

The Rosicrucian Brotherhood—Part 1

THE SCRIPTURES TEACH US that no age has existed, exists, or will exist, in which single individuals, experienced in the world and its darknesses, have not been able to retain knowledge of the holy light, counting themselves among the sons of God. Thus in each century and epoch were some, however small in number, who passed through the narrow portal, while the larger part of mankind trod the broader and more conspicuous way. For we read that in each epoch of the Church some were found who were given the “victory, the tree of life which is in the midst of the Paradise of God” (*Revelation 2:7*), the “hidden manna and the white stone” (*Revelation 2:17*), the “morning star” (*Revelation 2:28*), or “clothed in white raiment” (*Revelation 3:5*). They shall receive their heritage and their name shall not be blotted from the book of life, and they will be “pillars in the temple” and will receive “the new name of the Lamb.”

This is the first of three articles on the *Rosicrucian Brotherhood* by the English mystical philosopher, Robert Fludd (1574-1637), considered an immediate father of Freemasonry, foremost among the disciples of Paracelsus, and “the central figure of Rosicrucian literature, towering as an intellectual giant...a man of immense erudition, [and] exalted mind” (Waite). The unfoldment of the Christ within each human soul is the *magnum opus* of spiritual alchemy and the central truth of Fludd’s writing. This and the next two articles are drawn from the Rosicrucian apologist’s book *Summum Bonum, The Highest Good*, which first appeared in 1629 in German.

The following words of the Evangelist are also applicable to those men: all who receive “the true Light that cometh into the world,” receive the “power to become the sons of God” (*John 1:9, 12*). They are to live in the House of Wisdom, safely and strongly erected on the mountain, of which the Saviour speaks: “Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock; and the rain descended and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon rock” (*Matthew 7:24-25* and *Luke 6:48*).

But, you will ask, why are these good inhabitants of that imaginary house so hidden? Why do their habitations remain so secret? Why have they not appeared

before the world long since? Why do they not reveal their secrets for the prosperity of the State in which they live—if they can call such virtue and power their own?

To these questions I reply that while they are truly endowed with heavenly riches, they stand before the world poor and unknown. It is no wonder that, rich as they are through the Holy Spirit, they despise the world and its splendor, according to the word of the Evangelist: “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. For all that is in the world is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the

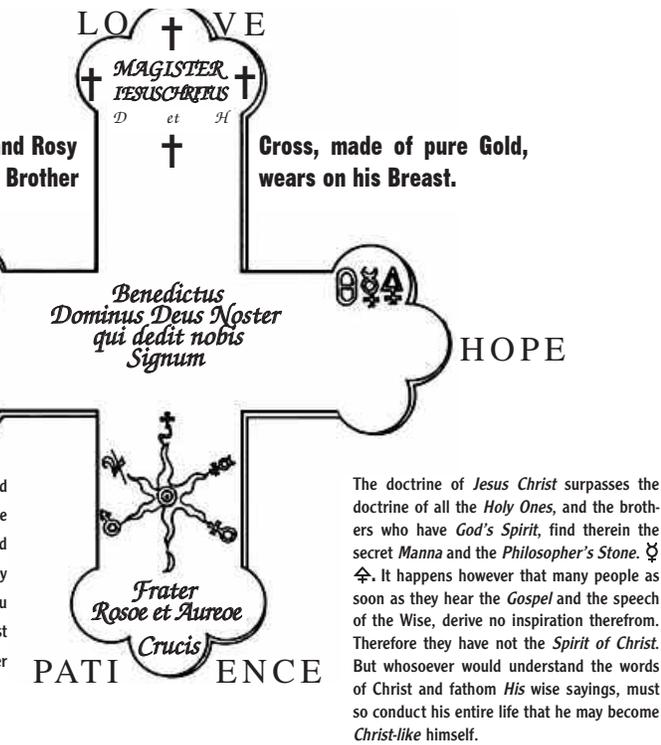
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eyes, and the pride of life” (I John 2:15-16). Thus it is that the world does not know the sons of God because “the sons of God do not know the world,” for the world “is built entirely upon wickedness” (I John 5:19).

