

Chapter Rose Croix

by Albert Pike

Foreword by Albert Mackey

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FOREWORD

Prince of Rose Croix: in French, *Souverain Prince Rose Croix*, and in German, *Prinz vom Rosenkruz*. This important degree is, of all the advanced grades, the most widely diffused, being found in numerous Rites. It is the Eighteenth of the *Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite*, the Seventh of the *French or Modern*, the Eighteenth of the *Council of Emperors of the East and West*, the Third of the *Royal Order of Scotland*, the Twelfth of the *Elect of Truth*, and the Seventh of the *Philalethes*. It was also given, formerly, in some Encampments of *Knights Templar*, and was the Sixth of the Degrees conferred by the *Encampment of Baldwyn at Bristol*, in England. It must not, however, be confused with the Rosicrucians, who, however, similar in name, were only a Hermetic and mystical Order.

The degree is known by various names: sometimes its possessors are called *Sovereign Princes of Rose Croix*, sometimes *Princes of Rose Croix de Heroden*, and sometimes *Knights of the Eagle and Pelican*. In relation to its origin, Masonic writers have made many conflicting statements, some giving it a much higher antiquity than others; but all agreeing in supposing it to be one of the earliest of the advanced Degrees. The name has, undoubtedly, been the cause of much of this confusion in relation to its history; and the Masonic Degree of Rose Croix has, perhaps, often been confused with the Cabalistical and alchemical sect of "Rosicrucians," or "Brothers of the Rosy Cross," among whose adepts the names of such men as Roger Bacon, Paracelsus, and Elias Ashmole, the celebrated antiquary, are to be found. Notwithstanding the invidious attempts of Barruel and other foes of Freemasonry to confound the two Orders, there is a great distinction between them. Even their names, although somewhat similar in sound, are totally different in signification. The Rosicrucians, who were alchemists, did not derive their name, like the Rose Croix Freemasons, from the emblems of the rose

and cross – for they had nothing to do with the rose – but from the Latin *ros*, Signifying *dew*, which was supposed to be of all natural bodies the most powerful solvent of gold, and *crux*, the cross, a chemical hieroglyphic of light.

Baron de Westeroode, who wrote in 1784, in the *Acta Latomorum* (i, page 336), gives the earliest origin of any Masonic writer to the Degree of Rose Croix. He supposes that it was instituted among the Knights Templar in Palestine, in the year 1188, and he adds that Prince Edward, the son of Henry III of England, was admitted into the Order by Raymond Lully in 1296. De Westeroode names Ormesius, an Egyptian priest, who had been converted to Christianity, as its founder.

Some have sought to find its origin in the labors of Valentine Andreä the reputed founder of the Rosicrucian fraternity. But the Rose Croix of Freemasonry and the Hermetic Rosicrucianism of Andreä were two entirely different things; and it would be difficult to trace any connection between them, at least any such connection as would make one the legitimate successor of the other. J. G. Buhle, in a work published in Göttingen in 1804, under the title of *Ueber den Ursprung und die vornehmsten Schicksale per Orden der Rosenkreutzer und Freimaurer*, or the *Origin and Principal Purpose of the Order of Rosicrucians and the Freemasons*, reverses this theory, and supposes the Rosicrucians to be a branch of the Freemasons.

Godfrey Higgins, in his *Anacalypsis* (ii, page 388), thinks that the "modern Templars, the Rosicrucians, and the Freemasons are little more than different dodges of one Order," all of which is only a confusion of history in consequence of a confusing of names. It is thus that Inge has written an elaborate essay on the *Origine de la Rose Croix* (*Globe*, volume iii); but as he has, with true Gallic *insouciance* (indifference) of names, spoken indiscriminately of Rose Croix Freemasons and the Rosicrucian Adepts, his statements supply no facts available for history. The

Baron de Gleichen, who was, in 1785, the German Secretary of the Philalethan Congress at Paris, says that the Rose Croix and the Freemasons here united in England under King Arthur (*Acta Latomorum i*, page 336).

But he has, undoubtedly, mixed up Rosicrucianism, with the Masonic legends of the Knights of the Round Table, and his assertions must go for nothing. Others, again, have looked for the origin of the *Rose Croix Degree*, or, at least, of its emblems, in the, *Symbola divina et humana pontifical, imperatorum, regum* of James Typot, or Typotius, the Historiographer of the emperor Rudolph II, a work which was published in 1601; and it is particularly in that part of it which is devoted to the Symbol of the Holy Cross that the allusions are supposed to be found which would seem to indicate the author's knowledge of this Degree. But Ragon refutes the idea of any connection between the symbols of Typotius and those of the Rose Croix. Rohison (*Proofs of a Conspiracy*, page 72) also charges Von Hund with borrowing his symbols from the same work, in which, however, he declares "there is not the least trace of Masonry or Templars."

