

Hermes his } Divine Pymander,
 } and Asclepius.

Hermes Trismegistus

HIS
Second Book,
CALLED
Asclepius.

Containing fifteen Chapters,
With

A Commentary.

LONDON,
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MDCLVII.

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THE
Second Book
OF
Hermes Trismegistus.

CHAP. I.

THou, *Asclepius*, serves
in stead of a Sun un-
to me; for God hath
brought thee to us,
that thou mightest be present
with us in thy divine Discourse,
being such which may seem
worthy to carry a greater lustre
of Piety and Religion, than all
the works before done of us, or
any gifts inspired by divine In-
spiration; which if understand-
ingly thou shalt regard, thou
shalt be richly filled with all
A 2 good

2 The second Book of
good things thorowout thy
whole Soul: If notwithstanding
there be many good things,
and not one generall, in which
all things are, for the one is per-
ceived to consent and agree
with the other; all these things
belong to that One, and that
One is All; for the one so co-
heres to the other, that they can-
not be separated. But in the fu-
ture Discourse, by a diligent
hearkening, thou shalt fully
know it. But thou, O **Ascle-
pius**, proceed a little, and call
forth him which should be pre-
sent; who entering, **Asclepius**
also suggesteth **Amnon** to be
present. **Trismegistus** saith, No
Envie hindereth **Amnon** from
us; for to his name we remem-
ber many things to be written
of us, as also to his loving and
dear Son, many things of natu-
rall Philosophy, and of many
Out-

Hermes Trismegistus. 3

Outlandish and strange things:
but this Tractate I will ascribe
to your name, neither call any
other save **Amnon**, lest a molt
devout Discourse of so weighty
a matter should be violated by
the intervention and presence of
many comers; for it is an argu-
ment of no honest and religious
heart, to publish a Tractate re-
plenisht with the fulnesse of the
divine Majesty, to the view of
every mans conscience. Holy
Amnon being now entered into
a private closet, fitted with the
Religion of four men, and the
Divine Presence of God, in
much reverence and secrecie he
begins thus to declare himself
in the name of all the **Hermes-
tes** to the consciences and souls
of them who are prepared to
hear.

Trism. O **Asclepius** the soul
of every man is immortall, but

A 3 not

4 The Second Book of
not all alike; for there is a difference both in the time and manner.

Asclep. No indeed, O **Trismegistus**, for every Soul is of one quality.

Trism. O **Asclepius**, how quickly hast thou learned, by the very light of reason; for said I not this, That all things are one, and one all things? that all things were in the Creatour, before he created all things; neither unworthily is he said to be All, whose parts are all things: therefore in this whole Discourse have a care to remember him, who being One, is All, even the very Creatour of all things; all things descend from Heaven into the Earth, into the Water, and into the Air. The Fire onely, in that it is carried upward, is lively subservient to that which descends; for
what-

Hermes Trismegistus. 5

whatsoever descends from above is generating, and whatsoever ascends upward is nourishing; the earth alone abiding in it self, is the receiver of all things, and the restorer of all things she receiveth. In this therefore wholly (as you said) even all things, both the Soul and the World, are naturally moved and concluded. So the various equality of every shape being differenced, that the **Species** of the qualities, by distance, may be known to be infinite, yet so united to this, that the whole may seem one, and from that one, all to have their being; wherefore the whole World are the four Elements of which it is compounded, Fire, Water, Earth, Air; one World, one Soul, one God. Now be thou present with me, as much as thou art able, both in minde, and wisdom: for the reason of

A 4 the

6 The second Book of
the Divinity which is to be
known by the divine intention
of the understanding, is most
like unto a Torrent running
with a violent and swift stream
from a high Rock, whereby it
glides away from the under-
standing of such, who are either
Hearers or Dealers in it.

The
COMMENTARY.

*This first Chapter teacheth,
that all things belong to one, and
that all things are one, of one, as
from which all things are, One;
as all the effects which in their
cause are one, as that every mans
Soul is immortall: but yet after
a different sort. All things de-
scend from Heaven; that which
descendeth affords generation, that
which ascendeth and goeth up-
ward, giveth onely life. This
thing*

*Hermes Trismegistus. 7
thing to be one, of which all things
are: and this which is all things
to move the world, and all the
forms of which the world is com-
pounded, to wit, the Fire, the Air,
the Water, and the Earth. And
as all bodies make one body of one
world, so it will have all the forms
of things to make one uniform
form of one world, which it cal-
leth the Form of the world; and
these are one Body, one Soul, one
World, one God; from whom Di-
vine Understanding and the Word
passeth from above, with a swift
lightening downwards, like unto
a swift Torrent, which flows in-
to, and fills all things, and this
Divine VVisdom and the VVord,
what is it (I pray) but the Divi-
nity, or Divine VVisdom it self,
which is the Creatour of all
things, which as the wise man
sings, is the onely Mover of all
things, and which being one can*

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*do all things, and which abiding
in it self changeth all things.
This is the first part.*

CHAP. II.

HEaven therefore is the
sensible preserver of all
those bodies whose encrease and
decrease the Sun and Moon, have
as it were power of. But God
who is the Creator of all things
is the Governour of Heaven, and
of its Soul, and of all things in
the world. For from all the
foresaid things, of all which
there is a Governour, there
is a frequent influence carried
through the world by nature it
self, and by the soul of every
Genus and Species in it: for the
world is prepared of God to be

a

Hermes Trismegistus. 9

a receptacle of every sort
of Species or form; and fashi-
oning out nature by the forms,
hath brought the world by the
four Elements even to Heaven.
All the works of God which are
pleasing to the eye, and which
hang over us are divided into
Species, and in that manner I
am now about to relate. The
Genera, or kinds, of all things
follow their **Species** for that the
Genus is the totality, or sub-
stance of it, & the **Species** a part
of the **Genus**: wherefore there
is a **Genus** of good Spirits, and
a **Genus** of bad, as also of men;
and likewise of Birds, and of all
things which the world hath, it
begets **Species** like to it self:
there is another **Genus** of brute
Beasts wanting indeed under-
standing and reason, but yet not
a soul or life, whereby it takes
delight in Benefits, & pines and

MORINES

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mournes away at injuries. I say of all things which live on the Earth by the preservation of Roots, and Plants, whose **Species** are dispersed throughout the whole Earth, the very Heaven it self is full of the Majesty of God, whose **Genus** inhabiteth that place where all **Species** are immortal; for the **Species** is a part of the **Genus**, as the Soul a part of man being a point of necessity to follow the quality of its **Genus** from whence it proceeds, that albeit every **Genus** or kind be immortal, yet every **Species** is not immortal; but the **Genus** of the godhead and the **Species** are immortal, yet the kinds of other things whose eternity remains in the **Genus**, albeit it dyes in the **Species**, is yet preserved by the fruitfulness of growing: therefore the **Species**

Hermes Trismegistus. 11

Species are mortall as man is mortall, his soul immortal; yet with every **Genus** the **Species** of every **Genus** is mixed, some which before were made, some made of these; but all these which were made are either of God, of Angels, or of men; being all formes most like unto their kindes: for it is impossible for Bodies to be formed without the will of God; **Species** to be fashioned without the help of Spirits, or brute Beasts to be ordered or disciplined without men. Whatsoever therefore ill Spirits swarving from their kind are joynd into the form of any **Species** of a divine **Genus**, are by that Proximity and nearness accounted like unto Gods, but the **Species** of which Spirits persevering in the quality of their kind, and these loving the wisdom of man are called Spirits;

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rits : there is also the like **Spe-**
ctes of men, but more large; for
the **Species** of mankind is of
many Shapes, and full of vari-
ety, and coming from above from
the aforesaid fellowship makes
a conjunction of necessity almost
with all other **Species**, in which
respect it comes nearest to God;
who with Divine worship hath
joyned himself unto God, even
in that holinesse he requires;
and they come nearest to ill
Spirits, who joyne themselves
to them: and those men who are
contented with a mediocrity in
their **Genus**, shall be like those
Species they resemble and
joyne themselves to.

The
COMMENTARY.

The Second Chapter for the bet-
ter understanding of what is and
shall

Hermes Trismegistus. 13
shall be said, intimateth that Mer-
curius doth use the word Animal
in a far other signification then we
have accustomed, as also the
word Anima. For out of the Se-
cond Dialogue of Pimander he
defineth the Soul by motion; where-
fore whatsoever hath a moving
faculty by the observance of his
speech, hath Animam a Soul;
whatsoever hath Soul and Body is
Animal. The Heaven therefore
is an Animal, so likewise the
world, Plants, and the Elements.
But it is our custome only to call
that an Animal, which is a living
Creature, and hath sense; Anima
we define not only by motion but by
Life, Sense, Voluntary motion, and
Understanding. Therefore when we
hear of the word Animal let us
take it in his sense, and not in our
own. But now to the Dialogue;
he compareth Heaven and Hea-
venly bodies to other sensible things

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as a man to other Creatures ; but yet man with other Creatures as a reasonable Soul, and Heaven with other sensible things as a sensible preserver. But that God is the Ruler & Governor of all things which are in the world, is nothing else, but that God provideth for all things, dispenseth all things in their kinds and Species, of all which the World is the receptacle, and God imparteth to every one as to a fit instrument some gift or propriety; as the Sun and Moon are the Divine Organs for the Springing and growing of things, and for their encrease, and decrease, and disposeth of men by Angels, and of brutes by men. But what he speaks of spirits, that Species cannot be formed without their help, and that certain have cleaved to a divine Genus, and in nearness and conversation have been accounted like unto Gods, and certain

Hermes Trismegistus. 15

certain in the quality of their Genus to have persevered Lovers of the wisdom of men. We know, out of the sacred Scriptures, that those Angels which kept not their first State, but left their habitation, were reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness unto the judgment of the great day: for albeit they counterfeited themselves to be Lovers of men, yet they love them not, but draw them to the same damnation which they themselves have had from the Beginning. They counterfeited even to love, when they brought death upon all men, saying, Ye shall not die, but shall be as Gods knowing good and evil: what therefore he here speaketh of Angels or Spirits, can not seeme fitly to be applyed to any divine knowledge, but to imitate the error of the Gentiles; but what he speaks of men are those which cleave unto God and grow religious,

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religious; but those which joyn themselves unto evil Spirits we confesse to be those which shall be received into the Company of Devils, and shall be joyned unto the evil Angels which shall be reserved, (as hath been said) in eternal chains under darknesse unto the great day; for we know it pronounced out of Gods mouth what he will say to them on the left hand in the day of Judgment, Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devill, and his angels; and who are those, but those who are joyned unto them, and love the works of darknesse in this life? Thus much for the Second Chapter.

