

# Adam McLean's Study Course on reading alchemical texts

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## Lesson 3 : The different types of alchemical works : Part 2 – The philosophical.

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There are many texts which we recognise as alchemical and yet which are not directly concerned with describing actual laboratory experiments. Even early in the history of alchemical texts we find many works which take a more philosophical perspective. We see this, for example, in the writings of Zosimos dating from the 4th and 5th centuries A.D., often thought of as the earliest of alchemical texts. Some of his writings are accounts of practical operations while other sections are of a philosophical nature. These are from his book *On the letter Omega*.

*The reverberatory furnace, said Mary, includes at the top three nozzles, or braces, or exhausts. Feed it with Greek rushes, gradually, during two or three days and as many nights, in accordance with what the bath of dye contains and let it dry up in the furnace. Make the asphalt run to the bottom during a whole day, while adding the substances that you know and the white or yellow copper.*

Here we have a straightforward practical description, while a section from later in the same group of works is philosophical and allegorical.

*My friend, build a temple from a single stone, similar to white lead, to alabaster, neither having beginning nor end in its construction. Let there be a source inside of very pure water, sparkling like the sun. Observe carefully on what side is the entrance to the temple and take a sword in hand; look then for the entrance, because the place where the opening is located is narrow.*

*A snake is lying at the entry, protecting the temple. Seize it. Firstly, you will immolate it; then strip it, and taking its flesh and its bones, separate its members; then uniting the members with the bones at the entrance of the temple, make a stairway out of it. Go up this and enter, and you will find there what you seek.*

It is obvious that we cannot read these two sections in the same way. So alchemy has from its very beginning incorporated both practical laboratory work and speculative and philosophical writings. Within what we are here labelling ‘philosophical’ alchemical texts there are a number of different types of writings. It is important to come to see the differences between these.

**1. Cosmological texts.** A number of alchemical writers thought it important to explore a cosmological dimension in their writings. They felt that the world was formed through a kind of alchemy, and that we could get closer to understanding alchemy if we thought about how the creation of the world came about. Some believed that the Creator himself acted like a great alchemist when he brought the world into being.

A piece from Thomas Vaughan's *Aula Lucis, or, the House of Light*, printed in 1651, is representative of this type of text.

*Trismegistus, in his vision of the creation, did first see a pleasing, gladsome light, but interminated [without end]. Afterwards appeared a horrible sad darkness, and this moved downwards, descending from the eye of the light, as if a cloud should come from the sun. This darkness — he said — was condensed into a certain water, but not without a mournful, inexpressible voice or sound, as the vapors of the elements are resolved by thunder. After this — said that great philosopher — the Holy Word came out of the light and did get upon the water, and out of the water He made all things. Let it be your study then — who would know all things — to seek out this secret water, which hath in itself all things.*

The text we looked at (in order to misinterpret it) in the first lesson, Crasselame, *The Light coming out of the Darkness*, is a clear example of this type of work.

*The dark Chaos had come out as a confused mass from the depth of the Nothing, on the first sound of the almighty Word, and one would have said that disorder made it, and that it could not be the work of a God, formless as it was. All things in it were in a deep rest, and the elements in it were confused, because the divine Spirit did not yet distinguish them.*

*Who could now tell in which way the Heavens, the Earth and the Sea have been formed so light in themselves, and so vast, taking into account their wide spread? Who could explain how the Sun and the Moon have received the movement and the light, and how everything we see down here, has its form and its being?*

*Who could eventually understand how every thing has received its own denomination, has been animated by its proper spirit, and while coming out of the impure and unordered mass of the Chaos, has been regulated by a law, a quantity and a measure?*

*O you, children and imitators of the divine Hermes, to whom the science of your father showed the nature discovered, only you, only you know how this immortal hand has formed the Earth and the Heavens out of this formless mass of the Chaos; since your Great Work shows clearly that God has created all things in the same way that your Philosophical Elixir is made.*

**2. Works that present philosophical theories about alchemy.** Many alchemical writers wanted to present a theory about alchemy to their readers. Some of these are well argued and explained, while others were derivative, relying on quotations from older writers. Among these many theories, we will illustrate the Sulphur-Mercury theory, which saw metals as arising out of these two primal substances, and another theory of metal formation which proposed that metals grew in the earth from seeds.

Firstly from *The mirror of alchemy* supposedly written by Roger Bacon [c.1214-1294], but more likely written sometime in the 15th century. 'Argent-vive' (quicksilver) is a common name for Mercury.

*Of the natural principles, and procreation of Minerals.*

*Secondly, I will perfectly declare the natural principles and procreations of minerals: where first it is to be noted, that the natural principles in the mines, are Argent-vive, and Sulphur. All metals and minerals, whereof there be sundry and diverse kinds, are begotten of these two: but, I must tell you, that Nature always intends and strives to the perfection of Gold: but many accidents coming between, change the metals, as it is evidently to be seen in diverse of the philosophers' books. For according to the purity and impurity of the two aforesaid principles, Argent-vive, and Sulphur, pure, and impure metals are engendered: to wit, Gold, Silver, Steel, Lead, Copper, and Iron: of whose nature, that is to say, purity, and impurity, or unclean superfluity and defect, give ear to that which follows.*

*Of the nature of Gold:- Gold is a perfect body, engendered of Argent-vive pure, fixed, clear, red, and of Sulphur clean, fixed, red, not burning, and it wants nothing.*

*Of the nature of silver:- Silver is a body, clean, pure, and almost perfect, begotten of Argent-vive, pure, almost fixed, clear, and white, and of such a like Sulphur: It wants nothing, save a little fixation, colour, and weight.*

Here is a classic statement of the Sulphur-Mercury theory. In this theory Nature would always wish to make gold out of the Sulphur and Mercury inside the earth, but various accidents and circumstances intervene and the less noble metals are often formed. Gold is seen as being formed by a pure red Sulphur and a red Mercury, while silver is a result of the mixing of a white form of Sulphur and Mercury.

The idea that metals grew in the earth from a metallic seed was another of the key theories that developed to explain how metals came about. Some alchemists thought that if one could parallel this growth of metals which they saw taking place in Nature, and reproduce this in their flasks then they could grow gold. The seed from which gold would grow was often seen as the philosophers' stone.

