

# PARACHEMY

Journal of Hermetic Arts and Sciences

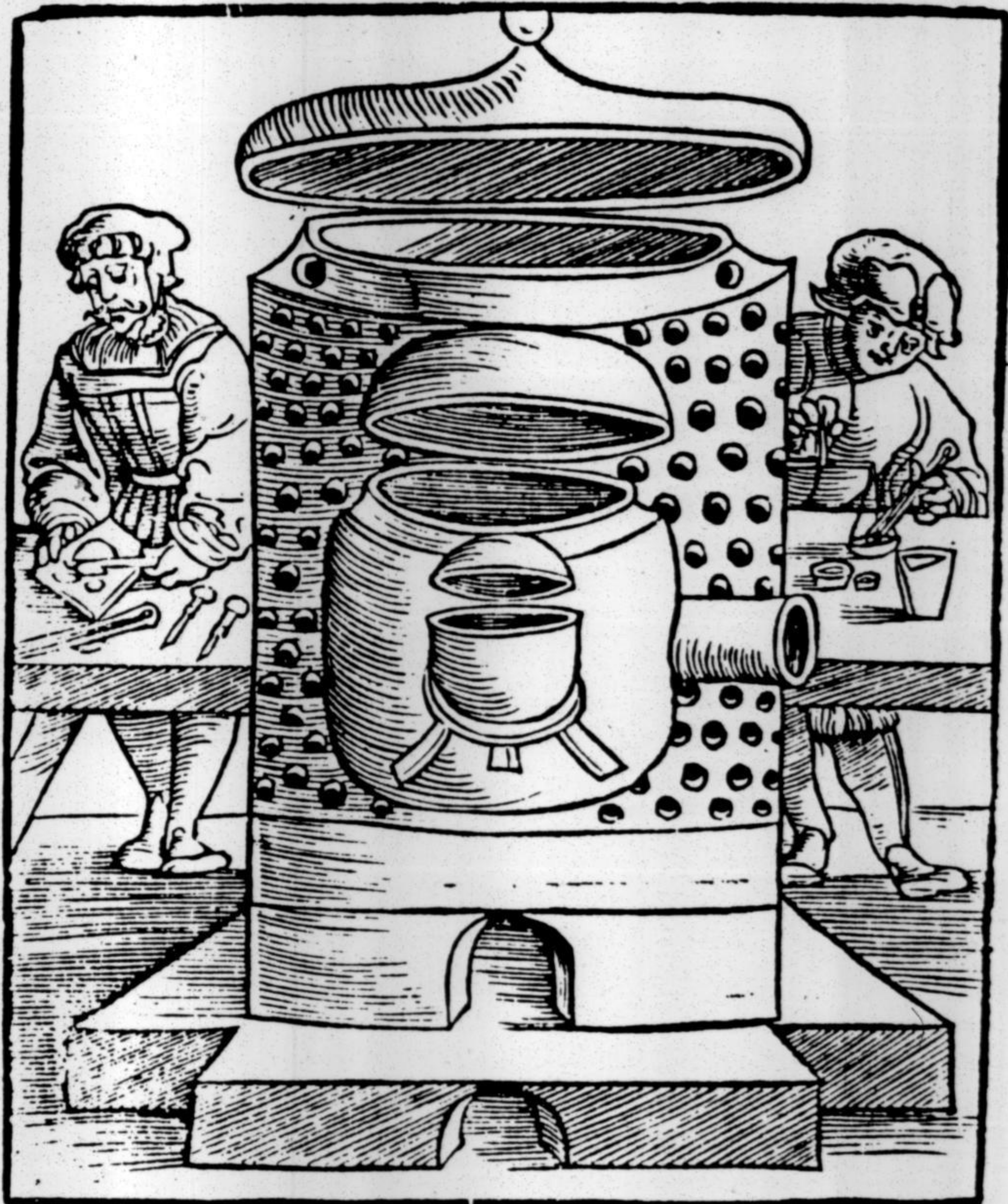
Astrology

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Alchemy

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Qabalah



Summer 1973

Volume 1, Number 3

# Parachemy

Journal of Hermetic Arts and Sciences

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*"The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and science."*

ALBERT EINSTEIN

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Summer 1973

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# Alchemy And Meditation

By

Robert Bremer

The great alchemist Gerhard Dorn wrote the following extraordinary words:

Within the human body there is hidden a certain metaphysical substance, known only to the very few, whose essence it is to need no medicament, for it is itself uncorrupted medicament. It is of a three-fold nature: metaphysical, physical and moral. Thus the attentive reader will conclude that one must pass from the metaphysical to the physical by a philosophic procedure.

In our view, this passage constitutes an amazingly concise summary of the alchemical work.

Time and again, we encounter persons who suffer from what we call the *either/or* syndrome. To them, *either* alchemy is a purely physical (and futile) laboratory pursuit—*or* it is a poetic analogy that was never intended to be taken literally. For the latter group, alchemy means we must turn the lead of our gross thoughts into the pure gold of religious platitudes, and that's all there is to it. When questioned about the physical laboratory apparatus with which alchemists worked, such persons dismiss it blithely, saying, in effect, that if the discovery of phosphorous was made by an alchemist (Hennig Brand), or if the virtues of antimony were illuminated by the work of an alchemist (Basil Valentine), it was merely the result of accidentally stumbling onto important facts after wandering through some vague metaphysical fog.

