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A New Light Of Alchymy

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Paracelsus**

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Of sulphur

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SULPHUR.

THe Philosophers have not undeservedly placed Sulphur in the first place amongst the three Principles, as being the most worthy Principle, in the knowledge of which the whole Art consists. Now there is a threefold Sulphur, and that is to be chosen above the rest: a Sulphur tinging, or colouring: a Sulphur congealing Mercury: the third is essential, and ripening. Of which we ought to treat seriously; but because we have set forth one of the Principles by way of Dialogue, so also we shall conclude the rest, lest we should seem to be partial, and detract from either of them. Sulphur is more mature then any of the other Principles, and Mercury is not coagulated but by Sulphur: therefore our whole operation in this Art is nothing else but to know how to draw forth that Sulphur out of Metals, by which our Argent vive in the bowels of the Earth is congealed into Gold, and Silver: which Sulphur indeed is in this work in stead of the Male, but the Mercury in stead of the Female. Of the composition, and acting of these two are generated the Mercuries of Philosophers.

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We told you in the Dialogue of Mercury with the Alchymist, of an Assembly of Alchymists that were met together to consult out of what Matter, and how the Philosophers Stone is to be made, and how that by the misfortune of a tempest they were without any conclusion dispersed almost through the whole World. For there arose a strong tempest, and very great Wind, which dispersed them all abroad, and so blowed through some of their Heads, that till this time they can not yet recover themselves, by means of which divers sorts of Worms are bred in their brains. Now there were amongst them Men of divers opinions; and conditions, and among the rest there was this Alchymist, which in this Treatise I shall discourse of: he was otherwise a good Man, but without a conclusion, or unresolv'd, also of the number of those who propound to themselves to find out the Philosophers Stone casually, and he was Companion to that Philosopher who disputed with Mercury. Now this man said, If it had been my fortune to have spoke with Mercury, I should have fished him dry in few words; that other, saith he, was a foole, he knew not how to proceed with him. Mercury indeed never pleased me, neither indeed do I think there is any good in it: but I approve of Sulphur, because at that meeting we discoursed most excellently of it: if that tempest had not disturbed us, we had concluded that that had been the first Matter, for I am not wont to trouble my self with light and trivial matters, my Head is full of profound Imaginations, And so being full of confidence he resolves to work in Sulphur, he began therefore

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therefore to distil it, to sublime, calcine, to fix it, to make Oyl *per Campanam* of it, sometimes by it self, and sometimes with Crystals, and Eggs-shells, and he tryed divers other Operations about it: and when he had spent much time and costs, and could find nothing to his purpose, he was sad, and being in a miserable perplexity passed over many nights without sleep; also oftentimes he went forth out of the City, to behold things, that he might the more conveniently devise something that was certain in his operation: Now it fell out upon a time, as he was walking up and down, he fell into an extasie with beholding of things, and came unto a certain green Wood, very full of all manner of things; in which were Mines of all Minerals and Metals, and all kinds of Beasts and Birds, and abundance of Trees, Herbs, and Fruit: there also were divers Conduits of Water; for in those places there was no Water to be had, but what was brought thither by divers Instruments and Pipes, and this by divers Artificers from divers places: that was the chiefst, and clearer than the rest, which was drawn by the Beams of the Moon; and this was procured only for the Nymph of the Wood. There also did feed Bulls and Rams, and the Shepherds were two young men, whom the Alchymist asking, said, Whose Wood is this? whom they answered, saying, This is the Wood and Garden of our Nymph *Venus*. The Alchymist walks up and down in it, and the place pleased him well, but yet he did still think of his Sulphur; and so being weary of walking, and in a sad condition sat by the side of the Channel, under a certain Tree, and began to

