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THE SECRET DOCTRINE OF THE ROSICRUCIANS

The Secret Doctrine of the Rosicrucians

William W. Atkinson (Magus Incognito)

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Rosicrucianism - A Primer

The original appellation of the alleged members of the occult-cabalistic-theosophic "Rosicrucian Brotherhood", described in the pamphlet "Fama Fraternitatis R.C." (*Rosae crucis*), which was circulated in MS. As early as 1610 and first appeared in print in 1614 at Cassel. To the first two additions were prefixed the tract "Allgemeine und Generalreformation der ganzen weiten Welt", a translation of Fr. Boccalini's "Dei Ragguagli di Parnasso", 1612. Beginning with the fourth edition in 1615, the third Rosicrucian rudiment, "Confessio der Fraternitat", was added to the "Fama". According to these, the Rosicrucian

brotherhood was founded in 1408 by a German nobleman, Christian Rosenkreuz (1378-1484), a former monk, who while travelling through Damascus, Jerusalem and Fez had been initiated into Arabian learning (magic), and who considered an antipapal Christianity, tinged with theosophy, his ideal of a religion. Concerned above all else that their names should appear in the Book of Life, the brothers were to consider the making of gold as unimportant-although for the true philosophers (Occultists) this was an easy matter and a parergon. They must apply themselves zealously and in the deepest secrecy to the study of Nature in her hidden forces, and to making their discoveries and inventions known to the order and profitable to the needs of humanity. And to further the object of the said order they must assemble annually at the "Edifice of the Holy Spirit", the secret head-quarters of the order, cure the sick gratuitously, and whilst each one procured himself a successor they must provide for the continuance of their order. Free from illness and pain, these "Invisibles", as they were called in the vernacular, were supposed to be yearning for the time when the church should be "purified".

For two hundred years, while the world never had the least suspicion of their existence, the brotherhood transmitted by these means the wisdom of "Father" Rosenkreuz, one hundred and twenty years after the latter's burial, until about 1604 they finally became known. The "Fama", which effected this, invited "all of the scholars and rulers of Europe" openly to favour the cause, and eventually to sue for entrance into the fraternity, to which, nevertheless, only chosen souls would be admitted. The morbid propensity of the age for esoterism, magic, and confederacies caused the "Fama" to raise a feverish excitement in men's minds, expressed in a flood of writings for and against the brotherhood, and in passionate efforts to win admission to the order, or at least to discover who were its members. All

of these endeavours, even by scholars of real repute like Descartes and Leibniz, were without results. From the manifestly fabulous and impossible "History" of the brotherhood, it was apparent that it depended upon a "mystification". This mystification was directly explained by an investigation by the author, who appears unquestionable to have been the Lutheran theologian of Württemberg, John Valentin Andrea (1586-1654). According to his own admission, Andrea composed in 1602 or 1603 the Rosicrucian book, "Chymische Hochzeit Christiani Rosenkreuz 1459", which appeared in 1616. This book, called by Andrea himself a youthful literary trifle in which he intended to ridicule the mania of the times for occult marvels (Life, p. 10), bears the closest intrinsic relation to the "Fama", which, in the light of this, is undoubtedly a later work of Andrea's or at least of one of the circle of friends inspired by him. Alchemistic occultism is mocked at in these works and in the "General-Reformation", the follies of the then untimely reformers of the world are openly ridiculed. The fantastic form of the tracts is borrowed from contemporary romances of knighthood and travel. The "Rosy Cross" was chosen for the symbol of the order because, first, the rose and cross were ancient symbols of occultism and, secondly, occur in the family arms of Andrea. It recalls Luther's motto: "Des Christen Hertz auf Rosen geht, wenn's mitten unter'm Kreuze steht" (Hossback, 121). As a result of his satirically meant but seriously accepted works, which soon gave rise to occult humbuggery (opposed by him) in new Rosicrucian raiment, Andrea openly renounced Rosicrucianism and frequently referred to it as a ridiculous comedy and folly. In spite of this, the Rosicrucian fraud, which served in many ways as a model for the anti-Masonic *Taxil-Schwindel*, has continued effective until the present day. In the seventeenth century Michael Maier and Robert Fludd were its champions. Psuedo-Rosicrucian societies arose, falsely claiming

