

# The Fraternity of the Rose Cross

by Manly Palmer Hall



## ROSICRUCIAN PHILOSOPHER

Father C.R.C (Christian Rosie Cross or Christian Rosencreutz)—considered not only as a personality, but also as a personification of the system of spiritual philosophy which he is reputed to have established—which explains why no authentic portrait of Father C.R.C. has ever been discovered. The Great Book of the Rose Cross lies unclasped upon the table, beside it an hour glass, intimating that in time all shall be revealed.

# The Fraternity of the Rose Cross

WHO were the Rosicrucians? Were they an organization of profound thinkers rebelling against the inquisitional religious and philosophical limitations of their time or were they isolated transcendentalists united only by the similarity of their viewpoints and deductions? Where was the "House of the Holy Spirit, " in which, according to their manifestoes, they met once a year to plan the future activities of their Order? Who was the mysterious person referred to as "Our Illustrious Father and Brother C.R.C."? Did those three letters actually stand for the words "Christian Rosie Cross"? Was Christian Rosencreutz, the supposed author of the *Chymical Nuptials*, the same person who with three others founded "The Society of the Rose Cross"?

What relationship existed between Rosicrucianism and mediæval Freemasonry? Why were the destinies of these two organizations so closely interwoven? Is the "Brotherhood of the Rose Cross" the much-sought-after link connecting the Freemasonry of the Middle Ages with the symbolism and mysticism of antiquity, and are its secrets being perpetuated by modern Masonry? Did the original Rosicrucian Order disintegrate in the latter part of the eighteenth century, or does the Society still exist as an organization, maintaining the same secrecy for which it was originally famous? What was the true purpose for which the "Brotherhood of the Rose Cross" was formed? Were the Rosicrucians a religious and philosophic brotherhood, as they claimed to be, or were their avowed tenets a blind to conceal the true object of the Fraternity, which possibly was the political control of Europe? These are some of the problems involved in the study of Rosicrucianism.

There are four distinct theories regarding the Rosicrucian enigma. Each is the result of a careful consideration of the evidence by scholars who have spent their lives ransacking the archives of Hermetic lore. The conclusions reached demonstrate clearly the inadequacy of the records available concerning the genesis and early activities of the "Brethren of the Rose Cross."

## THE FIRST POSTULATE

It is assumed that the Rosicrucian Order existed historically in accordance with the description of its foundation and subsequent activities published in its manifesto, the *Fama Fraternitatis*, which is believed to have been written in the year 1610, but apparently did not appear in print until 1614, although an earlier edition is suspected by some authorities. Intelligent consideration of the origin of Rosicrucianism requires a familiarity with the contents of the first and most important of its documents. The *Fama Fraternitatis* begins with a reminder to all the world of God's goodness and mercy, and it warns the intelligentsia that their egotism and covetousness cause them to follow after false prophets and to ignore the true knowledge which God in His goodness has

revealed to them. Hence, a reformation is necessary, and God has raised up philosophers and sages for this purpose.

In order to assist in bringing about the reformation, a mysterious person called "The Highly Illuminated Father C.R.C.," a German by birth, descended of a noble family, but himself a poor man, instituted the "Secret Society of the Rose Cross." C.R.C. was placed in a cloister when only five years of age, but later becoming dissatisfied with its educational system, he associated himself with a brother of Holy Orders who was setting forth on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. They started out together, but the brother died at Cyprus and C.R.C. continued alone to Damascus. Poor health prevented him from reaching Jerusalem, so he remained at Damascus, studying with the philosophers who dwelt there.

While pursuing his studies, he heard of a group of mystics and Qabbalists abiding in the mystic Arabian city of Damcar. Giving up his desire to visit Jerusalem, he arranged with the Arabians for his transportation to Damcar. C.R.C. was but sixteen years of age when he arrived at Damcar. He was received as one who had been long expected, a comrade and a friend in philosophy, and was instructed in the secrets of the Arabian adepts. While there, C.R.C. learned the Arabic tongue and translated the sacred book *M* into Latin; and upon returning to Europe he brought this important volume with him.

