

THE BOOK OF
**THE REVELATION
OF HERMES¹**

INTERPRETED BY
THEOPHRASTUS PARACELSUS

CONCERNING THE SUPREME SECRET
OF THE WORLD

Hermes, Plato, Aristotle, and the other philosophers, flourishing at different times, who have introduced the Arts, and more especially have explored the secrets of inferior creation, all these have eagerly sought a means whereby man's body might be preserved from decay and become endued with immortality. To them it was answered that there is nothing which might deliver the mortal body from death; but that there is One Thing which may postpone decay, renew youth, and prolong short human life (as with the Patriarchs). For death was laid as a punishment upon our first parents, Adam and Eve, and will never depart from all their descendants. Therefore, the above philosophers, and many others, have sought this One Thing with great labour, and have found that which preserves the human body from corruption, and prolongs life, conducts itself, with respect to other elements, as it were like the Heavens from which they understood that the Heavens are a substance above the Four Elements. Just as the Heavens, with respect to the other elements are held to be the fifth substance (for they are indestructible, stable, and suffer no foreign admixture), so also this One Thing (compared to the forces of our body) is an indestructible essence, drying up all the superfluities of our bodies, and has been philosophically called by the above-mentioned name. It is neither hot and dry like fire, nor cold and moist like water, nor

¹ The following extracts of Hermetic literature, wrote Archibald Cockren in "Alchemy rediscovered and restored" (1941), apart from the intrinsic beauty, provide a perfect example of the highly mystical and intentionally enigmatic phraseology of alchemical writing. The *Book of the Revelation of Hermes (Liber Apocalypseos Hermetis, Theo. Paracelso, Interprete, De Supremo Mundisecreto.&c.)*, interpreted by Theophrastus Paracelsus, concerning the Supreme Secret of the World, was first published under the auspices of Benedictus Figulus in his 'Golden and Blessed Casket of Nature's Marvels (Pandora Magnalium Naturalium Aurea et Benedicta),' 1608 (a translation of which work was edited and introduced by Mr. Arthur Edward Waite). Many of the truths enunciated therein are to be found in other works by writers of earlier and later times, but much of the phraseology is unique to Paracelsus himself.

warm and moist like air, nor dry and cold like earth. But it is a skillful, perfect equation of all the Elements, a right commingling of natural forces, a most particular union of spiritual virtues, an indissoluble uniting of body and soul. It is the purest and noblest substance of an indestructible body, which cannot be destroyed nor harmed by the Elements, and is produced by Art. With this Aristotle prepared an apple prolonging life by its scent, when he, fifteen days before his death, could neither eat nor drink on account of old age. This spiritual Essence, or One Thing, was revealed from above to Adam, and was greatly desired by the Holy Fathers, this also Hermes and Aristotle call the Truth without Lies, the most sure of all things certain, the Secret of all Secrets. It is the Last and the Highest Thing to be sought under the Heavens, a wondrous closing and finish of philosophical work, by which are discovered the dews of Heaven and the fastnesses of Earth. What the mouth of man cannot utter is all found in this Spirit. As Morienus² says: '*He who has this has all things, and wants no other aid. For in it are all temporal happiness, bodily health, and earthly fortune. It is the spirit of the fifth substance, a Fount of all Joys (beneath the rays of the moon), the Supporter of Heaven and Earth, the Mover of Sea and Wind, the Out pourer of Rain, upholding the strength of all things, an excellent spirit above Heavenly and other spirits, giving Health, Joy, Peace, Love: driving away Hatred and Sorrow, bringing in Joy, expelling all Evil, quickly healing all Diseases, destroying Poverty and Misery, leading to all good things, preventing all evil words and thoughts, giving man his heart's desire, bringing to the pious earthly honour and long life, but to the wicked who misuse it, Eternal Punishment.*'

This is the Spirit of Truth, which the world cannot comprehend without the interposition of the Holy Ghost, or without the instruction of those who know it. The same is of a mysterious nature, wondrous strength, boundless power. The Saints, from the beginning of the world, have desired to behold its face. By Avicenna this Spirit is named the Soul of the World. For as the Soul moves all the limbs of the Body, so also does this Spirit move all bodies. As the Soul is in all the limbs of the Body, so also is this Spirit in all elementary created things. It is sought by many and found by few. It is beheld from afar and found near; for it exists in everything, in every place, and at all times. It has the powers of all creatures; its action is found in all elements, and the qualities of all things are therein, even in the highest perfection. By virtue of this essence did

² Morien, Morieni Romani, Marianos the Monk, or Morienus Romanus, of old the Hermit of Jerusalem, author of *The Book of the Composition of Alchemy* also known as the *The Testament of Morienus*.