*All philosophers affirm, with one consent, that metals have a seed by which they are increased, and that this seminal quality is the same in all of them; but it is perfectly ripened in gold only, where the bond of union is so fixed that it is most difficult to de-compound the subject, and procure it for the Philosophical Work. But some, who were adepts in the art, have by painful processes taken gold for their male, and the mercury, which they knew how to extract from the less compacted metals, for a female: not as an easier process, but to find out the possibility of making the stone this way; and have succeeded, giving this method more openly to conceal the true confection, which is most easy and simple. We shall, therefore, set*

*before the reader a landmark, to keep him from tripping on this difficulty, by considering what is the seed wherein the metals are increased, that the artist may be no longer at a loss where to seek for it, keeping in view the writings of our learned predecessors on this subject.*

- From an anonymous work 'On the Stone of the Philosophers',  
printed in the *Collectanea Chemica* edited by A.E. Waite, printed in 1894.

Sendivogius writes clearly of this in his *Novum Lumen Chemicum* ('The New Chemical light'), first printed in the opening decade of the 17th century.

#### *How metals are produced in the Bowels in the Earth*

*The metals are produced in this way: after the four elements have projected their power and virtues to the centre of the earth, they are, in the hands of the Archeus of Nature distilled and sublimed by the heat of perpetual motion towards the surface of the earth. For the earth is porous, and the air by distillation through the pores of the earth is resolved into a water out of which all things are generated. You should know that the seed of metals is the same, in the first instance, as the sperm of all other things, viz., a vaporous moisture... Some think that each metal has its own seed. But this is a great mistake for there is only one Seed. The sperm which appears in Saturn is the same as that which is found in gold, silver, copper, &c.; their difference is caused by the place, and by the time during which Nature was at work upon them, the procreation of silver being achieved sooner than that of gold, and so with the other metals. The vapour which is sublimed by heat from the centre of the earth, passes either through cold or warm places. If the place be warm and pure, and contain adhering to it a certain fatness of sulphur, the vapour (or Mercury of the Sages) joins itself to its fatness, and sublimes it together with itself. If in the course of its further sublimation this unctuous vapour reaches other places where the earth has already been subtilized, purified, and rendered moist by previous ascending vapours, it fills the pores of this earth, and with it becomes gold. But if this unctuous moisture be carried to impure and cold places, it becomes lead; if the earth be pure and mingled with sulphur, it becomes copper. For the purer the place is, the more beautiful and perfect will the metal be. We must also note that the vapour is constantly ascending, and in its ascent from the earth's centre to its superficies, it purifies the places through which it passes. Hence precious metals are found now where none existed a thousand years ago, for this vapour, by its continual progress, ever subtilizes the crude and impure, and as continually carries away the pure with itself.*

Sendivogius presents here a variation on the metal seed theory, in his view that there are not individual seeds for each metal, but instead only one general metallic seed. Depending in what environment in the earth in which it grew, this seed could develop into the different metals.

There were a number of philosophical theories which appeared in the alchemical writings. We will find these in the texts we will look at in later lessons.

**3. Paracelsian alchemy.** The early 16th century doctor Paracelsus was very influential on alchemy, and a distinct "Paracelsian" alchemy arose in the century after his death. This attracted a number of alchemists and doctors, and we can recognise a definite group of Paracelsist writings. One distinguishing feature is that they use alchemy to create mineral medicines, and thus arose

Iatrochemistry, that is, alchemy applied to medicine. Paracelsus introduced a number of new terms into alchemy. One, 'Iliaster', we have seen in the first lesson in the extract from *The light coming out of darkness*. It is not always easy to understand what such Paracelsian terms mean, often the precise meaning has to be derived from the context. Iliaster usually seems to mean the primordial principle behind a thing or aspect of the world. Other Paracelsian terms are 'Archaeus', 'Astrum', 'Ens', 'Cacoastrum', 'Mumia', 'Evestrum', 'Ilech', 'Yliadum' among others. We will not need at this time to know their meanings as we shall look at this in more detail in a later lesson. Paracelsus promoted ideas such as the doctrine of signatures which suggested that a medicinal substance somehow bears the image, pointer or signature of the disease it can cure. He also expanded the idea that substances were made from the intermingling of two primal substances, by introducing the idea of the three principles, Salt, Sulphur and Mercury, that are found in all substances. Here is a typical example of a Paracelsist statement from the writings of Rudolph Glauber.

*Therefore this tincture is an universal medicine, like an invisible fire consuming all diseases, howsoever they are predominant. Its dose is very small, but the preparation of it most potent. With it, by me, the leprosy, venereal lues, dropsy, epilepsy, colic, rosy-drop, (Gutta Rosacea) and like diseases, have been cured and healed; also, the wolf, cancer, Noli me Tangere, fistula's, and other internal diseases, more certainly, than can be believed; of which Germany, France, Italy, Poland, Bohemia, etc., will give a testimony large enough.*

*Now, you Sophister, behold Theophrastus Paracelsus, and consider how your Apollo, Machaon, and Hypocrates, natural physicans, sought this tincture for resisting diseases, because all physicans aim at long life, and by this universal, they, for the most part, obtained it, and that very efficaciously; and according to their own arbitrimet, named it the Tincture of Naturalists. For in all medicine, what can be greater, than such a cleansing of the body, by which every superfluity is totally eradicated, and transmuted? The seed being found, all things are perfect. What profits the evilly founded purgation of sophisters, since it removes nothing of that, which should be taken away? Wherefore the most excellent foundation of a true physican is, regeneration of nature, and restoration of youth: Then, that new essence, expels all whatsoever is adverse to itself. For this regeneration, the powers and virtues of the Tincture of Naturalists were strangely found out, and until our time used by true spagyrist, and absconded [hidden away] as a secret.*

We see in this text that Glauber is using the idea of the alchemical tincture, not for transmuting metals but rather to restore the health to a human being. To a Paracelsist, or even an alchemist partly influenced by Paracelsus' ideas, the disease process in the human body could be pictured like an imperfect metal, corroded away. Just as the alchemists tried to produce a medicine for metals, to cure them of their rusts and corrosion so that they became perfect like gold, so the Paracelsists sought to do the same with human diseases. Paracelsist ideas are quite complex and we will look at them in more detail later.

**4. Alchemical allegories.** There is found in alchemical literature a large number of allegorical writings, in which the writer tries to present the alchemical process to the reader in the form of a (usually short) story, which often involves a central figure being led on a journey through a series of transformations.