After studying three years in Damcar, C.R.C. departed for the city of Fez, where the Arabian magicians declared further information would be given him. At Fez he was instructed how to communicate with the Elementary inhabitants [probably the Nature spirits], and these disclosed to him many other great secrets of Nature. While the philosophers in Fez were not so great as those in Damcar, the previous experiences of C.R.C. enabled him to distinguish the true from the false and thus add greatly to his store of knowledge.

After two years in Fez, C.R.C. sailed for Spain, carrying with him many treasures, among them rare plants and animals accumulated during his wanderings. He fondly hoped that the learned men of Europe would receive with gratitude the rare intellectual and material treasures which he had brought for their consideration. Instead he encountered only ridicule, for the so-called wise were afraid to admit their previous ignorance lest their prestige be impaired. At this point in the narrative is an interpolation stating that Paracelsus, while not a member of the "Fraternity of the Rose Cross," had read the book *M* and from a consideration of its contents had secured information which made him the foremost physician of mediæval Europe.

Tired, but not discouraged, as the result of the fruitlessness of his efforts, C.R.C. returned to Germany, where he built a house in which he could quietly carry on his study and research. He also manufactured a number of rare scientific instruments for research purposes. While he could have made himself famous had he cared to commercialize his knowledge, he preferred the companionship of God to the esteem of men.

After five years of retirement he decided to renew his struggle for a reformation of the arts and sciences of his day, this time with the aid of a few trusted friends. He sent to the cloister where his early training had been received and called to himself three brethren,

whom he bound by an oath to preserve inviolate the secrets he should impart and to write down for the sake of posterity the information



THE GOLDEN AND ROSY CROSS.

From *Geheime Figuren der Rosenkreuzer.*

It is said of this cross that it is made of spiritual gold and that each Brother wears it upon his breast. It bears the alchemical symbols of salt, sulphur, and mercury; also a star of the planets; and around it are the four words FAITH, HOPE, LOVE, and PATIENCE. The double-headed eagle, or Phoenix, subtly foreshadows the ultimate androgynous state of the human creature. Rosicrucian alchemy was not concerned with metals alone. Man's own body was the alchemical laboratory, and none could reach Rosicrucian adeptship until he had performed the supreme experiment of transmutation by changing the base metals of ignorance into the pure gold of wisdom and understanding.

he should dictate. These four founded the "Fraternity of the Rose Cross." They prepared its secret cipher language and, according to the *Fama*, a great dictionary in which all forms of wisdom were classified to the glorification of God. They also began the work of transcribing the book *M*, but found the task too difficult because of the demands of the great numbers of sick who came to them for healing.

Having completed a newer and larger building, which they called the "House of the Holy Spirit," they decided to include four new members in the Fraternity, thus increasing the number to eight, seven of whom were German. All were unmarried. Working industriously together, they speedily completed the arduous labor of preparing the documents, instructions, and arcana of the Order. They also put the house called "Sancti Spiritus" in order.

They then decided to separate and visit the other countries of the earth, not only that their wisdom might be given to others who deserved it but also that they might check and correct any mistakes existing in their own system. Before separating, the Brethren prepared six rules, or by-laws, and each bound himself to obey them. The first rule was that they should take to themselves no other dignity or credit than that they were willing to heal the sick without charge. The second was that from that time on forever they should wear no special robe or garment, but should dress according to the custom of the country wherein they dwelt. The third stated that every year upon a certain day they should meet in the "House of the Holy Spirit," or, if unable to do so, should be represented by an epistle. The fourth decreed that each member should search for a worthy person to succeed him at his own demise. The fifth stated that the letters "R.C." should be their seal, mark, and character from that time onward. The sixth specified that the Fraternity should remain unknown to the world for a period of one hundred years.

After they had sworn to this code five of the Brothers departed to distant lands, and a year later two of the others also went their way, leaving Father C.R. C. alone in the "House of the Holy Spirit." Year after year they met with great joy, for they had quietly and sincerely promulgated their doctrines among the wise of the earth.

When the first of the Order died in England, it was decided that the burial places of the members should be secret. Soon afterward Father C.R.C. called the remaining six together, and it is supposed that then he prepared his own symbolic tomb. The *Fama* records that none of the Brothers alive at the time of its writing knew when Father C.R.C. died or where he was buried. His body was accidentally discovered 120 years after his death when one of the Brothers, who possessed considerable architectural skill, decided to make some alterations in the "House of the Holy Spirit." [It is only suspected that the tomb was in this building.]