The opposite point of view holds that these men were determined, if rather misguided, pioneers in the field of science, and that their religious speculations are nobody's business but their own, and the less said about them, the better. After all, if a man discovers phosphorous, who cares what he thought about gnomes and spirits? If a man can teach us something about antimony, does it matter that he happened to be a devout member of a religious order?

The contemporary notion of priest *versus* scientist, monk *versus* nuclear physicist is very strangely inaccurate when we come up against the historical facts of the alchemical work. Science scoffs at the religious pretensions but accepts alchemy's important scientific discoveries. Religion scoffs at

the crude athanors and alembics and looks upon it all as a primitive exercise in religious mysticism.

Well, who is right?

The alchemists were deeply dedicated men who did not suffer from the fissure in our twentieth century souls, namely, that on the one hand there is God, on the other, there is matter, and never the twain shall meet. On the contrary, for the alchemist, God *is* in the world, and the world *is* in God. They were not victims of our contemporary blindness; that is why some of them succeeded in their work; that is why some of them have much of importance to convey to us today.

Here is another passage from Dorn that demonstrates further the beautiful confluence the alchemist experiences between the physical world and the non-physical:

There is in natural things a certain truth which cannot be seen with the outward eye, but is perceived by the mind alone. The philosophers have known it, and they have found that its power is so great as to work miracles.

This miracle, we suggest, is at work in the observation of a rose in your garden. This miracle is at work in the observation of a friend in your heart as well as your eyes. The *mysterium coniunctionis* of the alchemists, that mysterious marriage of the Sun and the Moon, is a conjunction of the most extraordinary scope, because it is a conjunction of physical fact with metaphysical reality.

This unique vision is not the result of a tersely factual pouring of acetic acid onto calcined stibium; nor is it the result of a mere figurative allusion that one given substance is the Sun and another, the Moon. Just as with physical facts, the quality of the ingredients has an important influence on the result, so in mental terms, the quality of the thought put into the work has a bearing on its ultimate success or failure. Dorn confirms this by saying:

In this truth lies the whole art of freeing the spirit from its fetters, in the same way that, as we have said, the mind can be freed from the body.

This last phrase—"the mind can be freed from the body"—is, as we see it, a direct reference to the meditative technique of the alchemist. But perhaps our word "technique" is not quite the correct one, for it seems to imply a formula of sorts, a preconceived set of ideas, whereas in truth, spontaneity is of the essence in meditation as it is in alchemy. Meditation is, after all, a kind of fishing into the subconscious for the wellspring of a truth. The conscious mind, selecting its subject or question (the 'bait') dips like a fishhook into the water. But the bait does not seek the fish.

The fish seeks the bait. And this is one of the most commonly misunderstood principles in all of metaphysics. We do not meditate. We *are* 'meditated.' To achieve this, we must be receptive.

Who among us is receptive?

Even in the privacy of our laboratory, don't we often tend to adjust flasks, measure substances, think in the jargon of the alchemical work as though we were really performing it? After all, '*I have studied for years; I have read the texts; I direct the course of this work.*'

Only God directs the work. And not one among us has access to the wellsprings of that wisdom unless we are receptive.

That is why alchemy is an art as well as a science. It is not only the art of directing the work as we understand it after being instructed by a book or a teacher; it is also the art of *receiving* the work, i.e., being receptive to it in our hearts, and letting the work refine us, even as we refine our work. That is the confluence of two worlds that the true alchemist experiences. We can, and must, strive for that through years of intellectual, physical and emotional effort, but in the end, we do not make it happen—we let it happen. And only through meditation is this "letting go" possible. To quote Dorn once again:

Thou wilt never make the One which thou seekest,  
except first there be made one thing of thyself.

This "one thing" is the one-pointed concentration and subsequent meditation of the devoted student. It involves and utilizes every level of his being. It brings those levels to a pitch of alertness previously unknown, and then, once attained, it lets go of them. The technique is familiar to readers acquainted with Zen, with Yoga, with Taoism, and with many other religious disciplines. But it has not been consciously identified with alchemy for the simple reason that alchemy is so widely misunderstood or even ignored, its terminology and methods being so notoriously obscure and complex.

Martin Ruland's *Lexicon of Alchemy* defines *meditatio* as follows:

The word MEDITATIO is used when a man has an inner dialogue with someone unseen. It may be with God, when He is invoked, or with himself, or with his good angel.

Clearly, then, the meditative aspect of the alchemical work is not merely cogitation, or simply sitting down and thinking about the work. To be sure, preliminary organization of the theory of a given procedure is essential; master the theory before the *praxis*. But meditation goes deeper than this, and involves a much more complex process. The point to be emphasized

is that meditation is an *inner dialogue*. We must select our terms for it with care, in attempting to describe it. The occultist will see it as a profound revelation from the Higher Self; the ceremonial magician, as the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel; the religionist as a form of prayer; the skeptic as an hypnotic trance; and the psychologist as a means of coming to terms with the contents of the unconscious.