On the other hand, however, it is the will of God that what is hidden shall be revealed. And God has promised through His prophets, in the last days before the end of the world, “to pour out His spirit upon all flesh” (Joel 2:28), and the royal Psalmist prophesies that God will quench the thirst of the sons of men out of the stream of His grace; those who remain under the protection of His wings in hope will find in Him the fountain of life, for in his light we shall see the light (see Psalm 36).

But to return to the inhabitants of that Castle of Wisdom, built with such reason on the mountain, it is given to them by the Holy Spirit to know everything—because it is His task to teach everything as was said by the Apostle, through “the grace of God which is given to you by Jesus Christ, in everything you are enriched by him, in all utterance and in all knowledge”(1 Corinthians 1:4-5). Thus it follows that these inhabitants of the House of Wisdom—they alone, and no one other than they—are those who, together with Solomon, have knowledge of true Magic, of true Cabala, and of true Alchemical science.

Therefore it seems to me praiseworthy that this society, the Brotherhood of the Rosicrucians, does not wish to appear before the world before the appointed time. We will seek to learn who are the inhabitants of this building, and why they are called particularly and constantly, *Brothers* and also *Rosicrucians*. Finally, we shall publish a dec-



From Secret Symbols of the Rosicrucians of the 16th & 17th Centuries, Altona, 1785
 Depicted without the rose, the above cross is emblematical of four Christian virtues, the foremost of which is Love, whose personification is Christ Jesus. The seven spirits (Earth is assumed) before the throne of the sun, represented by the symbols for their planetary bodies, signify the energies by which spiritual alchemy builds the inner Christ.

laration given by these Rosicrucians. Let us therefore say, to begin with, that the palace or cloister of this Fraternity is that of which the Holy Scripture speaks, as we can prove by these words: “Let us ascend the mountain of reason, and erect the House of Wisdom.” As the foundational element in that mountain we recognize the “cornerstone which” (according to the testimony of the prophet) “has taken from the mountain without the use of hands, and has itself become a great mountain, filling the whole earth after it shattered the feet of the statue.”

Thus says the prophet: “The house of the God of Israel is great and mighty in its possession.” This is the mountain which, in truth, is the Mount of Horeb, that spiritual Zion which is so often spoken of in Holy Scripture, and this stone is the same rock, that true house, which is meant by the Evangelist when he says, “The wise man will build his house by digging into the depth and placing the

foundation on the selfsame rock.” *That rock*, however, is *Christ*, upon whom the spiritual house and the sanctuary of the priests rests. However clear it may be that it is required of us that we build a house upon that rock mountain, it is also clear that this cannot be the work of men, as is believed by foolish alchemists or magicians, but rather is a divine work. It is entirely certain that if Wisdom herself is not present in such things and does not undertake the leadership, both as architect and executor of the work, then human power can do nothing. This is already confirmed in clear words by the sacred text (*Psalms* 127:1): “Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it.” Thus it is in truth the Lord who does the building of the house, executes it with wise and experienced hands, and brings everything to completion. This is none other than what we see manifested when the active man brings forth in suffering woman, through adjustment and dispersion, a third entity, namely, the foetus, which, however, is not created by clever men, but by the spirit of God hidden in the seed.

Therefore the Apostle also speaks: “We require of you, you brothers, that you bear rich fruit and work diligently; that you are calm and go about your business; work with your hands as we have prescribed for you, etc.” And, as a result, “So that no one will be in need.” David says in his Psalm, “Blessed are those who walk in the ways of the Lord; He will establish the work of their hands.” And yet the hands of the artist create nothing (as I have said) except that they separate the superficial, and then out of itself the Spirit acts for the perfecting and heavenly ordering of that royal palace. “Your habitation,” says the Apostle, “was not made by the hands of men, but we have a spiritual building in the heavens, which is the House of Wisdom on the Mount of Reason, built upon the spiritual rock.”