While making his alterations, the Brother discovered a memorial tablet upon which were inscribed the names of the early members of the Order. This he decided to transfer to a more imposing chapel, for at that time no one knew in what country Father C.R.C. had died, this information having been concealed by the original members. In attempting to remove the memorial tablet, which was held in place by a large nail, some stones and plastering were broken from the wall, disclosing a door concealed in the masonry. The members of the Order immediately cleared away the rest of the débris and uncovered the entrance to a vault. Upon the door in large letters were the words: POST

CXX ANNOS PATEBO. This, according to the mystic interpretation of the Brethren, meant, "In 120 years I shall come forth."

The following morning the door was opened and the members entered a vault with seven sides and seven corners, each side five feet broad and eight feet high. Although the sun never penetrated this tomb, it was brilliantly illuminated by a mysterious light in the ceiling. In the center was a circular altar, upon which were brass plates engraved with strange characters. In each of the seven sides was a small door which, upon being opened, revealed a number of boxes filled with books, secret instructions, and the supposedly lost arcanum of the Fraternity.

Upon moving the altar to one side a brass cover was disclosed. Lifting this revealed a body, presumably that of C.R.C., which, although it had lain there 120 years, was as well preserved as though it had just been interred. It was ornamented and attired in the robes of the Order, and in one hand was clasped a mysterious parchment which, next to the Bible, was the most valued possession of the Society. After thoroughly investigating the contents of the secret chamber, the brass plate and altar were put back in place, the door of the vault was again sealed, and the Brothers went their respective ways, their spirits raised and their faith increased by the miraculous spectacle which they had beheld.

The document ends by saying in effect, "In accordance with the will of Father C.R.C., the *Fama* has been prepared and sent forth to the wise and learned of all Europe in five languages, that all may know and understand the secrets of the august Fraternity. All of sincere soul who labor for the glory of God are invited to communicate with the Brethren and are promised that their appeal shall be heard, regardless of where they are or how the messages are sent. At the same time, those of selfish and ulterior motives are warned that only sorrow and misery will attend any who attempt to discover the Fraternity without a clean heart and a pure mind."

Such, in brief, is the story of the *Fama Fraternitatis*. Those who accept it literally regard Father C.R.C. as the actual founder of the Brotherhood, which he is believed to have organized about 1400. The fact that historical corroboration of the important points of the *Fama* has never been discovered is held against this theory. There is no proof that Father C.R.C. ever approached the learned men of Spain. The mysterious city of Damcar cannot be found, and there is no record that anywhere in Germany there existed a place where great numbers of the halt and sick came and were mysteriously healed. A. E. Waite's *The Secret Tradition in Freemasonry* contains a picture of Father C.R.C. showing him with a long beard upon his breast, sitting before a table upon which burns a candle. One hand is supporting his head and the other is resting the tip of its index finger on the temple of a human skull. The picture, however (see plate at head of chapter), proves nothing. Father C.R.C. was never seen by other than members of his own Order, and they did not preserve a description of him. That his name was Christian Rosencreutz is most improbable, as the two were not even associated until the writing of the *Chymical Nuptials*.

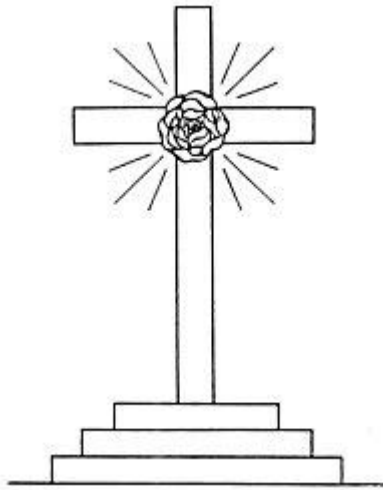
## THE SECOND POSTULATE

Those Masonic brethren who have investigated the subject accept the historical existence of the "Brotherhood of the Rose Cross" but are divided concerning the origin of the Order. One group holds the society originated in mediæval Europe as an outgrowth of alchemical speculation. Robert Macoy, 33°, believes that Johann Valentin Andreae, a German theologian, was the true founder, and he also believes it possible that this divine merely reformed and amplified an existing society which had been founded by Sir Henry Cornelius Agrippa. Some believe that Rosicrucianism represented the first European invasion of Buddhist and Brahmin culture. Still others hold the opinion that the "Society of the Rose Cross" was founded in Egypt during the philosophic supremacy of that empire, and that it also perpetuated the Mysteries of ancient Persia and Chaldea.