CHAP.

Hermes Trismegistus. 17

CHAP. III.

IN this regard, O Asclepius, Man is a great miracle, a Creature both to be revered and honored being after the nature & Image of God, as though he were a God. This the Angels know, for as much as they were created after the same nature, but disdained part of the humane Nature, & relied only on the Divine Nature. O therefore, the more temperate the Nature of man is, and comes nearest to God and to the divinity, the more he despiseth that part of his, whereby he becomes earthly; all other things below, with whom he must

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must needs be, he knoweth with a Heavenly disposition, and are near unto him in way of Charity, yet his desires are in heaven: so therefore he is happily placed in the midst, that what things are here below him he loveth, and is himself beloved of those things above. He inhabiteth the earth, and by his agility is mixed with the Elements, yet by the sharpnesse of his understanding he divideth into the depths of the ~~Sea~~; all things appear manifest to him neither do the Heavens seem to be above his reach, but as it were near by the quicknesse of his Spirit; no obscurity or darknesse of Air, can disturbe his fantasia, no thicknesse of ground can hinder his endeavour, nor depth of water hinder his eyesight; all things are the same with him, even all creatures whether

Hermes Trismegistus. 19

whether they take root from above or below. Things without life, grow upwards from one root into woods and bushes; some are nourished with two Elements, some with one; the food is for two parts, the Life and the Body, of which the ~~Ant-~~mal consisteth. The soul of the World is alwaies nourished by a continuall and restles agitation. Corporeall things encrease and are nourished by such things which the water and earth affordeth. The Spirit, of which all things are full, is mixt with all things, quickens and inlivens all things, adding sense unto the understanding of man, which fifth part by Divine Inspiration is only granted to man; and which not to be seen in any other Creatures doth beautifie advance and lift up the understanding of man to the knowledge

20. The second Book of
knowledge of divine mysteries;
but for that I am put in minde
to speak of the understanding,
I will hereafter expound the
reason of it unto you; for it is
most holy, excellent, and no lesse
than that which belongs to the
Divinity it self: but now I will
dispatch what I began; for I said
in the beginning, that in the
nearnesse and conjunction of
the Deity onely, men enjoy the
favour of God: for whosoever
have attained to so much felicity,
that they perceive that Divine
Sense or Understanding, they are
nearest unto the Divinity and
Wisdom of God, which men onely
partake of.

Asclep. O *Trismegistus*,
there is not a like understanding
of all men.

Trism. O *Ascleptus*, All
men have not attained that true
Understanding, but apprehending

Hermes Trismegistus. 21

ing some false fantasie, and that
without any true reason, out of
a rash opinion, are meeerly de-
ceived, which begets wicked-
nesse in the minde, and trans-
forms the best man into the na-
ture and likenesse of a beast. But
of the Understanding and the
like, when I come to speak of
the Spirit, I will give you the
full reason; for man is only of
two parts: the one part simple,
which the Græcians call *ειωδης*,
or which we call the Image of
God; but the other fourfold,
which the Græcians call *κοσμικον*,
and we the earthly substance, or
pourtraiture, being the body, in
which is inclosed that which we
have affirmed to be the divine
part of man, which is his Soul.
In which the pure Divinity of
the Soul, with the sense and feel-
ing of a clear conscience, resteth
at peace within it self, as within
a Castle of Defence. *The*

The
COMMENTARY.

This third Chapter extolleth the dignity of man, in which the Authour of so great benefits is chiefly to be acknowledged, and for ever to be praised and lauded, who hath honoured man with such excellent gifts; for, as he meaneth, man is made, that he might be like unto Angels, acknowledging them both to be, and that they are born with him, whom he hath to be his Guardians and Preservers, even from the first beginning of his nativity, consisting of a nature near unto Immortality, marked with the character or image of God, compounded of a mortall and immortal, earthly and supernaturall part: but who soareth after diuine things, despiseth and undervalues

values these earthly, hath his assistance in immortall and heavenly things, looks up and sighs after Heaven, knowing that to be the place of the better part of him, & of neereſt affinity to his Soul: nevertheless, he is placed here in the middeſt of the world, tying other things here below unto him, with whom (by Divine Ordinance) he knows he muſt needs be in the bond of love and charity, loving ſe theſe earthly things, that he may be loved of heavenly. He inhabiteth the earth by his agility, is mixed with the elements, & by the ſharpeſſe of his underſtanding deſcends into the deſcend. All things are manifeſt to him. Heavens ſeem not to be above his reach: for that by the quickneſſe of his Spirit he perceives them to be (as it were) neer unto him. The darkneſſe of the air can neither con-found the intention of his minde,

nor yet the thicknesse of the earth hinder his endeavour, or the depth of the waters obscure his eye-sight, and above all creatures, God hath beautified, advanced, and lifted up the understanding of man, to partake of Divine Knowledge; the understanding being onely the celestiall and immortall part, and challengeth a Divine Essence, and some men have attained to this Divine Knowledge, and therein are happy, bearing alwayes a zealous and religious minde towards God. Others content themselves onely with a shadow of Divine Knowledge, which whoso followeth, erreth and is deceived; for this mist of a shadow of godlinesse, begetteth wickednesse in their mindes which are so deceived, and transforms a man (though by nature a creature good and divine) into the likenesse and condition of a beast.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Asclep. Why then, O Trismegistus, must man have his abode in the world, and not most happily live in that part where God is?

Trism. Thou rightly enquirest, **Asclepius**: For we also beseech God, that he will enable us to give the reason; for seeing all things depend on his will, then even those also which are most mysterious, the reason of which we endeavour to unfold, by our present discourse: Hear therefore, O **Asclepius**: The Lord who is the Creatour of all things, whom we truly call God, made the world first, which might be perceived and seen: but yet I affirm it to have

B 2 na

26 The second Book of
no sense. For of this, whether
it hath or no, I will declare an-
other time; but so that it may
be seen of all. Because there-
fore he made this first, and that
the work seemed fair and good
unto him, as most full of the va-
riety of good things, he loved it
as a part of his Divinity and
Power; and therefore, because
it was of such excellencie and
goodnesse, he would have Man
made, that he might behold the
works he had thus made, and
likewise imitate his Wisdom
and Providence; for the will of
God is the chiefest perfection,
in that he fulfilled both his will
and his deed, in one and the
same moment of time. When
therefore God perceived that that
image of his (the Soul) could
not be studious of all things, un-
lesse he should cloath it with an
earthly covering, he builded for
it

Hermes Trismegistus. 27
it this house of clay, confound-
ing and mixing both parts in-
to one, as much as each body
should be capable: Wherefore
he made Man of an immortall
Soul, and mortall Body, that be-
ing a Creature thus composed,
he might satisfie both ends,
which was, to be in admiration
of Heaven and to pray for spi-
rituall and heavenly things, and
to inhabit, and govern these
earthly things below: and I do
not onely avouch the Earth and
the Water to be mortall things,
which two (out of the four Ele-
ments) Nature hath subjected
to the use of man; but all other
things whatsoever belonging to
man, as tillage, pastorage, build-
ings, ports, shipping, navigation,
traffique, & merchandise, which
is the strongest bond of humane
Society: And there is a part of
the world which is Water and
B 3 Earth,

28 The second Book of Earth that which is the Earthly part of the world is preserved for the knowledge and use of Arts, and discipline without which God would not have the world to be perfect, for necessity followeth the pleasure of God; and the effects follow his will, for it is not credible that God should be displeased with his own will for he knew long before what would be, and what would please him.

The COMMENTARY.

This fourth Chapter, why God did not place man in the spiritnall region but in this world; and the answer is plaine, and also why he formed man of both natures a mortall and immortall; and why the soul which he created after his own Image and likenesse, he put in

Hermes Trismegistus. 29

a corporeall and earthy closure; and that the will of God is the chief perfection of things, which necessity follows, and effect the necessity; for God fulfilled both his will, and his deed in one and the same moment of time. That he calleth the world, the second Deity, is as much as if you should call a second duetie and unity; for two is one and one two, but one is absolutely one, but two not absolutely one but by participation and contraction one, and the duety one. So there is one absolutely God, but the world is not God, but God by participation, being the very stamp of all sensible and detactable things. Thus, for the fourth part of Alclopius.

B 4

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

BUt, O *Asclepius*, I observe that thou dost earnestly desire to heare, how a man may come to enjoy that musically harmony and divine Worship, which belongs to heaven. Wherefore hear, O *Asclepius*, there is one frequent assemblie amongst men for this service of God; and this no other Creature can perform but man alone. For God is only pleased and delighted that man should extoll his admired work, sing praises of thanksgiving unto him, and perform such worship and service as belongs to his holy name. Neither do those heavenly graces unworthily descend into the congregations

tions of men, lest that this earthly World should seeme unbeautified in respect of the want of this heavenly and sweet Musick; but rather that his name who is the Father of all things, might be celebrated with the well tuned voices, and comely praises of men. So that neither in heaven nor earth this sweet Harmony of thanksgiving might cease; for there are some men (though few in number) that are indued with so divine and holy a spirit, that their care is only to please, reverence, and serve the Lord: but whose ever through the confusion of both natures, the flesh prevailing, have darkned their spirituall understanding, they are so much given over to their own lusts, and are only intent upon these outward and lower things. Therefore a man is not to be

32 The second Book of
esteemed the weaker in respect
that he is in part mortall, but
peradventure thereby he may
seem the more fitly and effectu-
alley composed to encrease in
full knowledge and understand-
ing, to wit, because unlesse he
had been made of both natures
he could not have sustained
both, therefore was he framed
of both that he might have both
an earthly and divine choice.
I desire thee O *Asclepius*, not
only to harken unto the reason
of this tractate; but also to en-
tertain it with much Zeal & fer-
vency of Spirit. For the reason
to many is incredible, but to
devouter mindes it seemes true
and good; wherefore from
hence I will begin.

The

Hermes Trismegistus. 33

The
COMMENTARY.

*This fifth Chapter sets forth
that sweet Musick granted to men,
to set forth the praises of God, which
we know the prophet did well con-
ceive, who being full of the spirit of
God, commanded to sing psalmes
unto the Lord with a loud voice,
and in the assemblies to praise the
Lord, upon the Cymbals, upon
the Lute, Harp, and Organs, for
this is the chief end both of singing
and Musicks. The Letter is in
it self conspicuous.*

CHAP. VI.

