

Confessio Fraternitatis,

Or,

*The Confession of the Laudable Fraternity
of the Most Honorable Order of the Rosy Cross,
Written to the Learned of Europe.*

Whatsoever there is published and made known to everyone concerning our Fraternity by the foresaid *Fama*, let no person esteem lightly of it, nor hold it as an idle or invented thing, and much less receive the same as though it were only a mere conceit of ours. It is the Lord Jehovah (who seeing the Lord's Sabbath is almost at hand, and hastened again, his period or course being finished, to his first beginning) doth turn about the course of nature. And what heretofore hath been sought with great pains and daily labor is now manifested unto those who make small account or scarcely once think upon it, but these which desire it, it is in a manner force and thrust upon them that thereby the life of the godly may be eased of all their toil and labor, and be no more subject to the storms of unconstant fortune; but the wickedness of the ungodly thereby, with their due and deserved punishment, be augmented and multiplied.

Although we cannot be by any suspected of the least heresy or of any wicked beginning or purpose against the worldly government, we do condemn the East and the West (meaning the Pope and Mahomet) blasphemers against our Lord Jesus Christ, and offer and present with a good will to the chief head of the Romish Empire our prayers, secrets, and great treasures of God.

Yet we have thought good and fit for the learned sakes to add somewhat more to this and make a better explanation if there be anything too deep, hidden, and set down over dark in the *Fama*, or for certain reasons were altogether omitted and left out, hoping herewith the learned will be more addicted unto us and be made far more fitter and willing for our purpose.

Concerning the alteration and amendment of philosophy, we have (as much as at this present is needful) sufficiently declared, to wit, that the same is altogether weak and faulty; yet we doubt not, although the most part falsely do allege that she (I know not how) is sound and strong, yet notwithstanding she fetches her last breath and is departing.

But as commonly, even in the same place or country where there breaketh forth a new unaccustomed disease, nature also there discovereth a medicine against the

same. So there doth appear for so manifold infirmities of philosophy, the right means, and unto our Patria sufficiently offered, whereby she may become found again, which is now to be renewed and altogether new.

No other philosophy we have, than that which is the head and sum, the foundation and contents of all faculties, sciences, and arts, the which (if we will behold courage) containeth much of theology and medicine, but little of the wisdom of lawyers, and doth diligently search both heaven and earth; or to speak briefly thereof, which doth manifest and declare sufficiently humanity; whereof then all learned who will make themselves known unto us, and come into our brotherhood, shall find more wonderful secrets by us than heretofore they did attain unto, and did know, or are able to believe or utter.

Wherefore, to declare briefly our meaning hereof, we ought to labor carefully that there be not only a wondering at our meeting and **adhortation**, but that likewise everyone may know, that although we do highly esteem and regard such mysteries and secrets, we nevertheless hold it fit that the knowledge thereof be manifested and revealed to many.

For it is to be taught and believed that this our unhoped willing offer will raise many and diverse thoughts in people, unto whom (as yet) be unknown *miranda sextæ ætatis*, or those which by reason of the course of the world, esteem the things to come like unto the present, and are hindered through all manner of importunities of this their time, so that they live no otherwise in the world than blind fools who can, in the clear sunshine day, discern and know nothing, than only by feeling.

Now concerning the first part, we hold that, that the meditations, knowledge, and inventions of our living Christian Father (of all that, which from the beginning of the world, humankind's wisdom, either through God's revelation, or through the service of the angels and spirits, or through the sharpness and deepness of understanding, or through long observation, use and experience, hath found out, invented, brought forth, corrected, and till now hath been propagated and transplanted) are so excellent worthy and great, that if all books should perish, and by God's almighty sufferance, all writings and all learning should be lost, yet the posterity will be able only thereby to lay a new foundation, and bring truth to light again; the which perhaps would not be so hard to do as if one should begin to pull down and destroy the old ruinous building, and then begin to enlarge the forecourt, afterwards bring the lights in the lodgings, and then change the doors, staples, and other things according to our intention.

But to whom would not this be acceptable, for to be manifested to everyone rather than to have it kept and spared, as an especial ornament for the appointed time to come?

Wherefore should we not with all our hearts rest and remain in the only truth (which people through so many erroneous and crooked ways do seek) if it had only pleased God to lighten unto us the sixth candelabrum? Were it not good that we needed not to care, not to fear hunger, poverty, sickness, and age?

Were it not a precious thing, that you could always live so, as if you had lived from the beginning of the world, and moreover, as you should still live to the end thereof? Were it not excellent, you dwell in one place, that neither the people who dwell beyond the River Ganges in the Indies could hide any thing, nor those who live in Peru might be able to keep secret their counsels from thee?

Were it not a precious thing that you could so read in one only book, and withal by reading understand and remember all that, which in all other books (which heretofore have been, and are now, and hereafter shall come out) hath been, is, and shall be learned, and found out of them?