In his *Anacalypsis*, Godfrey Higgins writes: "The Rosicrucians of Germany are quite ignorant of their origin; but, by tradition, they suppose themselves descendants of the ancient Egyptians, Chaldeans, Magi, and Gymnosophists." (The last was a name given by the followers of Alexander the Great to a caste of naked Wise Men whom they found meditating along the river banks in India.) The consensus among these factions is that the story of Father C.R.C., like the Masonic legend of Hiram Abiff, is an allegory and should not be considered literally. A similar problem has confronted students of the Bible, who have found not only difficult, but in the majority of cases impossible, their efforts to substantiate the historical interpretation of the Scriptures.

Admitting the existence of the Rosicrucians as a secret society with both philosophic and political ends, it is remarkable that an organization with members in all parts of Europe could maintain absolute secrecy throughout the centuries. Nevertheless, the "Brothers of the Rose Cross" were apparently able to accomplish this. A great number of scholars and philosophers, among them Sir Francis Bacon and Wolfgang von Goethe, have been suspected of affiliation with the Order, but their connection has not been established to the satisfaction of prosaic historians. Pseudo-Rosicrucians abounded, but the true members of the "Ancient and Secret Order of The Unknown Philosophers" have successfully lived up to their name; to this day they remain unknown.

During the Middle Ages a number of tracts appeared, purporting to be from the pens of Rosicrucians. Many of them, however, were spurious, being issued for their self-aggrandizement by unscrupulous persons who used the revered and magic name Rosicrucian in the hope of gaining religious or political power. This has greatly complicated



THE CRUCIFIED ROSE.

The original symbol of the Rosicrucian Fraternity was a hieroglyphic rose crucified upon a cross. The cross was often raised upon a three-stepped Calvary. Occasionally the symbol of a cross rising from a rose was used in connection with their activities. The Rosicrucian rose was drawn upon the Round Table of King Arthur, and is the central motif for the links forming the chain from which the "Great George" is suspended among the jewels of The Order of the Garter. Hargrave Jennings suspects this Order of having some connection with the Rosicrucians.

the work of investigating the Society. One group of pseudo-Rosicrucians went so far as to supply its members with a black cord by which they were to know each other, and warned them that if they broke their vow of secrecy the cord would be used to strangle them. Few of the principles of Rosicrucianism have been preserved in literature, for the original Fraternity published only fragmentary accounts of its principles and activities.

In his *Secret Symbols of the Rosicrucians*, Dr. Franz Hartmann describes the Fraternity as "A secret society of men possessing superhuman--if not supernatural--powers; they were said to be able to prophesy future events, to penetrate into the deepest mysteries of Nature, to transform Iron, Copper, Lead, or Mercury into Gold, to prepare an *Elixir of Life*, or *Universal Panacea*, by the use of which they could preserve their youth and manhood; and moreover it was believed that they could command the *Elemental Spirits of Nature*, and knew the secret of the *Philosopher's Stone*, a substance which rendered him who possessed it all-powerful, immortal, and supremely wise."

The same author further defines a Rosicrucian as "A person who by the process of spiritual awakening has attained a *practical knowledge* of the secret significance of the *Rose* and the *Cross*. \* \* \* To call a person a Rosicrucian does not make him one, nor does the act of calling a person a Christian make him a Christ. The real Rosicrucian or Mason cannot be made; he must grow to be one by the expansion and unfoldment of the divine power within his own heart. The inattention to this truth is the cause that many churches and secret societies are far from being that which their names express."

