed the eventual collapse and destruction of everything he had built up.

But with the continuation of the primary sin of denial, the soul-spirit nucleus lost the ability to manifest itself. In this way the divine human being, the spirit-man, disappeared as the manifestation of the soul-spirit nucleus, and its structure of lines of force was reabsorbed into the nucleus. The divine human being had vanished; while living, he had died. As 'the image with the dead eyes', to use Gustav Meyrink's term, he had returned into the principle of the soul. The microcosm, God's eternal creation, had been emptied and was no longer capable of manifesting itself from within.

But we know that 'God never forsakes the works of his hands,'

and that is why the emergency order was founded. We will not explain, here, how that emergency order came into being, but will confine ourselves to stating that mortal entities, born through the earthly process of maintenance, were allied with and introduced into emptied microcosms, with the aim of awakening the microcosms' former soul-spirit nucleus from its sleep of death and thus revivifying the image with the dead eyes.

Those who accomplish this grand and glorious work undergo that wonderful change we call transfiguration, that is, the unification of the nature-born lower self with the revivifying true or higher self.

Here, a warning is called for. There also exists a false higher self in the microcosm, which has already claimed countless victims. It is the product of the many nature-born beings who inhabited your microcosm before you. It is the karmic self or auric being. Millions of anthroposophically, theosophically and religiously inclined people have been and are being victimised by the karmic self.

Every nature-born human being leaves its traces in the auric self, the results of its unholy life. This karma, these traces, accumulate. Every nature-born being who begins to walk the great path of liberation is therefore faced, alas, with a dual task. Before he can set foot on the path of transfiguration, he must first liquidate the karma, the karmic self. Remember Jesus the Lord when he was tempted in the desert. He, too, first had to settle accounts with the karmic self.

To a certain extent this karma is vivified in one's own self. It is the microcosmic adversary, which must be recognised and overcome. But I-centred people are without exception victimised by it time and time again, for the karmic self depends for its existence on the cultivation of the mortal personality.

We are participants in the young Gnosis, who are united in the

Living Body and who wish to follow anew the age-old path of the Holy Grail. By virtue of our professing pupilship we are linked again with the wondrous nucleus of our microcosm. That ancient nucleus, which has been slumbering in our system for such an inexpressibly long time, is beginning to open again for us, who have devoted ourselves to the holy Rosycross. This immortal soul, this wondrous divine nucleus of the microcosm, speaks again to our nature-born soul: the image with the dead eyes is beginning to stare at us, with a deeply penetrating gaze, so that one can no longer be at peace, by day or by night. In this way, together, we stand once more at the threshold of the path of return to the Father's House.

And what is necessary now? Firstly, rebirth, the reanimation of the original soul. Secondly, our own transfiguration. Thirdly, the union of the two, of the original soul, the true higher self, with the nature-born lower self, the unification of the transfigured nature-born human being with the original soul-man.

He who wishes to walk this path receives a key. Hermes says to Tat that

The wickedness of the soul is its ignorance, its lack of Gnosis, of the knowledge which is of God. If the soul is ignorant regarding the essential nature of things and is totally blind to The Good, it is violently entangled and attacked by physical passions. The soul, seized by wickedness for lack of knowledge regarding its own being, is subjected to strange bodies, unworthy of man. As a burden it carries a body over which it does not rule, but by which it is ruled. Such is the wickedness of the soul. But thee, the virtue of the soul is the Gnosis, the living knowledge of God. He who possesses this knowledge is good and dedicated to God, and already divine.

The language of hermetic philosophy, in its clarity, presents clear guidelines on the path. He who, in awareness of the nature and

purpose of his deepest inner being, strives for the virtue of the soul, must bring about a total transformation in his life. He must enter into the new way of life, as the Spiritual School urges its pupils to do. This new way of life will enable us to be connected and unified with the spirit.

Tat asks: *What kind of person is he, Father?* And in verses twenty-eight and twenty-nine of the twelfth book Hermes replies:

A person who speaks little and does not lend his ear to much talk. He who spends time in arguing and listening to arguments fights against shadows. For God, the Father, The Good, cannot be verbalised, nor understood by the sense of hearing.

Hermes states that anyone who stands in the new way of life, who has accomplished the transformation of his life, does not speak much more than is absolutely necessary. Such persons have foresworn all idle talk, all dialectical conversation. They have left behind all nature-born problems. That is why silence occupies a very important place in the School's conference centres, and why the School never tires of telling its pupils about the need for silence and its benefits.

It spares no effort to bring them to soul-rebirth, so that, with a transformed, reborn soul, they might go out to meet the spirit. But the danger exists that many might remain in this — albeit changed and purified — soul-state, because they are inclined to expend that soul-state on a merely horizontal level. For a soul-human being is a loving and helpful person. He is willing to do everything for others, and for that reason is always exploited.

That is why Hermes tells Tat that the soul-man who truly seeks God, the soul-man who is entering into contact with the spirit, is someone who speaks little and does not lend his ear to much talk.

What, then, is speech? It is the production and radiation of creative energy, the energy a nature-born human being needs to perform the one work to which he is called. That is why the seeker

of God will only speak if it is necessary.

And what, then, is listening? It is receiving sensorially that same energy which the other person is discharging by speaking.

When you speak and someone else listens, the listener will absorb into himself all the energy you are pouring out by speaking, a process which, generally speaking, is highly suspect. So speaking and listening are extremely delicate matters about which the pupil must be very careful indeed. If one pursues one's pupilship seriously, speaking and listening will be made subordinate to a holy law, which only operates on the plane of the liberated soul-being. Any speaking and listening which fall below a certain level will harm and bind one to the lower nature.

Thus, the serious pupil no longer leads a double life. He is no longer on the one hand a pupil of the Gnosis, and on the other a nature-born human being with his stereotyped behaviour and his idle gossip. He who lives two lives, and thus serves two masters, with two different points of departure, will be fencing with self-made shadows, by day and by night.

XXIV

The Soul-Man

[A soul-man] is a person who speaks little and does not lend his ear to much talk. He who spends time in arguing and listening to arguments fights against shadows. For God, the Father, The Good, cannot be verbalised, nor understood by the sense of hearing.

The head sanctuary of the human being is one powerful organ of creativity, in a negative as well as a positive sense, in a receptive as well as a creative sense. This is still not sufficiently understood. Our intellectual considerations arise in the head sanctuary. They are rendered dynamic by the will and then expressed via the larynx, or written down by the hand. All our manual activities, all our hand movements are, as you know, related to the functions of the head sanctuary. In this way, our deeds of higher creativity are rendered visible and clearly demonstrable.

Now let us consider the second aspect of these things: someone speaks to you and you listen. In other words: you open your sensory faculty, the receptive aspect of your organ of higher creativity, for the other person, and that is not without results as far as you are concerned. For something along the lines of a coupling, a binding, can occur, because the other person discharges his creative energy over you, and you lap it up, you receive it.

And this is in most cases extremely destructive and dangerous; indeed, it may often even prove lethal to soul development.

For what is it that makes a person chatter away day and night like a machine gun? Aren't there people who are absolutely bristling with problems and tensions, and who seek to discharge them by chattering endlessly with their fellow human beings? Children, whose lower procreative organs have not yet developed, and older people, whose procreative organs no longer function as such, are often full of chatter.

Young people, as we know, are highly talkative. Words babble out of them in an almost endless stream. This, however, is generally not at all harmful, because what they say is in many respects still unsullied, although of course it is often rather tiring for their audience!

Old people, on the other hand, have much of their lives behind them. Their karma is fully active, nature is manifested in them to the full extent, and the results of their existence have taken root in the blood. And when their procreative functions begin to decline, everything that stirs and boils in the blood, all those fiery results of the retrograde movement, always seek a way out via the head sanctuary, via the larynx. That is why the Bible says: 'Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man, but what comes out of it.' What comes out of the mouth is often a deadly danger.

That is why Tat, who represents the sincere, liberation-seeking individual, is told by Hermes that a virtuous soul is: *a person who speaks little and does not lend his ear to much talk.*

Note what is said here: . . . a person who speaks *little* and does not lend his ear to *much* talk... So you should not carry these things to extremes. We have been given the power of speech as an aid. We have, for instance, our social conventions, and a variety of words with which we can express everything required by ordinary life in society. Hermes certainly did not have in mind

a community of people who remained absolutely silent at all times.

But when all the pressure, the tension, the dividedness, the complexity and the hopelessness under which a person lives come out in the spoken word, then please be careful. If someone has messed up his life and is filled to the brain with tensions, then be careful.

As a candidate in the gnostic mysteries one may wish to make conscious use of the larynx to speak in a genuinely creative sense, and to use the ability to listen, too, in a genuinely creative way. If that is the case, one will need to have very important and carefully thought out reasons.

We often speak to the pupils gathered in our temples. Why? Is it because we want to work off our personal tensions? No, we did not appoint ourselves to this position. We proclaim the gnostic teachings of salvation, the living Word, which is not *of* us. And we had to prepare ourselves for being allowed, and able, to carry out this task, this creative activity, in the way this proclamation demands of us. And you should think about this very carefully: by listening, you receive this creative power via your sensory openness and it is then active within you, unto a resurrection or unto a fall. Certain elementary aspects of gnostic magic are at work in all this.

So you will now understand that every nature-born human being possesses two creative organs: the larynx as the positive creative organ, and the senses as the negative, receiving creative organ. So he is, and will remain, androgynous. But when, by following the path, you enter into soul-rebirth and transfiguration, and thus prepare for yourself an entrance into immortality, you will take part in a group which no longer has any need to resort to nature's methods of creation to keep the human race going. The race of new humanity, of heavenly man, has entered

immortality, and the result is that the higher generative faculty is revealed in all its purity, truth and reality.

You should ponder very deeply on what we have said. If you do, you will certainly achieve a profound insight. You will also realise that in our life-field, in our nature-born state, the activities of the higher generative faculties will generally be many times more disastrous, bad, deadly and venomous than those of the lower generative faculties; and that the countless people who exist only in the lower generative faculty and have not the slightest awareness of the higher one, may be many times purer than people who do have an awareness of it. For nothing binds one so much to dialectics as speaking and listening in an impure way, the misuse of the higher creative functions of the larynx and the senses. There are people who have taken a large part of humanity captive and keep it under subjection by the express use of speech and song, by speaking and singing magic rituals, for instance.

For the sake of completeness, we should add that it is not only the sense of hearing that receives force, but also the senses of sight, touch, smell and taste.

It should now be clear why and in what way a person who bears the true signature neither speaks much nor listens much. He uses everyday speech only for ordinary and necessary social inter-course, without extremism, full of love, considerateness and goodwill.

What does Hermes mean when he says, in verse twenty-nine, that *God, the Father, The Good, cannot be verbalised, nor understood by the sense of hearing.*

If you understand these words from within, you are on the right path. Suppose some people are given a holy book; one of them reads aloud the imperishable language written in the book, and the

others listen. Do you think this kind of thing would generate power? No, it would only be empty words. Only if the spirit which is of God dwells in them will any power develop. If you want to liberate the spirit which is of God and disseminate it as a creative power, the divine spirit, the Seven-Spirit, must first be present in your life. If the spirit of God has touched you, you will quite naturally radiate horizontally what you have received vertically. And if you *then* read aloud from the Book of Books, the spirit which dwells in you will make the letter, which is dead, entirely free.

It is quite impossible for this to work if you put things the other way around. The spirit, and the Spirit-Soul, must be possessed. One cannot impart them to others by means of the higher creative functions. It is the same with the word. If you listen to us when we speak to you in keeping with our task and calling, the most that will happen is that, through gnostic magic, you will be moved and uplifted. Hearing directs you towards the path, but it could not *give* you the path, or the spirit, or the Spirit-Soul, even if we were to speak to you day in and day out, year after year. No, the most that can be expected is that hearing will awaken a movement of compliance within you; or it may arouse the opposite: denial, resistance. That is why, after words have been spoken, some people are very enthusiastic while others are full of aversion and resistance, and yet others are visited by doubt.

The highest result hearing can have is faith. That is why the holy language says that faith comes by hearing. After that, however, you have to go the path! For God and the Spirit-Soul do not allow themselves to be spoken; neither can they be understood by hearing. Since childhood, you have probably heard God being spoken about many times. This may have brought about a certain measure of faith in you, but nothing else. This should urge you on to walk the path in deed and reality; only then can God, the Spirit-Soul, take shape. If we then discover that the words spoken in the

School have no effect whatsoever on a certain pupil, but that he continues his ordinary, natural course of life just as he did before; if we see that the words of the temple do not move him or motivate him to change in any way, and that he makes no effort at all to act on anything he has heard, then we know that it is not right to use the higher creative functions with respect to such a pupil, and contact with him is broken. That is why the Sermon on the Mount says, perhaps a little crudely but nevertheless very clearly: 'Do not give dogs what is holy and do not cast pearls before swine.' And to this the Rosicrucians add: 'Do not cast roses before asses.'

Having said all this, we would now like to consider verse thirty:

Although all beings have senses, because without them they cannot exist, the living knowledge of God differs greatly from sensory perception. Sensory perception is brought about by influences or impressions which gain power over us. Gnosis, however, is the completion of knowledge, the knowledge which is a gift of God.

Various stimuli to action are present in all beings. People call these 'aptitudes', or 'inclinations'. They are astral forces which impel the being to action and are maintained by the retrograde movement. So one can speak of a certain orientation in one's life, which is closely linked with the human sensory faculties. But this general, sensory orientation of dialectical mankind, Hermes says, entails the loss of power over oneself. We would like to discuss this further in the next chapter.

The Captivity of the Senses

All human beings possess certain inclinations; they are born with them. Such inclinations are to be explained, for instance, by hereditary factors. We carry them over from our parents or ancestors, or karmic influences may be involved. All these tendencies, which are anchored in the blood, are maintained by the retrograde movement discussed earlier. In this way inclinations, which are already apparent in childhood, develop as one grows older and ultimately determine the type, the character of the nature-born human being.