THe Lord of eternity is first
God, secondly the World,
and thirdly Man. The maker
of

34 The second Book of
of the World is God, and all
things therein governing all
things with man whom he hath
appointed **Wicegerent** or go-
vernour, whom he hath made pro-
perly to take the Charge of his
whole work, that both he and
the world might be an Orna-
ment of praise unto himself,
that by this divine composition
of man, the world in Greek
might be the more truly called
κόσμος, that is, an Order or Or-
nament. For he knew himself,
and knew the world to wit that
remembring what resem-
blance it had with his parts,
what was for his use, and what
for his service, He might la-
bour to give praise and great
thanks unto God and to hon-
our his Image; being not Igno-
rant, that he was made also
after the Image of God, of
which there are two Images, to
wit

Hermes Trismegistus. 35
wit the world and man; whereby
it cometh to passe, that for as
much as there is but one joyning
together on that part, he con-
sists of soul and sense, and Spi-
rit and understanding he is di-
vine, and thereby may seeme
to ascend up into heaven; but
on his earthly part which con-
sists of fire, water, and air, he
remains a mortall Creature
upon earth, is altogether fixed
on the things below and swal-
lowed up of Nature; for so man
is partly divine and partly mor-
tall abiding in one body, but he
hath a measure of each.

Religion before all men
(which a virtuous life follows)
seemes only then to be profit,
when there is a contempt of all
lustfull desires and unlawfull
concupiscence, assisted with all
manner of virtues. For all such
things are contrary to the Soul
and

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and Spirituall understanding,
which are possessed with a corpor-
al, and earthly desire which are
well called by the name of goods
or possessions, in that they are
not born with us but afterwards
are possessed of us, wherefore
all things of this kind are differ-
ing from man that we may even
despise the body, and those
things which we greedily cover,
or any vice or wickednesse
which we lustfully desire, for
so far as he is led by reason; so
far he is a man; that contem-
plating of the divinity, he may
contemn and despise that part of
his, which is mortall, but only
so far as necessity compells for
preservation of the soul. For,
that man may be most perfect in
either part, observe him in each
to be formed of four Ele-
ments, or principall parts with
two hands and two feet, and
other members of his body, with
which.

Hermes Trismegistus. 37
which he may do service to this
lower or earthly world, but
with his other four parts, to wit,
his understanding, soul, memo-
ry, and providence, he searcheth
and looketh into all divine
causes and things, from whence
it happens that man with a
Restles search enquires into the
diversities, qualities, and effects
of things. But being hindred
by the weight, and too much
imperfection of his body, he
cannot properly foresee the true
naturall causes of things. This
man therefore, so framed and
fashioned, and that for such a
ministry & service commanded
of the great God, as in decently
governing the world, piously
worshipping his God, & worthily
& fitly obedient to both the wills
of God, what gift dost thou
think he shall be recompensed
with? for seeing that this world
is the work of God, and man
by

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by his labour and industry preserveth and encreaseth the beauty of it, joyneth his labour with the will of God, when by the help of his body, and by daily paines and care he adorneth that ~~Species~~ *Species* and forme, which by divine wisdom he first created, but with that with which our parents were rewarded; with which also that we may be rewarded if it may seem good to his wisdom, we do most earnestly pray and desire, that he will releate and free us out of this worldly prison, deliver us from these earthly bonds; and restore us like unto the divine nature, pure and holy.

Asclep Thou saiest the very truth, O *Trismegistus*, for this is their reward who live piously towards God, and faithfully to the World; but to them that live otherwise and wickedly, both

a

Hermes Trismegistus. 39

a passage is denied them into heaven, and a fearfull change into other shapes, unbecoming a righteous soul. But to proceed, O *Trismegistus*, sundry soules under the hope of future eternity are much indangered in this world, which seemes to some Incredible, to some Fabulous and to others Ridiculous; for the fruit which is reaped by worldly possessions in this temporall life, seemeth to be a very sweet thing, wherefore it obliquely holdeth the soul; that it cleaveth too much on that part of it which is mortall, neither suffers it to take notice of the divine part, envy hating immortality: for I will, as it were by foreknowledge tell you, that none after us shall have simple election, which is true Philosophy; being a frequent beholding a holy worship and knowledge

40 The second Book of
knowledge of the divinity, for
many do confound it after a di-
vers manner; how therefore do
many men corrupt this in-
comprehensible Philosophy, or
diversly confound it.

Wisr. O *Asclepius*, in this
manner mixing it by little de-
vices into divers disciplines not
comprehensible, Arithmetick
Musick Geometrie, but pure
Philosophy, and that only
hanging upon divine religion,
ought to apply it self wholly to
the rest, that it may admire the
course of the Starrs and Planets,
their appointed stations, and
their Commutations and
changes to consist of numbers:
but the dimensions, qualities,
and quantities of the earth, the
depth of the Sea, the Vertue of
fire, and the effects of all these,
acknowledging nature that it
may admire, adore, and praise
art

Hermes Trismegistus. 41
art and an excellent understand-
ing. But to know Musick is no-
thing else then to know the Order
of all things, which pertakes of
divine wildome; for an order of
all things artificially pitched up-
on one generall, will make in di-
vine Melodie a certain sweet
founding and most true *Harmo-
ny.*

Asclep. What then shall be-
come of men after us.

Wisr. They shall be decei-
ved by the Subtly of Sophisters,
and turned away from pure and
divine Philosophy; for out of
a pure mind and soul, to
worship God, to honour him
in his works, and to give thanks
unto him for his will, which is
only full of goodnesse, this is
Philosophie violated or cor-
rupted by no foolish or unseaso-
nable curiosity of the minde; and
of these, thus far.

The

The
COMMENTARY.

This sixth Chapter discourseth that God is the first God absolutely, the World the second, not absolutely but by participation God, as which is the first Image of an absolutely deity; man, the third God by participation of the divinity, and the second Image of God: but God is not an Image, but the truth of all Images, that man may ascend up into heaven by his soul, by his understanding, by his spirit, by his reason, as it were by the Superior Elements. But wherein he is made of fire, of air, of water, and earth, he is subject to death, and to dote upon all worldly things, deprived of that divine part; That the measure after which a man ought to live, is religion which goodnesse follows, and which seems
to

to be perfit, when being armed with Vertue it despiseth the coveting of other mens goods or any thing hurtfull to it, as possessions, the body it self, and all those things we lust after, even the very sense of appetite. For so far he ought to be called a man, whiles that this opinion is led only by reason, and that in contemplation of the divinity he contemneth and despiseth that part of him which is mortall; more then may serve for the preservation of his life.

Aclepius divineth that of the succeeding Egyptians, that there shall be none after them to attain to the pure Philosophy of the knowledge of God. Now Hermes asketh, to what end man ought to learn the dimensions of the earth, that is Geometry, the qualities, quantities, the depth of the Sea, and the nature of fire, and the effects of all these, that is the Universall Philosophy,

44 The second Book of
lofophy of numbers, celeftiall
globes, and naturall things, cer-
tainly to admire, adore, and
praise, the Art, excellent Invention
and Workman of all these for this is
pure Philosophy and only depending
upon divine religion; this is Musick,
this is harmony, to know the or-
der of all things, which all divini-
ty partaketh of, and which artifi-
cially pitched upon one generall,
will make in divine melody, a cer-
tain well tun'd and most sweet har-
mony and that is Philosophy, which
is corrupted by no unfit curiosity of
the minde, which with a pure soul
and mind doth worship the diety,
and honour his works, as also to
give thanks for the will of God,
which is so full of goodnesse, and
confirmeth the Prophecy of Ascle-
pius. This is the sixth partiti-
on.

CHAP.

Hermes Trismegistus. 45

CHAP. VII.

OF a Spirit, and such like, I
will now begin. There
was God, and Hyle, which in
Greek signifieth the world, and
the Spirit was in the world; but
not as with God, neither are
those things God, of which the
world is, wherefore they were
not, when they were not crea-
ted; but even then they were
in that, from whence they had
their being. For those things
are not onely said to be, which
are not yet created, but those
also which have not a fruitfu-
nesse in generating; so that no-
thing can be produced and ge-
nerated of them. Whatsoever
things therefore have in them a
nature of conceiving, those are
things

46 The second Book of

things apt to ingender, which may be created of these, albeit they ingender, or are created of themselves; wherefore God everlasting, God eternall, neither is, or could be begotten; he both is, hath been, and ever shall be. This is that therefore which in it self is the whole nature of God.

But the nature of the world, and of the Spirit, albeit they seem to be created from the beginning; yet they have in themselves a vertue of begetting and procreation, as also fruitfulness; for a beginning is in the quality of the nature, which contains in it self a quality, and nature of conception and birth. This is therefore onely generable, or easie to be ingendered without the conception of another; but that which hath in it onely the vertue of
concei-

Hermes Trismegistus. 47

conceiving, is by the mixture of another nature. So they are to be discerned, that this place of the world may not seem to be created with those things which are in themselves, as which hath in it self the power of whole Nature. I call it a place in which are all things; for neither could all these things be, if a place were wanting which might contain all things; for a place was to be provided for all things that were; for neither the quantities, nor qualities, nor situations, or effects, can be known of things which are not: therefore the world, albeit it be not so created, yet it contains in it self the nature of all things, as which giveth (in all things) rich and fruitfull matter to conceive. This is therefore that whole quality & matter which maybe created,
C red,

48 The second Book of

red, albeit it be not created: For as Nature is a fruitfull matter of quality, so the same is as fruitfull in malignity. Neither have I said, O *Asclepius* and *Ammon*, which is said of many, whether God could weaken and turn away evil from the nature of things? To which we answer not at all; yet for your sake I will prosecute what I began, and give a reason: For they affirm, that God ought all manner of wayes to have freed the world from wickednesse; for he is so in the world, as though he seems to be a member, or part of it; for it is so provided and ordained by the most high God, as much as with reason he could then, when he hath vouchsafed to dignifie the mindes of men with sense, discipline, & understanding; for with those things in which we excel other creatures, we can only shun the deceit of