lament most miserably, bewailing his Time and Charges which he spent in vain with operating, (he could not else have deceived others, but have damned himself only) and said, What is this? all men say it is a thing common, of small esteem, easie, and I am a learned man, & I cannot find out this wretched Stone. And so in his lamentation he began to curse Sulphur, because he had spent so much cost and labour in vain upon him: and Sulphur also was in that Wood, but this was unknown to the Alchymist. Whilst he was thus lamenting he heard this Voice as it were of some old man: Friend, Why dost thou curse Sulphur? The Alchymist looked every way round about him, and seeing no body, was afraid. But that Voice said to him again, Friend, why art thou so sad? The Alchymist taking courage said, Sir, The hungry man is always thinking upon Bread, so do I always upon the Philosophers Stone. *Vox.* And why dost thou curse Sulphur? *Alch.* Sir, I believed that that was the first Matter of the Philosophers Stone, and therefore in working upon it many years, I spent much, and could not find that Stone. *Vox.* Friend, truly I know that Sulphur is the true and principal Subject of the Philosophers Stone, but I know not thee, nor any thing of thy labour and intention: thou dost without cause curse Sulphur; because he is in cruel prisons, and cannot be at hand to every body; seeing he is put bound in a most dark dungeon, and goes not forth, but whither his Keepers carry him. *Alch.* And why is he imprisoned? *Vox.* Because he would be obedient to every Alchymist, and do what they would have him, contrary

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contrary to his Mothers will, who forbad him to obey any, but such as knew her, wherefore she put him into Prison, and commanded that his feet should be bound, and set Keepers over him, that without their knowledg and pleasure he should go no whither. *Alch.* O wretch! for this reason he could not come to me: truly his Mother doth him great wrong: and when shall he be let out of those Prisons? *Vox.* O friend! The Sulphur of Philosophers cannot go forth hence but in a long time, and with a great deal of labour. *Alch.* Sir! And who be his Keepers that keep him? *Vox.* Friend! His Keepers are of the same stock, but Tyrants. *Alch.* And who art thou, and how art thou called? *Vox.* I am Judg and Governour of the Prisons, and my Name is *Saturn.* *Alch.* Then Sulphur is kept in thy Prisons. *Vox.* Sulphur indeed is kept in my Prisons, but he hath other Keepers. *Alch.* And what doth he do in the Prisons? *Vox.* He doth whatsoever his Keepers will have him. *Alch.* And what can he do? *Vox.* He is the maker of a thousand things, and is the heart of all things; he knows how to make Metals better, and corrects Minerals, teacheth Animals understanding, knows how to make all kind of Flowers in Herbs, and Trees, and is chief over them, corrupts the Air, which he amends again: he is the Maker of all Odours, and Painter of all Colours. *Alch.* Out of what Matter doth he make Flowers? *Vox.* His Keepers afford Matter, and Vessels, but Sulphur digests the Matter, and according to the variety of his digestion, and weight, various Flowers, and Odours are produced.

ced. *Alch.* Is he old? *Vox,* Friend, Know that Sulphur is the vertue of all things, and is the second by birth, but yet older then all things, stronger, and more worthy, yet an obedient child. *Alch.* Sir, How is he known? *Vox,* Divers ways, but best by the State of the Vitals in Animals, by the colour in Metals, by the odour in Vegetables: without him his Mother works nothing. *Alch.* Is he the sole Heir, or hath he Brethren? *Vox,* His Mother hath but only one Son like him, his other Brethren are associated with evil things, he hath a Sister which he loves, and is again beloved by her, for she is as it were a Mother to him. *Alch.* Sir, is he every where uniform? *Vox,* According to his Nature, but he is changed in the Prisons; yet his heart is always pure, but his Garments are stained. *Alch.* Sir, Was he ever at liberty? *Vox,* Yea, especially in those times when there were such wise Men, betwixt whom, and his Mother there was great familiarity and friendship. *Alch.* And who were they? *Vox,* There were very many: There was *Hermes*, who was as it were one with his Mother: after him were many Kings, and Princes, as also many other wise men, in ages since, as *Aristotle*, *Avicen*, &c. who set him at liberty: These knew how to unloose his bonds. *Alch.* Sir, what did he give them for setting him at liberty? *Vox,* He gave them three Kingdoms: for when any doth unbind him, and release him, then he overcomes his Keepers, which before did govern in his Kingdom, and delivers them being bound to him that released him, for to be his Subjects, and gives him their Kingdoms to possess: but that which