Once the type has been formed in this way, it is extremely difficult to change it. The mentality has fixed the astral circulation process to such an extent, and the way the blood has moulded the mentality has been so far determined by one's inclinations, that one has lost all genuine power over oneself. Such a person thinks he lives, that it is his own hand that rests on the tiller, but he is moving about within the prison walls of the retrograde movement. He finds everything splendid, magnificent and good, if only he can follow his inclinations. Then he is at peace with himself.

We would like to give some vivid examples of this. Imagine a person who is very keen on travelling to far away places. One often comes across this type of individual. The urge is in his blood even in childhood, and can be accounted for quite easily, since

millions of people possess the innate urge to journey to the tree, but as yet unknown, Fatherland. This urge is one of the primordial characteristics of embryonic mankind and is fully understandable psychologically. However, with the coming and going of the generations this inclination has become distorted and superficial, and its meaning is no longer understood. The result is that for several months of every year one sees crowds of people chasing from country to country, from mountain to mountain, gaping at what they have not seen before, taking photographs and peering through binoculars. You know this type of person, with a camera slung around his shoulder. He comes home flushed with self-contentment, and after a while the activity is repeated.

In former times, when people had not yet become so individualised, there were national and group reactions, just as there are in the animal kingdom. These gave rise to the great migrations of peoples, for exactly the same psychological reasons. The nation was incited to such migrations by its religious leaders. The difficulty was when one nation wanted to migrate to a place where another nation was already living. Think of the migration of the ancient Semitic race described in the Old Testament. The 'promised land' referred to was a densely populated area by the standards of those times, and the result was one great massacre.

Another example related to all this is the interest in nature, which takes such a wide variety of forms. This inclination, too, is a remnant of the primordial urge towards the fundamental, original nature, to which man wants to return and about which he seeks to know everything. Lost and deluded amid a profusion of sciences, the naturalist seeks and will go on seeking. Geologists look for rock strata and stones; speleologists look for caves. And what they find and discover and think they have proved is only a tiny fragment, a splinter of the original, and therefore very misleading.

Guided by these two fairly vivid examples, which you can

amplify in all directions, you will discover that all human beings are full of inclinations, whether openly displayed or secretly cherished, whether general or very personal.

To return to our point of departure: there is a threefold, fundamental urge present in many people, developed on the same grounds and manifest through the same causes; it is an orientation of the senses towards art, science and religion. Originally this was the urge, the calling to the royal art, the universal science and the fundamental religion. Your inclinations take one of these three directions. They drive your senses onwards. And in one of these three directions, or a combination of them, they have made you err or founder.

Something of this threefold inclination is present in all entities of all life-waves. Think of the young Gnosis, which seeks to realise anew something of this tri-unity: Grail, Cathar and Cross with Roses; the royal art, the universal religion and the royal science. In all entities of all life-waves something of this threefold inclination is present, because the primal urge to fulfilment of the divine plan, from which everything came forth in the beginning, fills everyone and everything down to the last atom.

In this way, guided and driven by your senses, you too have entered into pupilship of the young Gnosis, because of a certain urge originating in the blood of your birth or in the karmic streams present in you. And if your senses have been satisfied one way or another, and you have entered the School in this way, because of the inner urge of your senses, well then, you will have come 'home', completely in accordance with your inclinations.

For years, perhaps, you have been sitting very comfortably in your chair, breathing magnificently in the field of the School. You are just where you wanted to be, in keeping with your senses and your birth in nature. But do you realise that in this way you have lost all your power? Can you say that when you follow your inclinations you have the helm of your ship of life firmly in your

hands? And if you can say so, are you able to keep it up? No, it is your senses, your inclinations, that are driving your ship of life.

Following your senses, be they ever so cultivated, will not bring about one single change in your fundamentally deviant state. They are nothing but external things. If you paint a rotting post white, does that mean it has been renewed? Its appearance is then in contradiction to its essence. If you enter the Living Body of the young Gnosis, following your inclinations, does this mean you have become a renewed human being? A reborn child of God? We have nothing against your inclinations, for you cannot do without them and they brought you here. But do not look around you in a self-satisfied way, sitting down with a sigh of relief and saying to your neighbour: 'It has been in me since my youth. I have been driven in this direction since childhood. And now, here I am. Do you see me?' We do, indeed, but what we see is not yet the signature of the renewed, divine human being. Living in accordance with the senses means the end of your power over yourself.

But what then? Well, hermetic acceptance — for being satisfied with the result of your sensory existence would only be the consummation of denial.

In the foregoing pages we have spoken at length about the Gnosis as the completion of knowledge and a gift of God, and about the essence of the denial resulting from the absence of Gnosis — the disobedience to the great plan underlying your microcosm, with all its crystallising and disintegrating consequences.

In contrast to all this, there is recognition. This recognition of God's plan for you begins with the great self-revolution; with the path and the process of which all preceding brotherhoods have testified. Something of this path of the preceding brotherhood is perhaps still karmically active in your microcosm. That old striving will then have brought you here again so that now, at last, you might achieve recognition in a practical, realising sense.

It is the path of the Gnosis that enables you to regain power over yourself. It is this path that often leads to a real battle against your self-complacency and your easy-going inclinations. What use are your inclinations to us? Pure, genuine pupilship must be manifested in you, one should be able to observe a great revolution in your life — the attitude of the very wakeful human being, who is fighting the battle of self-surrender! In practice, it boils down to the fact that you can, in general, never be satisfied with the result of your sensory existence — nor may you be. For such results are very deceptive, not intentionally, but because of their nature and the situations into which they bring you.

That is why recognition is self-revolution, which rends the web your senses have woven.

How can you enter into recognition? By turning towards the Gnosis. For, as Hermes says: *the Gnosis is the completion of knowledge, the knowledge which is a gift of God.*

We would like to try to explain what Hermes means by this. Recognition of the true aim of human existence, the true aim that lies at the foundation of a microcosm, and the acceptance of the process that leads to it, brings with it admittance into and participation in a universal, omnipresent knowledge.

Just as the air of our atmosphere is present everywhere, and just as we live from it with every breath, so the divine science, the Gnosis, is like an atmosphere. Wherever the individual directs himself, whatever subject he is interested in, the universal knowledge flows towards him like a breath.

This knowledge, this wisdom, is the oxygen, the truly indispensable sustenance of the reborn soul-man. Participation in the universal found of wisdom means freedom from all transmitted, dialectical knowledge. For in essence, every dialectical science is full of delusion, bound to the activities of the senses.

As soon as you undertake self-revolution and realise the path to the full, you will gain participation in the spirit. Then you will

breath in the divine atmosphere of life. Then you will participate in the Holy Seven-Spirit.

But earthly science exists in the complicated brain of those who live out of the sense-bound consciousness. Earthly science is composed on the basis of the results of the senses. Earthly science is the outcome of intellectual investigation.

On the other hand, the divine, universal science, the Gnosis, the science of which Hermes testifies, does not originate with one person or a group of people; it is not subdivided into branches but is, as we said, present everywhere, like an atmosphere. That is why, throughout the ages, all who have learned to breathe existentially in this atmosphere have arrived at the same results and the same conclusions.

There is no difference in knowledge and orientation among those who are known by God; an absolute unity prevails among them, wherever they may be in the world and even though they may never have seen each other in their physical bodies.

All Gnosis is Incorporeal

A microcosm, together with its central soul-nucleus, can be defined and delineated. The soul-figure which develops in the microcosm can be known. The existence of all the bodies within the microcosm, and all the activities within those bodies, can be verified and their life and movements traced. In principle, everything pertaining to or emanating from what has been created, whether microcosm, cosmos or macrocosm, is knowable. It is manifested in space. The developmental processes of all life-waves unfold within the immense grandeur of the All-Manifestation. And all mysteries present in that space, though perhaps countless in number, will one day be fathomed. They are the mysteries of the creature and of all created things.

But you should realise that beyond the All-Manifestation something else is to be found, something that can neither be known, nor defined, nor beheld, something that is neither spatial, nor existential and that cannot be entered by any creature, whatever its nature. This 'Other' is at the same time so all-encompassing and overwhelming that the entire expanse of the All-Manifestation, with all its billions of galaxies, is as nothing in comparison with it.

It is known that space has seven dimensions; but the Other is above and beyond the dimensional. There are no words with which to describe it. That is why Lao Tzu could only speak of

‘It’. Know that ‘It’ is all in all. Everything comes forth from and to ‘It’ everything will return. You will understand that we are speaking of the spirit, of God. Recollection of what ‘It’ is made Paul burst out into a song of jubilation in his letter to the Romans:

‘O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are your ways, how inscrutable is your counsel! For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counsellor? Or who has given him something, so that He might be compelled to give back? For of him and through him and to him are all things: to him be glory for ever! Amen.’

You see, that is why everything that has been created must direct itself to for in that lies the one aim of our existence. The All-Manifestation is the sea of plenitude, and this sea is enfolded, sustained and embedded in ‘It’. Only in ‘It’ do we find the root of all existence. For what enfolds us, purifies and irradiates us with its power.

Think now of the image we gave you earlier: the image of the universal knowledge, the universal wisdom, which enfolds you like an atmosphere and in which you need to breathe. Then you will be able to understand clearly that all wisdom which is of God is not corporeal, but incorporeal.

The knowledge that inhabits the human brain is a laughable nothingness compared with ‘It’. That is why it is absurd to compare the divine spirit with the human state of consciousness, or to refer to the latter as ‘spirit’. The knowledge that dwells in a human brain has to be spoken or written down to become knowable. It can never be called universal, and neither will it ever be so. It is in the all-encompassing manifestation of ‘It’, in the formless and substance-less primordial principle from which everything has come into being, that wisdom, universal knowledge, must dwell — itself formless and without substance, too. The participation as a creature in this substance-less reality, in

this omnipresence, in this fount of wisdom and love, must be called the highest form of religion.

It is the religion of Hermes. It is the religion of the Arch-Gnosis, the religion of cognition, which means: the complete devotion of heart and head to 'It', so that the spirit of wisdom and love will be able to touch the created being and manifest itself in him.

The All of creation, and thus every creature, finds its highest goal in Ie. Achieving a link with 'It' is the highest aim of every creature. In this way it becomes possible for the aim of the spirit to be transmitted first-hand to the creature. It is in this way that God and creature must become one, so that the highest aim of the creative idea of the Logos can be realised.

So we can state that all Gnosis, all divine wisdom, is incorporeal. And we hope that you will understand this, like a true Tat. When you approach the religion of cognition, do not do so in the stereotyped, mystical way of church theology. People who follow this approach realise intuitively that God governs the All and that the spirit is omnipresent, but they omit to walk the paths necessary to gain participation in the sonship of the spirit. They remain in their dialectical situations.

Think again of the image we gave you of the universal wisdom in which we need to breathe. Then the question may arise: 'How can the wisdom which is of God be received and expressed by the creature?' Hermes gives the answer in verse thirty-one:

All Gnosis is incorporeal. The Spirit-Soul is its instrument which, in turn, has the body as its instrument. So both the activities of the Spirit-Soul and those of matter take place in the body..

The term 'Spirit-Soul', as you know, refers to the ideal cooperation between head and heart, as intended by the Creator. It is the heart opened for the Gnosis, for the original soul, through which

the heavenly heart in the head-sanctuary is prepared. The heart, having been reborn as the gateway and basis of the soul, manifests itself in the head-sanctuary and there prepares the throne for the spirit, by means of the appropriate retrograde movement. Through this correct retrograde movement the head-heart unity is prepared.

So you will understand that the gnostic Spiritual School, with all its methods and literature, and the doctrine it teaches and practises, is intended to guide and impel you to this preparation. If you undertake this, then as soon as you have made yourself ready, there will be the knowledge, the presence of the spirit, of the Father. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit will then have become a fact, the outpouring of the wisdom that is all in all.

The candidate who has dedicated himself as a servant of the great, holy work, will be able to draw on this eternal fount from second to second. As soon as it is necessary, the wellspring will flow. In this way he will know and understand everything that has to be known and understood, and he will do so by means of the Spirit-Soul, which acts as a vehicle. Spirit and Spirit-Soul, bound to Pymander, then become active in the mental and physical bodies.

In this way one can become a servant of the Father, of God, in the true sense of the word. The processes referred to here work with the greatest accuracy, like precision-instruments, with the greatest refinement. Those who are linked with the spirit know no second in which the spirit would not be with them if they had need of it. The servants of the Brotherhood who have ennobled themselves to the state of connection with the spirit can draw on the eternal fount of wisdom by day and by night.

However, the flow of this spring will be interrupted the moment one is obliged to involve oneself with the ordinary life-field — with social or community affairs, for instance — to an extent over and above one's basic tasks in life. In some cases,

social events are closely connected with the servant's spiritual task and vocation. In these cases, a kind of intermediate state arises in which the spirit withdraws immediately whenever the activity's centre of gravity shifts to the nature-born field.

We are emphasising all this to make clear to you that the spirit will not allow itself to be prostituted or exploited under any circumstances; the spirit never makes itself subordinate to this nature. From this you can deduce how foolish it is to call on divine help for anything and everything, as is done in nature-religious practices. Such invocation never reaches the spirit! The only help that comes then is the radiation of the nature-aeons, to which the persons concerned have bound themselves by their orientation. But the spirit does not make itself subservient to nature for any reason whatsoever.

There are people who think that if they adopt a certain physical posture, or wear a certain kind of clothing or a particular facial expression, or even a particular kind of make-up, they will be taken for spiritual persons or initiates. But all these behaviours and methods only serve to prove precisely the opposite. Remember: he who wishes to possess the spirit must lose his self. As soon as the self comes to the fore, the spirit withdraws. That is a law no-one can avoid. You will understand this even more clearly when, finally, we draw your attention to the close of verse thirty-one of the twelfth book:

. . . for all things must come into being through antithesis and contradictions. It cannot be otherwise.