Hermes Trismegistus. 49

sin, guile, and all other corruption. For he, before that he is ensnared in them, shall by the very sight & ugliness of them, avoid them, that man is guarded with divine knowledge and wisdom; for it is the foundation of discipline, consisting in the excellence of knowledge: for by the Spirit all things are ministered, and refreshed in the world, and (as it were) an organ, or instrument, is subject to the will of the great God. Wherefore hitherto in our souls, let us conceive of that wise Moderatour and sensible Governour of God, which is called the Spirit, or holy Ghost, which comprehends in it self every place, and the substance of every thing, and the full matter of things begotten and created; and whatsoever else in the world, either for substance, quality, or quantity: for

50 The second Book of

all the **Species** in the world, and every thing according to that nature which is given it of God, is moved and governed by the Spirit. But the world is the receptacle of all things, and the haunt and place to move in for all creatures, of which God is the Governour, dispensing in all worldly things, as much as is necessary to every one, who with his Spirit fills all things, of what nature and quality soever. For the world is round, like unto a Ball or sphere, being for the form or qualities sake invisible to it self. For if you shall chuse any high place in it only to look down, thou canst not see from thence what is below, and because it consists of many places and parts, it is supposed to have a quality: and by the alone forms of the **Species**, in whose **Effigies** it seems to be ingraven, it

is

Hermes Trismegistus. 51

is supposed to be visible, when it is shewed, drawn out, or painted, but indeed it is alwayes to it self invisible. Whereby, the bottom or lowest part of the Sphere (if there be any) is called in Greek *ἄνω*, for *ἰδεν* in the Greek tongue signifieth to see, which sight the bottom of the Sphere may want, whereupon the **Species** are called *ἰδνα*, for that they are of an invisible form; and for that they are deprived of light, the Grecians call *ἄνω*, and for that they are in the bottom of the Sphere, the Latines, **Inferi**. These are therefore the ancient principles, or are (as it were) beginnings and heads of all things contained in any part or parts of these.

Asclep. All these things therefore, as you speak of, which are earthly, O **Trismegistus**,

e 3

are

52 The second Book of
are present as well in every
Species, as in the full substance
of every thing.

Trism. Therefore the world
nourisheth the bodies, the Spi-
rit the life or soul and sense, or
reason; the understanding being
a gift with which man is only en-
riched, neither all men but few
who have a heart & judgment to
be capable of so great a benefit:
for as the world is inlightned by
the Sun; so mans minde is il-
luminated by this light & much
more. For whatsoever the Sun
doth enlighten, by the Eclipses
and interposition of Earth and
the Moon, and by the approach
of night; it loseth, and is depri-
ved of that light: but reason
when it shall be once mixed
with mans Soul it becomes; by
that lively & growing mixture,
of

Hermes Trismegistus. 53
of one nature with it. So that
minds thus qualified are never
intangled with misty and ob-
scure errors. Whereby the
sense or reason may well be said
to be the soul or Spirit of God;
but I say not of all, but of
some excellent, and principall
ones.

The COMMENTARY.

The seventh Chapter containeth a hidden Philosophy of the generation, and matter of the World, of the Spirit accompanying it, and of the place. The world in God he calleth the Common place, wherefore he will not have the place of the world to be created, but that it is created and not created, created indeed if you respect the

54 The second Book of
the workmanship of the Creatures,
and not created if you respect the
truth of the workmanship. For
the world and the spirit, to wit the
world and a certain divine power
passing, and disfusung it self
through all things, were not in the
world when they were not created,
but he saith they were in that from
whence they were to be created;
but in what were they, but in that
divine word by which all things
were made? But in which and
what was made was life, and
from whence at length every thing
came that was made. The world
to be as fruitfull in evil as good,
being as capable of evil as good,
as the Earth is fruitfull both of
medicinable Herbs and hurtfull
Weeds; and that the earth hath by
a kind of propriety, so likewise
the World notwithstanding God
(as much as with reason he
might) hath provided for men reason

Hermes Trismegistus. 55
son, discipline, and understanding,
against this kind of materiall pro-
priety, least sinne should overrunne
the World, as brambles and hurt-
full weeds, a neglected and untilled
desert or wildernesse. Moreover of
the spirits disfusung through all
things, and those things that be un-
der us, of sense or reason, which is a
distilling of divine graces into
mens souls, as of the Sun beames on
the eyes, he discourseth somewhat
in this seventh part.

CHAP. VIII.

Asclep. Whom affirm you, O
Trismegistus, to be the
heads and beginings of the first
Principles.
Trism. I reveal & disclose unto
thee great & divine Mysteries of
which

56 The second Book of
which I now begin by the desi-
red help and assistance of God.
There are divers kinds of Gods,
and of those one part intelli-
gible, another sensible. They
are called intelligibles, not be-
cause they may be supposed not
to be subject to our senses, (for
we perceive them more then
those which we call visibles)
as our discourse shall shew, and
thou if thou mark it maiest per-
ceive: for divine reason passing
beyond the reach and capacity
of men, if thou with good care,
and great attention listen not
unto the speakers, will fly away
and passe through thee, and re-
turne to the Fountain of it own
waters. There are therefore
chief Lords or Gods of all Spe-
cies, the Prince of whom is
Ων; these are like one to ano-
ther in their Original, who by
nature effect all things, every
one

Hermes Trismegistus. 57
one illuminating one anothers
work. The chief Lord of Hea-
ven or whatsoever is concluded
under that name, is **Jupiter**,
for from Heaven **Jupiter** gives
life to all. The chiefe Lord of
the Sun, is the Light. For the
benefit of light is distributed un-
to us by the globe of the Sun.
There are 34. Lords of the ho-
roscope, or which speculate in-
to the Hours of Nativity, placed
alwayes amongst the fixed Pla-
nets, the Prince of these they
call Παντόμορφος, that is, which
hath all shapes or which, in dif-
ferent Species, makes divers
Shapes. The seven wander-
ing Planets have also their
Lords which they call, Fortune
and Fate by which all things are
changed which, were firmly sta-
blished by the law of nature, & al-
tered by a continual motion. But
the Aire is the Organ of instru-
ment

58 The second Book of
ment of all things, in which all
things are brought to passe; and
the chief Lord or Prince of this is
second in degree conferring
mortall things, and the like, up-
on mortall Creatures. These
things therefore being so, that
these lower things are moved by
the higher; So likewise all
naturall things are joynd to
themselves, as mortall things
with mortall, and sensible
things with sensible. But the
chief matter of Government,
belongs to that great Lord, being
not many but only one for from
that one all things descend: rather
flowing from him when they
seem to be distant, & are suppo-
sed to be a many things apart by
themselves but indeed are uni-
ted being one or rather two
from whom all things are ef-
fected, and from which they are
created; that is; the matter of
which they are made, & from his
will,

Hermes Trismegistus. 59
will by which other things are
brought to passe.

Asclep. Again, what is the
reason of this, O *Trismegistus*?

Trism. This, O *Asclepius*.
For God the Father, or the
Lord of all things, and whatso-
ever name he is more religiously
and devoutly called of men,
which ought for our understand-
ing sake to be revered of us,
in contemplation of so great a
Majesty, we have expressly called
him by none of those names,
for if this sound uttered, setteth
forth the whole will of man or
that understanding he shall con-
ceive by the spirit; the substance
of which name consisting of a
few syllables, is limited and
circumscribed, that there
might be in man a necessary and
familiar intercourse betwixt the
voice, & the eares, the spirit and
the understanding, and so of
all things by these: Whether
then

60 The second Book of
then the name of God be com-
plete or wholly in these? for
I suppose not, that the effici-
ent cause of all Majesty, and
the Father and Lord of all
things, can be expressed by one
name though compounded of
many Syllables: it is necessary
therefore that he should be cal-
led not by one name but rather
by all names, (seeing that he
is both one and all things) be-
ing meet that all things should
be his name; or that He
should be styled by the name of
All. This therefore being but
one, as being all, is full of the
fruitfulnesse of both natures,
and rich in his own will bring-
eth forth whatsoever he hath
a desire to create. His will is
all goodnes, and this same good-
nes pertaines to all things, from
his divinity nature proceeds
that all things may be as they
are,

Hermes Trismegistus. 61
are, and have been and in all
things which shall be, nature
hence forward may of it self be
sufficient to beget. Let this
therefore be the reason given
thee, O *Asclepius*, wherefore
and how all things, of both
sexes are made.

Asclep. You mean God,
Trismegistus?

Trism. Not only God, O
Asclepius, but all Creatures
having life, and all Creatures
without life; for it is impossible
that any of those things which
are, should be unfruitfull, for
fruitfulnesse being barred
from all things that are, it will
be impossible that there be a
perpetuity of those things which
are: for, I say, that Nature and
Reason, and the World do con-
tain in them this nature, and
preserve in themselves all things
created; for every Sex is full
of

of procreation, and the Con-
junction or uniting of both is
incomprehensible, which you
may call Venerie or lust or both:
this therefore being well under-
stood and clearly conceived, that
from the God of nature the
invention and office of procrea-
tion is for ever, in whom is
naturally perfect charity, joy,
mirth, and divine love; and it
might be said how great the
force and necessity of his mini-
stry is but that by the contem-
plation of him, it is manifest to
every ones understanding. For
if you observe the first time
wherein we are fashioned, how
both natures frameth an offspring
either Male, or Female, how
that the one greedily snatcheth
the seed of the other, & shuts it
up close within the womb, and
lastly how by that common
Conjunction at the same time
they

they beget men and women,
which the woman for a certain
time beareth in her womb. The
effects therefore of so pleasing,
and necessary a work, is com-
mitted in the dark, lest that
by the derisions and mockings
of common ignorant fooles,
the divinity of nature by the
conjunction of both sexes,
should be compelled to blush, if
it should be subject to the open
view of irreligious and ungodly
persons, for there are very few
in the world that may be coun-
tered modest and religious, where-
by it hapeneth that in many
there remains malice and
lewdnesse, through the want of
wisdome and knowledge in
those things which are: for by
the understanding of divine
knowledge, and religion, by
which all things are sweetly
disposed, and ordered, there
is

64 The second Book of

is not only a contempt of, but also medicine for all the evils in the world: but so long as ignorance and want of knowledge abide, there all manner of sin gets head, and wounds the soul with incurable Vices, which being infected, and defiled with them, swells it, as it were with Poyson, which cannot be cured but by a soul furnished with divine graces and understanding. If therefore only to a few this shall be profitable, it is meet to prosecute and conclude this tractate, to wit, wherefore God hath vouchsafed to impart, only unto men understanding and discipline. Hear therefore, when God the Father, and Lord of all things, had after other inferior Gods or Angels made man of the corrupter part of the world, and of a like measure of

Hermes Trismegistus. 65

of divinity, it happened that sin did remain mixed with those Bodies, with a necessary desire after food and living, (which nature hath given in common to other living creatures) as also other affections and vices of the minde incident to mans corruption. But the Angels which were made of the purest part of nature, and wanting no helps of Reason and Knowledge, and in a continuall state of immortality yet for unity of order, and for discipline, and understanding he hath ordained by an eternal Law, (being an order by the Law of necessity limited) that they should not be far from them, or much different in nature; appointing man above all creatures to be only endued with reason and knowledge by which he might shun the corruption & vices of his body, hath assigned them

66 The second Book of
them for the purpose and hope
of immortality, finally he hath
made man that he might be im-
morrall of a divine and omorrall
nature, that it might appear
that man being thus made after
the will of God, is in better
state then the Angels, who are
made only of an inmorrall na-
ture, as also all other mortall
creatures. In which respect,
man comming nearest to the
nature of God he should wor-
ship him in pure and undefiled
religion with an honest heart,
and that the Angels with a pi-
ous and loving affection
should pity and preserve all hu-
mane things. But this is spo-
ken of some few men who are
indued with chaste and pure af-
fections; we have nothing to
do with the Vitious, lest this
holy discourse be defiled by the
thought of them. The

The
COMMENTARY.

