

THE HERMETIC  
AND  
ROSICRUCIAN  
MYSTERY

*BY*

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We are only beginning and that by very slow stages, to enter into our inheritance from the past; and still perhaps in respect of its larger part we are seeking far and wide for the treasures of the mystic Basra. But these treasures are of more than one species and more than a single order; for that measure to which we are approximating and for that part which we hold, we shall be well advised to realize that there are some things which belong to the essences while some are of the accidents only. I do not think that among all the wise of the ages, in whatsoever regions of the world, there has been ever any difference of opinion about the true object of research; the modes and form of the quest have varied, and that widely, but to one point have all the roads con-verged. Therein is no change or shadow of vicissitude. We may hear of shorter roads, and one would say at first sight that such a suggestion may be true indubitably, but in one sense it is rather a convention of language and in another it is a commonplace which tends to confuse the issues. It is a convention of language because the great quests are not pursued in time or place, and it would be just as true to say that in a journey from the circumference to the centre all roads are the same

length, supposing that they are straight roads. It is a commonplace because if any one should enter the byways or return on his path and restart, it is obvious that he must look to be delayed. Furthermore, it may be true that all paths lead ultimately to the centre, and that if we descend into hell there may be still a way back to the light, as if one ascended to heaven; but in any house of right reason the issues are too clear to consider such extrinsic possibilities. Before I utilize these random and, I think, too obvious considerations to present the root-thesis of this paper, I must recur for one moment to the question of the essence and the accident, because on the assumption from which the considerations originate- namely, that there is a secret tradition in Christian times, the place of which is in the West- or rather that there are several traditions- it seems desirable to realize what part matters vitally among them. I will take my illustration from alchemy, and it should be known that on the surface it claims to put forward the mystery of a material operation, behind which we discern- though not, it should be understood, invariably-another subject and another intention. Now, sup-posing that we were incorrect in our

discernment, the secret tradition would remain, this notwithstanding, and it would remain also if the material operation were a dream not realized. But I think that a tradition of the physical kind would have no part in us, who are concerned with another conversion than that of metals, and who know that there is a mystic stone which is unseen by mortal eyes? The evidences of the secret tradition are very strong in alchemy, but it must be accepted that, either therein or elsewhere, I am not offering the proofs that the tradition exists. There are several schools of occult literature from which it follows that something was perpetuated belonging to their own order, as, for example, the schools of magic; concerning these latter I must say what to some persons may seem a rule of excessive severity- that they embody nothing which is essential to our purpose. It is time that we should set apart in our minds the domain of phenomenal occultism as something which, almost automatically, has been transferred to the proper care of science. In so doing it is our simple hope that it may continue to extend a particular class of researches into the nature of man and his environment which the unaccredited investigations of the past have

demonstrated already as productive to those who can be called open to conviction. The grounds of this conviction were manifested generations or centuries ago, and along both lines the research exhibits to us from time to time that we -or some of us- who know after another manner, have been justified very surely when, as if from a more remote region, we have returned to testify that the great mysteries are within.

I have no need to affirm that the secret tradition, either in the East or the West, has been always an open secret in respect of the root-principles concerning the Way, the Truth and the Life. It is easy, therefore, to show what it is not, and to make the distinction which I have attempted between the classes of the concealed knowledge. It is not so easy to define the most precious treasures of the King- in respect of that knowledge- according to the estimate concerning them which I have assumed tacitly to be common between persons confessing to mystic predispositions at this day. The issues are confused throughout, all our high predilections notwithstanding, by the traditional or historical notion concerning the adept, which is that of a man whose power is raised to the transcendent degree by

the communication or attainment, after some manner, of a particular and even terrible knowledge of the hidden forces of nature. I have heard technical and imputed adepts of occult associations state that those who possess, in the actual and plenary sense, the gifts which are ascribed to themselves by the simplicity of an artificial title, are able so to disintegrate the constituted man that they can separate not only the body from its psychic part but the spirit also from the soul, when they have a sufficient cause in their illumination against a particular victim. If things of this kind were possible, they would belong to the science of the abyss- when the abyss has been exalted above all that is termed God; but there is no need to attribute an over-great seriousness to chatter and traffic of this kind, which has been all too prevalent in a few current schools of in exactitude. The tendency contributes, as I have said, to confuse the issues and, though it may seem a perilous suggestion, one is tempted to say that, in all its higher aspects, the name itself of adept might be abandoned definitely in favour of that of the mystic- though on account of the great loose thinking it is only too likely- and there are signs

sufficient already- that it would share a similar fate of misconstruction.