See this situation very clearly. Now let us suppose you are walking the path diligently, with all your self-surrender, and completely orientated towards it, and that in this way you gain participation in the spirit-field. The divine wisdom will then reveal itself to and manifest itself in the Spirit-Soul, and the

Spirit-Soul will manifest itself to your mental and physical vehicles. Then you must, together with all your brothers and sisters who form the lowest link in the Universal Chain, be a servant of the spirit. Only when the spirit can find entrance in you and, from within, you are able to serve the spirit in the nature of death, will you become genuine participants in the Living Body; only then will you form, as a group, a worthy link in the Universal Chain.

In that sublime state of being you will still have to possess your nature-born body, and at the same time exist in the nature of death, in the world of antitheses. So on the one hand you exist in the field of creation and of creatures, together with our entire life-wave, while on the other hand you are linked with the spirit.

Can you think of a greater or more painful contrast? To be taken up in the spirit, to be linked with 'It', while at the same time being confronted with the rock-hard reality of the nature of death! On the one hand, to merge with the spirit, and on the other hand to participate in the field of nature! That is a contrast, and often a great contradiction; indeed, from time to time it is an intense bitterness.

But . . . *all things must come into being through antithesis and contradictions. It cannot be otherwise*, says Hermes. For it is a high, innate duty for what is linked with the spirit never to forsake the works of God's hands. The All has come into being out of the spirit. What threatens to be lost must be taken hold of, it must be seized, even if it is in the deepest depths of heli. That is a high, inborn duty.

There is a Logos of the spirit, and there is a Logos of nature. The called and ennobled children of God must serve both Logoi. So there are two fundamental tasks: service to the spirit, the true religion, and service in the nature of death. But the second form of service, service in nature, must proceed from the first. Then

the second will come to fruition. If one reverses the two tasks: first nature and then the spirit, one will be making the true task subordinate to the second and in this way one will only be left with the nature of death.

The World and Its Task

If you read through the twelfth book of Hermes, you will certainly discover that it is rather difficult to understand. The contents give the impression that the author is trying to explain something but is not having a great deal of success, because he lacks the right words, so that the images he arouses do not appear to be in a logical sequence.

However, you should not ascribe this confusion to Hermes Trismegistus, because the original text of the hermetic philosophy was undoubtedly as pure and clear as crystal. But as far as we know, no-one possesses this text any longer. The original text was violated and intentionally mutilated as it was copied down from manuscript to manuscript, until eventually a few Greek and Coptic texts were all that remained, and our translation is derived from those. That is why, using the text we have as a basis, we will need to try to return to what is called 'the memory of nature', and read and understand from it what was originally intended.

If this remark is not to seem illusory or fanciful, you should know what is meant by 'the memory of nature' and what the candidate in the gnostic mysteries may read from it.

Every microcosm possesses an auric being in which the microcosmic karma is stored. Everything preceding personalities in your microcosm have thought and done is inscribed as karma in the auric being. There is a part of the karma that gradually flows

into the personality via the sacral plexus, as the course of one's life unfolds. However, in the microcosms of some people there is also a karma composed of characteristics, abilities, qualities and talents, vocational facts and mighty efforts to serve God, the world and mankind. That karma only flows into the personality if the person concerned invokes it by his orientation and above all, by his way of life. Then he lives, literally and bodily, in the microcosmic memory of nature.

A third possibility is to read in the memory of nature of other people. All great world-teachers and their immediate co-workers, in short, all the great of spirit who have laboured for the world and mankind in the course of the ages, possess magnificent auric treasure-chambers with a mighty, radiative faculty in which everything they did, said and taught is preserved. None of these treasures can be lost. Well then, anyone who makes himself worthy, even if only partially, to enter that radiation-field will, provided his own auric sphere gives him the ability, be permitted to read in that memory of nature everything which will serve the peace, freedom and blessedness of mankind.

So there is a memory of nature that can be described as incidental, ephemeral, a tension-field that will one day be dissolved; but there is also the liberating, the essence of the entire Universal Chain, which can always be approached. So we speak not only of the treasure of the Cathars, the treasure of the Preceding Brotherhood, but also of the treasure of the entire Universal Chain. In this way it is possible for us, who are in the Living Body of the Young Gnosis, to receive the original hermetic wisdom and truth, to the extent that we live in and by the spirit. For this knowledge was and is never the exclusive possession of one person, who in times long gone was called Hermes Trismegistus, but this knowledge is part of the Universal Doctrine, radiating from all the microcosms of the Universal Chain, which are linked one with the other like a cloud of witnesses, as they are described in the Bible.

So let us approach our subject in this way, knowing that if we are united in the spirit, you will understand completely.

In verse twenty-one of the twelfth book it is said that there are two hosts of gods, the movable or mutable, and the immovable or immutable. This refers to the material and immaterial gods. And now, in verse thirty-two, Tat asks about our mankind: *Who men is the material God?* And there can be no answer but: *It is the world, which is beautiful and efficient but not good.* This does not mean the embryonic field in which we now exist, but the glorified world. For however glorious that world might be, one may never make the fundamental mistake of considering it as the highest.

For, as Hermes says, the world is sharply to be distinguished from the Only Good, that is: from the light which radiates directly from God, from the spirit. The world has come into being through the will of God, out of the fundamental nature; it is thus material and subject to the antitheses and contrasts of dialectics, to the natural course of rising, shining and fading. Its purpose is to be a field of education, a training school for human entities. That is why nothing in the world can be thought of as static; everything comes and everything goes.

So there is no constant, static radiation emanating from the world in immutability. On the contrary: the radiations issuing from the world give rise to opposites, contrasts, so that entities will learn from the tensions thus aroused and will follow the right paths. The forces, the radiations of the world, continually break up their own creations and creatures. So the essence of earthly things will naturally be in keeping with this law. Both causes and results remain perishable; they continually bring forth change.

The planetary god had a beginning. Our planet, our mother-earth, was once born. But in so far as she bears out and fulfils the will, the idea of the universal spirit, she will always exist, even though she has had a beginning. Thus the world is immortal,

eternal, even though it is nothing more than a creation-field, a field of genesis in which and through which creatures come into existence. By themselves, though imbued with a life-impulse, these creatures are subject to fruitlessness. For what sense does a life have if it is bound entirely to the web of transience, to a world constantly in motion, in a whirl of ever changing thoughts and forms? And in the midst of all this tumult, as its result, a countless multitude of creatures, like sparks sputtering from a blazing lire, appearing and then fading away again. What ever is the purpose of this cosmic sea of flames?

As a pupil of the young Gnosis, you will need to understand this. Hermes explains that *the divine immobility causes the motion of matter*. He goes on to say that *the world is spherical, like a head*. This sphere possesses various spheres, different levels of density. Well then, our planet in its entirety, with all the spheres that belong to it, is enclosed within another sphere, the sphere of divine immovability. Just as the entire All-Manifestation surrounds the fundamental nature and is interpenetrated by the spirit, so every planet is surrounded and interpenetrated by the spirit. Everything included in the All-Manifestation is moved by the spirit.

This calls to mind the classical symbol of the two heads, the head within which there is another head; the spiritual globe within which the material globe, the material planet, rotates. Also: the microcosm within which the personality exists. For doesn't the hermetic axiom say: 'As above, so below'? Just as the spirit-field exists around the planet, around the solar system, around every galaxy, around the All-Manifestation, so the spirit, a spiritual globe, exists around our microcosm.

Now consider yourself as a personality, a creature. You were not created arbitrarily, as a sparkling and at the same time dying phenomenon. You were not created as an arbitrary product of a meeting between your parents. You were not created as the result

of the play of flames in dialectics. If there is a creature, brought forth amid the chaos of the glorious world, in a fourfold, personal sense, then there is at the same time also an all-encompassing immovability of the spirit, a spirit-field around the spark.

The crux of the matter, then, is whether there is a positively active intermediary between the spark on the one hand and the spirit on the other, between the fourfold personality and the spirit-field surrounding it. This intermediary would have to be the soul, the special soul-existence described in the hermetic doctrine as 'the Spirit-Soul, the Nous'. If this intermediary is present in a human system, the words of verse thirty-four apply:

Now everything that, in the head, touches the membrane within which the soul is situated is immortal, because the body has been created, as it were, inside the soul, and the soul is more than the body.

The death of the spark of dialectical existence immediately becomes a thing of the past, even though the creature, just like the world, remains subject to transience. Though always transmuting, always transfiguring, immortality has then become a fact. When the spark with the fourfold personality, the soul and the spirit have been united, eternity is celebrated in time. So there must be a soul-state that is orientated entirely towards the great, glorious cohesion and idea of the whole of creation: spirit, soul and matter in beautiful, magnificent harmony.

Verse thirty-four ends with a warning about the opposite and its results:

But everything that is at a distance from this membrane is mortal, as it is more of the body than of the soul.

Where do your central interests lie? In matter? In the clods of this earth? Are your heels dug into the sands of this nature? Or do you direct the nuclei of your being towards the spirit?

The body, your personality, is built up of billions of atoms and is maintained by a constant atomic bombardment. All the atoms of the body possess a life, and the sum of the life of all the atoms is what constitutes your consciousness. That is why Hermes refers to dialectical mankind as ‘animals’. By virtue of your birth in nature you possess only an animal consciousness, a bodily consciousness, an atomic consciousness. If you orientate your consciousness exclusively towards the body and you devote all your care and attention to its satisfaction and protection, as is the case with by far the majority of people, then the animal, atomic consciousness will grow into an ego that becomes stronger and stronger until it overpowers everything. And the only result will be misery, suffering and death.

Such states also involve the denaturation of the soul, the soul-nucleus, the rose, which exists in the centre of the micro-cosm. The rose then closes its petals: the soul-nucleus shrivels to a grain of seed. In this way the spirit-field is virtually disconnected from the manifestation. Is it any wonder, then, that the manifestation must die?

That is why you should restore the original soul-activity in your system while there is still time, and with the reborn soul you should re-establish the link with the spirit and begin to live from it again. Then you will have overcome death.

How is this done? By neutralising the ego, which has grown into a satan. Your animal soul, your I-consciousness, must be brought to silence, and you must give up your idolisation of matter. All the ascents of your life must be shifted in the direction of the spirit, the Holy Seven-Spirit.

XXVIII

Spirit and Matter

After this introduction you will surely have understood that Hermes confronts us in the twelfth book with a tremendous problem that many people, throughout history, have very consciously not wanted to solve — the problem of the rift between spirit and matter.

Every creature, down to the smallest microorganism, has a material and a spiritual aspect. That is why verse thirty-four of our text says: *in this way everything that lives is composed of matter and spirit, just like the universe.*

However, do not think that the meaning of this is that every creature is at the same time a material and a spiritual being. No, every material manifestation possesses life in and of itself, on account of the fact that it is composed of living atoms, as we explained earlier. This manifestation, this created being, is surrounded by a spirit-field. Just as the entire All-Manifestation is enclosed within the Godhead, within the spirit, so it is with every creature.

But if the creature is not able to give expression to the spirit surrounding it, to the idea underlying its existence, then what remains is something that, as soon as its animal vital force has been spent, disintegrates into nothing. And thus dies.

One cannot say, as has been said, that ‘a body without a soul is dead.’ For a body without a soul is not a body. If a body does

not possess a soul, it cannot live, so neither can it die. Such ideas come from those who deny, or do not know, the spirit, although they have a fairly cultivated, natural consciousness-life, which they mistakenly think of as soul-life. But it is only the life of the body. Those who have subjected themselves to cultivate it will not willingly give up the results of that. Yet they have chosen death in preference to life; a life that will only be able to awaken out of and through the spirit.

So there are two sorts of life, just as there are two sorts of soul. For we repeat: every atom contains life, every atom is ensouled. A consolidation, a system of atoms thus possesses a consciousness, a kind of soul, composed of the life present in each atom. We call this a natural soul, and we speak of a natural life. But the natural life, the natural body, is surrounded by a spirit-field. And the relationship of this body, with its natural state of consciousness, to the spirit, is all-decisive.

If the natural soul and the natural body delude themselves with the idea that ‘we have, we possess, we are spirit, soul and body’, then they will be subject to death. Then they will be the ‘living dead’, as the Bible puts it.

We all possess a natural soul, each of us in his own way and cultivated to the extent determined by his hereditary disposition and karmic circumstances. We call ourselves civilised people. We live in keeping with ethical norms and try to be as good as possible in every respect.

But all that will not bring any solution. It will not give us peace, joy or happiness. For evil and wickedness go hand in hand with the goodness of this nature. In reality, your natural soul makes you deadly unhappy. Its life is the life of the body.

Throughout all ages until this very day, there has always been a certain kind of magic connected with the idea that every atom possesses life, and that every agglomeration of atoms can demonstrate

a collective life. Some churches have always taken advantage of this magic to make wooden, stone or metal statues or other objects speak, move or shed tears from time to time. Just think of the statue of Mary at Lourdes. Do not think that such incidents are founded on delusion. By means of a kind of mental irradiation one can impel the life of a statue, the power of its atoms, to a certain activity. If you make a study of these things in the light of this explanation, you will find countless proofs of it.

We are telling you this to make you realise that even if, with your bodily soul, your natural soul, the consciousness of your personality, you shed tears of emotion, or speak with great absorption about the Gnosis, or rationalise intellectually about the holy philosophy or a thousand and one other profound things, it doesn't mean a thing. What matters is whether you possess something of the immortal soul, or know something of the other life; in short, whether the spirit speaks in your life. That is the only thing that matters! Hermes says:

The world is the first creation; after the world, man is the second living being, but he is the first among mortals. He shares the ensouled element with the other living beings. He is not only no longer good, but even evil, because of his mortal state. Because it moves the world is not good, but as it is immortal it is not in what is evil. Man, however, is twofold in evil, because he is both mobile and mortal.

Anything that has been created can never be good in the sense of the Only Good. So the world is not good if only because of the fact that it is movable, dialectical; because it is subject to dialectical rising, shining and fading. For anything that fades and merges into something else proves by it that it is involved in a process of development, a process of manifestation. What the world does possess is immortality, which proves that it is not subject to evil.

So, as Hermes says, the world is mobile but immortal; man, however, is both mobile and mortal. That is why the world is superior to man. So man does not rule the world, as the bodily soul mistakenly imagines, but the world rules man.