*This eighth Chapter treateth of
the materiall Lords or Princes;
which he calleth Gods: The Lord
of Heaven he calleth Jupiter; the
Lord of the Sun, the Light: he
reckons 34 Horoscopes, or markers
of the hours of childrens nativity in
the same place of the fixed Plan-
ets, and the chief of these he calleth
Pantomorphos, and the Lords of
the seven wandering Spheres, or
Planets, he maketh Fortune, and
Fate: also he appointeth a Lord
of the air: but these seem to be the
fictions of Devils, and certain va-
nities smelling of the errors of the
Gentiles, and which cause those
which trust in them, rather to pe-
rish, than to be in any safety. From
hence he returneth to the contem-
plation of the most high and ines-
fable*

68 The second Book of

fable God, or which is to be named by all names, being full of fruitfulness, whereby all things have that which makes them altogether fruitfull: From hence is that love of procreation, and that great work of Nature, which hath nothing deformed or unseemly in it, whiles that the thoughts, speech, and actions be modest and religious; for that is given and permitted for the imitation of divine fruitfulness. But because the greatest part of men is ignorant of these mysteries, they profane these divine Laws, and after the manner of brut beasts, irreverently, unseemly, and outrageously use these things; therefore we dare not speak of such things, even for modesties sake, because those inordinate and irreverent thoughts and gestures are apt to thrust themselves into the minds of men, and not that seemly, holy, and undefiled

Hermes Trismegistus. 69

defiled Ordinance of God: and because few have pure and good affections, I suppose that we should neither think, or speak much of this matter. Then he addeth, that God hath bestowed onely upon men reason and understanding, whereby that immortall, and divine part of him might shun vices, which otherwise, by the admixture of his earthly substance, he might easily run into: for by reason of this body and dissoluble part, men must needs fall into lusts, and other temptations of the mind. This, of the eighth Part.

CHAP. IX.

AND because we are now speaking of the similitude, and mutuall fellowship of men and God, acknowledge, O
Asclepius,

70 The second Book of,

Asclepius, the authority and power of man. For as the Lord and Father, or most high God, is the Creatour of the heavenly Gods or Angels; so Man is the creatour of those gods which are set in Temples, contented to be neighbours unto men, and are not onely illuminated, but do also illuminate, doing not only good unto men, but also confirmeth that there is a God. Dost wonder at this, O **Asclepius**, or dost thou doubt of it, as many do?

Asclep. I am confounded, O **Trismegistus**; but giving credit to what you say, I judge man to be most happy, who hath attained to so great blessednesse.

Trism. Neither unworthily is he worthy of admiration, who is the greatest amongst the gods. For the **Genus** of all things is manifest without confusion, being

Hermes Trismegistus. 71

ing propagated of the purest part of Nature, and the similitudes of them to be (as it were) the heads of all; but the **Species** of the gods, which man represents, is fashioned of two natures; Divine, which is the more excellent and noble part; and Earthly, which is that which is here conversant in earth, and which consists of the whole Fabrick, or severall parts of the outward Man. So Man being mindfull of his Divine Nature and Originall, remains still in the likenesse of God. For as the Father and the Lord hath made eternal Gods, that might be like unto him. So man hath fashioned out unto himself gods; after the similitude of his own countenance.

Asclep. Do you mean images, O **Trismegistus**?

Trism. Do you not see how
D far

72 The second Book of

far you are mistaken & living
images, full of sense and spirit,
doing such and so great things!
Images having fore-knowledge
of things to come, and fore-tel-
ling by many other things, infir-
mities, cares, and sorrows, which
shall happen deservedly to men.
Are you ignorant, O *Asclepius*,
that *Egypt* is the image of Hea-
ven, or, which is more true, a
translation of descension of all
things, which are governed and
exercised in Heaven? And if we
speak rightly, Our land is the
Temple of the whole World,
and yet for that it becometh
wise men to fore-know all
things, it behoveth you not to
be ignorant, that the time will
come when it may appear, that
the *Egyptians* have by a con-
stant and pious practice in reli-
gion served God in vain, and all
their holy worship shall become
void, and of no effect: For the

Hermes Trismegistus. 73

Divinity shall return back from
Earth into Heaven, *Egypt* shall
be forsaken, and the Land which
was the seat of the Divinity, shall
be destitute of Religion, and
deprived of the presence of
the Deity. For when strangers
shall possess, and fill up this
Land and Kingdom, not onely
there shall be a neglect of Reli-
gion; but, which is more misfe-
rable, there shall be Laws en-
acted against Religion, Piety, and
Divine Worship, with punish-
ment inflicted upon those that
seem to favour it: then this ho-
ly seat shall be full of Idolatry,
Idols Temples, and dead mens
Sepulchres. O *Egypt*, *Egypt*,
there shall remain only a fained
shew of thy Religion, and which
will seem incredible to posteri-
ty; and onely letters shall stand
ingraven upon thy pillars, which
may declare thy pious deeds,

D 2 and

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and in thee shall inhabit the Scythian, Indian, or some other neer barbarous Nation. For the Divinity shall fly to Heaven, the whole Nation forsaken shall die, and so Egypt shall be forsaken of God and man. I call upon thee, thou most holy River, and presage unto thee things which shall come to passe; thy waters and divine streams shall be filled with blood, which shall overflow thy banks, and make a violent inundation, so that there shall be more dead than living, and he that remains alive, shall onely by his language be known to be an Egyptian, but by his deeds he shall seem a Barbarian. Why weep you, O *Asclepius*, Egypt shall be furnished with far greater, and worse evils than these, she being heretofore a holy and great Favourer of the Deity, and
Divine

Hermes Trismegistus. 75

Divine Worship and Religion, and that worthily upon earth, separated alone from other Nations, became the Mistresse of Sanctity and Piety, shall be an example of the greatest cruelty, and then with grief of heart, the world shall not seem to be admired and adored. This whole good (than the which there neither is, hath, or shall be any thing that shall appear, of more excellencie) shall be indangered, and seem burdenous to men, and in this respect shall be despised: neither shall the world be esteemed, which is the immutable work of God, a most glorious Fabrick, a work compounded with the different variety of shapes, an instrument of the will of God, who in his work (without envie) bespake all things to become one; which, of the beholders, might be honoured,

76 The second Book of

noured, praised, and loved, being an united heap of sundry shapes. For darknesse shall be preferred before light, death shall seem sweeter than life, no man shall look up to Heaven, a religious man shall be accounted a mad man, an irreligious and profane person seem wise, a mad man, valiant; and the worst of all men, good and pious: for the Soul, and all things about it, wherein it is either mortall, or conceiveth that it shall attain to immortality, accordingly as I have declared unto you, shall not onely be esteemed a thing worthy of laughter, but also a meer vanity: For beleve me, it shall be reckoned a capital offence for him that shall study to be religious, there shall new Statutes and Laws be stablished: nothing which is religious shall be heard worthy of Heaven,

Hermes Trismegistus: 77

ven, or heavenly things, or be entertained in the hearts of men: there shall be a separation of God, which is much to be lamented, from the Society of men; onely evil angels shall remain mixed with the humanity, which shall violently move to all manner of audacious mischiefs, stir them up to wars, sedition, robberies, deceit, and unto all things contrary to the disposition of the Soul, then the Earth shall not stand, the Sea shall not be sailed in; and in Heaven, the course of the Stars and Planets shall cease, all divine knowledge shall (of necessity) be buried in silence; the fruits of the earth shall be corrupted, neither shall the earth be fruitfull, and the air it self shall languish with a sorrowfull countenance; these and such like times shall come; irreligion

78 The second Book of
and confusion of the world, with
a senselesnes & vacancy of al good
things. When these things shall
happen, O **Asclepius**, then that
Lord and Father God Almighty,
Governour onely of the world,
looking into the manners, and
voluntary deeds of men; after
his own will (which is his good-
nesse) punishing vices, taking
away all errours and corruption,
and drowning all manner of
wickednesse, either by an inun-
dation of waters; or else consu-
ming them by fire, or else by
plague and pestilence, he will
end this world, and restore it to
its ancient beauty; so that the
world it self may seem to be ad-
mired and honoured: and God,
the Creatour and Restorer of so
great a work, shall of all men
then being, be magnified with
continuall praises and thankgi-
vings: For this generation of the
world,

Hermès Trismegistus. 79
world, and the reformation of
all good things, and the most
holy and religious restitution of
nature it self, in due time both
is, and hath been eternall from
the beginning, for the will of
God wants beginning, which
is the same, and continuall in
every place.

Asclep. For the nature of
God is the counsaile of his will,
and his excellent goodnesse,
his counsaile, O **Trismegis-
tus**.

Trism. O **Asclepius**, his will
proceeds from his counsaile, and
his will from his will, neither
wills he any thing ambitiously,
which is full of all things, and
those which he wills he hath,
but he wills all good things,
and hath all he wills. For he
thinks and wills all good things;
but this is God, and the world is
the Image of that Good.