Paul expresses this aptly in the following words: “I have planted, Apollo watered, but God gave the increase. Thus neither is he that planted anything, neither he that watered, but God gave the increase. Every man shall receive his reward according to his labor, for we are laborers together with God. You are God’s building. According to the grace of

God given to me, as a wise masterbuilder have I laid the foundation, and another builds upon it” (*I Corinthians* 3). Everyone must discover how he can build upon this foundation, “for other foundation can no man lay than what is laid, which is Jesus Christ. If any man’s work remain, which he has built upon this foundation, he shall receive a reward.

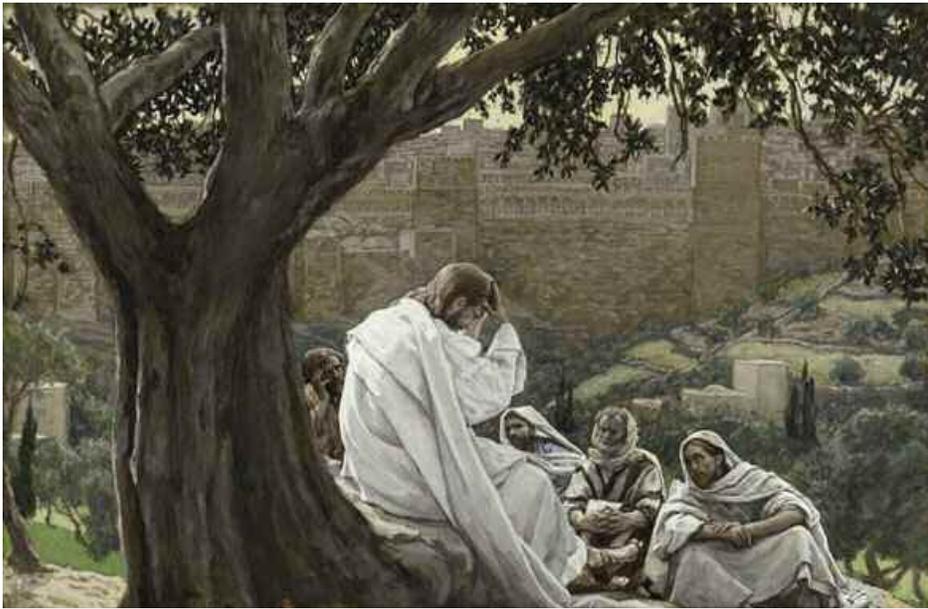
“Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man’s work shall be made manifest because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is.”

To this is related the oft-quoted stone of contention for the false Christians (*Romans* 9:33). This is the precious and proven cornerstone laid for everyone who believes in him as the foundation stone of the building, which will not be overthrown (*I Peter* 2:6). He is also a stone of contention (*Isaiah* 28:16). The prophet speaks of the ill-founded house (*Jeremiah* 22), and in *Proverbs* it says, “Woe to him who builds his house upon unrighteousness, and woe to his house in the day of judgment.” Solomon also says, “The house of the unrighteous will be destroyed.”

Since there exists a proven and a precious cornerstone, the true architects built the House of the Word above that stone. This house of the just, I say, will last forever, according to the decrees of Wisdom as is testified by *Matthew* 7:24: “Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine and doeth them, I will liken him to a wise man, which built his house upon a rock. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.”

Of this house the royal Psalmist sang (*Psalms* 5:7; 26:8; 84:10): “I will come into thy house in the fullness of thy mercy. I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thy honor dwelleth. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.”

By this, however, the king did not understand the temple built by the art of men because, as is testified by the Scripture, God did not inhabit a house from the exodus of Israel from Egypt to the time of Solomon, but He had His place in a tent.