descent from the genuine fraternity of the "Fama". After 1750 occult Rosicrucianism was propagated by Freemasonry, where it led to endless extravagant manifestations (St. Germain, Cagliostro, Schropfer, Wollner etc.). In the system of high degrees in "Scottish" Freemasonry, especially in the *Rosendruetz* degree, the Rosicrucian symbols are still retained with a Masonic interpretation. Finally, since about 1866 there have existed in England and Scotland (London, Newcastle, York, Glasgow) and in the United States (Boston, Philadelphia) "colleges" of a Masonic Rosicrucian society, whose members claim to be direct descendants of the brotherhood founded in 1408. Only Master Masons are eligible for membership. According to the definition of the president of the London branch (Supreme Magus), Brother Dr. Wm. Wynn Westcott, M.B., P.Z., it is "the aim of the Society to afford mutual aid and encouragement in working out the great problems of life and in searching out the secrets of nature; to facilitate the study of philosophy founded upon the Kabbalah and the doctrines of Hermes Trismegistus, which was inculcated by the original *Fratres Roseae Crucis* of Germany, A.D. 1450; and to investigate the meaning and symbolism of all that now remains of the wisdom, art, and literature of the ancient world". The view which has been lately revived, especially by Katsch and Pike, that Rosicrucianism definitely or even perceptibly cooperated in the foundation of modern Freemasonry in 1717, is contradicted by well-known historical facts.

ARNOLD, "Unparteiische Kirchen u. Ketzerhistorie", II (Frankfort, 1699), 640 sq.; HERDER, "Samtl. Werke" (Berlin, 1888), XV, 82 sq.; XVI, 596 sq.; BUHLE, "ursprung u. d. vornehmsten Schicksale der Rosenkreuzer u. Freimaurer" (Gottingen, 1804); NIKOLAI, Einige Bemerkungen uber den Ursprung u. d. Gesach. D. Rosendreuzeu u. Freimaurer" (Berlin, 1806); HOSSBACH,

JU. W. "Andrea u. sein zeitalter" (Berlin, 1819);
 GUHRAUER, "Zeitschr. F. hist. Theol. (1852), 298 sq.;
 SIERKE, "Schwarmer u. Schwinder zu Ende d. 18 Jahrh. "
 (Leipzig, 1874); KOPP, "Die Alchemie", II (Heidelberg,
 1886); WAITE, "The real History of the Rosicrucians"
 (London, 1887), needs revision; KATSCH, "Die Entstehung
 u. d. wahre Endzweck d. Freimaurerei" (Berlin, 1897);
 HEFELE [RAICH] in "Kirchenlex.", s.v. "Rosendreuzer";
 HERMELINK in "Realencyk." F. prot. Theol., s.v.
 "Rosenkreuzer"; "Allg. Handbuch d. Freimaurerei", II (3rd
 ed., 1900), 259-63; BEGMANN, "Monatshefte d. Comenius-
 Gesellschaft" (Berlin), V (1896), 212 sq.,; VI (1897), 204
 sq.; VIII (1899), 145 sq.; "Zirkelkorrespondenz" (Berlin,
 1896), 212; "Vorgesch. U. Anfange d. Freimaurerei in
 England", I (1909), II (1910), 16, 384; GOULD, Hist of
 Freemasonry", II (London, 1884), 60 sq.; "Concise Hist. Of
 Freemasonry" (London, 1903), 61-93; "Ars Quatuor
 Coronatorum", transactions (London), I (1888), 28, 54; V
 (1892), 67; VI (1893), 202 sq.,; VII (1894), 36 sq., 83; VIII
 (1895), 46; "The Theosophist" (Madras, 1886), VII, 451 sq.,
 VIII, IX, X; "Rosicrucian Society of England: rules and
 Ordinances" (London, 1881); revised 1882); Transactions,
 etc" (1879-91); "The Rosicrucian: A Quarterly Record"
 (1868-79); KLOSS, "Bibliog. D. Freimaurerei, etc."
 (Frankfort, 1844), 174-201, gives 274 works on the subject;
 GARDNER, "Bibliotheca Rosicruciana": I, catalogue
 (London, privately printed, 1903), gives a list of 604 works
 on the subject.
 HERMANN GRUBER.