80 The second Book of

Asclep. Good O **Trismegistus.**

Trism. Good, as I shall teach thee, O **Asclepius**, for as God is the dispenser and giver of all good things, to every **Genus** and **Species** in the World, that is, both of Soul and life, so likewise the world is the distributor and giver of all things, which seem good to mortall creatures; that is, change of parts, seasonable fruites, nativity, encrease and maturity, and the like, and by this God sitting above in the highest Heavens, is every where, and beholds all things: for there is above these Lower Heavens, a place without Stars, far from all earthly things, this place betwixt Heaven and Earth the dispenser of all things inhabiteth, whom we call **Jupiter**, or god, but on the earth and the Sea, Reigneth
Jupiter

Hermes Trismegistus. 81

Jupiter Pluto, and he is the nourisher, and preserver of all Living and fruitfull mortall Creatures, by the power of all these, Fruits, Trees, Plants, and the ground are refreshed, and the power and effects of other Gods are distributed through all things that are. They are distributed that shall bear rule on the Earth, and shall be placed in the very entrance of **Egypt**, in that City which is built in the West, or where the Sun sets. To which place all mortall Creatures both in Land and Sea shall hasten.

Asclep. But at this time where are they, O **Trismegistus.**

Trism. They are placed in the great City, in the **Libyan** Mountain, and thus far this declaration.

The

The
COMMENTARY,

This whole Ninth Chapter is prophane. which Augusting well reproveth in his Book of the City of God. It mainraines Idolatry, extolling and setting it forth with wonderfull praises; and the decay or fall of it, it much deplores. In the highest Heaven, he seeth a certain God beholding all things; but, in that place betwixt Heaven and Earth, he placeth Jupiter, the disposer, or Steward; and Pluto Jupiter to be the God; and dispenser on Land; and Sea; as though there were one God in Heaven, another in the Aire, and another on the Land, and Sea; all which contain an infinite impiety of errars: for out of divine writ we are uncorruptly, purely, and holly taught, that the Lord he is
God

God in Heaven above, and in Earth below, and that there is no other God: but against Idols and Idolatry the word of God and the holy Prophets do warily admonish us that we be not defiled, with so great a blot of impiety, nor corrupted with so great an error, for the Idol it self is cursed, and him that made it, and again, the worshipping of cursed Idols is the cause beginning, and end of all mischief. An Idol maker, and this Idol are both an abomination to the Lord, for both that which is made, with him that it shall be consumed with fire, these and many more things of Idolatry out of the Book of wisdom, and in Leviticus God himself out of his own mouth commandeth, I am the Lord your God, you shall not make to your self any Idol, or graven Image, neither shall you erect any monument, or Pillar in your Land to worship

84 The second Book of

worship it. And of the Idols of Egypt, he advertiseth in Ezekiel, Be not polluted with the Idols of Egypt, for I am the Lord your God: and of their abolishing he speaketh by the same Prophet, I will destroy their Images and make an end of their Idol Memphis; he shall no more lead them out of the Land of Egypt. What Mercurius calleth the fount Spirit, and sense of Idols, and Images in that they shall bring diseases, in firmities, and fears upon men, we know without doubt to be evil Spirits, and in assurance to be those of which the Prophet truly affirmeth, that all the Gods of the gentiles, are devils, or evil Spirits. Let this little be sufficient against the impiety of Trismegistus in this ninth part, for we speake to those who are seasoned with the true knowledge of God, which (as the wiseman saith) to know and understand

Hermes Trismegistus. 85

derstand is perfect righteousness, and to know his righteousness and power is the root of immortality, Lazarelus draweth this place to an Analogie, as though the Idols were the Apostles; the Image of man, Christ; the power given from above, the holy Ghost; Egypt, the darkness of the gentiles; and the persecution of the Disciples Apostles & Martyrs, the graven pillars declaring their pious works, and that the heart of posterity did retain, not their works, but their faith only: these are piously invented, but peradventure far from the Letter, or meaning. I think with Augustine that Hermes overshot himself both in this and the 13. Chapter, for they seem to have the Prophets of the Gentiles, as Balaam and the Sybils, that they may suffer both Light and darkness the lucid and obscure intermixture of Prophecies sometimes pure

86 The second Book of
pure, and sometimes impure;
This, for the ninth Chapter.

CHAP. X.

NOW we are to discourse of
mortality & immortality: for
hope and fear of death torments
many, which are ignorant of the
true reason: for death is caused by
dissolution of the body, tyed
out with labour and the har-
mony being ended whereby
the members of the body are
fitted into one composition for
lively uses, for the body dieth
when the vitall parts of man
faile. This is therefore death;
a dissolution of the body, and
an utter decay of the bodily
senses, about which to take
thought for, is to no purpose;
but

Hermes Trismegistus. 87

but there is an other thing ne-
cessary, which either igno-
rance, or mans incredulity fet-
teth leight by.

Asclep. What is that, O
Trismegistus, that they are
either ignorant of, or believe
not to be?

Trism. Hear therefore, O
Ascleptus, when there shall be a
separation of the soul from the
body, then the Judgement,
and examination of his delects
shall passe over unto the great
God; and he when he shall see
that it is just and righteous shall
suffer it to abide in a fit Mansion
but if he shall see it to be spot-
ted and defiled with sin and ini-
quity he will cast it down, and
deliver it to Stormes, Whirle-
Winds, fire, Lightening, and
Tempett; and it shall be snatch-
ed up betwixt Heaven and
Earth, with worldly tempests,
and

88 The second Book of

and with continuall torments, be driven into divers places, that in this respect the eternity of them is prejudicious because by an immortall sentence, the Soul is condemned to everlasting judgment; lest therefore we be infolded with these miseries, know that we must fear tremble, and beware; for the unbelievers are after their faults and pleasure in sin compelled to believe not by words, but by examples, not by threatenings but by the very suffering of punishment.

Asclep. Are not then, O **Trismegistus**, the faults of men punished only by mans Law.

Trism. Forsooth, O **Asclepius**, first all earthly things which are mortall, then those things also which live by corporal reason and which swarve from living after that Law of reason,
all

Hermes Trismegistus. 89

all these according to their deserts and faults are liable to punishment, but after death so much the sorer punishment as their faults have been concealed & unpunished in this life, for God foreknowing all things renders a like punishment to every one according to the measure and quality of the fault.

Asclep. Who are worthy of the greatest punishment, O **Trismegistus**.

Trism. Those who being condemned by the Laws of men come to a violent death, which seem not to yeeld unto the debt of nature, but to suffer punishment for their deserts. Contrarywise, God is a shield and defence unto a righteous man, who loveth piety and religion; for he defendeth such from all manner of dangers and evils,

evils, for the Father and Lord of all things, who alone is all, shoves himself willingly to all, not where he is in place, nor what in quality, nor how great in quantity, but illuminating man with the alone understanding of the mind, who when the darknesse of mind is removed; and the brightnesse of truth perceived, participates himself by the full sense of divine knowledge, by whose love he is freed from that naturall part which is mortall, and conceiveth hope of future immortality. This therefore shall be the difference betwixt good and evil men, for every one by piety religion divine worship and reverence of God, shineth and becometh bright as the eye-sight, when he hath throughly seen the truth of reason, and the confidence of hope, and excelleth so far other men.

men, as the Sun excelleth other Starrs in his Light: for the Sun it self not so much in greatness of diety, as in divinity and sanctity illuminateth the other Starrs. For I suppose this, O *Asclepius*, to be the Second God governing all other things, & illustrating all worldly things whether they be creatures with life or without life, for if the creature the world hath, is & shall alwaies be Living, nothing in the world is mortal. For there is no place of mortality, for every living part which is in the world, as in one and the same continual living creature, wherefore it ought to be full of life and eternity, if it must always live. The Sun therefore as the world is eternall, and so is the governor of life and livenessse, and the continual dispenser of them. He is therefore the God of the living

92 The second Book of
living and of those things which
have life in the world; the
continuall governour, and eter-
nall dispensator of life it self,
for he hath once dispensed by an
eternall Law; and giveth life
to every Living thing. In this
manner which I will speake of,
for in that quicknesse of eter-
nity, the world is moved, and
in that living eternity, is the
place of the world, for which
hereafter it shall neither stand
nor be destroyed, the world be-
ing intrenched, and as it were
wrapped in with the eternity of
life. It is therefore the dis-
penser or giver of life to all
things which are in it, and the
place of all things which are
governed under the Sun, the
commotion of which world
consisteth of a twofold effect.
For it self is outwardly enliven-
ed from eternity, and it quick-

ens

Hermes Trismegistus. 93

ens and inlivens those things
which are within it, differing
in proportions, and appointed,
and prefixed times, all things
are known and ordered by the
effects of the Sun, and by the
course, and influence of the
Starrs, all temporall things are
established by reason and divine
Law, the Earthly seasons are
known by the quality of the
Aire, as either in the variety of
heat, or cold, the Heavenly
seasons by the return of the
Starrs to the same places, and
by the temporall change of
tides, and the world is the re-
ceptacle of time, by whose
course and motion it is refresh-
ed, but time is kept by order.
Order and time make an inno-
vation of all things which are in
the world by course,

The

The
COMMENTARY.

This Tenth Chapter, speaketh of death and the examination of the Soul, when the body shall die, that they shall be most punished after death, whose life justly is taken away by mens Lawes, for the greatnesse of their offences, that God is a defence to the righteous; of the divinity of the Sun, and the world, for he puts the World to be the first sensible God, the Sun to be the Second, that the world shall never take rest, nor be destroyed. But we give not the incommunicable name of God, neither to the Sun, nor to the world, and believe that the world shall one day be dissolved. These things therefore being understood (as the bare words of Hermes shew,) they set out the error of the Gentiles, yet
we

we do grant by participation to these a divinity, as to excellent works of God. This the tenth part.

CHAP. XI.