Clavel, with his usual boldness of assertion, which is too often independent of facts, declares that the Degree was invented by the Jesuits for the purpose of countermining the insidious attacks of the freethinkers upon the Roman Catholic religion, but that the philosophers parried the attempt by seizing upon the Degree and giving to all its symbols an astronomical signification.. Clavel's opinion is probably derived from one of those sweeping charges of Professor Robison, in which that systematic enemy of our Institution declares that, about the beginning of the eighteenth century, the Jesuits interfered considerably with Freemasonry, "insinuating themselves into the Lodges, and contributing to increase that religious mysticism that is to be observed in all the ceremonies of the Order."

But there is no better evidence than these mere vague

assertions of the connection of the Jesuits with the Rose Croix Degree. Brother Oliver (*Landmarks* ii, page 81) says that the earliest notice that he finds of this Degree is in a publication of 1613, entitled *La Réforzeation universelle do monde entier avec la fama fraSerrtilatis de l'Qrdre respectable de la Rose Croix, Universal Reformation of the Whole World with the famous Fraternity of the Respectable Order of the Rose Croix*. But he adds, that "it was known much sooner, although not probably as a Degree in Masonry; for it existed as a cabalistic science from the earliest times in Egypt, Grecee, and Rome, as well as amongst the Jews and Moors in times more recent." Doctor Oliver, however, undoubtedly, in the latter part of this paragraph, confounds the Masonic Rose Croix with the alchemical Rosicrucians; and the former is singularly inconsistent with the details that he gives in reference to the Rosy Cross of the Royal Order of Scotland.

There is a tradition, into whose authenticity we shall not stop to inquire, that after the dissolution of the Order, many of the Knights repaired to Scotland and placed themselves under the protection of Robert Bruce; and that after the battle of Bannoskburn, which took place on Saint John the Baptist's Day, in the year 1314, this monarch instituted the "Royal Order of Heredom" and "Knight of the Rosy Cross," and established the chief seat of the Order at Kilwinning. From that Order, it seems to us by no means improbable that the present "Degree of Rose Croix de Heroden" may have taken its origin.

In two respects, at least, there seems to be a very close connection between the two systems: they both claim the kingdom of Scotland and the Abbey of Kilwinning as having been at one time their chief seat of government, and they both seem to have been instituted to give a Christian explanation to Ancient Craft Masonry. There is, besides, a similarity in the names of the "Degrees of Rose Croix de Heroden," and "Heredom and Rosy Cross," amounting almost to an identity, which appears to indicate a very intimate relation of one to the

other.

The subject, however, is in a state of inextricable confusion, and we are still unable distinctly to point to the period when, and to the place where, the present "Degree of Rose Croix" received its organization as a Masonic grade. We have this much of history to guide us. In the year, 1747, the Pretender, Prince Charles Edward, is said to have established a Chapter in the town of Arras, in France, with the title of the *Chapitre Primordial de Rose Croix*. The Charter of this Body is now extant in an authenticated copy deposited in the departmental archives of Arras. In it the Pretender styles himself "King of England, France, Scotland, and Ireland, and, by virtue of this, Sovereign Grand Master of the Chapter of H. known under the title of the Eagle and Pelican, and, since our sorrows and misfortunes, under that of Rose Croix."

From this we may infer that the title of Rose Croix was first known in 1747; and that the Degree had been formerly known as Knight of the Eagle and Pelican, a title which it still retains. Hence it is probable that the Rose Croix Degree has been borrowed from the *Rosy Cross of the Scottish Royal Order of Heredom*, but in passing from Scotland to France it greatly changed its form and organization, as it resembles in no respect its archetype, except that both are eminently Christian in their design. But in its adoption by the *Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite*, its organization has been so changed that, by a more liberal interpretation of its symbolism, it has been rendered less sectarian and more tolerant in its design. For while the Christian reference is preserved, no peculiar theological dogma is retained, and the Degree is made cosmopolite in its character.

It was, indeed, on its first inception an attempt to Christianize Freemasonry, to apply the rites, and symbols, and traditions of Ancient Craft Masonry to the last and greatest Dispensation; to add to the first Temple of Solomon and the

second of Zerubbabel a third, that to which Christ alluded when He said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days will I raise it up."