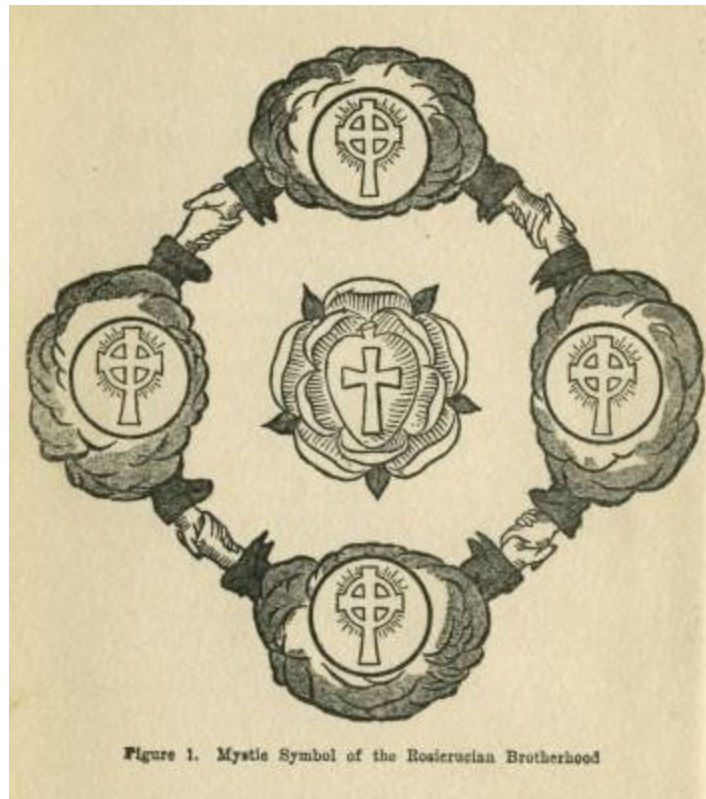


Figure 1. Mystic Symbol of the Rosicrucian Brotherhood

The Secret Doctrine of the Rosicrucians

PART I - THE ROSICRUCIANS AND THEIR SECRET DOCTRINE

The student of the history of occultism and the esoteric teachings, and even the average reader of current books and magazines, finds many references to "The Rosicrucians," a supposed ancient secret society devoted to the study of occult doctrines and the manifestation of occult powers. But when such person seeks to obtain detailed information concerning this supposed ancient "order" he finds himself baffled and defeated. Before

acknowledging the futility of the quest, however, he usually investigates one or more so-called "orders" having as a part of their title the word "Rosicrucian," only to find himself invited to join such "order" upon the payment of a fee or fees ranging from a small amount in some cases to quite large amounts in others, each "order" claiming to be the "only original order," and asserting that all the others are base imitators.

The truth is that there is not in existence, and never has been in existence, any popular occult order sanctioned by the real Rosicrucians, which anyone may join upon payment of fees, large or small, just as he may join any of the better known fraternal organizations of which there are so many. The true Rosicrucians have no formal organization, and are held together only by the ties of common interest in the occult and esoteric studies, and by the common acceptance of certain fundamental principles of belief and knowledge. This unorganized "order" has members in all walks of life, and in all countries, and its members never announce themselves as "Rosicrucians" to the general public. Admission to this unorganized "order" is never granted upon the payment of a fee, and is possible only upon the request and recommendation of three members in good standing who have themselves been members for a certain period of time, and who have attained a certain degree of proficiency in the attainment of the esoteric knowledge, and in demonstrating the principles discovered by them under the direction of certain higher adepts in the arcane wisdom.