Little wonder that the alchemist is said to begin his work with a *massa confusa!* Both in his mind and in his physical labors, he must sort out of the primal chaos a goodly order. If his thoughts are not in order, his substances will not be properly handled. And even at best, if both are in order, he must have the courage to dive deeper into his inner resources to understand the relationship between his own soul and that "soul" of matter with which he works. He can still expect to be attacked on the one hand by skeptical occultists for being too "literal" in using laboratory methods; and on the other by scientifically learned friends for being a religious sentimentalist over a few flasks and retorts.

So the alchemist, even today, has his own razor's edge to walk. But the challenge of the work goes beyond trite dismissals and defies the easy categories of those who try to explain it away. The man or woman who enters it with a prayerful and meditative heart can only benefit by its pursuit. Not one writer in this century or in those past can tell us the path is an easy one. Yet as Michael Maier has said:

There is in our chemistry a certain noble substance over whose beginning, affliction rules with vinegar, but over whose end, joy rules with mirth.

Finally, we draw from the wisdom of Morienus in instructing Khalid:

This thing for which you have sought so long is not to be acquired or accomplished by force or passion. It is only to be won by patience and humility and by a determined and most perfect love. For God bestows this divine and immaculate science on his faithful servants, namely those on whom he resolved to bestow it from the original nature of things. . . . Nor were they able to hold anything back save through the strength granted to them by God, and they themselves could no longer direct their minds save toward the goal appointed for them by God. For God charges those of his servants whom he has purposely chosen that they seek this divine science which is hidden from men, and that they keep it to themselves. This is the science that draws its master away from the suffering of this world and leads to the knowledge of future good.

# The Magistry

By W.B.

*The following short poem was dated December, 1633, and signed only with the initials W.B. It later appeared (in 1651) in a collection of alchemical works compiled by Elias Ashmole titled THEATRUM CHEMICUM BRITANNICUM, still considered one of the finest collections of alchemical works in English. This short poem exemplifies the efforts of early writers not only to summarize their work but to meditate on it—a point dealt with in another article in this issue—and to direct the reader to meditate as well on the alchemical message implicit in the ancient myths. The fifth stanza urges the student to a careful consideration of the myths of Cadmus and Jason, advice both given and followed three hundred years later by Fulcanelli in his famous work, LE MYSTERE DES CATHEDRALES. We have modernized the poet's spelling.* —Editor

Through want of skill and reason's light  
Men stumble at noon day;  
Whilst busily our Stone they seek,  
That lieth in the way.

Who thus do seek they know not what  
Is it likely they should find?  
Or hit the mark whereat they aim  
Better than can the blind?

No, Hermes' sons for Wisdom ask,  
Your footsteps she'll direct:  
She'll Nature's way and secret cave  
And Tree of Life detect.

Son and Moon in Hermes' vessel  
Learn how the colors show;  
The nature of the elements,  
And how the daisies grow.

Great Python how Apollo slew,  
Cadmus his hollow oak:  
His new raised army, and Jason how  
The fiery steers did yoke.

The eagle which aloft doth fly  
See that thou bring to ground,  
And give unto the snake some wings,  
Which in the earth is found.

Then in one room sure bind them both,  
To fight till they be dead,  
And that a Prince of Kingdoms three  
Of both them shall be bred.

Which from the cradle to his crown  
Is fed with his own blood;  
And though to some it seemeth strange,  
He hath no other food.

Into his virgin mother's womb  
Again he enter must;  
So shall the King by his new birth,  
Be ten times stronger just.

And able is his foes to foil,  
The dead he will revive:  
Oh, happy man that understands  
This medicine to achieve!

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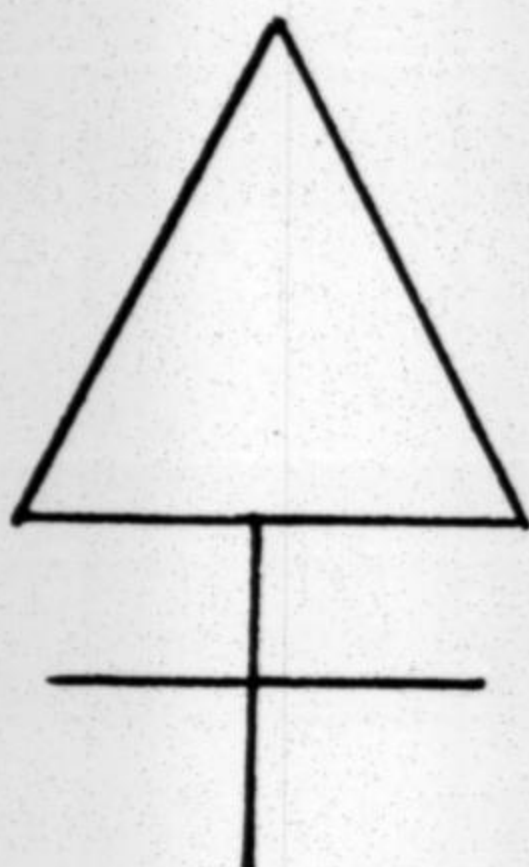
## Announcements

Teaching commitments and obligations to the International Alchemical Convention in Stuttgart, Germany, have made it impossible for Frater Albertus to contribute his regular article for this current issue of *Parachemy*. His articles will return with the Autumn issue.