Opaque watercolor over graphite on gray wove paper, 1895. J. James Tissot, 1836-1902. Brooklyn Museum

The Prophecy of the Destruction of the Temple

The temple made with hands can be destroyed by hands. The etheric temple, either of the physical body or a building, is made by thought and is a more perfect similitude of its spiritual archetype. The etheric Christ is the cornerstone of the individual soul body.

Addressing Himself to David, God also said, “Thou shalt not build an house for my name because thou hast been a man of war, and hast shed blood.” With these words he means a material temple, for the Holy Scriptures testify that David possessed a description of the material temple which had been written into his spirit by the finger of God. From this it seems clear that the divine Spirit Himself was the master of the plan of the House on the mountain, erected by reason, because, as it were, not only the Tabernacle and the Temple of Solomon, but also Man himself was formed according to this image, and therefore he is called the temple of the Holy Spirit.

Thus we come to the conclusion that the building of that house under the cooperation of a true Brother is a revelation of the occult, that is, the spiritual rock or the revelation of the mystical wisdom of the Stone of the Patriarch, which he calls the house of God. This is the erection of the spiritual house or palace on the Mount of Reason. And this rock we call the mystical castle Bethlehem, of which the Evangelist says, Christ was of the castle Bethlehem. From that place also came David, which can easily be proved by etymology, for Bethlehem means “house of bread” and “of

war.” But manna means “the hidden bread” and “the food of the angels,” “the bread of heaven,” and “the Word,” by which everyone can live without ordinary bread, as we are taught by Christ in the Scriptures.

From this it follows that *Bethlehem* is the same as *Beth-El*, which means “the House of the Lord.” Thus the stone or rock of Jacob is called “the House of God.” Concerning the secret of this House of God, this Temple of Christ, we are excellently told by that patient man, Job, who says, “He brings fire of Solomon which makes men into prophets and friends of

God.” It makes them into faithful, wise, just, holy ones. Likewise one speaks of the holy house, of the holy Christians, universal, a ransomed generation, true seed of Abraham, priests, apostles, brothers of Christ, a Christian brotherhood, and many other names too numerous to mention.

I have undertaken to explain carefully why these last—these Brothers of the Rosy Cross—are properly to be called the seed of Abraham, and have been chosen from among the heathen, how they are descended from the blood of the Jews, how they have been called brothers of the Apostles, Christians, and members of the Rosicrucian Fraternity. One has to know, first of all, that just as Christ came from the seed of Abraham, to whom by the word of God was promised blessing and through him salvation for the world, so also all true Christians must be called the seed of Abraham, because they have been born, as the Evangelist says, “not out of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, but of God.” “Who,” asks Christ, “is my mother, and who are my brothers? Whoever does the will of my Father who is in heaven, the same is my brother, my sister, my mother.” Such a descent from such seed is recognized unmistakably by the Apostle when he says, “They are of Christ who are

of the seed of Abraham and the heirs of his promise.” Thus the Apostle Paul praises not those who are circumcised in the foreskin alone, but in their hearts, when he says it is not the external Jew only, but the inner Jew who is chosen by God. So it is also with many among the heathen, because he says that of the seed of Abraham not only the Jews but all people of the world will be redeemed, as already seems evident from the Genesis. The heathen are co-workers, co-members and participants in this promise of Jesus Christ through the Gospel. For, as the Apostle testifies, Christ is the promised seed.

To anyone who doubts whether this Rosicrucian Brotherhood originates out of such blood, I reply in the sense of the evidence mentioned above, that if one kinship or brotherhood is of the flesh and of man, another is spiritual and divine. Thus it is written that the sons of God and the daughters of men, that is, those chosen by God from the tribe of Shem united themselves with the daughters of the tribe of the accursed Cain. However, the Scripture speaks quite generally: “You are a divine generation.” Therefore the divine seed is not from below out of the earth, for it is from above that the divine nourishment comes. In many places one finds sapphires, and lumps of earth in which there is gold. No bird has recognized this path, and no vulture’s eye has discerned it, and so on. “He places His hand upon the stones, and overturns the foundations of the mountains.”