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which is more; in his Kingdom is a Looking-glass, in which is seen the whole World. Who-soever looks in this Glas may see, and learn in it three parts of the wisdom of the whole World, and so shall become very wise in these three Kingdoms; such were *Aristotle*, *Avicen*, and many others, who as well as they before them, saw in this Glas how the World was made: By this they learned what were the influences of the Celestiall vertues upon inferiour Bodies, and how Nature by the weight of Fire compounds things; as also the motion of the Sun, and Moon: especially that universal motion, by which his Mother is governed: by this they knew the degrees of heat, cold, moisture, dryness, and the vertues of Herbs, and indeed of all things, whence they became most excellent Physicians. And truly, unless a Physitian be such an one as knows, why this Herb, or that, is hot, dry, or moist in this degree, not out of the Books of *Galen*, or *Avicen*, but out of the original of Nature, from whence they also understood these things, he cannot be a well grounded Physitian. All these things they diligently considered, and bequeathed their Writings to their Successors, that men might be stirred up to Studies of a higher Nature, and learn how to set Sulphur at liberty, and unloose his bonds: but Men of this age take their Writings for a sufficient ground, and authority, and seek no further; and it sufficeth them if they know how to say, so saith *Aristotle*, or, thus saith *Galen*. *Alch.* And what say you, Sir, can an Herb be known without an Herbal? *Pox*, Those ancient Philosophers wrote their Receipts out of the very Fountain of

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Nature. *Alch.* How Sir? *Vox,* Know that all things in the Earth, and upon the Earth, are generated, and produced of three Principles; sometimes of two, to which the third is joined: he therefore that knows these three Principles; and the weight of them, how Nature joyns them together, may be easily able by decoction to understand the degree of Fire in the Subject, whether well, or ill, or indifferently decocted, and that according to more or less: For all Vegetable things are known by those, who know the three Principles. *Alch.* And how is this done? *Vox,* By sight, tast, and smell; in and from these three Senses are gathered the three Principles of things, and the degrees of their digestions. *Alch.* Sir, They say that Sulphur is a Medicine. *Vox,* Yea, and the Physician himself, and to them that set him free from Prison, by way of thankfulness he gives his Blood for a Medicine. *Alch.* Sir, the universal Medicine being had, how long may a Man preserve himself from death? *Vox,* Even to the term of death: but this Medicine must be taken cautiously, for many wise men have been destroyed by it before their time. *Alch.* And what say you Sir, Is it poison? *Vox,* Hast not thou heard that a great Fire will destroy a little one? There were many Philosophers, which received the Art from other mens experience, which did not so thoroughly search into the vertue of the Medicine; yea, by how much the more powerfull, subtiler the Medicine was, it seemed to them to be the more wholsome; and if one grain of it can pass through many thousands of metals, much more mans Body. *Alch.* Sir how then must it be used

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used? *Vox*, It must be so used, that it may strengthen the Natural heat, but not overcome it.

Alch. Sir, I know how to make such a Medicine. *Vox*, Thou art happy if thou dost know. For the blood of that Sulphur is that intrinsecal vertue and siccity that turns, and congeals Quick-silver, and all Metals into Gold, and Mens Bodies into health.

Alch. Sir I know how to make oyl of Sulphur, which is prepared with calcined Cry-stals; I know also another, which is done by a Bell. *Vox*, Certainly then thou art a Philosopher of that Assembly; for thou dost understand, and expound my words aright, as also, unless I am deceived, of all the Philosophers.

Alch. Sir, is not this oyl the blood of Sulphur?