Members of the Rosicrucian body are prominent in the councils of nearly all of the occult organizations and societies throughout the world--in fact, it is these persons who are the real leaven in the general mass, and who keep alive the Sacred Flame of Truth in them. Many

Rosicrucians are also prominent in philosophic and scientific circles, and some of them are men quite prominent in the large affairs of the business and professional world, and in the ranks of statesmanship. Others are prominent in movements like the "labor movement" and similar activities. Some are prominent in the councils of the various churches, and others are leaders in Masonry and similar secret societies. In all of such circles the Rosicrucians exert a powerful influence, and always in the direction of good.

"The Brothers of the Rosy Cross"

The modern interest in the Rosicrucian Teachings dates back to the early part of the seventeenth century--about 1610, to be exact. At that time there were rumors of the existence of a society known as "The Brothers of the Rosy Cross," the officers and meeting places of which were not known to the public. The mysterious society was severely attacked by the ecclesiastical authorities and others, and was as vigorously defended by those who were interested in the general subject of occultism and the esoteric teachings. There were many spurious and counterfeit "orders" established during the following century, and for that matter in nearly every century since, but none have been able to show an undoubted connection with the original order. Some of the original teachings of the Rosicrucians have been incorporated in some of the higher degrees of Masonry, and have served a good purpose therein.

The legend concerning the origin of the order--true in some respects, but erroneous in others--was as follows: That a certain Christian Rosenkreutz, a German nobleman who had donned the robes of a certain order of monks, had visited India, Persia, and also Arabia, and had returned

bringing with him a certain Secret Doctrine obtained from the sages and seers of those Oriental lands. He was said to have established the original Rosicrucian Brotherhood about 1425, its existence not becoming generally known until nearly two hundred years afterward. The true Rosicrucians, however, recognize this legendary tale as being merely a cleverly disguised recital of the real facts of the establishment of the unorganized order, which must be read between the lines, aided by the spectacles of understanding, in order that its real import may be grasped.

The present writer does not feel justified in telling in these pages the tale as he understands it, and as it has been transmitted to him by those in authority; in fact, to make the same public, he would be violating a most sacred promise, which would amount to a betrayal of his initiation secrets. He, however, is permitted to state that the Secret Doctrine of the Rosicrucians is a body of esoteric teachings, handed down for ages by wise men deeply versed in the esoteric doctrines and occult lore. This Wisdom originally came by way of the Orient, and in fact even today comprises part of the Inner Teachings of some of the highest Oriental Brotherhoods. Its history is but another instance of the truth of the old Secret axioms, one of which says that we must "Look to the East, whence comes all Light."

For many years little or nothing was permitted to be revealed to the general public concerning the Secret Doctrine of the Rosicrucians, but during the past twenty-five years there has been a greater, and still greater freedom in this respect, until today many important Rosicrucian teachings form a part of nearly all writings and teachings upon the subject of the Esotericism in general, and of the Higher Metaphysics in particular. Theosophy,

and the general interest in Oriental Philosophies and Religions, have done much to bring into public notice some of the more elementary points of the Secret Doctrine. In fact, in the highest writings and teachings of some of the great organizations above referred to the Rosicrucian may find many half-hidden bits of the Rosicrucian Doctrine, cleverly disguised from the unprepared Many, yet plainly revealed to the prepared Few.