The great discovery which was made in the Royal Arch ceases to be of value in this Degree; for it another is substituted of more Christian application; the Wisdom, Strength, and Beauty which supported the ancient Temple are replaced by the Christian pillars of Faith, Hope and Charity; the Great Lights, of course, remain, because they are of the very essence of Freemasonry; but the three lesser give way to the thirty-three, which allude to the years of the Messiah's sojourning on earth. Everything, in short, about the Degree, is Christian; but, as we have already said, the Christian teachings of the Degree have been applied to the sublime principles of a universal system, and an interpretation and illustration of the doctrines of the Master of Nazareth, so adapted to the Masonic dogma of tolerance, that men of every faith may embrace and respect them. It thus performs a noble mission. It obliterates, alike, the intolerance of those Christians who sought to erect an impassable barrier around the sheepfold, and the equal intolerance of those of other religions who would be ready to exclaim, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?"

In the *Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite*, whence the Rose Croix Freemasons of the United States have received the Degree, it is placed as the eighteenth on the list. It is conferred in a Body called a "Chapter," which derives its authority immediately from the Supreme Council of the Thirty-third, and which confers with it only one other and inferior Degree, that of Knights of the East and West. Its principal officers are a Most Wise Master and two Wardens. Maundy Thursday and Easter Sunday are two obligatory days of meeting. The aspirant for the Degree makes the usual application duly recommended; and if accepted, is required, before initiation, to make certain declarations which shall show his competency for the honor which he seeks, and at

the same time prove the high estimation entertained of the Degree by those who already possess it.

The jewel of the Rose Croix is the golden compasses, extended to an arc to the sixteenth part of a circle, or twenty-two and a half Degrees. The head of the compasses is surmounted by a triple crown, having three series of points arranged by three, five and seven.

Between the legs of the compasses there is a cross resting on the arc; its center is occupied by a full-blown rose whose stem twines around the lower limb of the cross; at the foot of the cross, on the same side on which the rose is exhibited, is the figure of a pelican wounding its breast to feed its young which are in a nest surrounding it, while on the other side of the jewel is the figure of an eagle with wings displayed. On the arc of the circle, the P . . W . . of the Degree is engraved in the cipher of the Order. In this jewel are included the most important symbols of the Degree. The Cross, the Rose, the Pelican, and the Eagle are all important symbols, the explanations of which will go far to a comprehension of what is the true design of the Rose Croix Order. They may be seen in this work under their respective titles.

- Albert Mackey

Chapter Rose Croix

KNIGHT OF THE EAST OR OF THE SWORD
[Knight of the East, of the Sword, or of the Eagle.]
15th Degree of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite

This Degree, like all others in Masonry, is symbolical. Based upon historical truth and authentic tradition, it is still an allegory. The leading lesson of this Degree is Fidelity to obligation, and Constancy and Perseverance under difficulties and discouragement. Masonry is engaged in her crusade, — against ignorance, intolerance, fanaticism, superstition, uncharitableness, and error. She does not sail with the trade-winds, upon a smooth sea, with a steady free breeze, fair for a welcoming harbor; but meets and must overcome many opposing currents, baffling winds, and dead calms. The chief obstacles to her success are the apathy and faithlessness of her own selfish children, and the supine indifference of the world. In the roar and crush and hurry of life and business, and the tumult and uproar of politics, the quiet voice of Masonry is unheard and unheeded. The first lesson which one learns, who engages in any great work of reform or beneficence, is, that men are essentially careless, lukewarm, and indifferent as to everything that does not concern their own personal and immediate welfare. It is to single men, and not to the united efforts of many, that all the great works of man, struggling toward perfection, are owing. The enthusiast, who imagines that he can inspire with his own enthusiasm the multitude that eddies around him, or even the few who have

associated themselves with him as coworkers, is grievously mistaken; and most often the conviction of his own mistake is followed by discouragement and disgust. To do all, to pay all, and to suffer all, and then, when despite all obstacles and hindrances, success is accomplished, and a great work done, to see those who opposed or looked coldly on it, claim and reap all the praise and reward, is the common and almost universal lot of the benefactor of his kind.

He who endeavors to serve, to benefit, and improve the world, is like a swimmer, who struggles against a rapid current, in a river lashed into angry waves by the winds. Often they roar over his head, often they beat him back and baffle him. Most men yield to the stress of the current, and float with it to the shore, or are swept over the rapids; and only here and there the stout, strong heart and vigorous arms struggle on toward ultimate success.