*I was buried in a most profound sleep when I thought I saw a statue of about 15 ft high*

*representing a venerable old man, beautiful and perfectly well proportioned in all the parts of his body. He had a great head of hair of silver, all waving; his eyes were fine turquoises, in the middle thereof were carbuncles, enchasing the lustre whereof was so resplendent, that I could not behold the light. His lips were of gold, his teeth of oriental pearls, and all the rest of his body made of a most shining ruby. He touched with his left foot a terrestrial globe, which seemed to support him: having his right arm lifted up, stretched out, he seemed with his fingers ends to hold up a celestial globe upon his head, and in his left hand he held a key made of one great rough diamond.*

*This man approaching said to me: I am the genius of the wise men, fear not to follow me. Then taking me by the hair, with that hand wherein he held a key, he made me cross the regions of the air, that of fire, and the heavens of the seven planets. He carried me still further on, then having tossed me in a tornado, he disappeared and I found myself upon an island floating on a sea of blood. Surprised to be in so far distant our country, I walked upon the shore, and considering this sea with great attention, I perceived the blood it was composed of was living and all warm. I observed also, that a very gentle wind which stirred it without ever ceasing maintained its heat and excited in this sea a boiling which cast in all the island a motion almost imperceptible.*

- From the allegorical section of a work supposedly by Bernard Trevisan

This is typical of such allegories. Our hero is sleeping when he is taken up and led on a journey through the strange landscape of the allegory. Through this he becomes transformed.

To some extent we can see that the first such allegories were quite simple and to some extent seem to be read as paralleling actual physical alchemical operations, but later the literature becomes more elaborate. Here is an early example, from the allegory of Duenech,

*After Pharut put Duenech in a bed with white sheets and covered him well, so that he might not be killed by the smoke of the nearest furnace. Then he gave him clear water, in consequence of which Duenech began to sweat so strongly that the white sheets were completely stained. The black bile had been dissolved in the whole of Duenech's body. Thereupon Pharut prepared another bed for him, the bolster of which was filled with the feathers of a young, black eagle, and the pillow with swans' feathers; on the bed a black sheet and a white cover were laid. Duenech was put in this bed and all air holes were entirely closed so that neither sweat nor vapour might escape. This bed was heated and Pharut rubbed Duenech's body and feet with evil-smelling oil until the black bile had spread to the top of his head. From the change of colour it was clear that Duenech became unconscious several times. Pharut opened Duenech's mouth and rejoiced when he saw that Duenech's palate was white. At last he laid the exhausted monarch into a third bed and revived him there with water and oil, mixed with sulphur.*

*When Duenech looked at himself, he saw that he was freed from melancholy and had new, healthy blood, and that he surpassed all his fellow-soldiers in power.*

We can see that this allegory could be read and translated into actual physical alchemical terms. Later allegories can be much more complex and not easy to read into laboratory practices. For example the allegory in the *Metamorphosis of the Planets*, is extremely complex and extends to 80 pages or so. I have recently written an entire study course on this one work as it is so difficult to understand. Allegories, of course, used imagery, and some works had actual pictures included in

them. Alchemical allegories are very often entirely misunderstood by modern writers, who immediately translate the imagery in the text into a mess of modern ideas. It is important, in order not to entirely misunderstand these often confusing allegories that we read them in the context of alchemical ideas and not in the language of 20th century depth psychology or contrived esotericism.

**5. Spiritual alchemy.** The early hermetic writings, such as the *Corpus Hermeticum*, influenced many alchemists. These presented a spiritual or religious philosophy using alchemical ideas. Here is part of the opening section of the first book of the *Corpus Hermeticum*.

*This is, O Son, the Guide in the way that leads thither for thou must first forsake the Body before thy end, and get the victory in this Contention and Strifeful life, and when thou hast overcome, return.*

*But now, O my Son, I will by Heads run through the things that are: understand thou what I say, and remember what thou hearest.*

*All things that are, are moved; only that which is not, is unmovable.*

*Every Body is changeable.*

*Not every Body is dissolvable.*

*Some Bodies are dissolvable.*

*Every living thing is not mortal.*

*Not every living thing is immortal.*

*That which may be dissolved is also corruptible.*

*That which abides always is unchangeable.*

*That which is unchangeable is eternal.*

*That which is always made is always corrupted.*

*That which is made but once, is never corrupted, neither becomes any other thing.*

*First, God; Secondly, the World; Thirdly, Man.*

*The World for Man, Man for God.*

*Of the Soul, that part which is Sensible is mortal, but that which is Reasonable is immortal.*

*Every essence is immortal.*

*Every essence is unchangeable.*

*Every thing that is, is double.*

*None of the things that are stand still.*

*Not all things are moved by a Soul, but every thing that is, is moved by a Soul.*

*Every thing that suffers is Sensible, every thing that is Sensible suffereth.*

*Every thing that is sad rejoiceth also, and is a mortal living Creature.*

*Not every thing that joyeth is also sad, but is an eternal living thing.*

*Not every Body is sick; every Body that is sick is dissolvable.*

*The Mind in God.*

A number of later writers, unwilling perhaps to undertake laboratory alchemy, or practice as doctors, began to use alchemical ideas as the basis for a spiritual philosophy. Among these was the influential mystic Jacob Boehme, who wrote his extensive mystical works during the early 17th century. Some of these clearly use ideas from Paracelsist alchemy.

*The Mother of all Beings is Sulphur, Mercury is her life, Mars her sense, Venus her love, Jupiter her understanding, Luna her corporeal essence, Saturn her husband. You must*

*reconcile or lovingly betroth the Man with the Woman; for the Man is angry, yet give him his dear Spouse into his arms; but see that the Spouse be a virgin, wholly chaste and pure; for the Woman's seed shall break the Serpent's Head, namely the Man's anger...*

*The chaste Virgin signifies in the philosophic work the clear Deity, the Humanity is Mercury, Sulphur and Salt, both heavenly and earthly. The heavenly property is disappeared, and as a Nothing. The deadly property in the wrath is stirred up and lives to the anger, and in the properties of the anger. The Humanity, both in Adam and Christ, was tempted.*

In this lesson we have looked at some of the major species of what we can broadly label as 'philosophical' alchemical writings. We will be exploring the ways of reading these different works later in the course. Many alchemists wrote a work using two or more of these different broad styles. Thus in one section or chapter, they might be dealing with cosmological perspective while at another point in their work they might discuss some alchemical theory. As always, alchemists were deeply individualistic and usually pursued their own perspective. They did not always neatly fit into categories. However, it will be found to be a useful tool for our exploring alchemical texts, to be able to see these different categories of alchemical writings.