The symbolic principles of Rosicrucianism are so profound that even today they are little appreciated. Their charts and diagrams are concerned with weighty cosmic principles which they treat with a philosophic understanding decidedly refreshing when

compared with the orthodox narrowness prevalent in their day. According to the available records, the Rosicrucians were bound together by mutual aspirations rather than by the laws of a fraternity. The "Brothers of the Rose Cross" are believed to have lived unobtrusively, laboring industriously in trades and professions, disclosing their secret affiliation to no one--in many cases not even to their own families. After the death of C.R.C., most of the Brethren apparently had no central meeting place. Whatever initiatory ritual the Order possessed was so closely guarded that it has never been revealed. Doubtless it was couched in chemical terminology.

Efforts to join the Order were apparently futile, for the Rosicrucians always chose their disciples. Having agreed on one who they believed would do honor to their illustrious fraternity, they communicated with him in one of many mysterious ways. He might receive a letter, either anonymous or with a peculiar seal, usually bearing the letters "C.R.C." or "R.C." upon it. He would be instructed to go to a certain place at an appointed time. What was disclosed to him he never revealed, although in many cases his later writings showed that a new influence had come into his life, deepening his understanding and broadening his intellect. A few have written allegorically concerning what they beheld when in the august presence of the "Brethren of the Rose Cross."

Alchemists were sometimes visited in their laboratories by mysterious strangers, who delivered learned discourses concerning the secret processes of the Hermetic arts and, after disclosing certain processes, departed, leaving no trace. Others declared that the "Brothers of the Rose Cross" communicated with them through dreams and visions, revealing the secrets of Hermetic wisdom to them while they were asleep. Having been instructed, the candidate was bound to secrecy not only concerning the chemical formulæ which had been disclosed to him but also concerning the method by which he had secured them. While these nameless adepts were suspected of being "Brothers of the Rose Cross," it could never be proved who they were, and those visited could only conjecture.

Many suspect the Rosicrucian rose to be a conventionalization of the Egyptian and Hindu lotus blossom, with the same symbolic meaning as this more ancient symbol. The *Divine Comedy* stamps Dante Alighieri as being familiar with the theory of Rosicrucianism. Concerning this point, Albert Pike in his *Morals and Dogma* makes this significant statement: "His Hell is but a negative Purgatory. His heaven is composed of a series of Kabalistic circles, divided by a cross, like the Pantacle of Ezekiel. In the center of this cross blooms a rose, and we see the symbol of the Adepts of the Rose-Croix for the first time publicly expounded and almost categorically explained."

Doubt has always existed as to whether the name Rosicrucian came from the symbol of the rose and cross, or whether this was merely a blind to deceive the uninformed and further conceal the true meaning of the Order. Godfrey Higgins believes that the word *Rosicrucian* is not derived from the flower but from the word *Ros*, which means dew. It is also interesting to note that the word *Ras* means wisdom, while *Rus* is translated concealment. Doubtless all of these meanings have contributed to Rosicrucian symbolism.

A. E. Waite holds with Godfrey Higgins that the process of forming the Philosopher's Stone with the aid of dew is the secret concealed within the name Rosicrucian. It is

possible that the dew referred to is a mysterious substance within the human brain, closely resembling the description given by alchemists of the dew which, falling from heaven, redeemed the earth. The cross is symbolic of the human body, and the two symbols together--the rose on the cross--signify that the soul of man is crucified upon the body, where it is held by three nails.

It is probable that Rosicrucian symbolism is a perpetuation of the secret tenets of the Egyptian Hermes, and that the Society of Unknown Philosophers is the true link connecting modern Masonry, with its mass of symbols, to ancient Egyptian Hermeticism, the source of that symbolism. In his *Doctrine and Literature of the Kabalah*, A. E. Waite makes this important observation: "There are certain indications which point to a possible connection between Masonry and Rosicrucianism, and this, if admitted, would constitute the first link in its connection with the past. The evidence is, however, inconclusive, or at least unextricated. Freemasonry per se, in spite of the affinity with mysticism which I have just mentioned, has never exhibited any mystic character, nor has it a clear notion how it came by its symbols."