If you have absorbed all this, we would like to draw your attention again to the other soul-state, which must become a point of contact between the spirit surrounding you and the bodily consciousness or animal soul.

The animal soul, the consciousness of the nature-born human being, must become aware of its calling. Why were you born? To devote yourself to the living soul and to the spirit. You need to make yourself subservient to the spirit. You must understand the idea of the spirit and entrust yourself to it. If the animal soul, the normal consciousness, does not do that, you will die; you will undergo the death of dissolution.

If you do devote yourself to your task, you will die in order to live; you will enter into what is called 'transfiguration', the merging of the mortal with the immortal.

The true soul given by God, the rose, the nucleus of the microcosm, must be brought to life. It must be freed. The rose must be attached to the cross. If, in this way, you have become a true rosicrucian, the entry of the spirit can be celebrated and the resurrection fulfilled.

This explanation is confirmed by Hermes Trismegistus in a concise and powerful way in verses thirty-eight and thirty-nine:

The human soul is manifested as follows: the consciousness manifests in the mind, the mind in the power of desire, the power of desire manifests in the vital fluid; the vital fluid spreads through the arteries, the veins and the blood; it sets the animal creature in motion and sustains it, as it were. That is why some people think that the soul is the blood, thus misjudging the nature

of these two. For they do not know that, first, the vital Huid withdraws into the desire body, that the blood then coagulates and that, after the arteries and veins have emptied, it is this which raakes the creature die. In this way the death of the body occurs.

In short, the animal soul, the ordinary nature-born consciousness, exists only until the form disintegrates. The other soul, however, the true soul-state, moves in an entirely different way. First the Spirit-Soul is manifested, which means that the vivified rose of the heart, the soul of the microcosmic nucleus, is linked with the radiation of the spirit. The Spirit-Soul enters into connection with one's reason, which is thus filled with the spirit; in this way the intellectual brain-consciousness is dedicated to its true task, as a result of which the entire dialectical state of life begins to fulfil its purpose.

This gives rise to a circulatory process. The reason imbued with the Spirit-Soul is linked with the ordinary consciousness; and then the consciousness, in tum, is re-connected with the Spirit-Soul, the Spirit-Soul with the spirit, and the spirit with the reason.

To put it another way: when the true soul is able to celebrate its encounter with the spirit, this gives rise to an influx of the seven rays into the head-sanctuary. The head-sanctuary is imbued with the spirit and only then can the various aspects of the intellectual brain-consciousness unfold in the right way. At the same time, the whole being comes under the influence of the spirit.

So one discovers a retrograde movement: from the reason to the head and via the blood to the whole system; from the heart of the candidate radiating out to the Spirit-Soul, from the Spirit-Soul to the spirit, and from the spirit back again to the reason. This is a retrograde movement which maintains the other retrograde movement we discussed earlier. In this way the spirit becomes active and knowable throughout one's entire existence.

However, since for millions of years many have only known this by hearsay, the idea has taken root that the blood is the soul, that is — the soul which is linked with the spirit. But in thinking that one is mistaken about the nature of the soul and no longer knows, or no longer wishes to know, that the spirit must first return into the soul.

Only then will man be analogous to the holy world. Only then will man become immortal, through transfiguration. Then there will be a new heaven and a new earth, and also a new Man. Thus one can only be a new Man when one is linked with the spirit.

The Essential Mystery of Man

We are now approaching one of the crucial points of the mystery of the twelfth book of Hermes, which could be called 'the essential mystery of man'. We have explained that Hermes distinguishes two forms of life: the nature-born life and the true, spiritual life. He says that:

Everything is based on the one principle which, in turn, derives from the One and Only. This principle is subject to motion so that, in turn, it shall constitute the ground for the movement of the All. The One, however, is invariable and immobile. So there are these three:

*God, the Father, The Good,
the world,
and man.*

God encompasses the world and the world encompasses, man. The world is God's son; man is the son of the world, God's grandson, as it were.

God created the world, but the world created man. The world is God's son, but man is the son of the world. You will observe how far this viewpoint deviates from that of theology, in which every nature-born child is seen as a being received from God.

Think of the stereotyped words of birth-announcements: 'God has granted us a son or daughter.' That would be quite correct if

by 'God' one meant the world-god. But the nature-religious person certainly does not have that in mind. On the contrary, the nature-religious person believes he is serving and confessing God, the Father, and The Good, since he makes the great error of thinking he already possesses the spirit.

Galaxies and solar systems have their immediate origin in the fundamental nature. God did indeed create the world. And now, in and through the world, various life-waves come into being. Of these, mankind is one of the foremost as far as our planet is concerned. Our existence has its immediate origin in the world. We are of the earth, earthly. The earth in all its fullness is our life-field, the domain of our birth and our place of work.

Nevertheless, as Hermes says, *it is not as if God does not know man. On the contrary, He knows him perfectly and wishes to be known by him.* But not because we are of divine lineage in a direct sense, but because our existence as earth-born human beings is surrounded by a microcosmic spirit-field. Just as the earth as a cosmos is embedded in the spirit, so too is the microcosm surrounding us. Though the fourfold personality is entirely of the earth, there still exists the possibility for the earth-born entity to become a new Man through the touch of the spirit-field. There still exists the opportunity for another, new process of genesis, outside the human being, alongside him, even though connected with him. For the universal Gnosis is the central issue:

This alone is liberating, redeeming, and healing for man: the Gnosis, the knowledge of and with God. It is the path on which to climb Olympus. It is solely through Gnosis that the soul becomes truly good. Not at times good and then again evil, but good out of an inner need.

Outside us, yet intimately connected with us, lies the possibility of a quite different creation, the genesis of an entirely new Man. It is not us, earth-born entities, who become new creatures, but

a totally ‘other’ one. Alongside the earthly man is the spirit-man. The one is of the earth, earthly; the other is of heaven, heavenly. Think in this context of the first letter to the Corinthians (Chapter 15, from verse 35 onwards). Then you will know, you will experience and see before you that Paul was drawing here on hermetic philosophy.

So it is not one that changes, but two. At any rate, there can be two: an earthly human being and a heavenly man in one and the same microcosm.

Now you will see to what extent the holy language handed down to us has often been mutilated and defiled. Because people did not understand all this, or did not want to do so. Because people lived under the great, self-made delusion of thinking that an earthly human being could be made into a heavenly one. Earthly human beings, serving and making an idol of the earth, clinging fast to the earth, sparing no effort for the earthly body, being willing to endure anything merely to keep the earthly body in existence, even, for instance, to undergo a therapy that involves the use of living cells — and at the same time thinking one is of divine lineage!

Do you understand now what Jesus Christ, who came to us as the heavenly Man, as the wholly Other One, meant when he said: ‘My Kingdom is not of this world’?

It would be out of the question for even one single earth-bom being to become a heavenly Man; they are two distinct creations, two quite different creatures, sharply to be distinguished from one another.

So where do we stand with respect to the doctrine of transfiguration taught by the School of the Rosycross? Have you ever understood this doctrine properly? In essence, transfiguration means devoting oneself as an earthly, nature-bom human being,

to the creation, the genesis of the Other One; to the vivification of 'the image with the dead eyes'.

Can we do that? Yes, we can. It is even our calling, our task, our vocation. For that we have come into being. If we do nothing more than follow our natural urges as earthly beings, then, as we follow the road of dialectical experience, of rising, shining and fading, the time will come when death will take us. If, however, we take up our calling, we will see a heavenly Man growing within our microcosm, who will stand before us as the wholly Other One. And through his devotion, his self-surrender to that Other One, the earthly man will one day die, merge and rise again in Him who is the Other One. This second death then signifies the victory over death.

So we see two forms of spiritual life emerging side by side. A 'spiritual' life that is only apparently spiritual —that of the nature-born human being — singing odes, listening to sermons and trying to behave in an ethical way; and alongside that, the life which fulfils the spirit and is dedicated to the Gnosis, as a result of which we cal) the Other One into being. That is why Hermes says:

This alone is liberating, redeeming, and healing for man: the Gnosis, the knowledge of and with God. It is the path on which to climb Olympus. It is solely through Gnosis that the soul beco-mes truly good.

There are relatively very few who understand anything of this vocation of mankind, or indeed have ever heard of it. If one is young, a young soul of nature as yet lightly burdened, one can still hear this sparkling call of the beginning; one can still respond to it.

If, however, the body has grown older and more heavy, and the natural soul is overburdened with earthly matters and problems,

then the body draws the soul downwards, into the oblivion of creation. Then one can no longer have any part in the inexpressible glory of the true human vocation. This oblivion, then, this forgetting of the essential thing about our existence, is the greatest sin; it is *the* evil.

Everything we are trying to clarify here pertains to the hermetic religion, the religion of the spirit, the religion of cognition. This is pure Gnosis, pure gnostic experience, in the religious practice of which the entire nature-born being must be fitted for his true task. During this process of adaptation, the Other One in all its glory arises in the microcosm and forms a unity, as it were, with the nature-born being.

This unity is very exceptional. Hermes says of it that:

When the Spirit-Soul has divested itself of its apparel and adopted a fiery body, since it is divine by nature, it traverses the whole of space and leaves physical matter to judgement.

The composition of this apparel takes place in the earthly body, since owing to its nature, the Spirit-Soul cannot establish itself in an earthly body without being clothed. For the earthly body cannot contain such great divinity, and neither can such a magnificent and pure force bear to be brought into direct contact with the body subject to passions. That is why the Spirit-Soul clothes itself in the soul. The soul, however, makes itself subservient to the breath of life, while the breath of life governs the creature. That is why, as soon as the Spirit-Soul has divested itself of the earthly body, it dons its own fiery garment, but the earthly body cannot do so.

The Spirit-Soul is the blending of the pure, reborn soul with the radiations of the spirit; the connecting of what we call the spirit-spark or rose, the central point of the microcosm, with the radiations of the Seven-Spirit.

So we should make a clear distinction between the earthly

consciousness with its nucleus — the ensouling earthly principle in the head sanctuary — and the rose, the nucleus of the pure, original soul, situated at the central point of the microcosm. This original nucleus can be unified with the heart, if we open ourselves for that.

The earthly soul must begin to serve the rose in full self-surrender. Then the soul-rose will begin to open; then we will attach ‘the rose to the cross’. The soul-rose will then link itself with the radiations of the spirit. In this way it will become the Spirit-Soul/Nous, and will speak to — and within — the heart of the earth-born human being. Then, as Pymander, the Spirit-Soul will enter the head-sanctuary also, and in this way will begin to pervade and surround the earthly human being, guiding him forward on the path.

Furthermore, a new existence develops during this process of interchange: a new body is created. Hermes calls it a fiery body. It is more dazzling than a flash of lightning and totally independent of the earthly vehicles of the personality. It is rightly called a spiritual body, a body formed by the spirit directly from the astral primordial substance, a *soma psychikon*, a golden wedding garment. And Hermes emphasises that although this preparation takes place with the aid of an earthly body, it would be impossible for an earthly body to bear such great divinity. If ever there were too close contact between this fiery garment and the earthly body, the body would certainly be scorched.

So the time comes when there are two separate beings: the earthly man and the heavenly Man. The heavenly Man uses his soul-aspect in order to manifest himself in the consciousness of the earthly human being. The consciousness governs all the vehicles of the earthly human being. In this way the perfect connection and harmonious cooperation between the earthly man and the heavenly Man are ensured.

There are many brothers and sisters who are clothed in the heavenly garment. Think, for instance, of the previous brotherhoods in the universal gnostic chain. It is possible that through persistent effort you, too, will call such a heavenly body into being and that soon there will be two beings in your microcosm. Then, when the time is right, it will come about that all the heavenly ones will celebrate a great, glorious meeting with you.

It is to fulfil that grand, glorious divine work, to bring about that divine magic, that you have entered the School of the Golden Rosycross. It is to accomplish that miracle of miracles. That is the Gnosis.

XXX

The Mystery of the Fire (I)

We would now like to consider the radiant and majestic mystery of the fire. Hermes goes into this in some depth, as does all holy language, all mystic philosophy. For it is true to say that he who is able to fathom the significance of the mystery of the fire possesses the key to all other mysteries. In principle, for such a person, there are no mysteries any longer.

Let us take a look at the Bible, for this will enable us to gain understanding of the various aspects of the fire. Take the books of Moses, for instance. God spoke to Moses in the burning bush. God spoke to him on the mountain from the midst of the fire. Daniel walked through a fiery furnace. Ezekiel encountered the cloud of fire.

The New Testament, too, often mentions fire. John says: 'I baptize you with water, but He who comes after me will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.' Tongues of flame were seen above the heads of the disciples at Pentecost. And in the Book of Revelations we read: 'His head and hair were like snow-white wool, and his eyes like flames of fire.'

We could add many more biblical quotations about fire, such as the one about the Take of fire, but these are sufficient to make clear that the term 'fire' means nothing less than the pure, untainted spirit, as evinced by the words: 'The Lord, your God, is a consuming fire.' As soon as the spirit descends into the pupil in

the manner explained earlier, and enters into interaction with his entire existence, a fire develops as a natural necessity; a flame and a new vehicle, the vehicle of the flame. Those who bear this vehicle, those who are able to endure it, have always been called 'the sons of the fire', throughout the ages.

As Hermes states, it is impossible for the earthly body to endure such great divinity. When, through the appropriate way of life, an entity, a pupil of the gnostic mysteries, forms a link with the fire of the spirit, this gives rise to the development of a mighty flame, like a lightning flash. The connection of the spirit with the astral substance of the personality immediately generates a mighty fire. Obviously, an ordinary, nature-born body would not be able to endure such a fire.

There is an unknowable fire and, emanating from that, a knowable fire. The unknowable fire is the virginal spirit. The knowable fire is the spirit which enters into connection with the astral substance. In theory, every pupil knows the road leading to the descent of the spirit; he knows how to convert the unknowable fire into the knowable fire. The classical Rosicrucians called this 'the art of making gold'. The original gold-makers walked the path of the spirit, as a result of which they were able to bring the golden fire, the golden flame into being.