Adam and the Patriarchs preserve their health and live to an extreme age, some of them also flourishing in great riches.

When the philosophers had discovered it, with great diligence and labour, they straightway concealed it under a strange tongue, and in parables, lest the same should become known to the unworthy, and the pearls be cast before swine. For if everyone knew it, all work and industry would cease; man would desire nothing but this one thing, people would live wickedly, and the world be ruined, seeing that they would provoke God by reason of their avarice and superfluity. For eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has the heart of man understood what Heaven has naturally incorporated with this Spirit. Therefore have I briefly enumerated some of the qualities of this Spirit, to the Honour of God, that the pious may reverently praise Him in His gifts (which gift of God shall afterwards come to them), and I will herewith show what powers and virtues it possesses in each thing, also its outward appearance, that it may be more readily recognized. In its first state, it appears as an impure earthly body, full of imperfections. It then has an earthly nature, healing all sickness and wounds in the bowels of man, producing good and consuming proud flesh, expelling all stench, and healing generally, inwardly and outwardly.

In its second nature, it appears as a watery body, somewhat more beautiful than before, because (although still having its corruptions) its Virtue is greater. It is much nearer the Truth, and more effective in works. In this form it cures cold and hot fevers, and is a specific against poisons, which it drives from heart and lungs, healing the same when injured or wounded, purifying the blood, and, taken three times a day, is of great comfort in all diseases.

But in its third nature it appears as an aerial body of an oily nature, almost freed from all imperfections, in which form it does many wondrous works, producing beauty and strength of body, and (a small quantity being taken in the food) preventing melancholy and heating of the gall, increasing the quantity of blood and seed. It expands the blood vessels, cures withered limbs, restores strength to the sight, in growing persons removes what is superfluous and makes good defects in the limbs.

In its fourth nature it appears in a fiery form (not quite freed from all imperfections, still somewhat watery and not dried enough), wherein it has many virtues making the old young and reviving those at the point of death. For if to such an one there be given, in wine, a barleycorn's weight of this fire, so that it reach the stomach, it goes to his heart, renewing him at once, driving away all

previous moisture and poison, and restoring the natural heat of the liver. Given in small doses to old people, it removes the diseases of age, giving the old young hearts and bodies. Hence it is called the *Elixir of Life*.

In its fifth and last nature, it appears in a glorified and illuminated form, without defects, shining like gold and silver, wherein it possesses all previous powers and virtues in a higher and more wondrous degree. Here its natural works are taken for miracles. When applied to the roots of dead trees they revive, bringing forth leaves and fruit. A lamp, the oil of which is mingled with this spirit, continues to burn forever without diminution. It converts crystals into the most precious stones of all colours, equal to those from the mines, and does many other incredible wonders which may not be revealed to the unworthy.

For it heals all dead and living bodies without other medicine. Here Christ is my witness that I lie not, for all heavenly influences are united and combined therein. This essence also reveals all treasures in earth and sea, converts all metallic bodies into gold, and there is nothing like unto it under Heaven.

This spirit is the secret, hidden from the beginning yet granted by God to a few holy men for the revealing of these riches to His Glory dwelling in fiery form in the air, and leading earth with itself to Heaven, while from its body there flow whole rivers of living water. This spirit flies through the midst of the Heavens like a morning mist, leads its burning fire into the water, and has its shining realm in the Heavens.

Although these writings may be regarded as false by the reader, yet to the initiated they are true and possible, when the hidden sense is properly understood. For God is wonderful in His works, and His wisdom is without end. This spirit in its fiery form is called a *Sandaracā*³, in the aerial a Kybrick, in the watery an Azoth, in the earthly Alcohoph and Aliocosoph. Hence they are deceived by these names, who, seeking without instruction, think to find this Spirit of Life in things foreign to our Art. For although this Spirit which we seek, on account of its qualities, is called by these names, yet the same is not in these bodies and cannot be in them. For a refined spirit cannot appear except in a body suitable to its nature. And, by however many names it be called, let no one imagine there be different spirits, for, say what one will, there is but one spirit working everywhere and in all things.

³ Red arsenic sulfide, red metallic orpiment, minium or red lead. Not to be confused with resin, except in colour. See "A lexicon of alchemy (*Lexicon Alchemiae*)", Martin Ruland (1661).

That is the spirit which, when rising, illumines the Heavens, when setting incorporates the purity of Earth, and when brooding has embraced the Waters. This spirit is named *Raphael*, the Angel of God, the subtlest and purest, whom the others all obey as their King.