Many of those connected with the development of Freemasonry were suspected of being Rosicrucians; some, as in the case of Robert Fludd, even wrote defenses of this organization. Frank C. Higgins, a modern Masonic symbolist, writes: "Doctor Ashmole, a member of this fraternity [Rosicrucian], is revered by Masons as one of the founders of the first Grand Lodge in London." (See *Ancient Freemasonry*.) Elias Ashmole is but one of many intellectual links connecting Rosicrucianism with the genesis of Freemasonry. The *Encyclopædia Britannica* notes that Elias Ashmole was initiated into the Freemasonic Order in 1646, and further states that he was "the first gentleman, or amateur, to be 'accepted'."

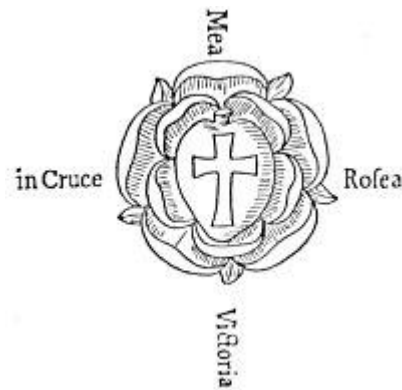
On this same subject, Papus, in his *Tarot of the Bohemians*, has written: "We must not forget that the Rosicrucians were the Initiators of Leibnitz, and the founders of actual Freemasonry through Ashmole." If the founders of Freemasonry were initiated into the Great Arcanum of Egypt--and the symbolism of modern Masonry would indicate that such was the case--then it is reasonable to suppose that they secured their information from a society whose existence they admitted and which was duly qualified to teach them these symbols and allegories.

One theory concerning the two Orders is to the effect that Freemasonry was an outgrowth of Rosicrucianism; in other words, that the "Unknown Philosophers" became known through an organization which they created to serve them in the material world. The story goes on to relate that the Rosicrucian adepts became dissatisfied with their progeny and silently withdrew from the Masonic hierarchy, leaving behind their symbolism and allegories, but carrying away the keys by which the locked symbols could be made to give tip their secret meanings. Speculators have gone so far as to state that, in their opinion, modern Freemasonry has completely absorbed Rosicrucianism and succeeded it as the world's greatest secret society. Other minds of equal learning declare that the Rosicrucian Brotherhood still exists, preserving its individuality as the result of having withdrawn from the Masonic Order.

According to a widely accepted tradition, the headquarters of the Rosicrucian Order is near Carlsbad, in Austria (see Doctor Franz Hartmann). Another version has it that a mysterious school, resembling in general principles the Rosicrucian Fraternity, which

calls itself "The Bohemian Brothers," still maintains its individuality in the *Schwarzwald* (Black Forest) of Germany. One thing is certain: with the rise of Freemasonry, the Rosicrucian Order in Europe practically disappeared, and notwithstanding existing statements to the contrary, it is certain that the 18th degree (commonly known as the Rose-Croix) perpetuates many of the symbols of the Rosicrucian Fire Alchemists.

In an anonymous unpublished manuscript of the eighteenth century bearing the earmarks of Rosicrucian Qabbalism appears this



THE ROSICRUCIAN ROSE.

*From Geheime Figuren der Rosenkreuzer.*

The rose is a yonic symbol associated with generation, fecundity, and purity. The fact that flowers blossom by unfolding has caused them to be chosen as symbolic of spiritual unfoldment. The red color of the rose refers to the blood of Christ, and the golden heart concealed within the midst of the flower corresponds to the spiritual gold concealed within the human nature. The number of its petals being ten is also a subtle reminder of the perfect Pythagorean number. The rose symbolizes the heart, and the heart has always been accepted by Christians as emblematic of the virtues of love and compassion, as well as of the nature of Christ--the personification of these virtues. The rose as a religious emblem is of great antiquity. It was accepted by the Greeks as the symbol of the sunrise, or of the coming of dawn. In his *Metamorphosis*, or *Golden Ass*, Apuleius, turned into a donkey because of his foolishness, regained his human shape by eating a sacred rose given to him by the Egyptian priests.