Originally, fire worship was worship of the spirit. The cult of the sun is a cult of the spirit. However, such a cult should not be seen as an end in itself; one may not stop at worshipping the spirit, as has always been the negative practice of natural religion. The aim is the realisation of the fire itself, the actual making of gold.

There is, as we know, yet another kind of fire, the element fire, with which we are all familiar. This kind of fire is a phenomenon which results from the simultaneous development of light and warmth. If the heat increases and there is sufficient oxygen present, a flame arises, in all kinds of differentiations and gradations of heat. So the flame is an elegant symbol for the spirit, even

though it is not the spirit itself.

Even so, there is a connection between earthly fire and spiritual fire. For the field of creation is surrounded by the spirit-field, which emits seven rays. These affect the creation-field, and the result is that various elementary connections arise, various tensions, which in turn awaken in the creation-field a corresponding fiery power. We know this power as electricity. Out of this power, through friction and rotation, light and fire are formed in the creation-field. Electrical energy is always latent or dynamically active in every creation-field. Enormous sources of electromagnetic power are present in our solar system. Only think of the sun. If these forces were to be unleashed in the wrong way, the solar system and our planet would burn up in a fraction of a second. And if we think of animal magnetism, we will know that all kinds of electrical phenomena and activities are present in every creature. However, they do not exceed the norms of our creation-field. All magic, too, is based on electromagnetic radiations.

Furthermore, you will realise that when a human being contravenes or violates the laws of nature, this will always give rise to disturbances in the electromagnetic interrelationships of his life-system. Illness is nothing else than a disturbance in one's electromagnetic system. Man often unleashes a disturbing, consuming fire on himself. This also explains what are known as 'the fires of hell'. God does not throw people into the fire, but by transgressing the elementary laws of life in his field of creation, man ignites the fire himself.

The legend that after death man must appear before God's judgement seat and may then be thrown into the fires of hell will also be clear now. A rock-hard man of nature, who with his instincts and passions has transgressed all natural laws and has in this way aroused tremendous tensions in his system will, when the material body is separated by death from the rest of the per-

sonality, undergo an intense burning of the remnants of his personality. A flame will then flare up in the microcosm, a fierce glow, a blazing fire. In this way, the self-judgement is quickly carried out, and for the consciousness being extinguished it is generally accompanied by extreme pain.

In normal cases the burning process unfolds much more gradually. In our book *Unmasking** we explain how the inhabitants of the reflection sphere maintain themselves through the theft of light-ether. Light-ether is strongly laden with electricity. Mesmerists, too, always work with light-ether, and thus with electrical energy.

Perhaps you will now be able to see how reflection sphere entities are able to create mystifications, for often they would very much like to appear as sons of the fire. What they produce is a pitiful imitation for, as Hermes says in verse 51, it is impossible for an earthly personality to endure the spirit-fire's great divinity, neither in the sense of being touched by it, nor in the sense of beholding it. Only those who have walked the path and received the radiations of the spirit would be able to endure such a meeting, as verse fifty-three shows:

For the earth cannot endure fire; even one little spark is enough to set it all ablaze. That is why the earth is entirely encircled by water, as a bulwark, protecting it from the fiery flames.

This verse alludes to the immense electrical energies concentrated in the solar system. The extremely complex planetary atmosphere, always symbolised by the element water, ensures that our planetary creation-field remains sufficiently insulated.

Every planet, every particle of the solar system, has its own specific electromagnetic value. But insulation is susceptible to damage and breakdown, which can lead to great catastrophes.

* Rosycross Press, Haarlem, Netherlands, 1958.

That is why an extremely stringent law of nature exists to ensure that every creation-field — each of which has its own electrical charge — can carry out its work undisturbed.

The perishing of the earth through fire refers to a disturbance of these natural laws, caused by a certain part of mankind. Just think of the methods of nuclear science. Perhaps you can imagine what enormous damage is being done to the earth as a field of creation through the arbitrary experimentation of nuclear science. You may also know how the Brotherhood of the Grail always tries to neutralise as far as possible the disasters that threaten and the suffering that would accompany them, and if they happen, to limit their effects to the minimum.

The root-fire of the spirit is the mightiest force in the whole universe, a force which transcends all imagination and surmounts every limitation. So perhaps you can imagine what an enormous perturbation arises in the human soul when the seven envoys of the spirit move the microcosm. Once these forces have been invoked, it is a matter of life or death.

You may also be able to imagine the phase the modern Spiritual School of the young Gnosis has been going through in recent years, now that it must learn to work with the forces of the spirit, not only by the School as a whole, but also in certain groups within the School.

Mankind stands once more in the phase of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The pentecostal fire has been ignited once again. That means quite something else than having a celebration and eating special food! It means learning to work with the mightiest power in the universe; it means learning to react to it. And we repeat that as soon as the spirit descends, a mighty fire arises. This fire cannot be endured by a single earthly body. That is why during recent years an increasingly powerful tension-field has developed within the magnetic field of the School. And each

person reacts in his or her own way. We hope and pray that you may bring the task of your pupilship to a good end, for it is a question of life or death.

The Mystery of the Fire (II)

We have more to tell you about the mystery of the fire, and about the Sons of the Fire, who speed through the All like flashes of fire, and whom we touched upon in the previous chapter.

The need for such information becomes clear when we read verse fifty-five of the twelfth book:

The thoughts of human beings create only what is of the earth. Since man's cognitive faculty does not possess a garment of fire, it is not capable of calling into being divine things and is confined by its vehicles to what pertains to man.

This natural law is transmitted to you here as a summary of everything we have been explaining in the previous chapters: the combined faculties of the earthly soul and the earthly state of consciousness are incapable of realising any divine work. That is why the inner essence of every human being, and the underlying aim of every effort, of every labour, is eventually brought into the light of day: through life or through death, through the manifestation of victory, or destruction.

Divine work cleaves through all the limitations of time and space, establishing eternity and liberation. But the earthly consciousness, which is incapable of accomplishing anything divine, cannot do otherwise than go on rising, shining and fading. With

that, all religious or humane striving stands or falls. ‘One knows the tree by its fruits.’

So we see what an enormous crisis mankind finds itself in. And we see how those who walk the path of the Gnosis must prove whether they are genuine pupils of a mystery school. For mankind threatens to founder in undivine striving, in undivine work. That is why a new Brotherhood of the Holy Grail is appearing on the stage of history, the third aspect of the Tri-Unity of the Light. This Brotherhood, however, will only be able to appear if it possesses and acts out of the root-fire of the spirit. For as you know, ‘flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God.’ Only those who live and work out of the Seven-Spirit bear fruits that will withstand the test of time. Everything else is subject to fruitlessness.

You, who seek true liberation, will know what boundless effort is being made to impel those who wish to be pupils of the young Gnosis to the stage of receiving the spirit. You will know how all are being invited in the most urgent way to enter the wedding hall.

You will also know what is necessary for that to happen: the sacrifice of your entire self and your most intelligent cooperation, in which not a single detail may be forgotten or overlooked. The Living Body is prepared. Who will join the true priestly multitude in order to serve this temple of the spirit, this Golden Head?

Finally, we would like to put what we have been saying in the context of Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians, which sums it all up by saying:

‘A soul-body is sown; a spiritual body arises. If a soul-body exists, then there also exists a spiritual body. “If, through total self-surrender to the true soul-state, a pupil can succeed in bringing about the link between soul and spirit, so that there is question of a truly living soul, then all the processes we have described will develop in the nature-born personality.

But the most important of these is that the descent of the spirit into the system of the prepared candidate will cause the manifestation of a mighty electrical phenomenon. The contact between the spirit and the pupil's astral field gives rise to a flame, a constantly blazing, fiery light, as a respiration-field, as a life-field. The candidate has then become a son, a child of the fire. He possesses the body of the spirit. The living soul-body is constructed through much wearisome striving and struggling on the path, but the spiritual body arises as if in a flash. The immortal Son of the Fire has come into being.

All this may seem somewhat unreal and far away. But it is the one, true calling of every mortal. And since it is your vocation, you have within you all the abilities necessary to fulfil it. Nothing can prevent you from walking this path to its consummation. He who walks the path must come to the one good end. In the Living Body of the modern Spiritual School the fire of the spirit has been brought to life. And that fire is now declaring itself to you; it is coming to you as a judgement. Will you live in this touch, will you truly live — or not?

The answer is up to you. Both the positive and the negative answers lie entirely within your capabilities.

Finally, then, may we say this to you: 'Stand immovably firm, at all times abounding in the work of the Lord. Then you will know with certainty that your labour will not be in vain.'

XXXII

Cain and Abel

If you have pondered and thought over what we have been explaining, you will have come to a marvellous discovery of a spiritual, cosmological, anthropological and philosophical nature. To bring about this discovery is the one true aim of the twelfth book of Hermes. That is why the twelfth book is perhaps the most disfigured of all the hermetic texts. From the earliest times onwards, those who worked on it did virtually everything to destroy its true nature, whether on their own initiative, and thus intentionally, or as a result of overshadowing. And what is left to us is in fact a very obscure reasoning, as a result of which the original meaning can only glimmer faintly through the covering.

Hermes sets the spirit Man and the nature-born human being, which are sharply to be distinguished, side by side. He does so to make clear to Tat that two very different creatures are involved, who cannot be compared with one another and whose orientations are in complete contrast, so that one may never confuse them.

Generally speaking, this is not at all surprising for pupils of the young Gnosis, since they are accustomed to using the term 'Spirit Man' to mean the reborn, transfigured new soul man, and for them, 'nature-born human being' means the ordinary, dialectical type that may one day be able to rise to the state of the spirit.

If, however, you were to try to understand the twelfth book on

the basis of this train of thought, you would be guilty of superficiality; you would certainly not discern the true nature of the twelfth book and, moreover, you would be making a serious mistake.

Hermes makes a distinction between the heavenly man and the earthly man. He says in verse fifty-one of the twelfth book, which deals with the heavenly man:

The earthly body cannot bear so great a divinity, nor can such a glorious, pure force endure being directly linked to a body, subjected to passions.

You should now approach the core of the problem and see the spiritual Man in two states of existence: firstly as the universal Man, in freedom, as a Son of the Fire; and secondly as the imprisoned or fallen spirit Man in the nature of death.

You should also see the nature-born human being in two aspects: the ordinary, dialectical, I-central type, entirely interwoven with nature; and beside him the dialectical human being who strives, through culture for instance, to achieve the ennoblement and spiritualisation of his life — the type found in churches and ethical movements, sometimes among statesmen and also often in the School of the Rosycross.

So there are two fundamental human types, each of which also has a sub-type. The manifestation which leads to the birth of the spiritual Man is the true, spirit-possessing type, born of God. And because of his exceptional soul-nature, the fallen spiritual man also possesses the spirit, fundamentally and in principle.

The nature-born type, however, is not born of God; it is a creature of the aeons, as the Pistis Sophia calls it, an aeonic creature that does not possess the spirit, but is at best a soul-being.

So spiritual human beings and ensouled human beings who do not have any link with the spirit exist side by side in our life-field, as one race, one community. The spiritual human being is the true

Man; the other is the pseudo-man. The primordial atom of the spiritual human being differs considerably from that of the pseudo-man.

There is no need to be surprised about this, because knowledge of it has always been part of the inner and revealed doctrine. Just think of the first pages of Genesis, of the story of Cain and Abel. Take a look at these names. Cain is the possessor. Abel is the pseudo-man. The true man and the pseudo-man thus appear together on the stage. The true man is in the state of imprisonment. As part of the original, Adamitic human race — a divine human race par excellence — he was in primeval times imprisoned in the earthly field of genesis; he remained behind there. In that field there was also a new, aeonic human race, derived from the Cosmocrators. This aeonic human race had to follow a quite different course of development from that of the spiritual human being.

In this way an extremely complex situation developed: the human being of divine descent and the human being of aeonic descent, were linked with each other, many lines in their lives being interwoven. The spiritual man was called to return to the light-realm, called to go back, as a prodigal son, to his origin. And the natural soul man was called to follow the long, long course of evolution.

Both bring a sacrifice, as the legend tells: Cain, the strong one, the possessor, and Abel, the pseudo-man. Both — and you should bear this in mind — have very different orientations towards God, and both have widely differing links with the divine. Cain is the son of the fire, Abel the son of the water. This means that Cain is of spiritual descent, while Abel is of natural descent. As creatures, both originated from the fundamental nature; that is why they are called brothers. Cain bears the sign of his fallen state on his forehead. It is the sign of the fire, the extraordinary state of the fourth candelabrum, which is situated behind the frontal

bone. It is the sign of judgement, but at the same time the sign of the spirit, the sign of the Son of Man. From the depths of his fallen state, Cain directs himself to the spirit. But in that state of being, the spirit cannot accept him; God is unable to receive him. So his sacrifice, alas, is not accepted.

Abel, who is entirely of the earth, earthly, completely bound to the earth, directs himself to his god, the aeonic god, the spirit of the world. And it cannot be otherwise than that his sacrifice is accepted. There are no impediments for that god. So the column of smoke of Abel's sacrifice coils straight upwards.

Cain flies into a rage, a very singular rage, as we shall see. And the God of Cain says: 'Why are you wrathful, and why is your countenance fallen? If you go your path, will there not be an ascent? If not, then sin lies at the door.' Cain does not understand this, and his ill-temper remains. And, as the legend goes on to say, he kills his brother Abel.

This is a death of a very extraordinary nature, as we will show. A great conflict has been created between the two human types of the life-wave. It has lasted until this very hour: the great conflict between the two races of humanity, between the sons of the fire and the sons of the water; between those who possess the spirit and those who possess a natural soul; between the sons of the Gnosis and those who, for instance, belong to the church. And the curse of the nature-aeons was pronounced. Ever since then, no child of the fire has been able to find peace on earth. There is not a single possessor of the spirit who can feel at home in dialectical nature. He can find no rest, no home, no peace and no happiness anywhere on the face of the earth. He dwells in the land of Nod; that is, the land of roaming, of never-ending flight, of continual dissociation from dialectical nature; and he suffers the curse, so that in principle and fundamentally he can find nothing of himself, nothing of his own being in the present. Continually persecuted, constantly under threat, repeatedly wounded, forever

surrounded by boundless hatred, which attacks him whenever the opportunity arises.