VVHerefore all things being so, neither of things created, Heavenly things or Earthly, is any thing stable fixed or immoveable, for on'y God, and worthily he alone is in himself from himself, and on all sides wholly full and perfect, and this is his firme stability which cannot be removed by the enforcement, or occasion of any other seeing in him are all things, and in all things he is only, unlesse any man will dare to say that his motion consisteth in eternity, but much rather his eternity is unmoveable, into which
E the

96 The second Book of
the motion of all times return-
eth, and from which the mo-
tion of all times takes it begin-
ning. God hath therefore been
alwayes stable, and his eterni-
ty alwaies alike stable with him,
containing the world not crea-
ted within himself, which we
rightly call sensible. The
Image of this God is the world,
which is made an imitator or
resemblance of eternity: for
time hath the force, and nature
of stability in the very necessity
of return again into it self:
wherefore albeit eternity be
stable immoveable and fixed,
yet because by the mobility of
time, motion is alwayes called
back into eternity, and that
mobility is turned by reason of
time, it comes to passe that
eternity it self is certainly im-
moveable, and may seem only
by time to be moved in which it
self

Hermes Trismegistus. 97
self is, for in that time is all the
motion; so it happens that the
stability of eternity is moved,
and the stability of time, be-
comes stable by the rule of mo-
tion, and so it is credible that
God is moved into himself, by
the same immoveableness, for
there is an in immoveable moti-
on in the greatnesse of his very
stability, for the condition of
his greatnesse is immoveable.
This therefore which is so,
and not obvious to our senses,
is infinite, incomprehensible
and inestimable, which can nei-
ther be sustained, reported of,
nor found out; whereupon it
is uncertain wherein, where,
how, and in what fashion it is:
for he is reported to be in the
greatest stability, and in him is
his stability, whether he be
God or Eternity, whether
the one be in the other, or both
E 2 in

98 The second Book of
in either, for which cause eter-
nity is without definition of
time: but time which may
be defined, returning either by
order course or circuit of another
is eternal, wherefore both seem
to be infinite, both eternall, for
stability considering that it is
fixed, for that by the Benefit of
strength it can sustein all
things that are moveable, it
worthily obtaineth Dominion:
for the beginning of all things
which are, is God, and eternity;
but the world because it is mo-
veable hath not the principali-
ty, for his mobility prevents his
stability by the rule of continu-
all motion, having an immove-
able strength. All sense there-
fore of the divinity being alike
and immoveable, moveth it-
self by his stability, and is incor-
rupt, and eternal; or whatsoever
may more fitly be called; eter-
nity

Hermes Trismegistus. 99
nity consisting in the very truth
of the high God, full of all sen-
sible things, and full knowledge
abiding as I said with God; but
worldly sense is the receptacle
of all sensible things, both for
Spectes and discipline, but hu-
mane sense by the strength of
memory, for that it remembers
all things that it hath done: for
divine reason and sense come
down continually to man,
and God would not that excel-
lent, and divine sense should be
confounded with all Creatures,
lest it should blush in being
mixt with brutes. For the un-
derstanding of humane sense, of
what sort, and how great it is,
is wholly in the memory of
things past: for by that strength
of memory it is made govern-
our of the earth; but the un-
derstanding of Nature, and of
the quality and sense of the
E 3 world,

100 The second Book of
world, may be perceived by all
sensible things in the world;
eternity, which is the second
is known to be a sense and qua-
lity given of the sensible world,
but the understanding of the
quality, and quality of the sense
of the high God, is the alone
truth, the shadow of which
truth in the world is not cer-
tainly known in the last line,
for where is any thing known by
the dimension of time, where
there seem to be leafings gene-
rations and errors? You see
therefore, O **Asclepius**, in
what things we are agreed up-
on, which we handle or which
we dare to touch: but I give
unto thee thanks, O great God,
which hast illuminated me with
the light of seeing thy divinity:
and you O **Tatus**, **Asclepius**,
And **Ammon**, conceale secre-
ly within your breasts and keep
close

Hermes Trismegistus. 101
close these divine Mysteries.
But in this differeth under-
standing from sense, for that our
understanding commeth by the
intention, and diligence of
the mind to understand and
know the quality of the sense
of the world, but the under-
standing of the world reacheth
to eternity, and to know God
who is above it self, and so it
happens unto us men, that as
in a mist we see those things
which are in Heaven, as much
as it is possible through the
condition of humane sense.
And this intention or reach in
perceiving so great good things
is very narrow and weak, but is
most large when it shall see it
by knowledge, and the testi-
mony of a good conscience.

The
COMMENTARY.

The eleventh Chapter discloseth that onely God is immovable and stable, and all other things mutable; God is infinite, incomprehensible, and is unknown what he is: the holy, incorrupt, and eternall sense of God, treateth of the sense of the world, of the sense of man, of the difference of the understanding from the sense. This is the Sum of the eleventh Part.

CHAP. XII.

BUt of Vacuity, which also with many seems to be a great matter, I thus think, that a Vacuity neither is, can, or shall be any thing; for all things
of

of the world are most full parts, as the world it self is full of bodies different in quality and form, having both their form and grearnesse, of which one is greater than another, and one lesse than another, different in strength and weaknesse: for some of these easily seem to be the stronger, as the greater: but the lesser and smaller can scarcely, or not at all be seen, which things to be, we know onely by feeling, whereby it happeneth, that many beleve that these are not bodies, or substances, but empty places, which is impossible; for if any thing be named out of the world, if there be any thing (which I hardly beleve) therein so full of intelligible things, that is, things like to the Divinity, as this place which is called the sensible world, is full of bodies and creatures, agreeing both in
E 5 nature

104 The second Book of
nature and quality to it, all
whose representations we see
not; but some exceedingly
great, some exceeding little,
and short, which either through
the length of distance, or that
we are dull of eye-sight, they ap-
pear to be such unto us, or to be
short, for their exceeding smal-
nesse they are supposed of some
not to be. I speak now of An-
gels, which, I suppose, sojourn
with us, and Spirits above us,
which are betwixt the purest
part of the air, and the earth,
where there is neither place for
Clouds, nor commotion by the
motion of any Meteor, Comet,
or Signe. In this respect, O *A-*
telepius, thou canst say nothing
to be subject to Vacuity, unless
thou vauntest there may be a
Vacuity of what thou affirmest
to be empty, as a Vacuity from
the fire, from the water, and
from

Hermes Trismegistus. 105
from the like, which although it
happens to seem so (For that
may be void of such things,
which are great, or little, which
makes it seem empty) yet there
cannot be a Vacuity of Spirit,
and Air. The like also we may
speak of a place, for the word
only wants understanding; for
a place appeareth what it is,
from that of which it is: for
when the principall name is ta-
ken away, the signification, or
interpretation is imperfect.
Wherefore the place of water,
the place of fire, or such like, we
truly say; for as it is impossible
for any thing to be void, or em-
pty, so the place alone what it is
cannot be known. For if you
put the place without that of
which it is, it shall seem to be
an empty place, which I beleeve
the world hath not: For if
there be no Vacuity, neither a
place

106 The second Book of

place appeareth what it is by it self, unlesse you shall adde unto it, either longitudes, latitudes, or altitudes, as signes to the bodies of men. These things being so, **Asclepius**, and you that are present know, that the intelligible World that is God, who is known only by the sight of the soul, is incorporeal; neither can any thing corporall be mixed with his Nature, that is, which may be known by quality, quantity, and numbers, for no such thing abideth in him; therefore this world, which is called sensible, is the receptacle of all sensible **Species**, qualities, or bodies; all which without God, cannot receive Vegetation, and be refreshed; for all things are God, and from him and his will are all things: that which is wholly good, comely and wise, sensible and

Hermes Trismegistus. 107

and intelligible, belongs to him alone, and without this there neither is, hath, or shall be any thing; for all things are from him, in him, and by him; both qualities of many shapes, and great quantities, and greatnesse exceeding measure, and varieties of **Species** and Forms, which if you shall understand, O **Asclepius**, you will give God thanks, and if you shall wel observe the whole, you shall by true reason perfectly learn, that the world it self is sensible, and all things that are in it, to be covered (as with a garment) from that upper world; for every kinde of creature, O **Asclepius**, of what kind soever, as well mortal, immortal, or rational, whether it be a living creature, or be not, each of them retain the image and form of their kinde, and albeit every kind of creature possesseth

108 The second Book of
fesseth the full form of his kind;
yet in the same form of shews,
they are all unlike one to ano-
ther, as the **Genus** of men, al-
though it be uniform, that a
man may naturally be known,
yet all of them are in the same
form unlike to themselves; for
the **Species**, which is divine, is
incorporeal, and whatsoever
else is comprehended in the
soul, or mind: seeing therefore
these two, of which the Form
consisteth, are corporeal, and in-
corporeal, it is impossible that
every Form should be created,
or born like one to another, the
moments of hours and climates
differing, and being distant, but
are changed so often, as an hour
hath minutes, in which is that
God of all shapes we have spo-
ken of; therefore the **Species**, or
Form, remaineth, begetting so
often from it self, so many, and
so

Hermes Trismegistus. 109
so different shapes, as the course
of the world hath moments,
which world is turned by con-
version and changes, but the
Species is neither turned, nor
changed. So the Forms of each
kind are permanent and stable,
but unlike to themselves in the
same Form.

Asclep. And the world chan-
geth his **Species**, or Form, **O**
Trismegistus.

Trism. Do you perceive
therefore, **O Asclepius**, that all
things are spoken unto thee, as
to one in a sleep, or in a dream?
For what is the world, or of
what consisteth it, but of all
things created?

Asclep. Therefore you mean to
speak of the Heaven, and of the
Earth & of the Elements, **Tris-**
megistus? For other things are
more frequently changed into
Forms, the Heaven moystening,

110 The second Book of
or drying up, cooling or heat-
ing, bright or lowring. In one
Form of the Heaven, these things
are, which Forms are altered by
the Form, also the Earth hath
alwayes many alterations of her
Form; as when it bringeth forth
fruits, and when it nourisheth
her fruits, and when it giveth
sundry and divers qualities, and
quantities of all fruits, and pla-
ces, and times, for the qualities,
sents, relishes, and forms of all
trees, flowers, and berries. The
fire also hath many and diverse
alterations; for the Forms of
the Sun and the Moon, they are
of all shapes, for they are (as it
were) our looking-glasses for
representation. But of these
things enough.

The

Hermes Trismegistus. 111

The
COMMENTARY.

*This twelfth Chapter declareth,
that there is no Vacuity, or Empti-
nesse in things; that Angels are
conversant, and dwell with us, who,
in regard of their too much sub-
tily, are not perceived of us; that
Spirits possesse the purer part of the
Air; the alone name of a place to
be void, that it belongs to some-
what, which being not understood,
it cannot be conceived what a place
is, and that is common to all Re-
latives. He affirmeth an intelli-
gible World, with which the sensu-
ble World, and all things in it, are
veiled as with a garment seeing
who is contained in the intelligible
World, that the Forms of all kinds
whatsoever, that are of one shape,
are unlike, and that according to
the circles, moments, and minutes*

of.