As an exercise we should now look at some short extracts from alchemical works and try and identify into which of these five broad categories they fall. As with the previous lesson, we should not at this stage try and understand the full contents of each of these bits of text. What we should try and do is to attempt to identify what particular type of philosophical alchemical text it is. Being able to realise what the author is trying to do in his text will help us put it in a proper context and thus ultimately be able to read it correctly. Works, say of Paracelsian alchemy, can be better understood when one reads them in conjunction with other Paracelsian works. Works of alchemical cosmology often draw on each other, so being able to place a work like this in that context, against a background of other such cosmological pieces, will assist us in understanding the work itself. Alchemy is primarily a literary tradition. Alchemical writers read and were familiar with the works of other alchemists. Therefore, it is important to see an individual alchemist's writings against the background of the books he had read and felt most comfortable with. We cannot really understand any alchemical work by itself in a vacuum. Instead, each alchemical work stands in the stream of other alchemical writings. We can really only understand it when we see how it draws on and reflects the writings that preceded it. An important part of this is for us to be able to see what type of work it is. Thus the exercises will provide us with some short extracts from a variety of different philosophical works. We have to try and identify into which type they generally fall.



## EXERCISE 1

*As I was now on the way and my heart was full of thoughts, it happened that I met a venerable old peasant between two mountains. He was clothed in a long grey cloak or smock, on his hat he had a black ribbon, around his neck a white banner, a yellow belt about his body, and also red boots on his feet.*

*After I had greeted him and approached him more closely, I became aware that in his hand he held two star-like flowers, each with seven rays. The one white and the other red, which he was contemplating. They were very beautiful and radiant in colour, lovely in scent and sweet to the taste. Also the one was feminine and the other masculine, and yet both grew out of one root and under the influence of all the planets.*

*I asked the peasant what he meant to do with these flowers, for, although I knew them both well, I did not know that they had an *Opinionem Distinctam* [separate reputation] as man and woman, that is, that they were of two distinct natures. He looked at me earnestly, asking who had led me to this unusual place, for it was sought by the most exalted men of the world, but it was closed and barred to them.*

*However, after I had told him of the wonderful course of my life, of which I have already mentioned something, he laughed and, turning to me in a friendly manner, he said: "You should know that no one may attain to the knowledge of these flowers unless he is predestined for it, or unless he achieves it by means of diligent prayer and strong, firm faith, and even then it is not given to him without great effort, trouble and tribulation, as you yourself must confess. And this is so in order that those who possess it remember this, and learn to esteem this Mystery more highly and to keep it secret. But since you have now come so far, I will show you, with the permission and licence of the *Divina Numinis*, that from these two flowers comes the *Prima Materia* of all metals, but only after their *Conjunction*, and not before it. Concerning this Count Bernhardus calls these two flowers a red man and a white woman. However, because of the dangers involved, the philosophers have always written of the *Prima Materia*, in order to conceal its root from the unwise, and have remained completely silent about the *Secundae Materiae*. For you must first obtain the *Secundam Materiam*, which is crude and itself the *Subiectum Lapidis*, and must extract from it the man and the woman, which only after their conjunction turns into the *Prima Materia*, which I thus reveal truthfully to you."*

From Grasshof, *Lilium inter spinas*, 1623

## EXERCISE 2

*Light Supreme, who art the Divine in Nature and dwellest in its innermost parts as in Heaven, hallowed be thy qualities and laws!*

*Wherever thou art, all is brought to perfection; may the realm of thy Knowledge become subject unto thee.*

*May our will in all our work be only thee, self-moving Power of Light!*

*And as in the whole of Nature thou accomplishest all things, so accomplish all things in our work also.*

*Give us of the Dew of Heaven, and the Fat of the Earth, the Fruits of Sun and Moon from the Tree of Life.*

*And forgive us all errors which we have committed in our work without knowledge of thee, as we seek to turn from their errors those who have offended our precepts.*

*And leave us not to our own darkness and our own science, but deliver us from all evil through the perfection of thy Work, Amen.*

A prayer for alchemists by Karl von Eckartshausen (1752-1803)

## EXERCISE 3

*For whatsoever virtues the Herb either green or dry abounds withal, its Essence possesses the same much more excellently, as being what is brought into a small compass, and so multiplied. whereas otherwise a good part of the Herb goes to the said contained virtues; especially of our Herbs here in Germany, in which the virtue is widely dispersed, and it is therefore far more advisedly done to collect them into a narrower space, that they may be the more commodiously administered. It is well worth noting, that we can search out the virtues of all Vegetables by their Signature, far better than by reading those books that are composed of scraps from one, and scraps from another. Neither is it so well always to acquiesce in the writings of the Ancients, who also remained ignorant of such things as God did not teach them, by Nature. Pray what Master is there of knowledge that never erred from the truth? And who is it that you can in all things safely trust?*

*O! I could wish, that we could but read, and understand the writings and signs of the said herbs, by which it speaks with us, we should not need so many seducing books. Who I pray exalted Moses, Daniel, Joseph, Solomon, and many other philosophers, to such an height of wisdom and art? It was only God, who yet lives and can at any time easily do whatever he formerly could. Who can doubt as touching him, when God minds the enlightening or blessing of any one with his gifts, he makes no use of any books, for this purpose, and so instruct out of them, nor doth he dispute or controvert with him. We should seek unto this Master and learn from him, and not out of the elegantly written Arabian, Greek and Latin books. But now the world is come to such an height of pride and error, that it can neither believe nor comprehend that any one can learn ought but in the Schools, and yet the most expert and most famous men that ever lived in the world, arrived to that famous light of Nature without making use of the Schools, and the things that they wrote, they did not publish them in a strange language, but in their own mother tongue, as is sufficiently evident....*

*As concerning the signature of herbs, by which God teaches us their hidden virtues, many things might be said, and it were to be wished, that such a knowledge were earnestly desired, and sought after by all those that deal in Physick, and do thence-from get their food, there would not then be so much need of troubling ones brains with so many foreign and domestic writings, where you shall find one gainsaying another, and so leave they as doubtful what party we were best addict ourselves unto and believe; but now we may easily find out the certainty and truth by their signature, and distinguish what is erroneous, and proceed on with more safety in all the practise, yea and in time too (by God's permission) come into a far better state. And here you are to remember, that the signature of herbs, do show a physician their virtues as well as books do, for indeed they rather trace by paths, than walk in the way of truth. And here would be a very convenient place to treat of the signatures of vegetables, but forasmuch as I have written a peculiar book concerning them (which God willing) shall suddenly come abroad, let the friendly reader have a little patience and expect it, wherein he shall find things wonderful and unheard of.*

From Rudolph Glauber's *Spagyricall Pharmacopoea*, 1654.