By nature, on account of his calling and structure, Cain is a tiller of the soil. In other words, the Cain-type must cultivate, he must build. That is your vital urge, at least if you are a Cain-person. Such a person has to stand on the square of construction. But he has no place in which to build. He has a building-plan, but not a building-site. He neither may nor can accomplish the plan in dialectical nature. He must build in and work on his true home: the home Sancti Spiritus, the home which is built where he is not.

That is why, since the beginning, he has been the one who flees; he is fleeing from himself. What an immeasurable woe! But at the same time, what a wonderful glory, as we shall see. That is one of the reasons why the sons of the water always strike down what is of the Gnosis, as if in a blind passion. For we do not belong here, we are not at home in this field of existence. We have to get out of it.

But the Lord said to Cain: ‘Whoever slays Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold.’ And the Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him. The fourth candelab-mm in the head sanctuary blazes up like a streak of lightning to blind every adversary.

‘Cain went out from the presence of the Lord and dwelt in the land of Nod, East of Eden.’ Understand these words in a different way than perhaps you did before. The earth does not give its gifts to the true sons of the Gnosis, because they belong to another realm, a different race. That is why everything they try to establish here always falls apart in their hands.

Their vocation is to gather and to help the sons of the fire, to save them and bring them home. That is the task of the children of the fire. So their orientation is diametrically opposed to that of the sons of the water. The sons of the fire turn to what is above, to the other realm; the sons of the water turn to what is here. The

one human type gazes upwards, the other downwards. And the battle and persecution arising from this contrast have lasted until this day.

But remember: 'Whoever slays Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold.' This means that the universal Seven-Spirit, the seven rays of the universal light, with all its seven times seven streams, is entirely on the side of those who truly seek the Seven-Spirit and wish to live from the wonderful sign of the Holy Grail.

In this way, the sons of the Gnosis go out from the presence of the Lord and dwell in the land of Nod, East of Eden. They are wanderers on the earth, but because of their being, their origin, they dwell at every moment, every heart-beat of their existence, in the land of the dawn, the land East of Eden.

And they await their sunrise, they await the rising dawn. They wait until the sun appears over Eden, the land of heavenly joy.

The Classic Betrayal (I)

If you have been thinking about what was said in the previous chapter, you may already have realised that if anyone who studies mankind's past wishes to reach the right conclusions, he will need to view everything in a much wider context than superficial literalism would allow.

The earth is inhabited by various human races, each with a differing past and also, in many respects, with a very divergent future. There are elements present that combine these races into one community; but there are undeniably also elements that separate them. Among all these races with very divergent dispositions we find the ancient spirit-born ones, the children of the fire. In the broadest possible sense it is a group of those whose microcosms still possess elements which make possible a direct link with and a life in the spirit.

All holy language, in its original, unsullied state, is directed solely towards this exceptional class of humanity, to the spirit-born ones of the beginning. And from a certain point of view, these universal teachings are to be considered dangerous for other human types.

Why dangerous? To understand this you will need to realise that the children of God and the children of nature have widely divergent interests. The children of God, in so far as they are in the state of imprisonment, seek to flee the world. The children

of nature seek and desire to maintain the world. So their efforts are diametrically opposed. In this context, we are using the word 'world' in its narrow sense, to mean the nature-born life-field.

If the children of God were to take the lead on earth, this would be accompanied by a complete alteration of the astral conditions of our life-field. The astral field of the nature of death would become like the gnostic astral field, a field full of serenity and the highest purity. The reflection sphere would be emptied. All those self-maintaining reflection sphere processes would become impossible. All the conditions of existence in our life-field would change. The earthly field of genesis would no longer provide life-spark entities with any possibility of existence. The millions of life-spark entities that populate the earth would simply not be able to exist any longer, and so it would be as if they had been murdered. The classic fratricide, the ancient drama of Cain and Abel, would be repeated.

Another possibility is that the life-spark entities could, through reconstruction of their microcosms, be restored to the childship of God. If an entity did not possess the classic, primordial atom of the spirit in his microcosm, it would be possible, by reconstructing the microcosmic field, by bringing the spirit into it, to introduce into the microcosm what was not previously present within it.

Creatures always come forth from the fundamental nature. The original nucleus of every creature unfolds on the basis of the creative idea underlying it. If this idea and the nucleus of the creature are not from the spirit, then a child of God will not develop. However, if this idea is of God, then a child of God will develop.

So the child of God is a creature who has to behave in accordance with the fundamental idea underlying his being. If he deviates from that idea, then he will have to undergo all kinds of difficulties and consuming processes until finally he has to return

to the original idea. If the idea originates from a different cosmocracy, then a different type of being will arise, a different orientation, a different starting point, a different aim.

However, we repeat that it is possible for entities who have an aeonic origin to be restored to, and by, the idea of the universal spirit. The first prerequisite for this is to preach, throughout the world, a universal doctrine of the spirit. The second is to establish and realise a genuine Church of the Spirit. The third is to adapt the life-field, mankind's field of genesis, to the requirements of the spirit, as a result of which the creature will submit to the spirit.

In this way, an entity that was not originally a child of God from the beginning, can become one through the re-creation of the microcosm. The Tri-Unity of the Light, Rosycross, Cathar and Grail, is preparing for such a mighty effort to re-create aeonic entities. The Universal Doctrine is resounding through the mouth of the Rosycross. The new Church of the Spirit, the aspect of the Brotherhood of the Cathars, has been founded. The great alteration of the life-field, beginning with the astral field and following the requirements of the spirit, is underway once more; and the Brotherhood of the Holy Grail has been manifested anew.

All this forms part of the mighty activities of the Sons of the Fire. It is for this reason that the liberated Sons of the Fire came and have always come to earth. It is for this that their disciples and servants came and have always come, for the unfoldment of an intense activity, with the aim of forging all Abel-entities into children of the fire. And to raise up all fallen and imprisoned Cain-entities and install them in the community of God. All true holy language, all Universal Doctrine, bears witness to this mighty and glorious attempt, which has been repeated time and time again throughout history. (We should repeat, here, that there is no such thing as an aeonic Universal Doctrine. In a moment, we will explain why.)

In many periods of man's history the necessary conditions

were created to bring about this grand and glorious work of the spirit. The true Church, the Church of the Spirit, has appeared many times on earth. Take, for instance, the Church of the Cathars mentioned just now. Think also of Apollonius of Tyana and of the gnostic churches around the Mediterranean, in Asia Minor, Greece, the Balkans, Egypt and other parts of North Africa. One can affirm with great joy that in all those periods large numbers of entities entered the liberating life. There is, indeed, a multitude that no-one can count, gathered from all peoples, all races of the earth.

And now we come back to the legend of Cain and Abel. Under conditions like those in the legend, Cain's sacrifice must always be rejected, because the astral conditions of the life-field in the nature of death are not suitable for the success of his work and must first be changed. Cain, the spiritual Man of the beginning, realises this. But in naive spontaneity he first observes the fundamental fault in Abel. And now he tries to force the alteration of Abel's astral conditions. That fratricide, so oft-repeated, is nothing less than the attempt to practise astral coercion on the Abel-type.

Suppose there were someone in the School of the Rosycross who did not understand all this at all. It would make no sense to force him. He should withdraw from the School of his own accord and return to his ordinary state of existence, living his everyday life until one day, perhaps, the right time came. But such a person cannot and may not be astrally forced. If you were to do so, you would disrupt the functioning of the nerves. The equilibrium of the cerebral functions would be upset, and you would literally make such a person mentally ill. That is why people who enter the School in a forced way, under pressure from others, eventually turn vehemently against the School. Such astral coercion, mixed with a little bit of culture, is a well-known occult method

of making someone into a mere slave of the nature-aeons. So the classic astral fratricide must always be rejected. It is never good to force a person into a link with the spirit, into a life of the spirit. These things must be born.

How? Through your personal example. Suppose it is very disharmonious in your home; that great tensions exist in your family, because of your attitude to the School. How will you overcome all this? By completely changing your way of life. By radiating love from morning till night and from night till morning. So that, full of amazement, the people around you will ask: 'What has happened to you? How has it come about? How is it possible for you to keep it up?' Then you will have broken something open in these people. And if you persevere you will overcome. The Church of the Spirit, the Tri-Unity of the Light, will never make the mistake of forcing anyone astrally. They will never begin a argument with entities who are different.

The Church of the Spirit has often perished through conflict. But then it was always a conflict that was waged against it. It was always a question of persecution, a persecution that goes on even today. The spirit does not need to force things, firstly because the Church of the Spirit is founded on the certainty that it will one day win. Secondly, it knows that it is indestructible. It is only that it cannot thrive, it can find no dwelling place here, in the dialectical field of existence. Seen from a lower point of view, this is the curse of Cain. But if anyone persecutes Cain or tries to kill him, the legend states that the Seven-Spirit will intervene to protect him. That is why the Church of the Spirit is indestructible.

But because it cannot remain constantly on earth in order to give all aeonic creatures the opportunity to come of their own accord, and because the Cain-fratricide is not permitted, the Church of the Spirit always comes and goes on earth in accordance with a certain periodic rhythm. The Church of the Spirit revives time and time again, and it is immutably certain that it

will be able to gather in its harvests in keeping with the laws of the spirit.

We would now like to consider all this from the opposite side, from the standpoint of nature-born human beings, from the point of view of those who are not, but who could become Sons of the Fire.

There are hundreds of millions of entities who have originated not from the spirit but from the aeonic cosmocrators, from the idea of the forces of nature. And since a creator is always bound to his creature and, in keeping with natural law, cannot forsake the works of his hands, the forces of nature always emanate a powerful impulse towards the preservation of their creation and their creatures, as well as the field in which they can thrive.

All this is amply described in *The Gnostic Gospel of the Pistis Sophia*. All aeons are involved in maintaining their creations. They cannot do otherwise. In doing so, the aeons serve only themselves, for if their creations were to perish they, too, would cease to exist.

That is why they maintain a hierarchically organised priesthood in this world, as you can also read in the *Pistis Sophia*. It is a priesthood with but one aim, one task: to maintain the field of genesis, the life-field of the aeonic entities, in its dialectical state. It is their aim to keep this world the way it is. And the entities who inhabit this world must cooperate, as a great band of slaves for the aeons. And for these entities, the wheel turns through the material sphere and the reflection sphere, without end.

So a temporary, 'heavenly' life is established in the reflection sphere. You will know just what to think of that! It is one of the ways in which the aeons try to protect themselves and their creatures. For the same reason the cult of the saints has been encouraged and occult methods applied, which take into con-

sideration even the tiniest details. In this way, the church of nature sets itself against the Church of the Spirit.

The natural result, alas, is betrayal, and the attempt to murder the spirit and persecute the spiritual Man wherever he may be found. The church of the aeons does not possess a Universal Doctrine, for if it were to reveal and proclaim the truth underlying its development, it would have to acknowledge the superiority of the spirit and the spiritual Man. Then it would quite simply have to make its teachings subordinate to the doctrine of the spirit, and that would mean its death, its expiry, its dissolution. But it cannot, by its very nature, accept the death of Abel brought about in an unforced way, through the new astral conditions of the Spiritual Churches which would then be called into being.

So, for the sake of the continued existence of the church of the aeons, the spirit must be betrayed and the Church of the Spirit destroyed wherever it appears. And the spiritual Man of the beginning must be persecuted and killed, wherever he may be on the face of the earth.

How is the spirit betrayed? One method is to contaminate the doctrine of the spirit with the aid of theological vassals, who explain the divine order purely in terms of aeonic aims and needs. In short, one can betray the spirit by advancing one's earthly goals under the smokescreen of a stolen and desecrated spiritual doctrine. For once the spirit has been betrayed and corrupted, it is easy to begin persecuting the Church of the Spirit and the spiritual Man. Only think of the betrayal of the Cathar Church, and the persecution of Rosicrucians throughout all ages; under the guise of having to intervene to protect the spirit, for the glory of God.

If dictatorial forces, whether left-wing or right-wing, were again to take control, the Church of the Gnosis, the Church of the Spirit, would once more become a persecuted church. The notorious council of Constantinople is also to be seen in this light. The spirit was officially rejected at this council, under the pretext that

‘we already possess the spirit’! This council was held in the year 381. Its subject was the regularisation of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Just imagine: ‘We are regularising the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. We believe this, but not that. We accept this, but not that. We will do this, but not that.’ And so the council members went to work.

We should add that the Greek Orthodox Church never recognised that council. But the Roman Catholic Church did so all the more! However, the decisions taken then were apparently not sufficient, because seventy years later, in the year 451, another church council was held, the council of Chalcedonia. There, official decisions were taken about the unity of the divine nature and human nature. ‘We,’ aeonic entities, ‘are linked with Christ,’ they said. The greatest betrayal of all times, the betrayal of Christ, whose holy name was attached like a label to all kinds of doctrinal tenets, began in the year 451. Christ and Mary were made into parade horses for the church, into purely aeonic gods.

All this is beautifully explained in *The Gnostic Gospel of the Pistis Sophia* mentioned earlier. This book describes how the aeons accepted Christ. This name is turned into a label to be scattered everywhere and attached to everything. But then the path of return is described, from the lowest level right into the liberating life; how Christ, how Jesus the Lord, passes right through all the spheres of the aeons and of the archonts of the aeons, and how the latter displayed considerable confusion and nervousness, because the Lord of all life had passed through their midst without them noticing. In other words: the betrayal, the classic betrayal of the beginning, is neutralised by all who walk the path of the spirit.

The Classic Betrayal (II)

We have been trying to give a clear picture of the Sons of the Fire on the one hand, and the children of nature on the other; of the Spiritual Church of the Universal Gnosis and the church of all who, because of their state of being, turn to the nature of death. You need to know all this not only so you can understand life's great problems but also, and more importantly, so you can recognise betrayal wherever it appears. If you do not possess the key to unmasking, you will certainly be victimised sooner or later. You should not underestimate this danger. For, throughout the ages, no effort has been spared to make the betrayal so complete that virtually all mankind, in its ignorance, accepted it, and therefore is victimised by it.