There was a time perhaps when we could have listened, and did even, to descriptions of this kind, because we had only just begun to hear of adepts and sages, so that things were magnified in the half-light. The scales have fallen now, and though the light into which we have entered is very far from the high light of all, it is serviceable sufficiently to dispel many shadows and to dissipate many distractions. The difficulty which is here specified is increased by the fact that there are certainly powers of the height, and that the spirit of man does not in its upward path take all the heavens of aspiration without, after some manner, being set over the kingdoms which are below it. For ourselves, at least, we can lay down one irrevocable law- that he who has resolved, setting all things else aside, to enter the path of adept ship must look for his progress in proportion as he pursues holiness for its own sake and not for the miracles of sanctity. It will be seen that I am disposed to call things by their old names, which have many consecrations, and I hope to command sympathy- but something more even- when I say further that he who dreams of adeptship

and does not say sanctity in his heart till his lips are cleansed and then does not say it with his lips, is not so much far from the goal as with-out having conceived regarding it. One of the lesser masters, who has now scarcely a pupil amongst us, said once, quoting from somewhere *Vel sanctum invenit, vel sanctvm f/acit*; but I know that it must be long resident in our desires before it can be declared in our lives.

I have searched the whole West and only in two directions have I found anything which will compare with pure monastic mysticism; one of these is the mystic side of alchemy, while the other is that body of tradition which answers most fully to the name of Rosicrucianism. There are other places in which we find the same thing, or the substance of the same thing, and I believe that I have given faithful testimony already on this point; even in the lesser schools I am sure that it was always at the roots, but except in so far as a personal sympathy may direct us, or the accidents of an historical study, I do not know that there is a direct gain- or that there is not rather a hindrance- by going any distance afield for what is so close to our hands, and into side issues for what is in the straight road-



whether this be broad or narrow. There is no doubt that from one point of view Christian mysticism has been on the external side betrayed rather seriously by its environment, because of the inhibitions of the official churches in saying this, I hope that the time has come to all of us when the cheap conventions of hostility towards these churches, and especially towards the Latin Rite, have ceased to obtain in our minds and that we can appreciate, in however detached a manner, the high annals of their sanctity. If so, we shall be able to appreciate also, at the proper value, an external and historical side on which the Latin Church approached too often that picture in the story of the Holy Graal of a certain King of Castle Mortal, who sold God for money. The difficulty which the Rite has created and the inhibitions into which it has passed arise more especially not alone on the external side but from the fact that it has taken the great things of symbolism too generally for material facts. In this way, with all the sincerity which can be attached to its formal documents, produced for the most part by the process of growth, the Church Catholic of Latin Christianity has told the wrong story, though the elements which were placed in its hands are the

right and true elements. I believe that the growth of sanctity within the Latin Church has been- under its deepest consideration-substantially hindered by the over-encrustation of the spirit with the literal aspect, though this at the same time is indispensable to expression. I believe that in the minds of the mystics this hindrance has operated; of all men on earth they have recognized assuredly the working of the spirit; but they sought to attain it through the veils of doctrine and they did not utterly and wholly part the curtains thereof. The result was that these trailed after them and were an impediment as they entered the sanctuary. The process itself was, in one sense, the wrong process, though on account of their environment it was almost impossible that they should adopt another. We have agreed long ago that to work up from Nature to Grace is not really the method of the wise, because that which is below is the branches and that which is above is the roots, and the tree of life is really in this sense, and because of our distance from the centre, as it were, upside down. So also the true way of experience in the mystic life is to work outward from within. It is natural, of course, and this is of necessity also, that we should receive our first intimations through the

