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PROSPECTUS.

THE SECRET SYMBOLS OF THE ROSICRUCIANS, ETC.

CONSIDERABLE attention has been paid of late to the study of the Eastern Religions, but comparatively few people have attempted to penetrate behind the veil which hides the sanctuary of the Christian religion. Such attempts were, however, made during the Middle Ages by the *Hermetic Philosophers*, called the *Brotherhood of the Golden and Rosy Cross*, and they laid down the results of their investigations in certain Symbols, which were called "secret," because they can be understood only by those who possess the key to their understanding. This Key, which alone opens the door, is *Spirituality*, that is to say, *Reason*, unadulterated by sophistry, free from dogmatic and sectarian prejudices, free from scepticism and superstition.

Among the great majority of the followers of the Christian church this key has been lost, and sophistry has taken the place of understanding. There is, perhaps, not one in a thousand of laymen or priests who knows the true meaning of the symbols and ceremonies of the Christian church. What the modern Christian usually knows about Christianity is merely its *historical*, but not its *spiritual*, character. The *Bible* has been degraded into a mere history of the Jews, the universal glorious *Christ-Spirit*, the Light of the World, the divine element in Man, which lives to-day as it ever lived since the beginning of the world, has in the

minds of his worshippers dwindled down to a mortal man, who lived among the Jews and was executed as a criminal.

Ever since the days of the great Reformation, when the *Bible* became the common property of the people who were unable to understand the secret meanings of its fables and allegories, which were known only to the initiated, the Cabalists, Alchemists, and *Rosicrucians*, the Christian religion has been studied more in its intellectual than in its spiritual aspect. Its external forms have passed through a severe scrutiny by those who could see in them nothing but the external forms, and their internal spirit was lost. The authorities of the church, being themselves unable or unwilling to explain their secret meaning, insisted that the fables and allegories of the Bible should be accepted in their literal sense, however absurd and unintelligible the latter may be. The intellect of the educated classes revolted at such an attempt to put their reason in bondage, and the consequence was that the spiritual power of the church has been lost in proportion as the latter lost sight of the eternal truth. From a religion of Divine Wisdom, teaching the true relation which Man bears to the Eternal Source from which he emanated, and to which it is his destiny to return, modern Christianity has become almost entirely a system of forms and ceremonies with little or no spirituality, a means to afford a comfortable living to the priesthood, a method of deceiving the ignorant and gullible with false hopes, and of restraining the wicked by fear, while the Christian places of worship have become more than ever deserted, except by such as use them as places for religious amusement or for the display of

fashion, and there are comparatively few who bring with them the living Christ, when they visit the church. Sentiment has taken the place of *spiritual power*, superstition and scepticism the place of the life-giving Faith, and even the meaning of the terms signifying divine virtues have become unknown among the learned. The attacks of the materialist, sceptic, and arguer about the forms of Christianity are allowed to go on without any defence being made, and if such a defence is ever attempted, matters are usually rendered still worse for the church, on account of the inefficacy and unreasonableness of the arguments used by its defenders.

Under such circumstances it must be thrice welcome to every lover of Truth, whether he be a Christian minister, a layman, or an "infidel," as it will be to every Occultist, Theosophist, and Mason, to see the truths of religion revealed by the "Secret Symbols of the Rosicrucians." For three centuries these symbols have been hidden away, nor would it have been of much use to have them published sooner, as they would not have been understood. Now, however, as the Light, which arose from the East, originating in the recent revival of the study of Eastern books, has begun to radiate over the West, we may study and understand these symbols in this light. We may thus perhaps redeem Christianity from her present state of degradation and decay, and restore to her the living *Spirit of Christ*.

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