Vox, O Friend! the blood of Sulphur is not given to any but to those, who know how to set him free from Prison. *Alch. Sir*, doth Sulphur know any thing in the Metals? *Vox*, I told thee, that he knows all things, and especially in Metals, but his Keepers know that there he could be easily set at liberty, wherefore they keep him there bound fast in most strong Prisons, so that he cannot breath, and they are afraid lest he should come into the Kings Palace.

Alch. Is he imprisoned so in all Metalls? *Vox*, In all; but not alike, in some not so strictly. *Alch. Sir*, and why in Metals in such a tyrannical manner? *Vox*. Because he would stand in awe of them no longer, when he shall once come to his Kingly Palaces, for then he can be seen, and look freely out of the windows; because there he is in his proper Kingdom, although not yet as he desires.

Alch. Sir, and what doth he eat? *Vox*, His meat

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is Wind, when he is at liberty, it is decocted; but in Prison he is constrained to eat it raw. *Alch.* Sir, Can those enmities betwixt him and his Keepers be reconciled? *Vox.* Yes, if any one were so wise. *Alch.* Why doth not he treat with them concerning a pacification? *Vox.* That he cannot do by himself, because presently he waxeth hot with anger, and rage. *Alch.* Let him do it by a Commissioner. *Vox.* Certainly he would be the most happy Man in the World, and worthy of eternal memory, who could tell how to make peace betwixt them; but this no man can do but he that is very wise, and can agree with his Mother, and have co-intelligence with her: for if they were Friends, one would not hinder the other, but joining their forces together would make things immortal. Truly he that would reconcile them together would be a man worthy to be consecrated to eternity. *Alch.* Sir, I will compose those differences betwixt them, and free him, I am in other matters a man very learned, and wise: Besides, I am very good at operations. *Vox.* Friend, I see truly that thou art big enough and thou hast a great Head, but I know not whether thou canst do those things or no. *Alch.* Sir, Perhaps thou art ignorant of what the Alchymists know, in matter of treaty they have alwayes the better of it, and truly I am not the last, so that his enemies will but treat with me, if they will treat, assure your self that they will have the worst. Sir, believe me, the Alchymists know how to treat, if they only will but treat with me, Sulphur shall presently be at liberty. *Vox.* I like your judgment well, I hear that you are approved

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proved of. *Alch.* Sir, Tell me if this be the true Sulphur of the Philosophers? *Vox,* This truly is Sulphur, but whether it be the Philosopher, that belongs to thee to know. I have said enough to thee concerning Sulphur. *Alch.* Sir, If I can find his Prisons, shall I be able to set him at liberty? *Vox,* If thou knowest well, thou shalt; for it is easier to free him then find them. *Alch.* Sir, I beseech thee tell me but this, if I find him, shall I make the Philosophers stone of him? *Vox,* O Friend! It is not for me to judge, do thou look to that, yet if thou knowest his Mother, and followest her, Sulphur being at liberty, the Stone is at hand. *Alch.* Sir, in what Subject is this Sulphur? *Vox,* Know for certain that this Sulphur is of great vertue; his Mine are all things in the World, for he is in Merals, Herbs, Trees, Animals, Stones, and Minerals. *Alch.* And what Devil is able to find him out lying hid amongst so many things, and Subjects? Tell me the matter out of which the Philosophers take him. *Vox,* Friend, thou comest too neer, yet that I may satisfie thee, know that Sulphur is every where, but she hath some certain Palaces, where she is wont to give audience to the Philosophers; but the Philosophers adore him swimming in his own sea, and playing with Vulcan; when the Philosophers go to him unknown in his vile garments. *Alch.* Sir, in the Sea, why then is he not mine, since he is hid here so neer? *Vox,* I told thee that his Keepers put him into most dark Prisons, lest thou shouldst see him for he is in one subject alone, but if thou hast not found him at home, thou wilt scarce find him