letter, but when it has exhibited to us some reflections of the light which is behind we must not suffer our course to be hindered by the office of the letter, but should set it aside rather, to abide in the root-meaning which is behind the symbols. There is a later stage in which we shall revert to the external and to the meaning that is without, bringing back with us the inward light to interpenetrate and transform it. Perhaps an illustration will explain better the order of procedure than a formal statement merely, though I do not think that there is even a surface difficulty concerning it. We have been taught in the infancy of the mind the great story which is the root and heart of external Christianity. That is not the letter which kills but the cortex of a vessel behind which are the eternal fountains of life. I need not say that many of us do not get beyond this cortex and, fortunately, it is not a dead husk, but a living body through which Grace flows to us after the measure of our capacity. But it may come to pass that the inward sensorium is opened- by the mediation, as it may well be, of the great books of the Church, or in what manner soever and we then see that the great story, the old story, the story which is of all things true, is that of our own soul. I

mean this not in the sense of the soul's geniture, but in the sense of its progress, as it is here and now environed. We are then looking towards the real road of our redemption, and it is at this stage that the letter should be set aside for a period because everything has to be enacted anew. The virgin must conceive and bear her son; in the grand rough outline of Saint Martin the son must be born in the Bethlehem of our human life; he must be presented in the temple which stands in the Jerusalem within; he must confound the doctors of the intellect; he must lead the hidden life of Nazareth; he must be manifested and must teach us within, in which way we shall return to the world of doctrine and shall find that all things are made new. It is not that there are new doctrines, but there is another quality of life; thereby the old symbolism has been so interpenetrated that the things which are without have become the things which are within, till each seems either in the power of the grace and in the torrent of the life. It is then that we cease to go out through the door by which we went in, because other doors are open, and the call of many voices, bidding us no longer depart hence, says rather: Let us enter the sanctuary, even the inmost shrine.

I desire, therefore, to make it plain that the Secret Church Mystic which exists and has always existed within the Church Militant of Christendom does not differ in anything from the essential teaching of doctrine- I mean *Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*; that it can say with its heart what it says also with its lips; that again there is no change or shadow of vicissitude; but in some very high sense the ground of the essentials has been removed. The symbolum remains; it has not taken on another meaning; hut it has unfolded itself like the flower from within. Christian Theosophy in the West can recite its *Credo in unum Deum* by clause and by clause, including in *unam sanctam catholicam et apostolicam ecclesiam*, and if there is an *arriere pensee* it is not of heresy or Jesuitry. Above all, and I say this the more expressly because there are still among us- that is to say, in those circles generally- certain grave misconceptions, and it is necessary to affirm that the path of the mystic does not pass through the heresies.

And now with respect to the secret schools which have handed down to us at this day some part or aspects of the secret tradition belonging to Christian times, I must leave out of consideration, because

there are limits to papers of this kind, the great witness of Kabalism which although it is a product of the Christian period is scarcely of it, and although therein the quest and its term do not assuredly differ from that of the truth which is in Christ, there are perhaps other reasons than those of brevity for setting it apart here. Alchemy may not have originated much further East than Alexandria, or, alternatively, it may have travelled from China when the port of Byzantium was opened to the commerce of the world. In either case, its first development, in the forms with which we are acquainted, is connected with the name of Byzantium, and the earliest alchemists of whom we have any remains in literature constitute a class by themselves under the name of Byzantine alchemists. The records of their processes went into Syria and Arabia, where they assumed a new mode, which bore, however, all necessary evidence of its origin. In this form it does not appear to have had a specific influence upon the corpus doctrinale. The records were also taken West, like many other mysteries of varying importance, and when they began to assume a place in western history this was chiefly in France, Germany and England. In other

words, there arose the cycle of Latin alchemy, passing at a later date, by the way of translation, into the vernaculars of the respective countries, until finally, but much later, we have original documents in English, French and German. It follows, but has not so far been noticed, that the entire literature is a product of Christian times and has Christianity as its motive, whether subconsciously or otherwise. This statement applies to the Latin Geber and the tracts which are ascribed to Morien and Rhasis. The exception which proves the rule is the Kabalistic Aesh Mezareph, which we know only by fragments included in the great collection of Rosenroth. I suppose that there is no labyrinth which it is quite so difficult to thread as that of the *Theatrum Chemicum*. It is beset on every side with pitfalls, and its clues, though not destroyed actually, have been buried beneath the ground. Expositors of the subject have gone astray over the general purpose of the art, because some have believed it to be: (a) the transmutation of metals, and that only, while others have interpreted it as (b) a veiled method of delineating the secrets of the soul on its way through the world within, and besides this nothing. Many text-books of physical

alchemy would seem to have been re-edited in this exotic interest. The true philosophers of each school are believed to have taught the same thing, with due allowance for the generic difference of their term, and seeing that they use the same language it would seem that, given a criterion of distinction in respect of the term, this should make the body of cryptogram comparatively easy to disentangle. But as one of the chief difficulties is said also to reside in the fact that many of them do not begin at the same point of the process, the advantage of uniformity is cancelled largely.