112 The second Book of

of hours, of which he maketh Pantomorphos Lord, whom before he affirmed to be God of the Horoscopes: but we acknowledge no such God: but leave it to the folly and ignorance of the Gentiles: if any as yet be so apparantly blind, mad, and stupified; but we, according to the saying of St. Paul, have but one God, the Father, in whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him. The Species and Forms, that is, the Idea's of which there is so much dispute with Plato and the Platonicks, the immutable and unchangeable Forms he placeth in Pantomorphos, having this name, as though he consisted of all shapes, and of every Idea, from which severall hours and moments, every particular Form is diversly shaped; but that the rest are mutable, as the World, the Heaven, and the Earth,
but

Hermes Trismegistus. 113

but there are who account Mercurius his Pantamorphos, and Plato his Idea to be meer forged things and fittions. This is the summe of the twelfth Chapter.

CHAP. XIII.

Let us return again to man, and to reason, by which divine gift, man is called a reasonable creature, for those things are lesse to be wondered at, (albeit they deserve admiration) which are only spoken of man. But of all wonders this is the greatest wonder, that man could find out and supply the divine nature: because therefore, our forefathers erred much, being incredulous about the reason and nature of the Gods,
and

114 The second Book of
and not looking into divine
worship, and religion, they
found out an art whereby they
might make them gods; to
which invention they joynd
the work of nature, and because
they could not make souls, they
called out the souls of Devils or
Spirits, and put them into their
Idols, and divine Myteries, by
which alone the Idols had pow-
er to do either good or hurt.
For thy Grandfather, O *Asclepi-
us*, was the first inventor of
Phyick, to whom a Temple is
consecrated in a mountain of
Libya, or Africa, near unto the
shoare of Crocodiles, in which
lieth his body; the rest of him,
or rather the whole of him be-
ing his better and Spirituall
part, is gone back again to Hea-
ven, affording all manner of
help and cure to diseased and
sick persons, now by vertue of
his

Hermes Trismegistus. 115

his diety, as he was wont to give
before by art or skill of Phyick,
and *Hermes* which was the
name of my Auncestors, doth
not he now in his Country re-
reining that surname, cure all
persons that come from all parts
to him? Also Isis the wife of
Osiris being well pleased how
much good she hath done? and
displeased, how much evil do we
know? for it is an easy matter
for earthly gods to be displeased,
seeing that they are made of the
same nature that man is, where-
upon it happened that these ho-
ly creatures were called upon,
and their soules worshipped
throughout every City, by the
Aegyptians who living consecra-
ted them so that they continued
in their Lawes, and were called
by their names: for this cause
O *Asclepius*, those which seem
to some worthy to be worship-
ped

ed and honoured to others seem otherwise, therefore Egyptian Cities are wont to fall out, and warr one with another.

Asclep. And what is the quality or substance **O Trismegistus** of these earthly Gods?

Trism. It consisteth, **O Asclepius**, of herbs, of Stones, of Spices which have in them a naturall power of divinity, and for this cause they are delighted with often sacrifices, Hymns, praises, and most sweet musick resembling an Heavenly harmony, that that which is Heavenly may by a Heavenly and frequent use be allured into the Idol, and there stay a long time, as glad and desirous of humane society: so man is the feigner of the gods, and you should not suppose the effects of these earthly gods to be casual, **O Asclepius**, the Heavenly Gods inhabite

inhabite the highest heavenly places fulfilling and preserving that order which he hath received. But these our Gods, regarding peculiarly certain things, and foretelling some things by lot and conjecture, foreseeing many things and after a manner helping them, become as it were by a friendly alliance aiders unto mens affairs.

The COMMENTARY.

This Thirteenth Chapter is full of impiety like unto the ninth, wherein Mercurius will have a man to be most divine, and most to be admired; he is certainly most impious, and profane, to wit that he shall be the inventor of Idolatry, that he should thrust in devilish Spirits called up into Idols,

118 The second Book of
Idols, and adde Rites, and sa-
crifices concerning Æsculapius
Mercurius, Isis, Osiris, which were
worshipped of the Egyptians; and
of those plants and creatures which
in Ægypt were esteemed holy, and
had in reverence of herbs, and
Stones, musick and hymns; with
which they did appease & reconcile
those Spirits which were put into
their Idols and Images, which
still some Pythonists are ac-
customed to do at this day (O
naughty age) who think that they
have Spirits closed up either in
rings or boxes: a most impious
sort of men, hatefull to God and
man; a very profest enemy: and
against this profane error of impi-
ery, St. Augustine well inveigheth
in his book of the City of God. This
for the 13. Chapter.

CHAP.

Hermes Trismegistus. 119

CHAP. XIV.

Asclep. What part therefore
of the world do the fates a-
bide in, O Trismegistus? If the
Heavenly Gods beare universal
rule, do the earthly Gods which
we call Fortune and Fate
inhabite in particular pla-
ces?

Trism. O Asclepius, that
is the necessity of all things that
are governed, that they are al-
wayes joyned and lincked to-
gether: this is therefore the
efficient cause of things, or
the most high God, or next
unto God, which second
effect is God, or the discipline,
of all earthly and Heavenly
things, stablished by divine
F laws.

120 The second Book of
lawes. The^e therefore, Fortune
and Necessity, are both tyed to-
gether by an individuall knor.
The former of which, Fortune
or Fate, begets the beginning of
all things, but Necessity entor-
ceth them to their effects, which
depends from those beginnings.
Order, followeth these, which
is the continuance, and dispositi-
on of time in bringing things
to passe, for nothing is with-
out the agreement of Order. In
all these this world is perfit, for
the world it self is carried by
Order, or consisteth wholly of
Order: wherefore these 3. Fate,
Necessity, and Order, are brought
to passe, especially by the will
of God, who governeth the
world by his own Law and di-
vine reason. By these there-
fore both will and nill are by a
divine hand fully crossed; for
they are neither moved by an-
ger,

Hermes Trismegistus. 121
ger, nor bowed by favour, but
serve the necessity of eternall
reason, which Eternity is un-
changeable, immoveable, and
insoluble. Fate therefore is
the first; which, the seed being
as it were cast in, receives the
encrease of all future things. Ne-
cessity follows, by which all
things are enforced violently to
their effects. The Third is
Order, which preserveth the
frame of those things which
Fate and Necessity hath disposed
of. This is therefore eternity,
which neither hath beginning
nor ending, which by a fixed
immutable law of continuall
motion is preserved. It riseth
and falls oftentimes by course,
so that when the times vary, it
riseth again in those same parts
in which it fell, for so is reason
a voluble rotundity that all are
so firmly joynd that you can-

122 The second Book of
not know what is the begin-
ning of volubility, when all
things seem to go before, and
follow themselves, for chance
and fortune are mixed in all
worldly things.

The
COMMENTARY.

The fourteenth Chapter speaketh of the Destinies, which he calleth Fate, Necessity, and Order; others, Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos. About which the Ethnicks were not wont lesse to trifle, than about other gods, which they feigned unto themselves, coining new and wonder-working Deities: but Mercurius treats of these more briefly and sparingly, and (as it were) doubtfully, like as these three should be the determination, and predestination of the Divine Will; which Necessity of things, as they
be,

Hermes Trismegistus. 123
be, follows; which lastly Order preserves, even as it is stablished by Divine and Eternall Law: So that the first Fate is Divine Predestination; the second, Consequence of things; and the third, Preservation. And these three, or the Divine Law, or those things that follow the course of Divine Law, contein the order both of finite causes, and those which are according to nature, but yet Fate admitteth in casuall things indefinite, and indeterminate causes beyond nature: but of these let others judge. And this for this present part.

CHAP. XV.

WE have spoken of all things as we could, and as the divinity would suffer.

124 The second Book of
and permit: It onely remaines
that we praise God and pray
unto him, and so return to the
care of the body. For treating
sufficiently of divine matters,
we have satisfied our minds as it
were with the food of the soul.
But as they passed out of the
cloyster, when they began to
pray to God, they looked back
towards the South; for when the
Sun setteth, if any man will
pray to God, he ought to look
that way; as also when the Sun
riseth, to look East: Now as they
were saying their prayers,
Asclepius said, with a low
voice. **Plutus** let us put the Fa-
ther in mind that he command
that we should dedicate our
prayers unto God, with an ad-
dition of frankincense, and in-
cense. **Trismegistus** hearing of
it, and being moved, saith.
Cress better O **Asclepius**, for
this

Hermes Trismegistus. 125
this is like unto thest when you
pray unto God to burn frankin-
cense, and the like: for nothing is
wanting unto him, who himself
is all things, for in him are all
things; but let us give thanks,
and adore him, for these are
the cheif sacrifices of God, when
thankes are given of mortall
men. We give thee thankes, O
great and glorious God, for by
thy grace only we have attained
to the Light of thy knowledge.
Thou Name, holy and worthy
to be honoured, one name by
which God as a Father is de-
voutly to be praised, because
thou vouchsafest to give unto all
fatherly piety religion and love,
or whatsoever thing else is of
most efficacy, when thou dost
reward us with sense, reason,
and understanding; with sense
that we may know thee; with
reason, that we may look up un-

126 The second Book of
to thee, and search into thy di-
vine nature; with understanding
that knowing thee we may re-
joyce in thee, and being pre-
served by thy Majesty, we may
delight our selves in thee, that
thou wast pleased to shew thy
self wholly unto us: let us give
thanks that thou hast vouch-
safed to consecrate us, who
are placed in these earthly ra-
bernacles to be heirs of eterni-
ty. For this is only mans con-
gratulation and knowledge of
thy Majesty. We have known
thee, thou great Light, by reason.
we have known thee to be the
most wise and sensible God, O
true way of Life, O fruitfull
encrease of all naturall things;
we have known thee in the full
conception of thy whole na-
ture, we have known thee in
thy eternity, for in all this our
prayer adoring the bounty of
thy

Hermes Trismegistus. 127
thy goodnesse, we only beseech
thee, that thou wilt be pleased
to continue us in the love of
thy knowledge, and that by this
kind of life we be never separated
from thee: desiring this we be-
take us to a pure Supper with-
out flesh.

The
COMMENTARY.

*This Fifteenth Chapter religi-
ously endeth the Dialogue with
giving of thanks. When thank-
giving and adoration is ended,
Mercurius, Asclepius Amnon
and Tattius, the Four men which
filled the holy place or cloister, ac-
cording to the religious Rites of the
Egyptians, betake themselves to
a pure banquet not consisting of flesh:
and thus far Hermes, of the will of
God.*

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illa, quae non sapio,
Arbitror.*

Lux alia Solis, alia

Lychnoru

9e