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him in Woods. But do not thou despare in finding of him out: I tell thee of a truch, that he is in Gold, and Silver most perfect, but in Argent vive most easy. *Alch.* Sir, I would very willingly make the Philosophers Stone. *Vox.* Thou desirest a good thing, Sulphur also would willingly be out of bonds. And so *Saturn* departed. Now a deep sleep seized upon the Alchymist, being weary, and there appeared to him this Vision, He saw in that Wood a fountain full of Water, about which walked Sal, and Sulphur, contending one with the other, until at last they began to fight; and Sal gave Sulphur an incurable wound, out of which wound, in stead of blood, there came out Water, as it were most white milk, and it became to be a great River. Then out of that Wood came forth *Diana* a most beautiful Virgin, who began to wash her self in that River: whom a certain Prince, a most stout man (and greater then his servants) passing by, and seeing, began to admire at her beauty; and because she was of a like Nature with him, he became enamoured with her, which when she perceived, she was inflamed with love towards him. Wherefore as it were falling into a swoun she began to be drowned: which that Prince seeing, commanded his Servants to help her; but they were all afraid to go to the River; to whom the Prince said, Why do you not help *Diana* that Virgin? To whom they replied, Sir, this River is indeed little, and as it were dryed up, but most dangerous: Once upon a time we were willing to go into it without thy knowledg, and we hardly escaped the danger of eternal death; We know

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know also that others that were our predecessors perished in it. Then the Prince himself laying aside his thick Mantle, even as he was armed, leaped into the River, and to help fair *Diana* he stretched forth his hand to her; who being willing to save her self, drew also the Prince himself to her, and so were both drowned. A little after their Souls came out of the River, flying above the River, and said, It was well done of us, for else we could not have been freed from those bodies which are polluted, and stained. *Alch.* But do you ever return into those Bodies again? *Anime,* Not into such filthy bodies, but when they be purged, and this River shall be throughly dryed up by the heat of the Sun, and this Province shall be often tried by the Air. *Alch.* What shall you do in the mean time. *Anim.* Here we shall fly upon the River till those Clouds and Tempests shall cease. In the mean time the Alchymist fell into a more desired dream of his Sulphur; and behold there appeared to him many Alchymists coming to that place to seek after Sulphur, and when they found the carcase of that Sulphur which was slain by Sal, by the Fountain, they divided it amongst themselves: which when the Alchymist saw he also took a part with them; and so every one of them returned home, and began to work in that Sulphur, and till this day they do not give over. But *Saturn* meets this Alchymist, and saith to him, Friend, how is it with thee? *Alch.* O Sir, I have seen many wonderful things, my Wife would scarce believe them; now also I have found Sulphur, I beseech you Sir help, let us make the
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Philosophers Stone. *Saturnus.* With all my heart, my Friend, make ready then Argent-vive, and Sulphur, and give hither a Glas. *Alch.* Sir, have nothing to do with Mercury, for he is naught, he hath deluded my Companion, and many others. *Sat.* Without argent-vive, in whole Kingdom Sulphur is the King, the Philosophers have done nothing, neither do I know what to do without it. *Alch.* Sir, let us make it of Sulphur alone. *Sat.* Well then, my friend, but it will succeed accordingly. Then they took that Sulphur, which the Alchymist found, and they did what the Alchymist would have done, they began to work divers wayes, and to make experiments of Sulphur in divers strange kind of Furnaces, which the Alchymist had: but in the conclusion of every operation there was brought forth nothing but Matches, such as old women usually sell to light Candles withal. Then they began a new work, and sublimed, and calcined Sulphur according to the Alchymists pleasure; but in what way soever they worked it, it succeeded as before, for still they made nothing but Matches; then said the Alchymist to Saturn, Truly Sir, I see it will not succeed according to my fancy, I beseech thee do thou work alone, what thou knowest. Then Saturn said, see then, and learn. He then took two Mercuries of a differing substance, but of one original, which Saturn washed in his own urine, and called them Sulphurs of Sulphurs, and mixed the fixed with the volatile, and the composition being made, he put it into its proper vessel, and lest the Sulphur should fly away, he set a keeper over him, and then