The presence of a hieroglyphic rose upon the escutcheon of Martin Luther has been the basis of much speculation as to whether any connection existed between his Reformation and the secret activities of the Rose Cross.

statement: "Yet will I now give the over-wise world a paradox to be solved, namely, that some illuminated men have undertaken to found Schools of Wisdom in Europe and these for some peculiar reason have called themselves *Fratres Rosa: Crucis*. But soon afterwards came false schools into existence and corrupted the good intentions of these wise men. Therefore, the Order no longer exists as most people would understand existence, and as this Fraternity of the *Seculo Fili* call themselves *Brothers of the Rosie Cross*, so also will they in the *Seculo Spiritus Sancti* call themselves *Brothers of the Lily Cross* and the *Knights of the White Lion*. Then will the Schools of Wisdom begin again to blossom, but why the first one chose their name and why the others shall also choose theirs, only those can solve who have understanding grounded in Nature."

Political aspirations of the Rosicrucians were expressed through the activities of Sir Francis Bacon, the Comte de St.-Germain, and the Comte di Cagliostro. The last named

is suspected of having been an emissary of the Knights Templars, a society deeply involved in transcendentalism, as Eliphas Levi has noted. There is a popular supposition to the effect that the Rosicrucians were at least partial instigators of the French Revolution. (Note particularly the introduction to Lord Bulwer-Lytton's Rosicrucian novel *Zanoni*.)

### THE THIRD POSTULATE

The third theory takes the form of a sweeping denial of Rosicrucianism, asserting that the so-called original Order never had any foundation in fact but was entirely a product of imagination. This viewpoint is best expressed by a number of questions which are still being asked by investigators of this elusive group of metaphysicians. Was the "Brotherhood of the Rose Cross" merely a mythical institution created in the fertile mind of some literary cynic for the purpose of deriding the alchemical and Hermetic sciences? Did the "House of the Holy Spirit" ever exist outside the imagination of some mediæval mystic? Was the whole Rosicrucian story a satire to ridicule the gullibility of scholastic Europe? Was the mysterious Father C.R.C. a product of the literary genius of Johann Valentin Andreaë, or another of similar mind, who, attempting to score alchemical and Hermetic philosophy, unwittingly became a great power in furthering the cause of its promulgation? That at least one of the early documents of the Rosicrucians was from the pen of Andreaë there is little doubt, but for just what purpose he compiled it still remains a matter of speculation. Did Andreaë himself receive from some unknown person, or persons, instructions to be carried out? If he wrote the *Chymical Nuptials of Christian Rosencreutz* when only fifteen years old, was he overshadowed in the preparation of that book?

To these vital questions no answers are forthcoming. A number of persons accepted the magnificent imposture of Andreaë as absolute truth. It is maintained by many that, as a consequence, numerous pseudo-societies sprang up, each asserting that it was the organization concerning which the *Fama Fraternalitatis* and the *Confessio Fraternalitatis* were written. Beyond doubt there are many spurious orders in existence today; but few of them can offer valid claims that their history dates back farther than the beginning of the nineteenth century.

The mystery associated with the Rosicrucian Fraternity has resulted in endless controversy. Many able minds, notable among them Eugenius Philalethes, Michael Maier, John Heydon, and Robert Fludd, defended the concrete existence of "The Society of Unknown Philosophers." Others equally qualified have asserted it to be of fraudulent origin and doubtful existence. Eugenius Philalethes, while dedicating books to the Order, and himself writing an extended exposition of its principles, disclaims all personal connection with it. Many others have done likewise.

Some are of the opinion that Sir Francis Bacon had a hand in the writing of the *Fama* and *Confessio Fraternalitatis*, on the basis that the rhetorical style of these works is similar to that of Bacon's *New Atlantis*. They also contend that certain statements in the latter work point to an acquaintance with Rosicrucian symbology. The elusiveness of the Rosicrucians has caused them to be favorite subject's for literary works. Outstanding among the romances which have been woven around them is *Zanoni*. The author, Lord Bulwer-Lytton, is regarded by some as a member of the Order, while others assert that he applied for membership but was rejected. Pope's *Rape of the Lock*, &c. *Comte de*

*Gabalus* by Abbé de Villars, and essays by De Quincy, Hartmann, Jennings, Mackenzie, and others, are examples of Rosicrucian literature. Although the existence of these mediæval Rosicrucians is difficult to prove, sufficient evidence is at hand to make it extremely probable that there existed in Germany, and afterwards in France, Italy, England, and other European countries, a secret society of illuminated savants who made contributions of great import to the sum of human knowledge, while maintaining absolute secrecy concerning their personalities and their organization.