With those words is not only described the earthly substance of that House, but also its riches, the fiery light within it, and its power and might. The immeasurable strength of Bethlehem, interpreted as the house of war, is shown in the castle from which Christ went forth. Thus that spiritual stone (not the erroneous one of the false Alchemists) is also called “the fame of the whole world” by Hermes, a true and divine Alchemist. Through the discernment of that spiritual stone all darkness disappears from around one, and He appears “in the



Opaque watercolor over graphite on gray wove paper. J. James Tissot, 1836-1902. Brooklyn Museum

Transfiguration

power of his strength” because He conquers all fine things and permeates all solid ones. Thus was the world created.

Job and Hermes, however, not only describe the precious metals of that house, but also its virtues. For the city or castle built upon the summit of the mountain is also cabalistically called *Beth-ulia*, which means, as it were, “the Virgin of the Lord,” or “the House that gives birth to the Lord.” Hence Bethlehem is designated as the virginal earth which shall bring forth the Redeemer. And this saying comprises the whole claim of the prophets: “The earth will open and will give birth to the

Messiah.” For above all, it must be recognized that in the Holy Scriptures the names of both men and of cities contain secrets. Therefore the name of the city of Lutz was changed to Bethel because of the notable effect of the stone, which is called the house of God. Likewise, Bethlehem corresponds to the living Bread which shall come forth as out of a house or castle, and *Bethulia* means metaphorically the House of Wisdom built on the Mount of Reason. Apparently this name was given to this town because it was the most beautiful town or castle upon a height or mountain in that region. The latter is also called Mount Horeb in order to designate the Mountain of God. Finally, the prophet points to the mystery of the word Bethlehem when he says, “Christ, the Lord of Israel, will be given out of Bethlehem...”

Here then you have that House or Palace of Wisdom erected on the Mount of Reason. It remains however, to learn who are those sages to whom this House is open. These most fortunate of men and their spiritual house are described by the Apostle in the following manner: “To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as living stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 2:4-5). And further on, he says, “But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy community, a ransomed people, that you should practice the virtues of him who has called you out of darkness into his royal light. For previously you were not a people, but now you are the people of God.”

With these words he not only describes the overwhelmingly strong foundation and the builder of the House, but also the inhabitants. For these dwellers in the House of Wisdom are shown by him to be the faithful in Christ also, according to the teachings of Esdras, who lay down their mortal sheaths, choosing the immortal, confessing the name of the Lord, crowned with victory. Thus says a man, enlightened by wisdom: “For mortals labor in vain who have chosen a different path than was shown by the prophet,” but this is not the path of death, as people are accustomed to believe, for it is the one mentioned by the Apostle Peter when he



Song of the Mystic

In the hush of the Valley of Silence
I dream all the songs that I sing;
And the music floats down the dim Valley,
Till each finds a word for a wing,
That to hearts, like the Dove of the Deluge,
A message of peace they may bring.

But far on the deep there are billows
That never shall break on the beach;
And I have heard songs in the Silence
That never shall float into speech;
And I have had dreams in the Valley
Too lofty for language to reach.

Oh, I have seen Thoughts in the Valley—
Ah me, how my spirit was stirred!
And they wore holy veils on their faces,
Their footsteps could scarcely be heard;
They passed through the Valley like virgins,
Too pure for the touch of a word !

Do you ask me the place of the Valley,
Ye hearts that are harrowed by Care?
It lieth afar between mountains,
And God and His angels are there:
And one is the dark mount of Sorrow,
And one the bright mountain of Prayer.

—Frater Ryan

speaks of the one taught him by Christ when the latter was transfigured on the Mountain. And this should remain secret and hidden, otherwise the Apostle would not have said, “As Jesus has taught me,” and the highest Wisdom would not have directed, “Do not tell anyone.” (Continued) □

—Robert Fludd