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then put him into a bath of a most gentle heat, according as the matter required, and he made all things very well. Then they made the Philosophers Stone, because of the true matter a true thing must needs be made. The Alchymist being very glad took the Stone with the Glass, and beholding the colour thereof, which was like burnt Blood, he was amazed, and by reason of too much joy he began to leap, in which leaping the Glass fell out of his hands upon the ground, and was broken. And so Saturn vanished away. The Alchymist also being awaked out of his dream, found nothing in his hands but Matches which he made of Brimstone: but the Stone flew away, and doth still fly; whence it is called Volatile: and so that miserable Alchymist learned nothing else by that Vision but how to make Matches: who afterwards laying aside the Stone, became to be a Physitian; by searching after the Stone of the Philosophers he got the Stone of the Kidneys. Last of all he led such a life, as such kind of Alchymists are wont to do, who for the most part become Physicians, or Quacksalvers, which thing will happen to all, who betake themselves to the Art casually without any foundation, but only by hearsay, or by means of Receipts.

Some of them, when things succeed not, say: We are wise men, we hear that the grass grows, if the Art were true we should have had it before other men: And so have brazen faces, lest we should be accounted underserving Men (as indeed they are; and also perverse) condemn, and undervalue

value the Art. This Science hates such Men, and
 alwayes shews them the beginning in the end.
 Now we grant unto the unworthy, that this Art
 is nothing, but to the lovers of vertue, and the
 true Searchers, and Sons of Wisdom, we do most
 highly commend it, and do affirm it not only to
 be true, but altogether the truest: which some-
 times we have really made good before men wor-
 thy of such a sight, I say before Men of high,
 and low condition: (yet this Medicine was not
 made by us, but received from a friend, and yet
 most true) for the searching out of which we
 have sufficiently instructed the Searchers thereof;
 whom if our Writings do not please, let them
 read those of other Authors, which are easier,
 but with this Caution, that whatsoever they shall
 read, they shall alwayes compare it with the
 possibility of Nature, lest they assay any thing
 contrary to Nature. Neither let them believe, al-
 though it were written in the Books of Philoso-
 phers, that Fire burns not, because this is con-
 trary to Nature: but if it be writ, that Fire hath
 a drying and heating faculty, this is to be believ-
 ed, because it is according to Nature: for Na-
 ture doth alwayes agree with a sound judgment,
 and in Nature there is nothing difficult, all truth
 is plain. Then also let them learn, what things
 in Nature are of affinity with each other, which
 we conceive may be easier done by our Writings,
 then any other, seeing we think we have wrote
 sufficiently, until some other shall come, who shall
 set down the whole receipt so plain, as to make
 Cheese of Milk, which is not lawful for us to do.

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But that I may not direct all things I say to the new beginner only, we shall say something to you also who now have passed over these painful labours. Have you seen that Countrey, where a man married a wife, whose nuptials were celebrated in the house of Nature? have you understood how the vulgar with you have seen this Sulphur? If therefore you will that old women should Practise your Philosophy, shew the dealbation of your Sulphurs; say unto the vulgar, Come and see, for now the water is divided, and Sulphur is come out; he will return white, and congeal the Waters. Burn therefore Sulphur from incumbustible Sulphur, then wash it, make it white, and red, until Sulphur become Mercury, and Mercury be made Sulphur, which afterwards you shall beautifie with the soul of Gold: For if you do not sublime Sulphur from Sulphur, and Mercury from Mercury, you have not yet found out the Water, which out of Sulphur, and Mercury is created by way of distillation; he doth not ascend that doth not descend. Whatsoever in this Art is remarkable, by many is lost in the Preparation, for our Mercury is quickned with Sulphur, else it would be of no use. A Prince without a People is unhappy; so is an Alchymist without Sulphur and Mercury. If thou hast understood me, I have said enough.

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