On another page of this issue, we are pleased to announce a quatercentenary conference in celebration of the birth of Robert Fludd, an important figure in the Rosicrucian controversy of the seventeenth century. This conference, we feel, will be of interest to our readers, but we wish to emphasize that Paracelsus Research Society takes no active part in the conference. Therefore, all inquiries or correspondence should be addressed to Professor Godwin at the address noted in the announcement. We will keep our readers informed of progress made and information gained from this important conference.

Concerning . . .



## SULPHUR

By

Michael Sendivogius

*Translated from the Latin edition, Frankfurt, 1677*

*[Through generations and translations, misinformation abounds regarding one Michal Seziwoju, whose name has been Latinized to Michael Sendivogius (variously placed chronologically from 1556 to 1636 or 1646). Historians have presented vastly detailed biographies combining useful fact with much misleading fiction, and in the course of an unquestionably eventful life, Sendivogius has been credited with powers and performances beyond his worth. It was only after his dramatic rescue of the famed Scottish alchemist, Alexander Seton, from imprisonment and torture by the Elector of Saxony, that he gained prominence in the history of alchemy. In gratitude, Seton shared with Sendivogius his precious powder of transmutation, and shortly after Seton's death, Sendivogius married his widow, thus acquiring the secret notes and unpublished writings of the Scottish adept. These he edited and published, sometimes under the name COSMOPOLITA, a title by which Seton had been known, sometimes under his own anagram of DIVI LESCHI GENUS AMO. The following is taken from NOVUM LUMEN CHYMICUM. —Editor]*

Among the three principles the Sages have justly assigned the first place to Sulphur, as the whole Art is concerned with the manner of its preparation. Sulphur is of three chief kinds: that which tinges or colours; that which congeals mercury; and essential sulphur, which matures it. The properties and preparation of this Sulphur we propose to describe, not in a set treatise, but in a dialogue. . . . We will only say, by way of preface, that Sulphur is more mature than the other principles, and that Mercury

cannot be coagulated without it. The aim and object of our Art is to elicit from metals that Sulphur by means of which the Mercury of the Sages is, in the veins of the earth, congealed into silver and gold; in this operation the Sulphur acts the part of the male, and our Mercury that of the female. Of the composition and action of these two are engendered the Mercuries of the Philosophers.

In a former dialogue we gave an account of the meeting of Alchemists, which a sudden tempest brought to so abrupt a close. Among those who took a prominent part of the proceedings, was a good friend of the first Alchemist; he was not a bad man, or an impostor, but, as they say, nobody's enemy except his own; yet he was foolish withal, and though really very ignorant, had no small opinion of his own wisdom and learning. He had at the meeting been the foremost champion of the claims of Sulphur to be regarded as the first substance of the Stone, and was satisfied that he would have been able to make good that claim, if the meeting had not been prematurely broken up. So when he got home he resumed his operations on Sulphur in a very confident spirit. He subjected it to distillation, sublimation, calcination, fixation, and to countless other chemical processes, in which he spent much time and money, without arriving at any result whatsoever. His failures at length began to prey on his health and spirits, and in order to recruit the former, and raise the latter, he fell into the habit of taking long walks in the neighborhood of the town where he lived. But wherever he went he could think of nothing but Sulphur. One day, with his mind full of this besetting idea, and being wrought almost to an ecstasy, he entered a certain verdant grove, in which there was abundance not only of trees, herbs, and fruits, but also of animals, birds, minerals, and metals. Of water there was indeed a great scarcity; it was carried to the place by means of aqueducts, and among these was a conduit flowing with water extracted from the rays of the moon—but this water was reserved for the use of the Nymph of the grove. In the grove there were two young men tending oxen and rams, and from them he learned that the grove belonged to the Nymph Venus. The Alchemist was gratified enough, but all his thoughts were absorbed by the subject of Sulphur, and when he remembered the words of the Sages, who say that the substance is vile and common, and its treatment easy, when he recollected the vast amount of time, labour, and money which he had vainly spent upon it, he lifted up his voice, and in the bitterness of his heart, cursed Sulphur. Now Sulphur was in that grove, though the Alchemist did not know it. But suddenly he heard a voice which said: "My friend, why do you curse Sulphur?" He looked up in bewilderment: nobody was to be seen. "My friend, why are you so sad?" continued the voice.

*Alchemist:* Master, I seek the Philosopher's Stone as one that hungers after bread.

*Voice:* And why thus do you curse Sulphur?

*Alchemist:* My Lord, the Sages call it the substance of the Stone; yet I have spent all my time and labour in vain upon it, and am well nigh reduced to despair.