There are affirmed to be experimental schools still existing in Europe which have carried the physical work much further than it is ever likely to be taken by any isolated student; but this must be accepted under several reserves, or I can say, at least, that, having better occasions than most people of knowing the schools and their development, I have so far found no evidence. But there are testified otherwise to be- and I speak here with the certainty of first-hand knowledge-other schools, also experimental, also existing in Europe, which claim to possess the master-key of the mystical work. How far they have been successful at present in



using that key I am not in a position to say, nor can I indicate its nature for reasons that, I think, must be obvious. It so happens, however, that the mystery of the processes is one thing and that which lies on the surface, or more immediately beneath the externals of the concealed language, is, fortunately, another thing. And, as often happens also, the enlightening correspondences are offering their marks and seals- if not at our very doors- at least in the official churches. Among all those places that are holy there is no holy place in which they do not abide a mane usque ad vespertinum, and the name of the correspondence-in-chief is the Holy Eucharist.

I propose now to tabulate certain palmary points of terminology which are common to all the adepts, including both schools indifferently, though we are dealing here- and this is understood- with the process of one school only. By the significance of these points or terms we shall see to what extent the symbolism of the higher alchemy is in conformity with mystic symbolism and with the repose of the life of the Church in God. It should be realized, however, that there is nothing so hard and so thankless as to elucidate one symbolism by the

terms of another- and this notwithstanding an occasional identity which may manifest in the terms of each.

It must be understood further and accepted that all alchemists, outside the distinctions of their schools, were actuated by an express determination to veil their mystery and that they had recourse for this purpose to every kind of subterfuge. At the same time they tell us that the whole art is contained, manifested and set forth by means of a single vessel, which, amidst all manner of minor variations, is described with essential uniformity throughout the great multitude of texts. This statement constitutes a certain lesser key to the art; but as on the one hand the alchemists veil their hallow-in-chief by reference, in spite of their assurance, as above noted, to many pretended vessels, so has the key itself a certain aspect of subterfuge, since the alleged unity is in respect only of the term final of the process in the unity of the recipient. This unity is the last reduction of a triad, because, according to these aspects of Hermetic philosophy, man in the course of his attainment is at first three- that is, when he sets out upon the great quest; he is two at a certain stage; but he is, in

fine, one, which is the end of his evolution. The black state of the matter on which the process of the art is engaged is the body of this death, from which the adepts have asked to be detached. It is more especially our natural life. The white state of the stone, the confection of which is desired, is the vesture of immortality with which the epopts are clothed upon. The salt of the philosophers is that savour of life without which the material earth can neither be salted nor cleansed. The sulphur of the philosophers is the inward substance by which some souls are saved, yet so as by fire. The mercury of the sages is that which must be fixed and volatilized- naturally it is fluidic and wandering- but except under this name, or by some analogous substitute, it must not be described literally outside the particular circles of secret knowledge. It is nearer than hands and feet.

Now the perfect correspondence of these things in the symbolism of official Christianity, and the great mystery of perfect sanctification, is set forth in the great churches under the sacramentalism of the Holy Eucharist. This is my point, and I desire to make it clear: the same exalted mystery which lies behind the symbols of bread and wine, behind the

undeclared priesthood which is according to the order of Melchisedeck, was expressed by the alchemists under the guise of transmutation; but I refer here to the secret school of adeptship which had taken over in another and transcendent interest the terminology and processes of occult metallurgy.

The vessel is therefore one, but the matter thereto adapted is not designated especially, or at least after an uniform manner it is said to be clay by those who speak at times more openly in order that they may be understood the less, as if they also were singing in their strange chorus:-

Let us be open as the day,

That we may deeper hide ourselves.