## EXERCISE 4

**Question.** *After what manner are metals conceived in the womb of the earth?*

**Answer.** *When the four elements have developed their power or virtue in the centre of the earth, and have deposited their seed, the Archeus of Nature, in the course of a distillatory process, sublimates them superficially by the warmth and energy of the perpetual movement.*

**Q.** *Into what does the wind resolve itself when it is distilled through the pores of the earth?*

**A.** *It resolves itself into water, whence all things spring; in this state it is merely a humid vapour, out of which there is subsequently evolved the principiated principle of all substances, which also serves as the first matter of the Philosophers.*

**Q.** *What then is this principiated principle, which is made use of as the first matter by the Children of Knowledge in the philosophic achievement?*

**A.** *It is this identical matter, which, the moment it is conceived, receives a permanent and unchangeable form.*

**Q.** *Are Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Venus, the Sun, the Moon, etc., separately endowed with individual seed?*

**A.** *One is common to them all; their differences are to be accounted for by the: locality from which they are derived, not to speak of the fact that Nature completes her work with far greater rapidity in the procreation of silver than in that of gold, and so of the other metals, each in its own proportion.*

**Q.** *How is gold formed in the bowels of the earth?*

**A.** *When this vapour, of which we have spoken, is sublimed in the centre of the earth, and when it has passed through warm and pure places, where a certain sulphureous grease adheres to the channels, then this vapour, which the Philosophers have denominated their Mercury, becomes adapted and joined to this grease, which it sublimates with itself; from such amalgamation there is produced a certain unctuousness, which, abandoning the vaporous form, assumes that of grease, and is sublimed in other places, which have been cleansed by this preceding vapour, and the earth whereof has consequently been rendered more subtle, pure, and humid; it fills the pores of this earth, is joined thereto, and gold is produced as a result.*

**Q.** *How is Saturn engendered?*

**A.** *It occurs when the said unctuousness, or grease, passes through places which are totally impure and cold.*

**Q.** *How is Venus brought forth?*

**A.** *She is produced in localities where the earth itself is pure, but is mingled with impure sulphur.*

**Q.** *What power does the vapour, which we have recently mentioned, possess in the centre of the earth?*

**A.** *By its continual progress it has the power of perpetually rarefying whatsoever is crude and impure, and of successively attracting to itself all that is pure around it.*

From the Hermetic Catechism of Baron Tschoudy, 18th Century.

## EXERCISE 5

*Into darkness then did descend the spirit of God,  
Upon the watery chaos, whereon he made his abode.  
Which darkness then was on the face of the deep,  
In which rested the Chaos, and in it all things asleep.  
Rude, unformed, without shape, form or any good,  
Out of which God created all things as it stood.  
But first he commanded a light to appear,  
That all might be seen, that before was hid.  
And God saw that the light was good and clear,  
And the darkness and light he did then divide,  
Calling the one day, and the other night,  
For darkness [to] obscure (and day for shining bright).  
And a firmament then God did let make,  
To sever the waters above from those below;  
And divided the Earth from the waters also,  
Wherein greatly his power he did show.  
Then out of this Chaos, the four elements were made:  
Heat and cold, moist and dry, in like wise,  
Which are the beginning of all creatures wide,  
That under the globe of Luna do abide.  
The quintessence (that some men it call)  
Was taken out of the Chaos before the four elements all:  
Which is the first being, as we may descry,  
And uncorruptible, whereof was made the sky,  
And celestial bodies all, which do never die.*

*Of the Division of Chaos.* An alchemical poem by the physician, astrologer, magician and alchemist, Simon Forman (1552-1611). Bodleian Library Oxford, MS Ashmole 240.

## EXERCISE 6

*Trismegistus, in his vision of the creation, did first see a pleasing, gladsome light, but interminated. Afterwards appeared a horrible sad darkness, and this moved downwards, descending from the eye of the light, as if a cloud should come from the sun. This darkness — he said — was condensed into a certain water, but not without a mournful, inexpressible voice or sound, as the vapours of the elements are resolved by thunder. After this — said that great philosopher — the Holy Word came out of the light and did get upon the water, and out of the water He made all things. Let it be your study then — who would know all things — to seek out this secret water, which hath in itself all things. This is the physical and famous Pythagorean cube, which surprises all forms, and holds them prisoners. "If anywise," said my Capnion, "a form implanted in this ground remain thereon; if it enters therein and does abide in such solid receptacle, being laid up therein as in a material foundation; it is not received at random nor indifferently but permanently and specially, becoming inseparable and incommunicable, as something added to the soil, made subject to time and to place, and deprived — so to speak of its liberty in the bondage of matter."*

*The consequences of this prison, which sometimes are sad, and the steps that lead to it, are most elegantly expressed in the oracles. "A steep descent extends beneath the earth, leading seven ways by stages and beneath which is the throne of a horrible necessity."*

*In a word, all things in the world — as well events as substances — flow out of this well. Hence come our fortunes and our misfortunes, our riches and our poverty, and this according to the scales of the Supreme Agent, in his dispensations of light and darkness. We see there is a certain face of light in all those things which are very dear or very precious to us. For example, in beauty, gold, silver, pearls, and in everything that is pleasant or carries with it any opinion of happiness — in all such things I say there is inherent a certain secret, concomitant lustre, and while they last the possessors also are subject to a clearness and serenity of mind. On the contrary, in all adversity there is a certain corroding, heavy sadness, for the spirit grieves because he is eclipsed and overcast with darkness. We know well enough that poverty is but obscurity, and certainly in all disasters there is a kind of cloud or something that answers to it. In people that are very unfortunate this darkness has a character, and especially in the forehead there lies a notable judgment; but there are few who can read in such books.*

From Thomas Vaughan, *Aula lucis, or, The House of Light*. A discourse written in the year 1651.