*Voice:* It is true that Sulphur is the true and chief substance of the Stone. Yet you curse it unjustly. For it lies heavily chained in a dark prison and cannot do as it would. Its hands and feet have been bound, and the doors of the dungeon closed upon it, at the bidding of its mother, Nature, who was angry with it for too readily obeying the summons of every Alchemist. It is now confined in such a perfect labyrinth of a prison, that it can be set free only by those Sages to whom Nature herself has entrusted the secret.

*Alchemist:* Ah! miserable that I am, this is why he was unable to come to me! How very hard and unkind of the mother! When is he to be set at large again?

*Voice:* That can only be by means of hard and persevering labour.

*Alchemist:* Who are his gaolers?

*Voice:* They are of his own kindred, but grievous tyrants.

*Alchemist:* And who are you?

*Voice:* I am the judge and the chief gaoler, and my name is Saturn.

*Alchemist:* Then Sulphur is detained in your prison?

*Voice:* Yes, but I am not his keeper.

*Alchemist:* What does he do in prison?

*Voice:* Whatever his gaolers command.

*Alchemist:* And what can he do?

*Voice:* He can perform a thousand things, and is the heart of all. He can perfect metals and minerals, impart understanding to animals, produce flowers in herbs and trees, corrupt and perfect air; in short, he produces all the odours and paints all the colours in the world.

*Alchemist:* Of what substance does he make the flowers?

*Voice:* His guards furnish him with vessels and matter; Sulphur digests it; and according to the diversity of the digestion, and the weight of the matter, he produces choice flowers, having their special odours.

*Alchemist:* Master, is he old?

*Voice:* Know, friend, that Sulphur is the virtue of the world, and though Nature's second-born—yet the oldest of all things. To those who know him, however, he is as obedient as a little child. He is most easily

recognized by the vital spirit in animals, the colour in metals, the odour in plants. Without his help his mother can do nothing.

*Alchemist:* Is he the sole heir, or has he any brothers?

*Voice:* He has some brothers who are quite unworthy of him; and a sister that he loves, and who is to him as a mother.

*Alchemist:* Is he always the same?

*Voice:* As to his nature, it is always the same. But in person his heart only is pure: his garments are spotted.

*Alchemist:* Master, was he ever quite free?

*Voice:* Yes, in the days of the great Masters and Sages, whom Nature loved, and to whom she gave the keys of the prison.

*Alchemist:* Who were these wise adepts?

*Voice:* There have been very many, and among them Hermes, who was one and the same with the mother of Sulphur. After him there were kings, princes, a long line of Sages, including Aristotle and Avicenna. All these delivered Sulphur from his bonds.

*Alchemist:* What does he give to them for delivering him?

*Voice:* When he is set free, he binds his gaolers, and gives their three kingdoms to his deliverer. He also gives to him a magic mirror, in which the three parts of the wisdom of the whole world may be seen and known at a glance: and this mirror clearly exhibits the creation of the world, the influences of the celestial virtues on earthly things, and the way in which Nature composes substances by the regulation of heat. With its aid, men may at once understand the motion of the Sun and Moon, and that universal movement by which Nature herself is governed—also the various degrees of heat, cold, moisture, and dryness, and the virtues of herbs and of all other things. By its means the physician may at once, without consulting an herbarium, tell the exact composition of any given plant or medicinal herb. But now-a-days men are content to trust to the authority of great writers, and no longer attempt to use their own eyes. They quote Aristotle and Galen, as if there was not much more to be learned from the great Book of Nature which is spread open before them. Know that all things on the earth and under the earth are engendered and produced by the three principles, but sometimes by two, unto which the third, nevertheless, adheres. He who knows these three principles, and their proportions as conjoined by Nature, can tell easily by their greater or less coction, the degrees of heat in each subject, and whether they have been well, badly, or passably cooked. For those who know the three principles know also all vegetables—by sight, taste, and odour, for these senses determine the three principles, and the degree of their decoction.

*Alchemist:* Master, they say that Sulphur is a Medicine.

*Voice:* Nay, you might rather call him a physician, and to him who delivers him out of prison, he gives his blood as a Medicine.

*Alchemist:* How long can a man ward off death by means of this universal Medicine?

*Voice:* Until the time originally appointed. But many Sages who did not take it with proper caution, have died before that time.

*Alchemist:* Do you call it a poison then?

*Voice:* Have you not observed that a great flame swallows up a small one? Men, who had received the Art by the teachings of others, thought that the more powerful the dose they took of our Medicine, the more beneficial would be the effect. They did not consider that one grain of it has strength to penetrate many thousand pounds of metals.

*Alchemist:* How then should they have used it?

*Voice:* They ought to have taken only so much as would have strengthened and nourished, without overwhelming, their natural heat.

*Alchemist:* Master, I know how to make that Medicine.

*Voice:* Blessed are you if you do! For the blood of Sulphur is that inward virtue and dryness which congeals quicksilver into gold and imparts health and perfection to all bodies. But the blood of Sulphur is obtained only by those who can deliver him from prison; and therefore he is so closely imprisoned that he can hardly breathe, lest he should come to the Palace of the King.

*Alchemist:* Is he so closely imprisoned in all metals?

*Voice:* In some his imprisonment is less strict than in others.