We are telling you all this, firstly, because you need to know it in order to understand hermetic philosophy; and secondly because, if you are a pupil, your trust in the Gnosis and your loyalty to the School will be tried and tested to the utmost in the not too distant future. Either in the recent past or via your immediate ancestors, you have behind you a past in the church, in the aeonic sense. And even if that is not the case, you will still have been influenced intellectually by the aeonic church. This is particularly the case with those who pride themselves on their intellectuality and place great emphasis, for instance, on science as the key to human existence.

From the standpoint of the spirit, objections can be made against all present-day forms of science. The objections will vary according to what branch of science is involved; sometimes it will be the point of departure that is wrong, while in other cases it will be the aim, or the effects.

However, if there is one science one must object to absolutely, that science is theology. Since the beginning of our era, many massive theological lies have been officially proclaimed, crystallised in an abundance of dogmas, and set down in legions of ancient manuscripts about which entire libraries of books have been written. And we call those who read and study these things learned people. Whether they are wise, though, in the sense of a genuine science, is another question.

If you look into this, you will easily understand what we are saying. If you look at how the theology of this world was patched together by the so-called church fathers, you will realise that their aim was to exclude the spirit and ensure that the Church of the Spirit had not a single chance of succeeding. You will see how the church fathers accepted and rejected fundamental dogmas by turns, how they reformed and changed them, broadened them and afterwards pruned them down again. You will see how, century after century, they persecuted and quarrelled with each other over these things. And how the blind reformers of later times ended up betraying their own reforms, because of their state of being; because, alas, they were theologians and therefore ignorant regarding the true knowledge of God.

Madame Blavatsky once produced a rather nice list of the foundations of this so-called science. After mentioning a number of incidents and disputes at various councils, she tells how, 'for many centuries, the councils quarrelled and wrangled and advocated the most contradictory and opposite opinions. And finally the doctrine of the holy trinity emerged from their theological brains. This doctrine was introduced into the world with quarrels,

murders and other crimes, which played an important role in its perpetration.’ So, let us leave it at that. If you are interested in this subject, you can find out more for yourself. Our main aim is to help you distinguish truth from lies. Also, it is important to be able to show how much the holy language has always been damaged so as to serve the ends of the aeonic church.

Remember, then, that the aeonic church does not possess its own Universal Doctrine, or its own holy language. The church of nature invariably uses the holy language of the Church of the Spirit. But if applied in its original form, it is not suitable for use in that way.

That is why all holy language must first be remodelled by the aeonic church. It is a bad sign, for instance, that the canon of our Bible was not fixed until the fourth century — again, at a council of course, the council of Nicea. Not one of the New Testament books is older than that time.

Why did people go to all that trouble when, for instance, the teachings of Hermes Trismegistus had already been there for tens of thousands of years?

Why take all that trouble, when the wisdom of the Tao Te Ching had already been radiating for many centuries before our era?

Why go to such lengths, when it is clear the virtually all the valuable parts of our Bible are unmistakably derived from hermetic texts?

And then to know that all the books of the Bible were compiled by the church fathers, who fought each other over it in the most ferocious way. That there is anything essential left after all that must be regarded as a miracle, as indeed is the marvellous Gospel according to John, so dearly loved by the Brotherhood of the Cathars.

It is fortunate that all that fabrication and remodelling utilised the language of the spirit. For the genuine seeker of the spirit will

always be able to free the truth, be it ever so defiled, and he will invariably be able to prize out of it the one treasure. Yet in doing so, you will need to take what we have said into consideration.

Neither can one simply say that 'we will reject the Bible and look only at older scriptures,' for those, too, are damaged. No effort has been spared to get hold of the authentic scriptures and either destroy or send them out into the world in a remodelled and adapted form. One cannot manufacture a false doctrine or false dogma without garbling the sources one has drawn on. And those who have done this sort of thing will certainly not have contented themselves with half-measures. Thus there is not a single outer source left, not a single material scripture on which we might draw without danger. So warning signals should always be sent out to true seekers of the spirit.

You find yourself in the midst of an intense and sinister betrayal, of terrible proportions. For if the spirit has not been freed in you, you are always dependent on sources. And these are without exception poisoned with respect to the living Truth. So the poison is in you, too, and — often without you knowing it — also the betrayal. For your understanding is only partial and with the best intentions you can blind your fellow human beings.

In the course of the ages there have been many who have turned away from all sources, all theology, all churches and who took the course of freedom, as it is called. Perhaps you, too, pride yourself on having done this since your youth. But do not think that you have taken no poison, for everyone is exposed to astral influences.

With every breath, with every heartbeat, with every movement of your personality, you assimilate the heavily polluted substance of the astral sphere of this world. In all countries, from Africa to the South American interior, everywhere you could think of looking, the thoughts of betrayal are being injected into the astral sphere by means of magic practices. And in this way the whole

of mankind is taken captive astrally. To turn away from sources is perhaps even the greatest danger, for when you think ‘nothing can happen to me,’ you assimilate the betrayal in deep draughts.

So the study of sources is always advisable, because if anything of the spirit is latent within you, you will come time and time again to the conclusion that ‘there’s something wrong here. These statements are contradictory.’ Then you have to seek further, strive further, persevering and not deviating from your goal until finally you are able to break through all the walls surrounding you and behold the truth.

How can one find the truth?

We would like to go into this question. Let us first call to mind the words of Temple Song number 164:

*Non-material is God’ s wisdom;
none can its place define.
Its essence is eternal
and everywhere does shine.*

This means that the fathomless field of creation, in which all those deceptions and lies are perpetrated by occult means, is surrounded by the realm of the spirit, the Kingdom of God, the realm which is God himself.

Currents emanate from the spirit, streams which move the All. We speak of the Seven-Spirit, and of its seven times seven aspects. The spirit and its radiation-field are nearer to us than hands and feet.

This all-encompassing, all-pervading spirit contains life — Tao, love, wisdom and thus all truth, perfect knowledge, as well as the power and ability to fulfil.

It is towards this spirit that pupilship of the modern Spiritual School aims. If you live your life in such a way as to free that spirit within you, if you enter into the essence of true pupilship, with

everything that is in you, then the spirit will touch you. Then you will free the activities of the spirit within you. And straight away you will become autonomous. Then you will rise above all those attempts to deceive and mislead you. Then you will have been liberated for all time. Then you will look down on all that blundering with indescribable compassion. Then you will join the ranks of those who ceaselessly endeavour to redeem mankind.

When the son of the fire has found the spirit, his Cain-sacrifice is accepted.

How are you to find the spirit, which is God? By meditating? By concentrating? By practising some exercise or other? By forcing your own astral status? No, there is but one road to life: the rebirth of the soul, the attainment of new soul-quality. Only through the soul can one find the spirit.

But alas, the majority are unable to grasp what is really meant by the word 'soul'. That is why it is necessary to draw attention again to the twelfth book of Hermes, verses fifty-five and fifty-six.

Since man's cognitive faculty does not possess a garment of fire, it is not capable of calling into being divine things and is confined by its vehicles to what pertains to man. The human soul — not every soul however, but the soul truly devoted to God — is in a certain sense good-demonic and divine. When such a soul, after having walked the path of true piety — a path that leads to knowledge of what is divine and to refraining from injustice or harm towards any man — has detached itself from the body, it becomes Spirit-Soul throughout.

As we have explained, aeonic man is devoid of all spirit-fire and so cannot enter into contact with the spirit. The aeonic soul does not possess the astral status necessary for that. The demonic or

nature-born state of the aeonic human being (the word 'demon' means nothing else than force of nature) is quite different from that of the spirit Man.

That is why it is so important for us to become truly devoted to God, which means striving consistently for linkage with the spirit, by means of a new way of life completely adapted to that aim. It is this path *that leads to knowledge of what is divine and to refraining from injustice or harm towards any man*. So the familiar words of Mark, chapter 12, are unmistakably hermetic:

Jesus the Lord is asked Which is the first commandment of all?' And he replies: 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and all your soul, and all your mind.' And secondly: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these.'

If you undertake this, accepting all the consequences, you will be walking the path of those truly devoted to God. Then you will liberate the true Nature within your microcosm. Then the primordial atom will bloom as a wonderful rose. Then you will enter the rose garden and celebrate the alchemical wedding of Christian Rosycross. Through this there will develop a mighty astral fire; a fiery body will be manifested. By means of this body, the *soma psychikon*, you will be linked with the spirit.

Such a soul becomes a spirit-soul, which means that the new, purified soul is linked with the spirit, and thus becomes a Pymander. Then you will have solved for yourself the mystery of the fire. Then you will have become a Son of the Fire.

Glossary

Aeons: a. Monstrous formations of unholy, natural forces, which in the course of time have been brought into existence through mankind's thinking, willing and desiring, deviated from God. Aeons can be differentiated into twelve main groups. These creations of mankind, which are completely beyond control, keep mankind imprisoned and create the irresistible forces of self-maintenance through which mankind is made to proceed on its ominous ways. In this way the human link with the rotating, dialectical wheel is perpetuated.

b. The term *aeons* also includes the hier-archic group which rules time and space, also called 'the dialectical hierarchy' or 'the prince of this world'. It consists of the highest form of metaphysical power which originates from fallen mankind, united with the nature-aeons mentioned before. This group misuses all the forces of nature because of its luciferic supremacy in the fallen, dialectical world, driving mankind to unholy activities for the benefit of its own, dark purposes. These entities have achieved liberation from the dialectical wheel at the expense of terrible human suffering. In their need for self-maintenance they can only hold on to this freedom by increasing and maintaining the suffering of the world. (See: *The Coming New Man*, Part I, Chapter X, and *Unmasking*, by J. van Rijckenborgh, Rozekruis Pers, Haarlem, The Netherlands.) For the sake of completeness it must be mentioned that fallen man's thinking, feeling, willing and

desiring call into being the so-called good aeons, which dominate man and keep him imprisoned in the nature of death. The natural forces of the divine, sevenfold earth-cosmos exist alongside these unholy natural activities, but are experienced by man as being hostile, as he continually disrupts and transgresses the harmony of the natural laws of the earth-cosmos through his fallen state. (See *The Coming New Man*.)

Andreae, Johann Valentin: Prominent Rosicrucian Brother of the seventeenth century whose works include *The Alchemical Wedding of Christian Rosycross*. In this book the complete journey of the candidate on the path of transfiguration is described.

Apocalypse of the Four Elements: The world, manifested in and through the four elements (fire, water, air and earth).

Arch-Gnosis of Hermes: This name points to the fact that present-day mankind's true gnostic activity has its origin in the primordial fount of the Egyptian Gnosis; every gnostic work of salvation is founded on the knowledge that man's liberation is only possible through the resurrection of the hermetic or Mercury-man, the true divine Man with a consciousness illuminated by God. That is why the gospel of Matthew testifies: 'Out of Egypt I have called my Son'.

Archon: Ruler of the aeons. See: Aeons.
Attaching the Rose to the Cross: Aspect of the pupil's path on which, guided by pure insight and true longing for salvation, his material-born persona-

lity, the I-man, perishes in a 'dailly dying', so that the true god-man, the pymandric man, will awaken.

Art, the Royal: See: Science.

Auric Being: See Being.

Authades: The power with the lion's head, the unholy will of the I-man. (The name 'Authades' is taken from the gnostic gospel *Pistis Sophia* by Valentinus.

Body, Living: See Celestial Ship.

Being, Auric: The lipika (the auric being or firmament) represents the totality of forces and values in which the entire human karma is anchored. Our earthly, mortal being is a projection of this firmament and is determined by it. The transmutation of the personality must be preceded by a change of the lipika, of the lights. This will only be possible through the sacrifice of the I, I-demolition or self-surrender. The result will be the resurrection of the true man, in whom spirit, soul and body again form a harmonious unity.

Brotherhood, Universal: The divine hierarchy of the Immovable Kingdom. It forms the universal body of the Lord and is described by many different names, such as: Invisible Christian Church, Universal Gnostic Chain, Christ Hier-archy, Gnosis. In its activities for fallen mankind it appears as the Tri-Unity of the Light, the Brotherhood of Shamballah, the Mystery School of Christ-Hiero-phants, taking shape in the young Gnostic Brotherhood.

Carpet: 'To stand on the carpet' is a masonic term referring to the inner attitude of the pupil who tries to realise the fivefold universal Gnosis through a pro-found, earnest dedication and perse-vergence.

Celestial Ship: A gnostic Living Body; the ark mentioned in Genesis. It is a body of liberating forces, constructed in cooperation with the universal gnostic Chain, in the service of the harvest which, at the end of a cosmic day, must be gathered into the barn of the new life. It is 'the sheep-fold of the Good Shepherd', mentioned in the New Testament.

Chain, Universal Gnostic: See Brotherhood, Universal.

Christ, Inner: See: Other One.

Christ Atom: See Rose of the Heart

Conference Centres: The modern Spiritual School has a number conference centres, where hundreds of pupils of different nationalities gather for conferences, dedicated to the doctrine of liberation and its many aspects, and the need to put this doctrine into practice.

Cosmocrators: Seven mighty beings of nature, also called 'gods', who are closely linked with the origin of creation. They maintain the fundamental cosmic laws and their activities. Together they form the Seven-Spirit of the All-Manifestation. See the First Book of Pymander, Part I.

Counternature: Dialectical existence in which fallen mankind, i.e. those who are severed from God, from the spirit, live in self-will. A life of separation from the cosmic order established by God has developed the evil which characterises all aspects of our existence and which we try to combat with the same self-will. This godless, and therefore counter-natural development can only be nullified by what is called in the Bible: 'reconciliation with God', that is, the true, conscientious ministry of this reconciliation; in other words, the re-

establishment of the link with the spirit through the path of transmutation and transfiguration which involves the return to voluntary obedience to the universal, cosmic order.