It is most commonly described as metallic, because on the surface of the literature there is the declared mystery of all metals, and the concealed purpose is to show that in the roots and essence of these things there is a certain similarity or analogy. The reason is that the egypt, who has been translated, again finds his body after many days, but under a great transmutation, as if in another sense the panis quotidianis had been changed into the panis virus et vita/is, but without mutation of the accidents. The reason is also that in normal states the body is here

and now not without the soul, nor can we separate readily, by any intellectual process. the soul from the spirit which broods thereover, to fertilize it in a due season. It is, however, one vessel, and this makes for simplicity; hut it is not by such simplicity that the art is testified to be a *lusus puerorum*. The contradistinction hereto is that it is hard to be a Christian, which is the comment of the man born blind upon the light that he cannot see. There is also the triumphant affirmation of the mystical counterposition, that to sin is hard indeed for the man who knows truly. The formula of this is that man is born for the heights rather than the deeps, and its verbal paradox is *facilis ascensus superno*. The process of the art is without haste or violence by the mediation of a graduated fire, and the seat of this fire is in the soul. It is a mystery of the soul's love, and for this reason she is called "undaunted daughter of desire." The sense of the gradation is that love is set free from the impetuosity and violence of passion and has become a constant and incorruptible flame. The formula of this is that the place of unity is a centre wherein there is no exaggeration. That which the fire consumes is certain materials or elements, which are called *recrementa*, the grosser parts, the

superfluities; and it should be observed that there are two purgations, of which the first is the gross and the second the subtle. The first is the common process of conversion, by which there is such a separation of seemingly external components that what remains is as a new creature, and may be said to be reborn. The second is the exalted conversion, by which that which has been purified is so raised that it enters into a new region, or a certain heaven comes down and abides therein. It is not my design in the present place to exhaust all the sources of interpretation, because such a scheme would be impossible in a single paper, and I can allude, therefore, but scantily to the many forms of the parables which are concerned with the process up to this point. The ostensible object, which was materialized in the alternative school, is the confection of a certain stone or powder, which is that of projection, and the symbolical theorem, is that this powder, when added to a base metal, performs the wonder of transmutation into pure silver or gold, better than those of the mines. Otherwise, it prolongs life and renews youth in the adept-philosopher and lover of learning. In the second case, it is spoken of usually as an elixir, but

the transmuting powder and the renewing draught are really one thing with the spiritual alchemists. It must be also affirmed that in virtue of a very high mysticism there is a unity in the trinity of the powder, the metal and the vase. The vase is also the alchemist on his outer side, for none of the instruments, the materials; the fires, the producer, and the thing produced are external to the one subject. At the same time the inward man is distinguished from the out-ward man; we may say that the one is the alchemist and the other the vessel. It is in this sense that the art is both physical and spiritual. But the symbolism is many times enfolded, and the gross metal which is placed within the vessel is the untransmuted life of reason, motive, concupiscence, self-interest and all that which constitutes the intelligent creature on the normal plane of manifestation. Hereof is the natural man enclosed in an animal body, as the metal is placed in the vessel, and from this point of view the alchemist is he who is sometimes termed arrogantly the superman. But because there is only one vessel it must be understood that herein the stone is confected and the base metal is converted. The alchemist is himself finally the stone, and because

many zealous aspirants to the art have not understood this they have failed in the great work on the spiritual side. The schedule which now follows may elucidate this hard subject somewhat more fully and plainly.

There are (a) the natural, external man, whose equivalent is the one vessel; (b) the body of desire, which answers to the gross matter; (c) the aspiration, the consciousness, the will of the supernatural life; (d) the process of the will working on the body of desire within the outward vessel; (e) the psychic and transcendental conversion thus effected; (f) the reaction of the purified body of desire on the essential will, so that the one supports the other, while the latter is borne upward, and from such raising there follows this further change, that the spirit of a man puts on itself a new quality of life, becoming an instrument which is at once feeding and is itself fed; (g) herein is the symbol of the stone and the great elixir; (h) the spirit is nourished from above by the analogies of Eucharistic ministry; (i) the spirit nourishes the soul, as by bread and wine; (j) the soul effects the higher conversion in the body of desire; (k) it thus comes about that the essence which dissolves



everything and changes everything is still contained in a vessel, or- alternatively- that God abides in man.