## EXERCISE 7

*That Urim and Thummim were given on the Mount cannot be proved, yet it appears they are potential from the Creation, for they were substances whose name and essence did predicate each other, being convertible terms. The name and essence is one, the words signify light and perfection, knowledge and holiness, also manifestation and truth; even as science and essence make one perfection. It is likely they were before the Law was given, for the Almighty commanded Noah to make a clear light in the Ark, which some take for a window, others for the arching and bowing of the upper deck a cubit (Genesis 8, 22), but since the text said Day and Night shall no more cease, it seems it did then cease, and whether there were one or many windows is uncertain. But when the windows of Heaven were opened, and the air darkened by pouring out rain, the Sun not giving his Light, but prohibited the generative spirit of the creatures in the Ark, what exterior clearness could be expected, therefore some of the Rabbis say the Hebrew word Zohar, which the Chaldee translates Neher, is not found in the scripture but in this place, so that like the word it seemed to be a rare Light, and that which is generally doubted to be, the Creator commanded Noah to make by Art. Other Hebrew Doctors say it was a precious stone hung in the midst of the Ark, which gave light to all living creatures therein, this the greatest carbuncle could not do, nor any precious stone that is only natural, but the Universal spirit fixed in a transparent body shines like the Sun in glory, and gives sufficient light for all the room to unveil by. Therefore it is most probable this was the light that God commanded Noah to make, to give light to all living creatures, for it is of perpetual endurance.*

*And whereas Tubal Cain is said to be a perfect Master of every artificer in brass and iron, which some hold doth contain the whole and perfect decoction of the metallic virtue, wherein the central virtue is most abundant, and makes the happy more admired, who walks in the midst of the stones of fire (Ezekiel 28,16), for where there are two things of our nature the chief is to be understood, therefore in the mansion of fire, pure fire is preferred.*

*The scarlet veil in the Temple seemed ever moving and signified pure fire generative and moving, which when fixed in clear bodies is Urim and Thummim, although essences are not without great difficulty made manifest by themselves, yet the clear vision thereof makes the possibility unquestionable, as at Elisha's prayer his servant saw the horses and chariots of fire about his master, which before he saw not, so are these apparent when the Invisible is made Visible.*

*Some think that Urim and Thummim were not artificial because they are said in the text (Exodus 28, 30) to be put into the Breastplate, but not to be made, but this point may be cleared by observing the several kinds of making, as between those things made with hands, and those things that are only made visible by effect, for when Nature and habitual virtue meet together the perfection is more absolute by a kind of new generation, as the purity of metals by an inward power does purge itself by ebullition, not by the first and remote causes but by the second and nearer, whereof the Philosophers said, the secret of all secrets is such a disposition which cannot be perfected with hands, for it is a transmutation of natural things from one thing to another. Also it is said the Artist takes impure spirits and by sublimation, Nature and Art, cleanseth them into bodies pure and fixed, so that the bodily nature doth eternally predominate, and being more than perfect doth give perfection to other things.*

From *The Glory of Light* in Ms. Ashmole 1415.

## EXERCISE 8

*I, Ben Adam, saw a vision at night, and beheld the four Elements fought one against another in a way of battle, and behold two swallowed up the other two. Afterward these two fell out one against the other, and the one swallowed the other, and so but one was seen. And behold that same one, which stood alone, and had swallowed up the other three, had no more that same look or frame, which it had at first. For the other three, which lay closed up in the others belly altered their former shape so ugly and terribly informed, that it looked no more so, as it did formerly; for it looked black and horrible, yet it could be discerned, that it was one of the four, and not a strange one, and yet it was not that, which it was at first. Because it had three in its belly, which altered their nature and being, because it was all the four, and yet was none of them, but like as a fifth one, sprung up out of the four, and yet not five, but was only one.*

*And there came suddenly a great clap which made the earth quake, then have I heard a strong voice, saying : “The battle is allayed, as these four have agreed and are become one. The gate is opened, out of which thou goest, and suffereth thyself to be seen, of those, which seek after thee, therefore rise and show they birth, thy father, who hath begotten thee, and they mother, which hath borne thee.”*

*And I saw a mighty angel rise out of the midst of the earth, who was clad with a cloud, and a rainbow upon his head, and his countenance like unto the sun, and his feet are white as snow, like pillars of sugar, beneath which was dark as night, and in his left hand he had a double serpent, but in his right hand he had a golden book opened.*

*And with his right foot he pointed to the sea, and with the left to the earth, saying: “I do that which I am commanded to do”.*

*And he cried with a loud voice like to the repost of a canon, and when he cried with a loud voice there appeared seven planets, and they did speak their voices. And when these planets had done speaking, they all were like unto the sun, so that none could be discerned from the other.*

*A vision of Ben Adam, Printed at Amsterdam 1698.*



## EXERCISE 9

*Paracelsus, the searcher of secrets, in his writings, earnestly persuades the true physician, that is desirous to be instructed, both in the science and use of medicine, to be well acquainted with the signatures and hieroglyphic characters of things; and among other excellent services done to the republic of medicine, he declares, that there are three ways, by which Nature pretermittin no notable thing, manifests man, and all created things. First by Chiromancy, which is the natural astrum of things, and comprehends the external parts of man, as hands, feet, lines, veins. Secondly by physiognomy, which compriseth the face and head. Thirdly by habit and proportion, manners, and use of the whole body, denoting the senses of the mind and cogitations of the heart. After him John Baptista Porta of Naples, a famous phyropta, and most prudent emulator of Nature, in his Physiognomonica, hath set for an excellent work for public profit. From these more perfect, I also thought it expedient to take occasion of this matter, to write of these high and accurate things. He which comes in Autumn, (to whom I hold a light) may taste the sweet cane, and eat more ripe fruits. These few observations of mine, consigned (for it is difficult to tread in unknown paths) to the students of signatures, who with me, are not ashamed to learn, I freely would have common, which both by reading Paracelsus and Porta, and also by my own experience, I have found conveniently and analogically harmonious: for it suffices to publish what we know, till greater light be manifested. It had been well, if that so much desired book of the most excellently learned Carrichter, Of Plants and Signatures of Things, had been set forth to public view, wherein in a wonderful and harmonious manner, he conforms the Terrene stars of plants, to the stars of the firmament; the knowledge of which would indeed be gratefully received by the botanic public good.*

*Stars, according to Paracelsus, are the forms and matrices of all herbs and every star in heaven, is no other, but a herb prefigured in a spiritual and catholic manner, representing the like of every vegetable in the earth. So every herb is a Terrene star growing towards heaven; and every individual star, is a celestial herb in a spiritual form, in nothing differing from herbs growing in the earth, save only in the matter: therefore stars by their excrements, and nostoch [a Paracelsian term for a slime], preannounce all future diseases. Likewise the celestial herbs tend downward toward the earth, and respect their proper herbs procreated by them. This foundation being known, known also will be the constellations and composition of celestial and terrestrial herbs, viz. this is the star of rosemary, wormwood, etc. and hath the virtues of them. Also in terrene herbs this will be observed, that as many colours of flowers, so many virtues of herbs. Nothing is placed in the family of plants either unadvisedly or in vain, but in a rare manner, from their seasonable ordained causes, are produced in exact number, time, and place. And as in things mute the gesture is instead of speech, by the motion of the body declare the affects of the their sense: so also God to every plant hath insited its discoverer, that the genuine virtues of herbs latently absconded by their external signatures, that is, by the similitude of their form and figure (as by indexes of their office, essence, and latent virtues) may by their aspect be known, discovered, and manifested: yea so as in the manner aforesaid, by their signatures they magically seem to speak to us.*