The Higher Alchemy

The Rosicrucians, according to the public encyclopaedias, and other works of reference, are held to have been devoted to the subject of Alchemy. And, indeed, this statement is correct. But the modern compilers of such reference books have fallen into the error of supposing that the Alchemy referred to was performed wholly upon the Plane of Matter--and concerned wholly with the Transmutation of Elements. They are ignorant of the fact that the Alchemy which attracted the Rosicrucians, and which took up most of their time and attention, was Mental Alchemy, and Spiritual Alchemy--something quite different indeed, though having of course a correspondence to the Material Alchemy, according to the Law of Correspondence. The student of the present book will discover this fact, and will receive many valuable hints concerning the higher forms of Alchemy, providing he is prepared to read between the lines of the text, and to reason by Analogy. The axiom "As above, so below," will be found to work out well in this connection.

Why the Esoteric Teaching is Kept Secret

It is difficult to convey to the average European or American the true reasons underlying the Secrecy which

invariably surrounds the Esoteric Teachings of all the great schools of occult thought. Such a person is inclined to think that the only reason is the delight in "mystery mongering" which he thinks he finds among all occult teachers. But to one who penetrates even but a short distance on The Path, the true reasons are perceived. Such a one perceives the dangers of premature disclosure of important esoteric principles to the unprepared public mind. The following quotations from a well-known writer will perhaps give a hint to the solution of this question. The writer says:

"The Oriental method of cultivating knowledge has always differed diametrically from that pursued in the West during the growth of modern sciences. Whilst Europe has investigated Nature as publicly as possible, every step being discussed with the utmost freedom, and every fresh fact acquired circulated at once for the benefit of all, Asiatic science has been studied secretly and its conquests jealously guarded. I need not as yet attempt either criticism or defence of its methods. The student will later on see that this falls naturally into its place in the whole scheme of occult philosophy. The approaches to that philosophy have always been open, in one sense, to all. Vaguely throughout the world in various ways have been diffused the idea that some process of study which men here and there did actually follow, might lead to the acquisition of a higher kind of knowledge than that taught to mankind at large in books or by public teachers. The East, as pointed out, has always been more than vaguely impressed with this belief; but even in the West the whole block of symbolical literature relating to astrology, alchemy, and mysticism generally has fermented in European society, carrying to some peculiarly receptive and qualified minds the conviction that behind all this superficially meaningless nonsense great truths lay concealed. For such persons eccentric study has sometimes revealed hidden passages

leading to the grandest imaginable realms of enlightenment. But till now, in all such cases, in accordance with the law of those schools, the neophyte no sooner forced his way into the region of mystery than he was bound over to the most inviolable secrecy as to everything connected with his entrance and further progress there. In Asia, in the same way, the chela, or pupil of occultism, no sooner became a chela than he ceased to be a witness on behalf of the reality of occult knowledge. I have been astonished to find, since my own connection with the subject, how numerous such chelas are. But it is impossible to imagine any human act more improbable than the unauthorized revelation by any such chela, to persons of the outer world, that he is one; and so the great esoteric school of philosophy successfully guards its seclusion. * * *

It is however desirable to disabuse the reader of one conception in regard to the objects of adeptship that he very likely has formed. The development of those spiritual faculties, whose culture has to do with the highest objects of the occult life, gives rise as it progresses to a great deal of incidental knowledge, having to do with physical laws of Nature not yet generally understood. This knowledge, and the practical art of manipulating certain obscure forces of Nature, which it brings in its train, invest an adept, and even an adept's pupils, at a comparatively early stage of their education, with very extraordinary powers, the application of which to matters of daily life will sometimes produce results that seem altogether miraculous; and from the ordinary point of view, the acquisition of apparently miraculous power is such a stupendous achievement, that people are sometimes apt to fancy that the adept's object in seeking the knowledge he attains has been to invest himself with these coveted powers. It would be as reasonable to say of any great patriot of military history that his object in becoming a soldier has been to wear a

gay uniform and impress the imagination of the nurse maids."