*Alchemist:* Why, Lord, is he imprisoned in the metals so tyrannously?

*Voice:* Because if he once came unto his royal palace, he would no longer fear his guards. He could look from the windows with freedom, and appear before the whole world, for he would be in his own kingdom, though not in that state of highest power whereto he desires to arrive.

*Alchemist:* What is his food?

*Voice:* His food is air, in a digested state, when he is free; but in prison he is compelled to consume it in a crude state.

*Alchemist:* Master, cannot those quarrels between him and his gaolers be composed?

*Voice:* Yes, by a wise and cunning craftsman.

*Alchemist:* Why does he not offer them terms of peace?

*Voice:* He cannot do so by himself: his indignation gets the better of his discretion.

*Alchemist:* Why does he not do so through some commissary?

*Voice:* He who could put an end to their strife would be a wise man, and worthy of undying honour. For if they were friends, they would help, instead of hindering each other, and bring forth immortal things.

*Alchemist:* I will gladly undertake the duty of reconciling them. For I am a very learned man, and they could not resist my practical skill. I am a great Sage, and my Alchemistic treatment would quickly bring about the desired end. But tell me, is this the true Sulphur of the Sages?

*Voice:* He is Sulphur; you ought to know whether he is the Sulphur of the Sages.

*Alchemist:* If I find his prison, shall I be able to deliver him?

*Voice:* Yes, if you are wise enough to do so. It is easier to deliver him than to find his prison.

*Alchemist:* When I do find him, shall I be able to make him into the Philosopher's Stone?

*Voice:* I am no prophet. But if you follow his mother's advice, and dissolve the Sulphur, you will have the Stone.

*Alchemist:* In what substance is this Sulphur to be found?

*Voice:* In all substances. All things in the world—metals, herbs, trees, animals, stones, are its ore.

*Alchemist:* But out of what substances do the Sages procure it?

*Voice:* My friend, you press me somewhat too closely. But I may say that though it is everywhere, yet it has certain palaces where the Sages can most conveniently find it; and they worship it when it swims in its sea and sports with Vulcan (god of fire), though there it is disguised in a most poor garb. Now is it in a dark prison, hidden from sight. But it is one only subject, and if you cannot find it at home you will scarcely do so in the forest. Yet, to give you some heart in your research, I will solemnly assure you that it is most perfect in gold and silver—most easily obtained in quick-silver.

With these words Saturn departed, and the Alchemist, being weary with walking, fell into a deep sleep, in which he saw the following vision: He beheld in that grove a spring of water, near which Salt and Sulphur were walking and quarrelling, until at last they began to fight. Salt dealt Sulphur a grievous wound, out of which there flowed, instead of blood, pure, milk-

white water, that swelled into a great river. In this river the virgin goddess, Diana, came to bathe; and a certain bold prince, who was passing by, was inflamed with great love towards her; which she, perceiving and returning pretended to be sinking under water. The prince bade his attendants assist her; but they excused themselves, saying that the river, though it looked small and all but dried up, was most dangerous. "And," said they, "many of those who have passed here before have perished in it." Then that prince threw off his thick cloak, plunged into the river, and stretched out his arm to save the beautiful Diana; but she grasped it so convulsively that they both sank under water together. Soon afterwards their souls were seen rising upward above the water, and they said, "We have done well, for in no other way could we be delivered from our stained and spotted bodies."

*Alchemist:* Will you ever return into those bodies?

*Souls:* Not while they are so polluted—but when they are cleansed, and the river is dried up by the heat of the sun.

*Alchemist:* What do you do in the meantime?

*Souls:* We soar above the water till the storm and the mists cease.

Then the Alchemist thought that he saw a great number of his fellows come to the spot where the body of the Sulphur lay slain by the Salt; and they divided it among themselves, and gave a piece to him also. Then they went home, and began to operate on their (dead) Sulphur, and are at it to this day.

Presently Saturn returned, and the *Alchemist* said: Master, come quickly, I have found Sulphur—help me to make the Stone.

*Saturn:* Gladly, my friend. Prepare the quicksilver, and the sulphur, and give me the vessel.

*Alchemist:* Oh, I do not want Mercury. It is a delusion and a snare, as my friend the other Alchemist discovered to his smart.

*Saturn:* I can do nothing without quicksilver.

*Alchemist:* Oh no, we will make it of Sulphur only.

So they set to work on that piece of dead sulphur, and sublimed, calcined, and subjected it to all manner of chemical operations. But they produced nothing save little bits of sulphurous tow, such as they use for lighting fires. Then the Alchemist confessed the fruitlessness of his endeavours, and bade Saturn set about the work in his own way.

Then Saturn took two kinds of quicksilver, of different substance but one root, washed them with his urine, and called them the sulphurs of sulphurs; then he mixed the fixed with the volatile, after which he placed them in a proper vessel, and set a watch to prevent the sulphur from

escaping; afterwards he placed them in a bath of very gentle heat—and thus they made the Philosopher's Stone, which must always follow as the outcome of the right substance. Then the Alchemist took it in his hand, admired its beautiful purple colour, and danced about with it, shouting aloud with joy and delight. Suddenly the glass slipped out of his hand and broke into a thousand pieces; the stone vanished; and the Alchemist awoke with nothing in his hand but some pieces of sulphurous tow.