*Oswald Croll of Signatures of Internal Things, 1608.*

## EXERCISE 10

*Philochrysus: Pray what do you mean by an Inherent Curse, and how do you appropriate it to the Terrestrial Gold.*

*Philadelphus: Know what is the Blessing and you cannot fail to know what is the Curse in Nature. There is an Inherent Blessing in every creature, and there is also an Adherent Blessing. Without the former God could never have pronounced them good, and without the latter they could never have been serviceable to man, or to the rest of their fellow creatures. A privation, or loss, in either of these kinds, is called the Curse. And as it has diverse degrees and is variously specified, so takes it up diverse names, as Death, Darkness, Hades, Sheol, the Turba, the Left Hand, the Seed of the Serpent, the Mist out of the Earth, Lilith, Arimanius, Poison, the Blood of the Old Dragon, the Prisons, the North, and many others.*

*The benediction now of both kinds may be lessened, hidden or removed either in part of in whole. The Adherent Benediction may possibly admit of a total remove and separation, but the inherent can never do this without the destruction and annihilation of the subject wherein it is. Whence though it may be hid, yet can it never be separated without the entire disunion of its constituent and vital principles. Which are not perishable, but endure the same, notwithstanding all the cortices, veils, and coverings, wherewith they may be overcast or oppressed, and which are said to be under the president-ship of so many evil Angels.*

*Behold then here is Wisdom to take away the Inherent Curse from the creature, and to cause the disappeared Blessing to reappear, and exert forth itself. Now shall you understand how this curse is to be appropriated to the terrestrial Gold, and how the contrary Blessing is to be predicated of the celestial. But in the first place you are to take notice, that as the inherent is here less than in any other subjects of the same Kingdom and Order, so the Adherent Curse is greater. In the second place you are to observe that the primary and Radical principles being (as to us) invisible in themselves, the secondary and elementary, which may be made visible, can be here only examined into.*

*In the third place, I am now to acquaint you that these elementary principles, which I call also Spermatical, as I call the former Seminal, are vastly different in the state of pure and of corrupt Nature.*

*For in pure nature there is found a bright living crystalline water, full of spirit, power and energy; but in Nature corrupted there is a water that is opposite to this, being without Light, Life, or purity, without spirituality or strength, and void of all benign efficacy. Wherefore as a stagnated pool remote from the sun beams, or as a dead insipid phlegm, is not to be regarded or valued, so likewise there is found a bright, living and crystalline earth (such as hath been, and such as will be, and such as is even at this time, when it appears not, except to some few) which is sometimes compared to fine silver, and is called the Salt of the Earth. And in this Blessed earth is locked up the Spirit, Energy and Seed of the Mineral and vegetable kingdoms in their purest constitution, yea and of the animal too. For that it contains in itself the Fire of Nature, by which the wheel of her Magia, according to all the seven forms and spirits is set to work.*

*On the contrary there is a dull, dead and opaceous earth that is mixed more or less with all terrestrial subjects, and that may by Art be separated from them. This is the Curse of the Earth which must be taken away and dissolved, before the Blessed and new Earth can appear, wherefore it is called the Damned Earth.*

*From A Conference betwixt Philochrysus and Philadelphus On the Philadelphian Gold possibly written by Francis Lee, 1697.*

## EXERCISE 11

*The first Similitude demonstrates unto us that God by his great power and infinite bounty hath created this earth all equal, fat and fertile without sands, without stones, without mountains or valleys, by the influence of the stars and operation of nature. Notwithstanding, we now see that it retains nothing of the ancient lustre, but rather disfigured from his perfection, that hardly can it be known to be the same thing it was being outwardly changed into diverse forms and figures of strong stone, of high mountains, and deep valleys, and inwardly into wonderful things, diverse colours, diverse minerals, diverse salts and sundry metals. And although those confused and contrary things are found at this present in the bowels of the Earth, yet they proceed all interiorly from the same first form, then when of a most large, gross profound, and largeness that it had at the beginning it is brought into a grand and vast Lustre by help of the continual operation of the Sun, the heat thereof being always there conserved vehement, burning and vapourous, mingling itself confusedly even to the very Center of this gross mass with the cold and moist which is shut up in the same body*

*From whence some times arise cold vapours cloudy and airy, which some of the mixture of those two contrary regents, from which being stayed, and enclosed within the Earth in length of time, many other vapours do brood so strong that at the last that she is constrained to make way for them to exhale by the opening of the womb, giving unto them (in spite of her power) free passage. Whereas she would rather have desired to retain them in the natural dens of her most profound caves where many of them being gathered pell-mell together in long continuance of time rise suddenly upon heaps many parts of the earth in one place by the united force of the exhalations and many others in other places.*

*Yet notwithstanding the mountains and the valleys are to some purpose, principally it helps the earth to a better temperature of the four qualities, heat, cold, moist and dry. Decoction in a manner decocted and diminished. Now in those places we there find the best and purest metals. This reason does much enforce that in low grounds where the earth is flat and plain there is not so great quantity of vapours nor so many sulphurous exhalations therefore it is more calm and quiet. That which is fat and slimy and where the humidity from above drains itself downward, and enters thereinto becomes more tender and soft changing itself into an extreme Whiteness by the means principally of a drought proceeding from the heat of the Sun which makes it more strong more digested and more hardened after a long time. But a corruptible, frangible sandy earth and which yet being somewhat tender hanging in Goblets as Grapes of a Vine is ordinary more wan and by consequence having less nourishment to compact the substance thereof is not so lively having retained little humidity or vigorous nourishment.*