This process, thus exhaustively delineated in the parables of alchemy, is put with almost naked simplicity by Eucharistic doctrine, which says that material lips receive the supersubstantial bread and wine, that the soul is nourished and that Christ enters the soul. It seems, therefore, within all reason and all truth to testify that the panis vivus et vitalis is even as the trans-muting stone and that the chalice of the new and eternal testament is as the renewing elixir; but I say this under certain reasonable reserves because, in accordance with my formal indication, the closer the analogies between distinct systems of symbolism the more urgent is that prudence which counsels us not to confuse them by an interchangeable use.

All Christian mysticism came forth out of the Mass Book, and it returns therein. But the Mass Book in the first instance came out of the heart mystic which had unfolded in Christendom. The nucleus of truth in the missal is Dominus prope est. The Mass shows that the great work is in the first sense a work of the hands of man, because it is he officiating as a priest in his own temple who offers

the sacrifice which he has purified. But the elements of that sacrifice are taken over by an intervention from another order, and that which follows is transfusion.

Re-expressing all this now in a closer summary, the apparatus of mystical alchemy is indeed, comparatively speaking, simple.

The first matter is myrionimous and is yet one, corresponding to the unity of the natural will and the unlimited complexity of its motives, dispositions, desires, passions and distractions, on all of which the work of wisdom must operate. The vessel is also one, for this is the normal man complete in his own degree. The process has the seal of Nature's directness; it is the graduation and increasing maintenance of a particular fire. The initial work is a change in the substance of will, aspiration and desire, which is the first conversion or transmutation in the elementary sense. But it is identical even to the end with the term proposed by the Eucharist, which is the modification of the noumenal man by the communication of Divine Substance. Here is the lapis qui non lapis, lapis tingens, lapis angularis, lapis qui multiplicetur, lapis per quem justus aedificabit domum Domini, et

jam valde aedificatur et terram possidebit, per omnia, etc. When it is said that the stone is multiplied, even to a thousand fold, we know that this is true of all seed which is sown upon good soil.

So, therefore, the stone transmutes and the Eucharist trans-mutes also; the philosophical elements on the physical side go to the making of the stone which is also physical; and the sacramental elements to the generation of a new life in the soul. He who says Lapis Philosophorum, says also: My beloved to me and I to him: Christ is therefore the stone, and the stone in adept humanity is the union realized, while the great secret is that Christ must be manifested within.

Now it seems to me that it has not served less than a useful purpose to establish after a new manner the intimate resemblance between the higher understanding of one part of the secret tradition and the better interpretation of one sacrament of the church. It must be observed that we are not dealing in either case with the question of attainment. The analogy would remain if spiritual alchemy and Christian sacramentalism abode in the intellectual order as theorems only, or as part of the psychic dream which had never been carried into

experience. It would be more easy (if there were here any opportunity) to offer the results of the experience as recorded in the lives of the saints than to discuss the traditional attainments which are held to have passed into actuality among the secret schools; but the veiled literatures must be left to speak for themselves, which- for those who can read- they do, like the annals of sanctity as to these- those who will take the pains may seek verification for themselves. My task in respect of spiritual alchemy ends by exhibiting that this also was a mystery of sanctity concerned ex hypothesis with the communication of Divine Substance, and that this is the term of the Eucharist. It is this which the doctrine of sanctity offered, to those who entered the pathway of sanctity, as the foretaste in this life of the union which is consummated in eternity, or of that end be-yond which there is nothing whatever which is conceivable. We know from the old books that it has not entered into the heart of man, but the heart which has put away the things of sense conceives it by representations and types. This is the great tradition of that which the early alchemists term truth in the art; the end is representation after its own kind rather than felicity,

but the representation is of that order which begins in ecstasy and ends in absorption. Let no man say, therefore, that he loses himself in experience of this order, for, perchance, it is then only that he finds himself, even in that way which suggests that after many paths of activity he is at length coming into his own.

