

Foreword

These meditations on the Major Arcana of the Tarot are Letters addressed to the Unknown Friend. The addressee in this instance is anyone who will read all of them and who thereby acquires definite knowledge, through the experience of meditative reading, about Christian Hermeticism. He will know also that the author of these Letters has said more about himself in these Letters than he would have been able to in any other way. No matter what other source he might have, he will know the author better through the Letters themselves.

These Letters are written in French because in France—since the eighteenth century until the present time, i.e. the second half of the twentieth century—there exists a literature on the Tarot, a phenomenon which is found nowhere else. On the other hand, there existed in France—and it still persists—a continuous *tradition* of Hermeticism, in which is united a spirit of free research with one of respect for the tradition. The purpose of these Letters therefore will be to "incarnate" into this tradition, i.e. to become an organic part of it, and in this way to contribute support to it.

As these Letters are intended only to serve, to sustain, and to support the Hermetic tradition— from its first appearance in the epoch of Hermes Trismegistus, lost in the remoteness of antiquity and become legendary—they are a definite manifestation of this millennial-old current of thought, effort, and revelation. Their aim is not only to revive the tradition in the twentieth century but also, and above all, to immerse the reader (or rather the Unknown Friend) in this current—be it temporarily or for ever. For this reason the numerous citations of ancient and modern authors which you will find in these Letters are not due to

literary considerations, nor to a display of erudition. They are *evocations* of the masters of the tradition, in order that they may be present with their impulses of aspiration and their light of thought in the current of meditative thought which these Letters on the twenty-two Major Arcana of the Tarot represent. For these are in essence twenty-two spiritual exercises, by means of which you, dear Unknown Friend, will immerse yourself in the current of the living tradition, and thus enter into the community of spirits who have served it and who are still serving it.

And the citations in question only serve the aim of a "relief-setting" for this community. For the links in the chain of the tradition are not thoughts and efforts alone; they are above all *living beings* who were thinking these thoughts and willing these efforts. The essence of the tradition is not a doctrine, but rather a community of spirits from age to age.

There remains nothing more to say in this introduction to the Letter- Meditations on the Tarot, because all other questions concerning them will find a response in the Letters themselves.

Your friend greets you, dear Unknown Friend,
from beyond the grave.