## THE FOURTH POSTULATE

The apparent incongruities of the Rosicrucian controversy have also been accounted for by a purely transcendental explanation. There is evidence that early writers were acquainted with such a supposition--which, however, was popularized only after it had been espoused by Theosophy. This theory asserts that the Rosicrucians actually possessed all the supernatural powers with which they were credited; that they were in reality citizens of two worlds: that, while they had physical bodies for expression on the material plane, they were also capable, through the instructions they received from the Brotherhood, of functioning in a mysterious ethereal body not subject to the limitations of time or distance. By means of this "astral form" they were able to function in the invisible realm of Nature, and in this realm, beyond reach of the profane, their temple was located.

According to this viewpoint, the true Rosicrucian Brotherhood consisted of a limited number of highly developed adepts, or initiates, those of the higher degrees being no longer subject to the laws of mortality; candidates were accepted into the Order only after long periods of probation; adepts possessed the secret of the Philosopher's Stone and knew the process of transmuting the base metals into gold, but taught that these were only allegorical terms concealing the true mystery of human regeneration through the transmutation of the "base elements" of man's lower nature into the "gold" of intellectual and spiritual realization. According to this theory, those who have sought to record the events of importance in connection with the Rosicrucian controversy have invariably failed because they approached their subject from a purely physical or materialistic angle.

These adepts were believed to have been able to teach man how to function away from his physical body at will by assisting him to remove the "rose from the cross." They taught that the spiritual nature was attached to the material form at certain points, symbolized by the "nails" of the crucifixion; but by three alchemical initiations which took place in the spiritual world, in the true Temple of the Rose Cross, they were able to "draw" these nails and permit the divine nature of man to come down from its cross. They concealed the processes by which this was accomplished under three alchemical metaphoric expressions: "The Casting of the Molten Sea," "The Making of the Rose Diamond," and "The Achieving of the Philosopher's Stone."

While the intellectualist flounders among contradictory theories, the mystic treats the problem in an entirely different manner. He believes that the true Rosicrucian Fraternity, consisting of a school of supermen (not unlike the fabled Mahatmas of India), is an institution existing not in the visible world but in its spiritual counterpart, which he sees fit to call the "inner planes of Nature"; that the Brothers can be reached only by those who are capable of transcending the limitations of the material world. To

substantiate their viewpoint, these mystics cite the following significant statement from the *Confessio Fratemitatis*: "A thousand times the unworthy may clamour, a thousand times may present themselves, yet God hath commanded our ears that they should hear none of them, and hath so compassed us about with His clouds that unto us, His servants, no violence can be done; wherefore now no longer are we beheld by human eyes, unless they have received strength borrowed from the eagle." In mysticism the eagle is a symbol of initiation (the spinal Spirit Fire), and by this is explained the inability of the unregenerated world to understand the Secret Order of the Rose Cross.

Those professing this theory regard the Comte de St.-Germain as their highest adept and assert that he and Christian Rosencreutz were one and the same individual. They accept fire as their universal symbol because it was the one element by means of which they could control the metals. They declared themselves the descendants of Tubal-cain and Hiram Abiff, and that the purpose of their existence was to preserve the spiritual nature of man through ages of materiality. "The Gnostic sects, the Arabs, Alchemists, Templars, Rosicrucians, and lastly the Freemasons, form the Western chain in the transmission of occult science." (See *The Tarot of the Bohemians* translated by A. E. Waite from the French of Papus.)

**Max Heindel, the Christian mystic, described the Rosicrucian Temple as an "etheric structure" located in and around the home of a European country gentleman. He believed that this invisible building would ultimately be moved to the American continent. Mr. Heindel referred to the Rosicrucian Initiates as so advanced in the science of life that "death had forgotten them."**



THE CREST OF JOHANN VALENTIN ANDREÆ.

From *Chymische Hochzeit*.

The reference to four red roses and a white cross in the Chymical Marriage of Christian Rosencreutz identified Johann Valentin Andreæ as its author, for his family crest, shown above, consisted of four red roses and a white cross.

**Aura.**