*From The Golden Fleece, or Flower of Treasures (Splendor Solis) 16th century.*

## EXERCISE 12

26. *He that can join light with darkness can multiply things in their own kind, and change the nature of them.*
27. *The Universal Vital Spirit coming down from Heaven, pure, clear, and uncontaminated is the father of the particular vital spirit which is in everything, for it increases and multiplies it in the body; from whence the bodies borrow the power of multiplying themselves.*
28. *As the first Vital Spirit lies in the mercurial humour that is common and free, and the vital Spirit of particular things is resident in that mercurial humour imbued with the virtue of that body whose it is, which they call radical moisture.*
29. *He that can join a Spirit impregnate with the virtue of one body with another, that is now disposed to change, may produce many miracles and monsters.*
30. *The first variety of the disposition of bodies proceeds from the various concoction of Water.*
31. *The second, from the various mixtures of the three principals, Salt, Sulphur, and Mercury.*
32. *These dispositions flow from the various positions of the stars, especially from the Sun.*
33. *Every thing has so much vitality as is required to produce the natural actions of the species.*
34. *Nothing begins to be made that does not receive some vitality from Heaven by which it can work somewhat.*
35. *He that knows how to infuse the propitious Heaven or Sun into things, or the mixtures of things, may perform wonders, and hereupon depend all magical operations.*
36. *By how much the disposition or the subjects are more formal, so much more of this life they receive, and so much more powerfully they work.*
37. *As in the eye, the operations are more noble than in the foot, although they both proceed from the same Soul, because of the variety of this organ apt to receive a greater portion of life; So the constellated characters because of their formality receive a greater portion of Spirit from Heaven and perform noble actions.*
38. *This Spirit continually flows from Heaven and back again to Heaven, and in the flowing is found pure and unmixed, and therefore may by a skilful workman by wonderful means be joined to anything, that increase the virtues of it according to the disposition of the subject.*
39. *The Heart of Heaven is the Sun, which by light distributes all things, as well to the stars, as to the Earth.*
40. *Opaque is nothing else but a body either wanting light or having the light asleep in it.*
41. *He that can by light draw light out of things, or multiply light with light, he knows how to add the universal spirit of life to the particular spirit of life, and by this addition do miracles.*

‘A hundred aphorisms containing the whole body of magic’ in Ms. Sloane 1321.

## EXERCISE 13

*After I had considered and contemplated all these matters... it seemed to me that I stood upon a thorn or a sharp stone, and saw these visions in a deep valley. Then I heard something rustling behind me, as though someone were wearing a silken garment. Suddenly I grew afraid and looked behind me. There appeared an old ice-grey man with a long beard that reached to his belt. He was wearing a long black garment. In one hand he held a compass, in the other a carpenter's square.*

*As he went wordlessly past me, toward the ball, he grew ever taller and larger, until the ball reached only to his belt (although it was really higher than a house) and his head reached to the Sun. Then he set his compass in the centre and circumscribed the ball, so that it became perfectly round. After this, he placed his compass on the carpenter's square, and spoke. "It is one times three multiplied by itself." Then he placed the compass again on the top of the ball and measured the distance from this to the firmament, and again from the firmament to the highest Star. He cried with a terrible voice, "This is one out of four separated by the three." Next he drew two lines from the uppermost star to the ball, such that they intersected one another, so that a triangle was formed. After this he made a quadrangle from the centre with the compass, such that one corner was at the centre of the ball, and a white dove sat on the opposite corner, which he called the Spirit of the Conjunctions and the Vivificationis. But the two remaining corners were united with the two corners of the triangle. Then a flame of fire shot forth to the lines made by the triangle and remained there.*

*Up from below there came a white glistening star, whose rays spread outwards and intermingled in the middle of the quadrangle. This star grew blood-red and shined so brightly that I could not look directly at it. It had a threefold circle or halo around it, the innermost ring golden-yellow, the second red, and the third blood-red. The light from this star grew so intense and powerful that the uppermost Star, and the Sun and the Moon of the firmament lost their radiance and turned blood-red. Likewise the earth lost its greenness, and everything turned red, for a fire shot forth from the star, which burned up the ball together with the entire firmament, so that nothing more remained, neither Sun, nor Moon, nor anything in heaven or on earth.*

*After this the star split in two, like a mirror or a round disk, and a new ball appeared in it. This was bright and transparent and green as an emerald. Above it stood the sun, also transparent and very bright, indeed, much brighter than it had shined before. The entire firmament was there as well, but it did not revolve. Then the old man cried "Praise be to God, for Evil has now been suppressed, and Truth has again been revealed. Delight, you children of light; the darkness has an end. The Sun shall never set again, but rather it shall shine on you from Eternity to Eternity, and shall never more be darkened," And then he vanished.*

*Then the Principal said to me: "Observe and note this figure well, which for you is the meaning of the entire Work. In this the whole Secret of Secrets resides, in natural as well as supernatural things, which are not possible for men to comprehend.*

From Franz Kieser, *Cabala Chymica*, 1606.

## EXERCISE 14

*As Man was created on the last day of Creation, so on the first day God created Light. Let us consider this Light.*

*It is nothing else but the first fiery spiritual body of the Threefold God, who in the beginning suspended a fog or mist over the waters, which with its living working strength gave it its soul and made it fruitful, God then took this living Fire, placed it in the heavens and called it Light. God then took this Light, and with its strength impregnated the earth and every creature with His Likeness, so that all created beings should have a portion of this Light.*

*Therefore say Solomon, "Gods' imperishable Spirit is in all". This specificated light is given to all living creatures, it is also a part of the universal and inexhaustible strength which nourishes and holds all things. This Light is the universal working Fire which the Wise call Nature or the object of all Wonder, Spirit, Sperma, Hyle Archaeum, or the Universal Spirit, for all the strength of nature is in it, and we see in this spiritual Wisdom the bodily earth. The Hermetists say that "as above so below". As long as this spirit hovers in its own sphere, it is universal and can draw to itself diversity of forms in three different kingdoms, Metallick, Vegetable and Animal, but as soon as it has specificated itself it is no longer universal and becomes one with the body which it inhabits. All creatures have their beginning in this spiritual body and through it comes the magnetism of nature, for the creature has its root in spirit from which it broke off and for which it continually yearns; and is drawn too and maintained and also made essential. It augments and multiplies vegetation.*

*This Light or Universal Heavenly Fire of Nature, the life and movement of all things remains as long as God wills it, nourishing vegetation; for it is an imperishable strength which the curse of God did not lessen over the Earth and its substance. For were this not so the heavenly fire could not have increased the cursed earth nor given fruit to vegetation, and the world would have come to an end. But it gives continious motion and life and its souls' strength until God decrees the end of the world and brings it to Judgement.*

*As this Light was first from God in heaven, the planets obtained this Light by proximity, which gave them life and passed on this life to their lower physical bodies. The life of the Planets is dependant upon continious movement, ensured through the influence of the Heavenly Light. Therefore Bechard says; "The Sun is either hot or cold to itself, but its movement is naturally hot."*

*In their circular movement or path they form a certain figure and stand in the heavens in the following order: SATURN, JUPITER, MARS, SOL, VENUS, MERCURY, & LUNA; and while the Planets influence that which is below not above, it is apparent that all their strengths are given to all births; the source of the Seven spirits, named the Seven Forms.*

*From I.C.H. Of Nature and Art, 1781.*