"The Secret Doctrine of the Rosicrucians"

What is known as "The Secret Doctrine of the Rosicrucians" is an extensive body of esoteric teaching and occult lore which has been transmitted from Master to Student, from Hierophant to the new Initiate, for countless generations. Seldom has any part of the Secret Doctrine been committed to writing, or exposed to public view on the printed page, until the present generation. Previous to that time the little that was written, or printed, concerning this body of teachings was disguised in the vague terms of alchemy and astrology, so that the same would have one meaning to the average reader and another and closer meaning to those who possessed the key to the mystery. The frequent references in the ancient books to "sulphur," "mercury," and other chemical elements, and to "The Philosopher's Stone," etc., were all intended to indicate certain portions of the teachings of the Secret Doctrine to those who already possessed the key.

The Secret Doctrine of the Rosicrucians is believed by those best informed to have been built up gradually, carefully, and slowly, by the old occult masters and adepts, from the scattered fragments of the esoteric teachings which were treasured by the wise men of all races. The legend runs that these fragments of the Secret Doctrine were the scattered portions of the old esoteric teaching of ancient Atlantis--the bits of the great mass of the Atlantean occult teachings which were scattered in all directions by the great cataclysm which had destroyed that great continent. The few survivors of the Atlantean civilization

carefully preserved these Fragments of Truth, and passed them on to their chosen students and capable descendants.

The old Masters who made it the object of their lives to gather together once more these scattered fragments, and to thus reconstruct the Occult Doctrine of the Atlanteans, found a portion of their material in Egypt, in India., in Persia, in Chaldea, in Medea, in China, in Assyria, and in Ancient Greece, and also in the mystic records of the Hebrews, such as the Kaballah and the Zohar. The common source, however, may be regarded as distinctly Oriental. The great philosophies of the East, in fact, may be said to have been built upon the base of these still more ancient teachings. Moreover, the great Grecian Secret Teachings are believed to have been based upon knowledge obtained from this same common source. So, at the last, the Secret Doctrine of the Rosicrucians may be said to be the Secret Doctrine of Atlantis, transmitted through the descendants of the people of that great centre of occult knowledge.

The following quotation from a writer who, himself, has gathered together many bits of the ancient wisdom, may be interesting. Speaking of these ancient teachings he says: "The teaching has come down to the present age through the corridors of time, from the dim ages of past eras, races, and schools of thought. Even those highest in the ancient occult councils, however, are unable to trace the teachings, in an unbroken direct line, further back than the time of Pythagoras (about 500 B. C.), and a little later in Ancient Greece, although they find many references thereto, and extracts therefrom, in some of the older records of ancient Egypt and Chaldea, which serve to show that the schools of Pythagoras, and other ancient Grecian occultists, were founded on occult instruction still more remote, received in a direct line of succession of teachers and pupils extending over centuries. Investigators have found traces of the

teachings in the records of Persia and Media, and it is believed that the inspiration for the original philosophical teachings of Gautama, the founder of Buddhism, was received from the same sources. Traces are also found in the Hebrew Esoteric Teachings."

The writer continues: "The Grecian Teachings were undoubtedly obtained directly from Egyptian sources, through Pythagoras, the relation between the early Grecian teachings and philosophies, and the older school of old Egypt, being very close and intimate. Pythagoras is known to have received instruction from Egyptian and Persian hierophants. There is to be found the closest resemblance between the ancient Grecian teachings, and those of the Egyptian Esoteric Fraternities. Some of the Teachers, however, hold that the Grecian and Egyptian schools, respectively, were but two separate offshoots of an original and older Teaching which had its origin in the lost continent of Atlantis. There are many traditions connecting the Teaching with Atlantis, and it is possible that both Greece and Egypt received it from this common source, instead of Greece being indebted to Egypt for the line of transmission. But, be this as it may, it is a fact that all of the traces of teaching that the various occultists gather from the traditions, scraps of doctrine, and legends regarding Atlantis, can be reconciled with the best esoteric and occult knowledge had by the race today. The fragments of the Egyptian Esoteric Teachings, many of which are still preserved in an undoubted direct line of succession, are practically identical, in fundamental and basis points, with the Grecian Occult Teachings. And, as has been said, the Persian, Medean, and Chaldean legends .and traditions, and scraps of teachings which have been preserved, show a common source or origin with those of Egypt and ancient Greece."