How pleasant were it, that you could so sing, that instead of stony rocks you could draw to the pearls and precious stones, instead of wild beasts, spirits, and instead of hellish Pluto, move the mighty princes of the world?

O ye people, God's counsel is far otherwise, who hath concluded now to increase and enlarge the number of our fraternity, the which we with such joy have undertaken, as we have heretofore obtained this great treasure without our merits, yea without any our hopes, and thoughts, and purpose with the like fidelity to put the same in practice, that neither the compassion nor pity of our own children (which some of us in the fraternity have) shall draw us from it, because we know that these unhopd-for goods cannot be inherited, nor by chance be obtained.

If there be someone now, which on the other side will complain of our discretion, that we offer our treasures so freely, and without any difference to all people, and do not rather regard and respect more the godly, learned, wise, or princely persons, than the common people; those we do not contradict, seeing it is not a slight and easy matter; but withal we signify so much, that our arcana or secrets will in no ways be common, and generally made known: Although the *Fama* be set forth in five languages and is manifested to everyone, yet we do partly very well know that the unlearned and gross wits will not receive, nor regard the same; as also the worthiness of those who shall be accepted into our fraternity are not esteemed and known of us by a person's carefulness, but by the rule of our revelation and manifestation.

Wherefore if the unworthy cry and call a thousand times, or if they shall offer and present themselves to us a thousand times, yet God hath commanded our ears, that they should hear none of them: yea, God hath so compassed us about with his clouds, that unto us his servants no violence or force can be done or committed; wherefore we neither can be seen or known by anyone, except one who has the eyes of an eagle.

It hath been necessary that the *Fama* should be set forth in everyone's mother tongue, because those should not be defrauded of the knowledge thereof, whom (although they be unlearned) God hath not excluded from the happiness of this fraternity; the which shall be divided and parted into certain degrees; as those which dwell in the city Damcar in Arabia, who have a far different politic order from the other Arabians. For there do govern only wise and understanding people, who by the king's permission make particular laws; according unto which example also the government shall be instituted in Europe (whereof we have a description set down by our Christianly Father) when first is done and come to pass that which is to precede.

And thenceforth our trumpet shall publicly sound with a loud sound, and great noise, when namely the same (which at this present is shown by few, and is secretly, as a thing to come, declared in figures and pictures) shall be free, and publicly proclaimed, and the whole world be filled withal. Even in such manner as heretofore, many godly people have secretly and altogether desperately pushed at the Pope's tyranny, which afterwards, with great earnest, and especial zeal in Germany, was thrown from his seat, and trodden underfoot, whose final fall is delayed, and kept for our times, when he also shall be scratched in pieces with nails, and an end be made of his ass' cry, by a new voice: The which we know is already reasonable manifest and known to many learned people in Germany, as their writings and secret congratulations do sufficiently witness the same.

We could here relate and declare what all the time, from the year of our Lord 1378 (in which year our Christian Father was born) till now, hath happened, where we might rehearse what alterations he hath seen in the world these one hundred six years of his life, which he hath left to our brethren and us after his decease to peruse.

But brevity, which we do observe, will not permit at this present to make rehearsal of it till a more fit time: At this time it is enough for these which do not despise our declaration, having therefore briefly touched it, thereby to prepare the way for their acquaintance and friendship with us. Yea, to whom it is permitted, that he may see, and for his instruction use those great letters and characters which the Lord God hath written and imprinted in heaven and earth's edifice, through the alteration of

government, which hath been from time to time altered and renewed; the fame is already (although as yet unknown to himself) ours.

And as we know he will not despise our inviting and calling, so none shall fear any deceit; for we promise, and openly say that no person's uprightness and hopes shall deceive him, whosoever shall make himself known unto us under the seal of secrecy, and desire our fraternity. But to the false hypocrites, and to those that seek other things than wisdom, we say and witness by these presents publicly, we cannot be made known, and be betrayed unto them; and much less they shall be able to hurt us in any manner of way without the will of God; but they shall certainly be partakers of all the punishment spoken of in our *Fama*; so their wicked counsels shall light upon themselves; and our treasures shall remain untouched and unstirred, until the Lion doth come, who will ask them for his use and employ them for the confirmation and establishment of his kingdom.

We ought therefore here to observe well, and make it known unto everyone, that God hath certainly and most assuredly concluded to send and grant to the world before her end, which presently thereupon shall ensue such a truth, light, life, and glory, as the first man Adam had, which he lost in Paradise, after the which his successors were put, and driven with him to misery: Wherefore there shall cease all servitude, falsehood, lies, and darkness, which by little and little, with the great world's revolution, was crept into all arts, works, and governments of people, and have darkened the most part of them.

