

The Fifteenth Book

Of Truth to His Son Tat.

1. Hermes. Of Truth, O Tat, it is not possible that man being an imperfect wight, compounded of imperfect Members, and having his Tabernacle consisting of different and many Bodies, should speak with any confidence.
2. But as far as it is possible, and just, I say, That Truth is only in the Eternal Bodies, whose very Bodies be also true.
3. The Fire is fire itself only, and nothing else; the Earth is earth itself and nothing else; the air is air itself and nothing else; the water, water itself and nothing else.
4. But our Bodies consist of all these; for they have of the Fire, they have of the Earth, they have of the Water, and Air, and yet there is neither Fire, nor Earth, nor Water, nor Air, nor anything true.
5. And if at the Beginning our Constitution had not Truth, how could men either see the Truth, or speak it, or understand it only, except God would?
6. All things therefore upon Earth, O Tat, are not Truth, but imitations of the Truth, and yet not all things neither, for they are but few that are so.
7. But the other things are Falsehood, and Deceit, O Tat, and Opinions like the Images of the fantasy or appearance.
8. And when the fantasy hath an influence from above, then it is an imitation of Truth, but without that operation from above, it is left a lie.
9. And as an Image shews the Body described, and yet is not the Body of that which is seen, as it seems to be, and it is seen to have eyes, but it sees nothing, and ears, but hears nothing at all; and all other things hath the picture, but they are false, deceiving the eyes of the beholder, whilst they think they see the Truth, and yet they are indeed but lies.
10. As many therefore as see not Falsehood, see the Truth.
11. If therefore we do so understand, and see every one of these things as it is, then we see and understand true things.
12. But if we see or understand any thing besides or otherwise than that which is, we shall neither understand, nor know the Truth.
13. Tat. Is Truth therefore upon Earth, O Father?

14. Hermes. Thou cost not miss the mark, O Son. Truth indeed is nowhere at all upon Earth, O Tat, for it cannot be generated or made.

15. But concerning the Truth, it may be that some men, to whom God will give the good seeing Power, may understand it.

16. So that unto the Mind and reason, there is nothing true indeed upon Earth.

17. But unto the True Mind and Reason, all things are fantasies or appearances, and opinions.

18. Tat. Must we not therefore call it Truth, to understand and speak the things that are?

19. Hermes. But there is nothing true upon Earth.

20. Tat. How then is this true, That we do not know anything true? how can that be done here?

21. Hermes. O Son, Truth is the most perfect Virtue, and the highest Good itself, not troubled by Matter, not encompassed by a Body, naked, clear, unchangeable, venerable, unalterable Good.

22. But the things that are here, O Son, are visible, incapable of Good, corruptible, passible, dissolvable, changeable, continually altered, and made of another.

23. The things therefore that are not true to themselves, how can they be true?

24. For every thing that is altered, is a lie, not abiding in what it is; but being changed it shews us always, other and other appearances.

25. Tat. Is not man true, O Father?

26. Hermes. AS far forth as he is a Man, he is not true, Son; for that which is true, hath of itself alone its constitution and remains, and abides according to itself, such as it is.

27. But man consists of many things and doth not abide of himself but is turned and changed, age after age, Idea after Idea, or form after form, and this while he is yet in the Tabernacle.

28. And many have not known their own children after a little while, and many children likewise have not known their own Parents.

29. Is it then possible, O Tat, that he who is so changed, is not to be known, should be true? No, on the contrary, he is Falsehood, being in many Appearances of changes.

30. But do thou understand the true to be that which abides the same, and is Eternal, but man is not ever, therefore not True, but man is a certain Appearance, and Appearance is the highest Lie or Falsehood.

31. Tat. But these Eternal Bodies, Father, are they not true though they be changed?

32. Hermes. Everything that is begotten or made, and changed is not true, but being made by our Progenitor, they might have had true Matter.

33. But these also have in themselves, something that is false in regard of their change.

34. For nothing that remains not in itself, is True.

35. Tat. What shall one say then, Father, that only the Sun which besides the Nature of other things, is not changed, but abides in itself, is Truth?

36. Hermes. It is Truth, and therefore is he only intrusted with the Workmanship of the World, ruling and making all things whom I do both honour, and adore his Truth; and after the One, and First, I acknowledge him the Workman.

37. Tat. What therefore doth thou affirm to be the first Truth, O Father?

38. Hermes. The One and Only, O Tat, that is not of Matter, that is not in a body, that is without Colour, without Figure or Shape, Immutable, Unalterable, which always is; but Falsehood, O Son, is corrupted.

39. And corruption hath laid hold upon all things on Earth, and the Providence of the True encompasseth, and will encompass them.

40. For without corruption, there can no Generation consist.

41. For Corruption followeth every Generation, that it may again be generated.

42. For those things that are generated, must of necessity be generated of those things that are corrupted, and the things generated must needs be corrupted, that the Generation of things being, may not stand still or cease.

43. Acknowledge therefore the first Workman by the Generation of things.

44. Consequently the things that are generated of Corruption are false, as being sometimes one thing, sometimes another: For it is impossible they should be made the same things again, and that which is not the same, how is it true?

45. Therefore, O Son, we must call these things fantasies or appearances.

46. And if we will give a man his right name, we must call him the appearance of Manhood; and a Child, the fantasy or appearance of a Child; an old man, the appearance of an old man; a young man, the appearance of a young man; and a man of ripe age, the appearance of a man of ripe age.

47. For neither is a man, a man; nor a child, a child; nor a young man, a young man; nor an old man, an old man.

48 But the things that pre-exist and that are, being changed are false.

49. These things understand thus, O Son, as these false Operations, having their dependence from above, even of the truth itself.

50. Which being so, I do affirm that Falsehood is the Work of Truth.