There are a good many Alchemists who, having an extremely favourable opinion of themselves, and fancying that they can hear the grass grow, rail against this Art, because they think that if the Stone were not a mere delusion, they could not have failed to find it. We, for our part, are not over anxious to rob these people of their comfortable conviction. But to men who were worthy (men both of high and low degree) we have repeatedly proved the reality of our Art by incontestable ocular evidence. Let me warn those who wish to follow the true method in studying our Art, always to read with constant reference to natural facts, and never, under any circumstances, to do anything contrary to Nature. If the Sages say that fire does not burn, they must not believe it; for Nature is greater than the Sages; but if they say that it is the property of fire to dry and heat things, they will accept this statement, because it is in accordance with the truth of Nature—and the facts of Nature are always simple and plain. If any one came and taught you to make this Stone, as though he were giving you a recipe for making cheese out of milk, he might speak more plainly than I have done; but I am compelled to veil and conceal my meaning, because of the vow which my Master exacted of me.

My last words shall be addressed to you who have already made some progress in this Art. Have you been where the bridegroom has been married to the bride, and the nuptials were celebrated in the house of Nature? Have you heard how the vulgar have seen this Sulphur, as much as have you who have taken such pains to seek it? If you wish that even old women should practice your philosophy, shew the dealbation of these sulphurs, and say openly to the common people: Behold, the water is divided, and the Sulphur has gone forth; when it returns it will be whiter than snow, and will congeal the water. Burn the sulphur with imcombustible Sulphur, wash it, and make it white and purple until the Sulphur becomes Mercury, and the Mercury Sulphur, and you can proceed to quicken it with the soul of gold. Our Mercury must be corrected by means of Sulphur—otherwise it is unprofitable. A prince without a people is a wretched sight—and so is an Alchemist without Sulphur and Mercury. If you understand me, I have spoken.

The Alchemist went home, bewailed the broken Stone, and his folly in not asking Saturn about the Salt of the Sages, and the way of distinguishing between it and ordinary salt. The rest he related to his wife.

## CONCLUSION

Every student of this Art should first carefully read what is said—in this and other Treatises—about the creation, operation, properties, and effects of the four elements; otherwise he cannot apprehend the nature of the three principles, or find the substance of the Stone, or understand its development. God has created the elements out of chaos; Nature has evolved the three principles out of the elements; and out of these principles she makes all things, and gives power to her beloved disciples to produce marvelous preparations. If Nature produces metals out of the principles, Art must follow her example. It is one of the rules of Nature to act through intermediate substances; and this book should enable the student to judge what substances are intermediate between the elements and metals, and between metals and the Stone. The difference between gold and water is great, that between water and mercury not so great, and that between gold and mercury very small, for mercury is the habitation of gold, water the habitation of mercury, and sulphur is that which coagulates mercury. The whole arcanum lies hidden in the Sulphur of the Sages, which is also contained in the inmost part of their Mercury, which has to be prepared in a certain way that shall be described on another occasion.

I have not written this Treatise with the object of refuting the ancient Sages, but only for the purpose of correcting, explaining, and supplementing their statements. After all, they were only men, and they sometimes did make assertions which can now no longer be maintained. For instance, when Albertus Magnus says that gold was once found to have developed in the teeth of a dead man, he is out of harmony with the possibilities of Nature; for an animal substance can never develop into a mineral. It is true that animals and vegetables contain sulphur and mercury, as well as minerals; but these principles are animal and vegetable, not mineral. If there were no animal sulphur in man, the mercury of his blood could not be congealed into flesh and bones; and if plants contained no vegetable sulphur, their mercury or water (sap) would not be congealed into leaves and flowers. The three kinds of sulphur are essentially the same, but, like the three mercuries, they are differentiated according to the three kingdoms, and cannot act outside their own kingdoms. Each kind of mercury can be coagulated by none but its own sulphur, and if gold was found in the teeth of a dead man, it must have been introduced in an artificial manner—either as gold, or in the shape of some other metal which by the gradual action of its own metallic sulphur on its metallic mercury, was afterwards transmuted into gold. It is mistaken impressions and superstitious notions, like this one of Albertus Magnus, that we have set ourselves to correct in this Treatise, by stating once for all the true facts of animal, vegetable, and mineral development.

