



The Hand Of The Mysteries
Artist Augustus Knapp

Redrawn from an early 18th century watercolor.
(Artist Unknown.)

The original drawings from which this plate was
taken is

designated the hand of the philosopher which is
extended to
those who enter into the mysteries. When the
disciple of the
Great Art first beholds this hand, it is closed, and he
must
discover a method of opening it before the mysteries
contained
therein may be revealed. In alchemy the hand
signifies the
formula for the preparation of the tincture
physicorum. The fish
is mercury and the flame-bounded sea in which it
swims is
sulfur, while each of the fingers bears the emblem
of a Divine Agent through the
combined operations of which the great work is
accomplished. The unknown artist
says of the diagram: "The wise take their oath by
this hand that they will not teach the
Art without parables." To the Qabbalist the figure
signifies the operation of the One
Power [the crowded thumb] in the four worlds (the
fingers with their emblems).
Besides its alchemical and Qabbalistic meanings,
the figure symbolizes the hand of a
Master Mason with which he "raises" the martyred
Builder of the Divine House.
Philosophically, the key represents the Mysteries

themselves, without whose aid man cannot unlock the numerous chambers of his own being. The lantern is human knowledge, for it is a spark of the Universal Fire captured in a man-made vessel; it is the light of those who dwell in the inferior universe and with the aid of which they seek to follow in the footsteps of Truth. The sun, which may be termed the "light of the world," represents the luminescence of creation through which man may learn the mystery of all creatures which express through form and number. The star is the Universal Light which reveals cosmic and celestial verities. The crown is Absolute Light-- unknown and unrevealed--whose power shines through all the lesser lights that are but sparks of this Eternal Effulgence. Thus is set forth the right hand, or active principle, of Deity, whose works are all contained within the" hollow of His hand.

(From the Secret Teachings of All Ages)