The writer adds: "We are speaking now of the historical view of the subject, only. The occult traditions hold that the Teaching, in some form, is as old as the race itself, and has been known to the advanced minds of every great civilization of the past, many of which disappeared thousands of years ago, all traces of them having been lost to the present sub-race. The traditions hold that the Teaching was handed down from the Elder Brethren of the race--certain advanced souls who appeared in the earlier days, in order to plant the seeds of Truth, so that they would grow, blossom, and bear fruit throughout the ages to follow. We do not ask you to accept this statement--it is not material--for the Teaching bears evidences of its own Truth within itself, without needing the force of such high authority. The ancient tradition is mentioned merely that the student may know that the same is accepted as truth by many of the highest occult authorities and teachers."

"The Seven Aphorisms of Creation"

In the present book, the writer has presented for the consideration of his readers "The Seven Aphorisms of Creation" of the Rosicrucians, which embody the fundamental principles of the Rosicrucian Secret Doctrine. He has also reproduced the leading Secret Symbols of the Rosicrucians which relate to the Seven Aphorisms of Creation.

The student who will master the principles herein set forth will have brought himself to a plane of thought which will naturally tend to place him en rapport with the higher teachers of the Rosicrucians, and to render him subject to the offer of still higher information should he desire to proceed further into this great study. Let the student always remember the ancient axiom: "When the Pupil is ready, the Master appears." But the Pupil is not "ready"

until he has mastered the elementary instruction such as is given in the pages of this book.

It is not claimed, however, that in the pages of this book are given all the Secret Teachings of the Rosicrucians, such as their Formulas and Methods of Mental Alchemy, and Spiritual Transmutation. Such information cannot be cast broadcast, for reasons which will be apparent to every earnest and intelligent student. But, on the other hand, such information cannot be withheld from those who are ready to receive it, and who are moved by the proper motives in seeking to acquire the secret knowledge. When the student learns how to give "The Right Knock," then will he find proven the old promise: "Knock, and it shall be opened unto you."

The Symbol of the Rosy Cross

The well-known Symbol of the Rosicrucians--"The Rosy Cross"--appears in several forms, as for instance: The Cross surmounted by the Rose; the Sword (the Cross handle) attached to the Rose; the Cross surmounted by the Crown; a modification of the Phallic Cross, etc. The explanation of the general Symbol is Sevenfold--the three highest being reserved for Initiates of a certain rank, only, and therefore cannot be stated here. Below follow several of the meanings which we are permitted to translate and explain here:

(1) The Cross Surmounted by the Rose, indicates that the "Rose" (the mystic symbol of the Divine) can be attained only by the suffering of mortal life (symbolized by the Cross).



Figure 2. The Symbol of the Rosy Cross. (Conventionalized)

(2) The Sword Attached to the Rose indicates that the Sword of the Spirit must be actively employed in the Battle of Life, in order to win the reward of the Rose (the Rose being the reward bestowed by the Queen upon the victorious Knight, in the olden days).

(3) The Cross Surmounted by the Crown, indicates that the suffering of mortal existence, borne by the faithful disciple of Truth, will inevitably be rewarded by the attainment of the Crown of Mastery. "Every Cross has its Crown"; and "No Cross, no Crown"; being old aphorisms seeking to express this truth.

(4) The Modified Phallic Cross, indicates the Sexual Duality of the Manifested Universe--the Presence and Activity of

the Universal Male Principle and the Universal Female Principle, respectively.