This spiritual substance is neither heavenly nor hellish, but an airy, pure, and hearty body, midway between the highest and the lowest, without reason, but fruitful in works, and the most select and beautiful of all other heavenly things.

This work of God is far too deep for understanding for it is the last, greatest, and highest secret of Nature. It is the Spirit of God, which in the Beginning filled the Earth and brooded over the waters, which the world cannot grasp without the gracious interposition of the Holy Spirit and instruction from those who know it, which also the whole world desires for its virtue, and which cannot be prized enough. For it reaches to the planets, raises the clouds, drives away mists, gives its light to all things, turns everything into Sun and Moon, bestows all health and abundance of treasure, cleanses the leper, brightens the eyes, banishes sorrow, heals the sick, reveals all hidden treasures, and, generally, cures all diseases.

Through this spirit have the philosophers invented the Seven Liberal Arts, and thereby gained their riches. Through the same Moses made the golden vessels in the Ark, and King Solomon did many beautiful works to the honour of God. Therewith Moses built the Tabernacle, Noah the Ark, Solomon the Temple. By this Ezra restored the Law, and Miriam, Moses' sister, was hospitable; Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and other righteous men, have had life-long abundance and riches; and all the saints possessing it have therewith praised God. Therefore is its acquisition very hard, more than that of gold and silver. For it is the best of all things, because, of all things mortal that man can desire in this world, nothing can compare with it, and in it alone is truth. Hence it is called the Stone and Spirit of Truth; in its works is no vanity, its praise cannot be sufficiently expressed. I am unable to speak enough of its virtues, because its good qualities and powers are beyond human thoughts, unutterable by the tongue of man, and in it are found the properties of all things. Yea, there is nothing deeper in Nature.

O unfathomable abyss of God's Wisdom, which thus has united and comprised in the virtue and power of this one Spirit the qualities of all existing bodies!

O unspeakable honour and boundless joy granted to mortal man! For the destructible things of Nature are restored by virtue of the said Spirit.

O mystery of mysteries, most secret of all secret things, and healing and medicine of all things! Thou last discovery in earthly natures, last best gift to Patriarchs and Sages, greatly desired by the Whole world! Oh, what a wondrous and laudable spirit is purity, in which stand all joy, riches, fruitfulness of life, and art of all arts, a power which to its initiates grants all material joys!

O desirable knowledge, lovely above all things beneath the circle of the Moon, by which Nature is strengthened, and heart and limbs are renewed, blooming youth is preserved, old age driven away, weakness destroyed, beauty in its perfection preserved, and abundance ensured in all things pleasing to men!

O thou spiritual substance, lovely above all things!

O thou wondrous power, strengthening all the world!

O thou invincible virtue, highest of all that is, although despised by the ignorant, yet held by the wise in great praise, honour, and glory, that proceeding from humours wakes the dead, expelles diseases, restores the voice of the dying!

O thou treasure of treasures, mystery of mysteries, called by Avicenna '*an unspeakable substance*,' the purest and most perfect soul of the world, than which there is nothing more costly under Heaven, unfathomable in nature and power, wonderful in virtue and works, having no equal among creatures, possessing the virtues of all bodies under Heaven! For from it flow the water of life, the oil and honey of eternal healing, and thus hath it nourished them with honey and water from the rock. Therefore, saith Morienus: '*He who has it, the same also hath all things*.' Blessed art Thou, Lord God of our Fathers, in that Thou has given the prophets this knowledge and understanding, that they have hidden these things (lest they should be discovered by the blind, and those drowned in worldly godlessness) by which the wise and pious have praised Thee! For the discoverers of the mystery of this Thing to the unworthy are breakers of the seal of Heavenly Revelation, thereby offending God's Majesty, and bringing upon themselves many misfortunes and the punishments of God. Therefore, I beg all Christians, possessing this knowledge, to communicate the same to nobody, except it be to one living in Godliness, of well-proved virtue, and praising God, Who has given such a treasure to man. For many seek, but few find it. Hence the impure and those living in vice are unworthy of it. Therefore is this Art to be shown to all God-fearing persons, because it cannot be bought with a price. I testify before God that I lie not, although it appear impossible to fools, that no one has hitherto explored Nature so deeply.

The Almighty be praised for having created this Art and for revealing it to God-fearing men. Amen.

Thus is fulfilled this precious and excellent work, called the revealing of the occult spirit, in which lie hidden the secrets and mysteries of the world. But this spirit is one genius, and Divine, wonderful and lordly power. For it embraces the whole world, and overcomes the Elements and the fifth Substance.

**To our Trismegistus Spagyus, Jesus Christ,
Be praise and glory immortal.
Amen.**