C.R.C.: Traditional abbreviation of the name Christian Rosycross; reference to the prototype of the person who has accomplished the return to the true, immortal human state via the path of transfiguration. This sevenfold path is fully described as the seven new days of creation in the book *The Alchemical Wedding of Christian Rosycross*, which contains an explanation of the veiled text of Johann Valentin Andreae.

Demi-Urge: Spiritual being which comes forth from God the Father. The Demi-Urge created the world out of original matter, but the original matter itself was created by God the Father and not by him. He is one with the Word, with the world-soul, the Son of the Father, and is also called the universal Architect.

Demons: Literally: natural forces. When, in accordance with the divine plan, a human being fulfils the will of the Father in voluntary obedience and in this way unites with these forces, they reveal themselves as mighty helpers along the path that leads to deification. But one can also experience them as hostile activities of a vengeful demon, the forces of fate. In this case they coincide with the karma which determines human fate on the sad path of experience. Also referred to as demons, and then in an unfavourable way, are the natural aeons which came into being through the blind natural I life of fallen mankind. Closely connected are the demons, the astral forces created by man's mentality.

Dialectics: Our present-day life-field in which everything reveals itself in pairs of opposites that are inseparably linked: day and night, light and dark, joy and sorrow, youth and old age, good and evil, life and death; they inevitably generate and follow each other. Through this fundamental law everything in this field of existence is subject to continuous change and disintegration, to rising, shining and fading. Through this law this field of existence is a place of finiteness, pain, sorrow, demolition, illness and death. On the other hand, from a higher point of view, dialectical law is a law of divine grace, which prevents man's final crystallisation (and thereby his inescapable down-fall) through a continuous demolition and renewal, offering him, time and time again, a new possibility of manifestation. In this way man repeatedly receives an opportunity to recognise the purpose of his existence and, through transfiguration (rebirth out of water and spirit), to walk the path of return.

Doctrine, Universal: This is not a 'doctrine' in the usual sense and neither can it be found in books. The Universal Doctrine is, in essence, the living, divine reality from which the ennobled consciousness, the hermetic or pymandric consciousness, can learn to read and understand the wisdom of the Creator.

Emergency-Order Personality: Owing to the stupendous cosmic drama known as 'The Fall', part of the human life-wave became entangled in the grip of irrational nature and began to identify with it, because by losing the link with the spirit it could not maintain itself in the original human life-field. To give this fallen part of mankind the possibility of freeing

itself from the imprisonment of delusion, it was isolated in a closed part of the Sevenfold Cosmos, subject to the law of dialectics, the law of continuous birth and death, so that, through repeated experiences of sorrow and finiteness, it would become conscious of its high origin and immortality and break the shackles of matter, the fetters of 'flesh and blood'. By restoring the link with the Father, the Spirit, it could then return to mankind's original domain of life. That is why the doctrine of the Rosycross calls this dialectical field of existence the 'emergency-order', established by God. The body in which man manifests himself is called the body of the emergency-order. The pupil, with the indispensable help of the light of the Gnosis, of the love of Christ, learns to exchange this emergency-order body for a glorified, immortal vehicle. This process of transfiguration is the evangelical 'rebirth out of water and spirit'. It is the total transformation of what is unholy and mortal into what is holy and immortal, through the pure original substance, and by the power of the regained link with the spirit.

Endura: The path of I-demolition, the path of the last, golden death through the self-surrender of the I to the 'Other One', to the immortal man, the 'Christ in me'. It is the path of the Johannine man, who 'makes straight the paths for his Lord'; it is putting into practice the words: 'He, the heavenly Other One, must increase, and I must decrease, so that the heavenly Other One will live in me.' The path of the endura is the classical path along which fallen man, existing in darkness, suffering and death will have to travel to rise to his true, immortal being, and so return to

the Father. Our journey through the world of dialectics leads us to death; the endura is a voluntary dying to realise true life. It is the path of the God-seeking man, voluntary dying as to his I-being, to be able to live eternally in the Other One: 'He who loses his life for my sake will find It'.

Field, the New Astral: See: Realm.

Game, the Great: Extensively stage-managed, refined project of the reflection sphere, aiming to imitate the return of the Lord by using occult forces and nature-scientific phenomena. See *Démasqué*, by J. van Rijckenborgh, Rosycross Press, Haarlem, the Netherlands, for further information about the phenomena accompanying the end of the current Cosmic Day, threatening to imprison mankind and dragging it along in a blinding delusion.

Gnosis: a. The divine breath, God, the Logos, the source of all being, which reveals itself as spirit, light, love, power and universal wisdom.

b. The Universal Brotherhood which supports and reveals Christ's radiation field.

c. The living knowledge which is of and with God and becomes part of all those who enter the light-birth of God (the pyrametric state of consciousness) through the rebirth of the soul.

Gnosis, the Fivefold Universal: Concise term for the five phases of development in which and through which the path to life reveals itself in the pupil: 1. liberating insight; 2. dynamic longing for salvation; 3. self-surrender, 4. a positive, new way of life; 5. resurrection in the new life-field.

Group Unity: The true unity of those

who have been admitted into the Living Body of the young Gnostic Brotherhood. This unity is insisted upon because of the nature of the Spiritual School. It does not mean a well-intentioned manifestation of 'togetherness', but the inner unity of new soul-life, growing in the Gnosis, proving itself in a positive, new way of life, in the sense of the Sermon on the Mount.

Head and Heart Sanctuaries: Man's head and heart are intended to become the consecrated working-places of the divine activities in and with those who have restored the link with the spirit. In accordance with this lofty purpose head and heart will again become united, a true sanctuary in the service to God, after a fundamental and structural purification on the path of the endura, the path of I demolition. The need to become conscious of this purpose will compel and admonish the serious pupil to purify his mentality, will, desire and actions of everything detrimental to this high vocation.

Heart Sanctuary: See Head and Heart Sanctuaries.

House Sancti Spiritus: The resurrection-field, the new life-field.

Lectorium Rosicrucianum. **Life-Spark**

Entities: Nature-born entities lacking the rose of the heart, the spirit-spark atom. These persons are totally orientated towards existence in the material sphere of the earth. They feel completely at home there and lack any inner life. They are, in fact, not people, but solely natural phenomena, absolutely insusceptible to spiritual contact. A way of life, persistently deviating from God, inevitably generates life-spark entities, which come and go without leaving

behind any positive effects. Present-day mankind consists of many hundreds of millions of this kind of 'simulated' human being.

Lipika: See: Being, Auric.

Man of Nature: Human being born of matter and subject to the law of the dialectical nature order.

Microcosm: The human being as a *minutus mundus*, a small world, a spherical life-system in which, from the centre outwards, one can distinguish: the personality, the field of manifestation, the auric being and the sevenfold, magnetic field of the spirit. True man is a microcosm; what is understood by 'man' in this field of existence is only the damaged personality of a degenerated microcosm. Our present-day consciousness is only a consciousness of the personality, of the body, which is therefore only conscious of the field of existence to which it belongs.

Nature of Death: Life, true life, means life eternal. But in present-day humanity the law of continuous change and disintegration reigns. Everything that comes into being begins to perish again from the very first moment of its generation. From this it appears that what is commonly called 'life', is in fact only a sham existence, an existence of delusion. That is why it is foolish to cling to it as is done by nearly the whole of mankind. The sorrow of demolition continually experienced and quite pointlessly resisted will make mankind realise that it is not the nature of death that is intended to be his life-field, but the nature of life, the original Adamitic life-field referred to in the Bible as 'the Kingdom of Heaven'. The compelling, indestructible human urge for con-

stant happiness, constant peace and imperishable love, and longing for eternal life originate from the original life-nucleus resting within him; it is the original principle of the true, immortal man. From this original atom, or Christ-atom, from this 'kingdom within you', the immortal, true man will arise and return to the nature of life, the house of the Father, through a life-reversal.

Original Atom: See: Rose of the Heart.

Other One: The true, immortal man who is truly of God and 'perfect as the Father is perfect'. The purpose of existence in dialectica is to revivify the only-begotten Son, the Christ-being within us. That is, therefore, also the purpose of all true, gnostic Rosicrucianism. See also: Rose of the Heart.

Pistis Sophia: Title of a gnostic gospel of the second century (thought to have been written by Valentinus). It has remained intact and proclaims with impressive purity and detail the liberating path, walked with Christ — the path of transmutation and transfiguration; b. the name is also used to refer to a true pupil, who perseveres until he reaches attainment.

Pymander: The vivifying spirit, revealing itself to and within the reborn soul-man in a twofold way: as the formation of the sevenfold nucleus radiation of the microcosm by entering the head sanctuary; and later, when the work of sanctification is finished through the self surrender of the mortal soul, it will reveal itself through the resurrection of the heavenly man, the inner Christ-being, from the grave of nature, through the original atom, the centre of the microcosmic earth. This development is therefore completely Christ-centric: after his cru-

cifixion (the descent of the divine light in the mortal personality) the Christ descends into the central point of the earth to arise from his grave after having accomplished his work of salvation.

Realm, New Gnostic: The gnostic, astral field, made up of pure, original astral substance and built by the young gnostic Brotherhood, in cooperation with the gnostic, Universal Chain of which it is the youngest link. Because of its activities in both the resurrection field of the sixth cosmic domain and the field of our existence in the seventh cosmic domain it allows those who are searching for liberation to enter the field of resurrection via the Living Body of the young Gnosis, for as long as the time of harvest lasts. Thus the Living Body constitutes the very temporary bridge between the two cosmic domains. The new gnostic realm provides the forces necessary for the pupil to cross this bridge-unto-life.

Religion, Fundamental: See: Science.

Reflection-Sphere: The dialectical nature-order consists of two parts: the material sphere in which man lives his material existence, and the reflection sphere in which, among other things, the necessary processes between the death of the old personality and the quickening of a new personality take place. Apart from the spheres of hell and purgatory (the sphere of purification), the reflection sphere consists of what in natural religion and occultism is wrongly called 'heaven' and 'eternal life'. These spheres of 'heaven' are just as much subject to finiteness as existence in the material sphere. The reflection sphere is, among other things, the temporary residence of the dead, which does not mean that those who die

acquire a new life here, for there is no continued existence for the fourfold personality. Only the most essential nucleus of the consciousness, the dialectical spark, is temporarily taken back into the auric being and will then form the basis of the consciousness of the new personality. This personality is constructed by the auric being, in cooperation with the forces active in the expectant mother.

Respiration-Field: The respiration-field or field of manifestation is the immediate force-field within which life is made possible for the personality. It is the connecting field between the auric being and the personality. In attracting and repelling substances and forces, it is entirely one with the personality and acts for the benefit of its life and maintenance.

Rose of the Heart: Mystical term for the spirit-spark atom, also called original atom or Christ atom. It coincides with the top of the right heart ventricle in the mathematic centre of the microcosm. It is a rudimentary remnant of the original, divine life. The rose of the heart (also called the golden grain of Jesus, or the wondrous jewel in the lotus) is the germe of a completely new microcosm, the divine seed that has been kept as a promise of salvation in fallen man, so that one day the moment will come when he will remember his origin and will be filled with longing for the House of the Father. Then the light of the spiritual sun, the light of the Gnosis, can awaken the slumbering rose-bud. After the pupil's positive and persevering reaction the process of re-generation will commence in accordance with the divine plan of salvation.

Science, Universal: Universal science, fundamental religion and the royal arts

are the working-fields of the Brotherhood of the Rosycross, the Brotherhood of the Cathars and the Brotherhood of the Holy Grail. Together they form the Tri-Unity of the Light, which has taken shape in the young gnostic Brotherhood, and comes to the fore in the **Serpent-Fire:** The soul or consciousness-fire situated in the spinal column.

Serpent-Fire System: Cerebrospinal system, the seat of the soul-or consciousness-fire.

Seven-Spirit, Holy: Third aspect of the threefold-manifested Godhead. It is the all embracing love of the Father which is explained by the Son, who goes out to fallen mankind as a sevenfold radiation-field, to save what is lost. Under the guidance and with the help of the seven-fold universal power, manifesting itself in the Universal Brotherhood, the process of transfiguration can be accomplished. During this process the sevenfold Holy Spirit comes to dwell again in the candidate.

Song of Repentance, Redeeming: Term derived from the gnostic gospel *Pistis Sophia* by Valentinus. He who begins to fulfil the demands of the liberating path, sings the songs of repentance of the *Pistis Sophia*.

Spirit-Soul: a. The purpose of the path of the endura — the path of pupilship of a gnostic, Spiritual School — is to awaken the immortal soul from its latent state. As soon as this soul awakens from its sleep of death, the link with the universal Spirit, with God, is restored. This restored link between spirit and soul, between God and man, is demonstrated in the glorious resurrection of the Other One, in the return of the prodigal son, the true

man, to the House of the Father. The soul which is granted this link, this unification with what is called by the Egyptian Arch-Gnosis: 'Pymander', is the Spirit-Soul. It is the unity of Osiris-Isis (spirit-soul), of Christ-Jesus, of Father-and-Son, the alchemical wedding of Christian Rosycross, the wedding of the heavenly groom with his heavenly bride.

b. The heart sanctuary of dialectical man, emptied and purified of every nature-born influence and activity, vibrating harmoniously with the rose, with the spirit-spark atom, is also referred to as Spirit-Soul. It indicates the pure, reborn soul, merging with the radiations of the spirit; the unity of the rose, the centre of the microcosm, and the radiations of the Seven-Spirit. Pymander, the spirit, is revealed by and speaks through the Spirit-Soul.

Spirit-Spark Atom: See Rose of the Heart.

Spiritual School: See Brotherhood, Universal.

Wheel of Birth and Death: Also called: wheel of dialectics. It is an ever repeating process of the personality's birth, life and death, followed by a rebirth of a new personality in the microcosm, in keeping with dialectical laws.

Wonder-Flower, the Golden: The birth of the divine light in the head-sanctuary, in the open space behind the frontal bone. As a seven-petalled rose filled with the prang of life, the light of the Gnosis, the seven cerebral cavities enable the candidate to see the new life-field with a new consciousness.

Upper Room: a. The head-sanctuary; b. the Golden Head of the gnostic Living Body.

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