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Let the painstaking student be satisfied to have received a true account of the origin of the Three Principles. There is no greater help towards a successful end than a good beginning. I have in this Treatise started the student on the right road, and given him clear and practical directions. With God's blessing, and by dint of diligent and persevering study, he may now fairly hope to reach the glorious goal. But I, having told out all that is lawful for me to utter, now commit myself to the mercy of a loving Creator, who will receive me to Himself; and I commend the gentle and pious Reader to the same great Father of All, to whom be praise and glory, through the endless succession of the ages. †

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### THE PRIMA MATERIA

*If we wish to know nature we must learn to know God, and God cannot be known without a knowledge of one's own divine self. The spiritual substance of which external visible nature is an imperfect expression and manifestation has been called PRIMA MATERIA; it is the material for the formation of a new heaven and a new earth. It is like "water," or a "crystalline ocean," if compared with our grossly material earth; it is at once fire, water, air, and earth, corporeal in its essence, and nevertheless incorporeal relatively to our physical forms.*

*In it as the "chaos" are contained the germs or seeds or potencies of all things that ever existed, and of all that ever will exist in the future. It is the soul, or CORPUS of nature, and by means of the magic fire, it may be extricated from all substances and be rendered corporeal and visible. It is a unity, and nevertheless a trinity, according to its aspects as Sulphur, Mercury and Salt. These three are distinct qualities characterising the spirit of light, and nevertheless they are nothing different from the essence of the light, and this light is eternal nature, or the soul of the world.*

FRANZ HARTMANN

# ROBERT FLUDD

1574-1637

A Quatercentenary Conference  
In Celebration of His Birth

Oxford, England

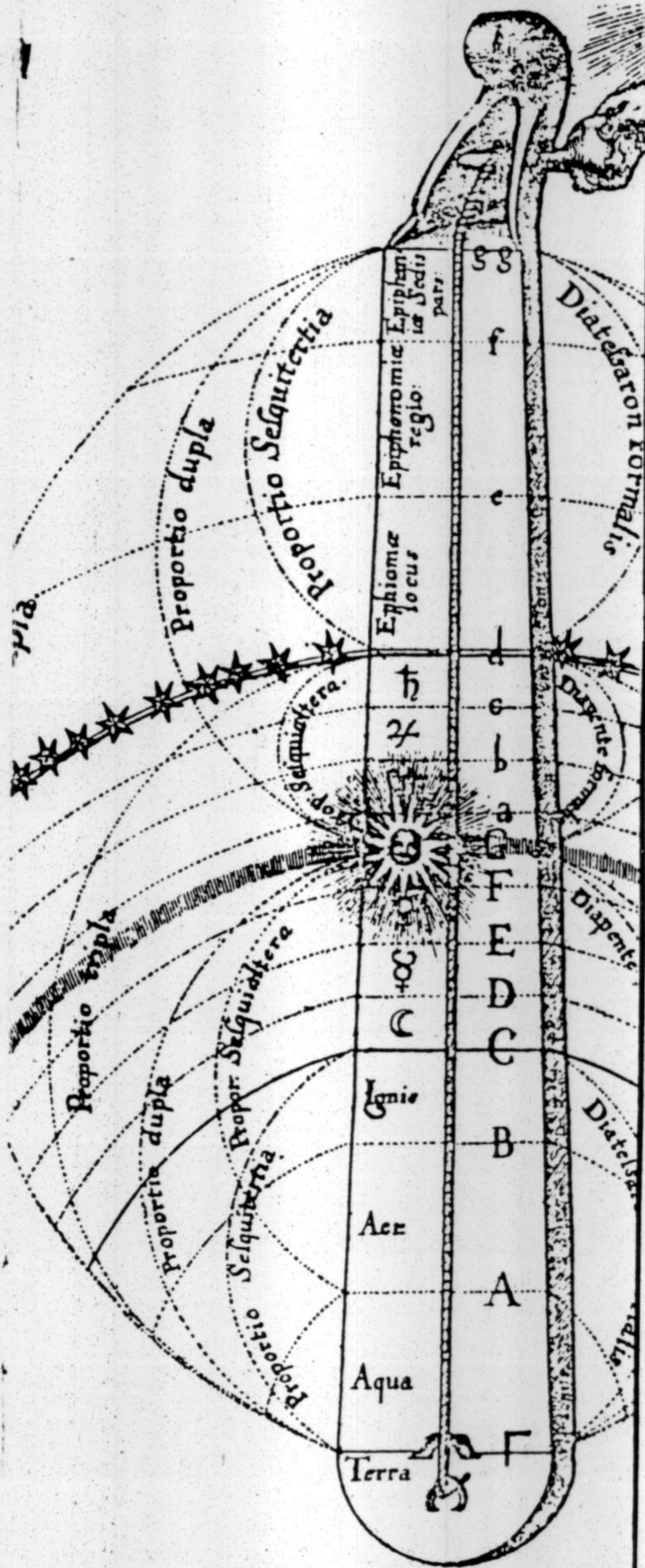
August 31 - September 1, 1974

In the past decade there has been a considerable resurgence of interest in the work of Robert Fludd. His attempt to assemble the totality of human knowledge within a religious framework was doomed to oblivion, appearing as it did at the beginning of the scientific age. Now, however, he can be recognized as an important representative of less "scientific" currents in Renaissance thought.

The Conference will take place in Oxford, where Fludd attended St. John's College. It will provide a forum for those interested in Renaissance philosophy, metaphysics, and magic, as well as for historians and scholars in other disciplines who are concerned with the ideas current in Europe during Fludd's time.

Abstracts of papers and proposals for seminars and discussions should be submitted before May 1, 1974. Contributions are also welcome that do not bear directly on Fludd, but which serve to illuminate his work and period.

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