It might seem that I have reached here a desirable point for my conclusion, but I am pledged, alike by my title and one antecedent reference, to say something concerning Rosicrucianism, which is another witness in the world on the part of the secret tradition. There is one respect in which it is simpler in its apparatus than the literature of the purely Hermetic tradition, for it lies within a smaller compass and has assumed a different mode. It is complicated by the fact that very few of the texts which are available among the things of the outside world have a title to rank in its tradition. This, I suppose, is equivalent to an intimation that the witness is still in the world after another and more active manner, which is true in more than a single way. I am not the ambassador, and much less the plenipotentiary, of the secret societies in the West, and independently of this statement I feel

sure that I shall not be accused of endeavouring to assume the role or to create the impression. I know only that the societies exist, and that they are at the present time one means of perpetuating that tradition. I do not suggest that there are no other means, because I have indicated even from the beginning that the door looking towards heaven and the sanctuary which is its ante-chamber was opened long centuries ago by the official churches. But the tradition itself has been rather behind the churches and some part of the things for which we are all seeking is to be found therein- all which is without detriment to the light of the East, because this is also the light of the West under another veil. Even in the esoteric assemblies which are now and here among us, the tradition is, in a sense, veiled, and, of course, in speaking publicly one has always to cloud the sanctuaries rather than to say: Lift up your eyes, for it is in this or that corner of London, Paris or Prague.

If there is one thing more regrettable than the confusion in forms of symbolism, it is the identification of separate entities under a general term which has only a particular meaning so far as history is concerned. The name Rosicrucian, has

suffered from abuse of this kind, being used almost interchangeably with that of Alchemist by popular writers. I must ask to be disassociated from this error when I say that the external history of the Rosy Cross, in so far as it can be said to exist, has only one point of correspondence with Rosicrucian traditions perpetuated by secret societies in a few centres of Europe. The point of correspondence is the legend-in-chief of the Order, detached from the pseudo-historical aspect which it bore in the early documents, and associated with a highly advanced form of symbolism. It is in this form only that it enters into the sequence of the mysteries, and exhibits how the priest-king does issue from Salem, carrying bread and wine. We have, therefore, the Eucharistic side in the higher Rosicrucian tradition, but if I may describe that which is greater in the terms of that which is lesser- because of the essential difficulty with which I am confronted- it has undergone a great change, not by a diminution of the sacraments but because they are found everywhere. The alchemical maxim which might be inscribed over the gate of any Rosicrucian temple is-

Est in Mercurio quicquid quaerunt  
sapientes.

The Eucharistic maxim which might be written over  
the laboratory of the alchemist, in addition to  
Laborare esse orare, would be-

Et antiquum documentum

Novo cedat ritui:

Praestet fides supplementum

Sensuum defectui.

The maxim which might be written over the temples  
of the official churches is Corporis Mysterium, that  
the mystery of the body might lead them more fully  
into the higher mystery of the soul. And, in fine,  
that maxim which might, and will be, inscribed over  
the one temple of the truly catholic religion when  
the faiths of this western world have come into their  
own- that which is simplest of all, and of all most  
pregnant, would be mysterium fidei, the mystery  
which endures for ever and for ever passes into  
experience.

In conclusion as to this part, Rosicrucianism is  
the mystery of that which dies in manifestation that  
the life of the manifest may be ensured. I have  
found nothing in symbolism which accounts like  
Rose-Cross symbolism for that formula which on



one side is the summary expression of mysticism:  
"And I look for the resurrection of the dead and the  
life of the world to come."

And now in conclusion generally:-

I have spoken of three things only, and of one of them with great brevity, because the published literatures have to be set aside, and of that which remains it does not appear in the open face of day. The initiations are many and so are the schools of thought, but those which are true schools and those which are high orders issue from one root. Est una sola res, and those whose heart of contemplation is fixed upon this one thing may differ widely but can never be far apart. Personally, I do not believe- and this has the ring of a commonplace- that if they came to understand one another they would be found to differ widely. I know not what systems of the eons may intervene between that which is imperishable within us and the union wherein the universe will, in fine, repose at the centre. But I know that the great systems ay, even the great processes- of the times that are gone, as of those which now encompass us- do not pass away, because that which was from the beginning, is now and ever shall be- is one motive, one aspiration, one

term of thought remaining, as if in the stillness of an everlasting present. We really understand one another, and our collective aspirations are united, world without end.

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