It is the motionless and stationary that most frets and impedes the current of progress; the solid rock or stupid dead tree, rested firmly on the bottom, and around which the river whirls and eddies: the Masons that doubt and hesitate and are discouraged; that disbelieve in the capability of man to improve; that are not disposed to toil and labor for the interest and well-being of general humanity; that expect others to do all, even of that which they do not oppose or ridicule; while they sit, applauding and doing nothing, or perhaps prognosticating failure.

There were many such at the rebuilding of the Temple. There were prophets of evil and misfortune – the lukewarm and the indifferent and the apathetic; those who stood by and sneered; and those who thought they did God service enough if they now and then faintly applauded. There were ravens croaking ill omen, and murmurers who preached the folly and futility of the attempt. The world is made up of such; and they were as abundant then as they are now. But gloomy and discouraging as was the prospect, with lukewarmness within and bitter opposition without, our ancient

brethren persevered. Let us leave them engaged in the good work, and whenever to us, as to them, success is uncertain, remote, and contingent, let us still remember that the only question for us to ask, as true men and Masons, is, what does duty require; and not what will be the result and our reward if we do our duty. Work on, the Sword in one hand, and the Trowel in the other! Masonry teaches that God is a Paternal Being, and has an interest in his creatures, such as is expressed in the title Father; an interest unknown to all the systems of Paganism, untaught in all the theories of philosophy; an interest not only in the glorious beings of other spheres, the Sons of Light, the dwellers in Heavenly worlds, but in us, poor, ignorant, and unworthy; that He has pity for the erring, pardon for the guilty, love for the pure, knowledge for the humble, and promises of immortal life for those who trust in and obey Him. Without a belief in Him, life is miserable, the world is dark, the Universe disrobed of its splendors, the intellectual tie to nature broken, the charm of existence dissolved, the great hope of being lost; and the mind, like a star struck from its sphere, wanders through the infinite desert of its conceptions, without attraction, tendency, destiny, or end.

Masonry teaches, that, of all the events and actions, that take place in the universe of worlds and the eternal succession of ages, there is not one, even the minutest, which God did not forever foresee with all the distinctness of immediate vision, combining all, so that man's free will should be His instrument, like all the other forces of nature. It teaches that the soul of man is formed by Him for a purpose; that, built up in its proportions, and fashioned in every part, by infinite skill, an emanation from His spirit, its nature, necessity, and design are virtue. It is so formed, so molded, so fashioned, so exactly balanced, so exquisitely proportioned in every part, that sin introduced into it is misery; that vicious thoughts fall upon it like drops of poison; and guilty desires, breathing on its delicate fibers, make plague-spots there, deadly as those of pestilence upon the body. It is made for virtue, and not for vice; for purity, as its end, rest, and happiness. Not more vainly would we attempt to make the mountain sink to the level of the valley, the

waves of the angry sea turn back from its shores and cease to thunder upon the beach, the stars to halt in their swift courses, than to change any one law of our own nature. And one of those laws, uttered by God's voice, and speaking through every nerve and fiber, every force and element, of the moral constitution He has given us, is that we must be upright and virtuous; that if tempted we must resist; that we must govern our unruly passions, and hold in hand our sensual appetites. And this is not the dictate of an arbitrary will, nor of some stern and impracticable law; but it is part of the great firm law of harmony that binds the Universe together: not the mere enactment of arbitrary will; but the dictate of Infinite Wisdom. We know that God is good, and that what He does is right. This known, the works of creation, the changes of life, the destinies of eternity, are all spread before us, as the dispensations and counsels of infinite love. This known, we then know that the love of God is working to issues, like itself, beyond all thought and imagination good and glorious; and that the only reason why we do not understand it, is that it is too glorious for us to understand. God's love takes care for all, and nothing is neglected.

It watches over all, provides for all, makes wise adaptations for all; for age, for infancy, for maturity, for childhood; in every scene of this or another world; for want, weakness, joy, sorrow, and even for sin. All is good and well and right; and shall be so forever. Through the eternal ages the light of God's beneficence shall shine hereafter, disclosing all, consummating all, rewarding all that deserve reward. Then we shall see, what now we can only believe. The cloud will be lifted up, the gate of mystery be passed, and the full light shine forever; the light of which that of the Lodge is a symbol. Then that which caused us trial shall yield us triumph; and that which made our heart ache shall fill us with gladness; and we shall then feel that there, as here, the only true happiness is to learn, to advance, and to improve; which could not happen unless we had commenced with error, ignorance, and imperfection. We must pass through the darkness, to reach the light.