Concluding this introductory statement, and inviting you to enter into the study of the Secret Doctrine of the Rosicrucians, let us ask you to carefully consider the following words of an ancient aphorism: "The possession of Knowledge, unaccompanied by a manifestation and expression in Action, is like the hoarding of precious metals by the miser--a vain and foolish thing. Forget not The Law of Use, in this and all other things."

PART II. THE ETERNAL PARENT

In the Secret Doctrine of the Rosicrucians we find the following Aphorism of Creation:

The First Aphorism

I. The Eternal Parent was wrapped in the Sleep of the Cosmic Night. Light there was not: for the Flame of Spirit was not yet rekindled. Time there was not: for Change had not re-begun. Things there were not: for Form had not represented itself. Action there was not: for there were no Things to act. The Pairs of Opposites there were not: for there were no Things to manifest Polarity. The Eternal Parent, causeless, indivisible, changeless, infinite, rested in unconscious, dreamless sleep. Other than the Eternal Parent there was Naught, either Real or Apparent.

In this First Aphorism of Creation the Rosicrucian student is directed to apply his attention to the concept of the Infinite Source of All Things--the Eternal Parent "from which all things proceed." This Eternal Parent--the Infinite Unmanifest, is represented by the Rosicrucians by the

symbol of a circle, having nothing outside of itself and nothing within itself.

The circle, however, must not be interpreted as conveying the idea of limitation; rather is it intended to convey the idea of limitlessness. The symbol, although the best possible for the purpose, is inadequate--this by reason of the impossibility of representing the Infinite by a finite symbol. The only adequate symbol of the Eternal Parent would be that of Infinite Space, and this, of course, cannot be represented by a sign, for no matter how wide the circle might be drawn there would always be Space beyond it. But, recognizing the impossibility of an

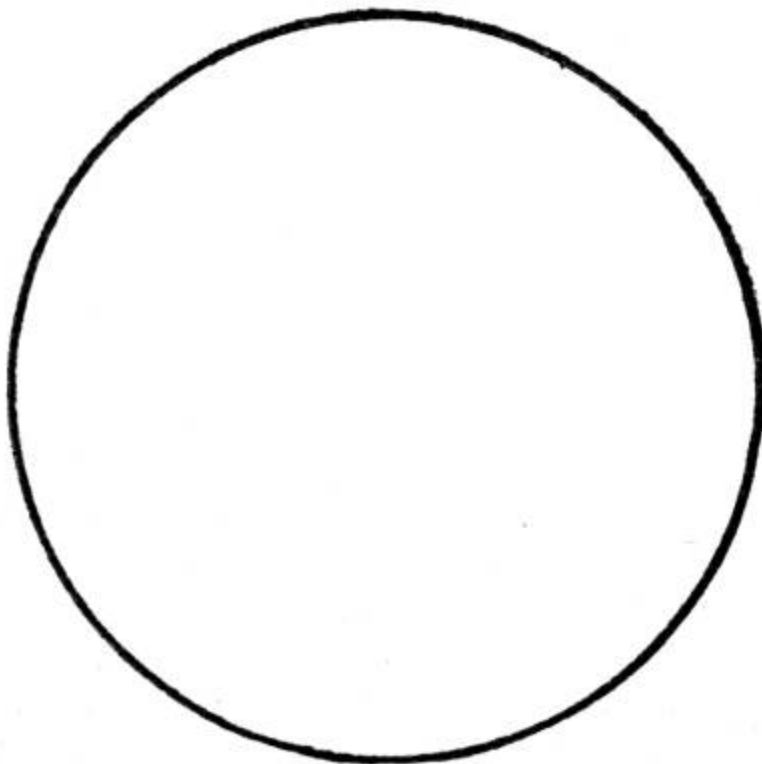


Figure 3. Symbol of the Infinite Unmanifest

adequate symbol, the ancient Rosicrucians have adopted the empty circle as the best possible finite symbol of the