For from thence are proceeded an innumerable sort of all manner of false opinions and heresies, that scarce the wisest of all was able to know whose doctrine and opinion he should follow and embrace, and could not well and easily be discerned; seeing on the one part they were detained, hindered, and brought into errors through the respect of the philosophers and learned men, and on the other part through true experience. All the which, when it shall once be abolished and removed, and instead thereof a right and true rule instituted, then there will remain thanks unto them which have taken pains therein; but the work itself shall be attributed to the blessedness of our age.

As we now willingly confess that many principal people by their writings will be a great furtherance unto this reformation which is to come; so we desire not to have this honor ascribed to us, as such work were only commanded and imposed upon us. But we confess and witness openly with the Lord Jesus Christ, that it shall first happen that the stones shall arise, and offer their service, before there shall be any want of executors and accomplishers of God's counsel.

Yea, the Lord God hath already sent before certain messengers, which should testify his will, to wit, some new stars, which do appear and are seen in the firmament in *Serpentario* and *Cygnus*, which signify and give themselves known to everyone, that they are powerful signacula of great weighty matters. So then, the secret hid writings and characters are most necessary for all such things which are found out by people: Although that great Book of Nature stand open to all people, yet there are but few that can read and understand the same.

For as there is given to people two instruments to hear, likewise two to see, and two to smell, but only one to speak, and it were but vain to expect speech from the ears, or hearing from the eyes, so there hath been ages or times which have seen, there have also been ages that have heard, smelt, and tasted. Now there remains yet that which in short time, honor shall be likewise given to the tongue, and by the same, what before times hath been seen, heard, and smelt, now finally shall be spoken and uttered forth, viz. when the world shall awake out of her heavy and drowsy sleep, and with an open heart, bareheaded and barefoot, shall merrily and joyfully meet the now arising sun.

These characters and letters, as God hath here and there incorporated them in the holy scripture the Bible, so hath he imprinted them most apparently into the wonderful creation of heaven and earth, yea in all beasts. So that like as the mathematician or astronomer can long before see and know the eclipses which are to come, so we may verily foreknow and foresee the darkness of obscurations of the Church, and how long they shall last.

From the which characters or letters we have borrowed our magic writing, and have found out, and made a new language for ourselves, in the which withal is expressed and declared the nature of all things: So that it is no wonder that we are not so eloquent in other languages, the which we know that they are altogether disagreeing to the languages of our forefathers, Adam and Enoch, and were through the Babylonical confusion wholly hidden.

But we must also let you understand that there are yet some eagles' feathers in our way, the which do hinder our purpose. Wherefore we do admonish everyone for to read diligently and continually the holy Bible; for he that taketh all his pleasures therein, he shall know that he prepared for himself an excellent way to come in to our Fraternity. For as this is the whole sum and content of our rule, that every letter or character which is in the world ought to be learned and regarded well; so those are like unto us, and are very near allied unto us, who do make the holy Bible a rule of their life, and an aim and end of all their studies; yea to let it be a compendium and content of the whole world. And not only to have it continually

in the mouth, but to know how to apply and direct the true understanding of it to all times and ages of the world.

Also, it is not our custom to prostitute and make so common the holy scriptures; for there are innumerable expounders of the same; some alleging and wresting it to serve for their opinion, some to scandal it, and most wickedly do liken it to a nose of wax, which alike should serve the divines, philosophers, physicians, and mathematicians, against all the which we do openly witness and acknowledge, That from the beginning of the world there hath not been given unto people a more worthy, a more excellent, and more admirable and wholesome book than the holy Bible; blessed is he that hath the same, yea more blessed is he who reads it diligently, but most blessed of all is he that truly understandeth the same, for he is most like to God, and doth come most near to him.

But whatsoever hath been said in the *Fama* concerning the deceivers against the transmutation of metals, and the highest medicine in the world, the same is thus to be understood that this so great gift of God we do in no manner set at naught, or despise it. But because she bringeth not with her always the knowledge of nature, but this bringeth forth not only medicine, but also maketh manifest and open unto us innumerable secrets and wonders. Therefore it is requisite that we be earnest to attain to the understanding and knowledge of philosophy. And moreover, excellent wits ought not to be drawn to the tincture of metals, before they be exercised well in the knowledge of nature.

He must needs be an unsatiable creature, who is come so far, that neither poverty nor sickness can hurt him; yea, who is exalted above all other people, and hath rule over that, the which doth anguish, trouble, and pain others, yet will give himself again to idle things, as to build houses, make wars, and use all manner of pride, because he hath of gold and silver infinite store.

God is otherwise pleased, for he exalteth the lowly and pulleth down the proud with disdain; to those who are of few words he sendeth his holy angel to speak with them, but the unclean babblers he driveth in the wilderness and solitary places: The which is the right Reward of the Romish seducers, who have vomited forth their blasphemies against Christ, and as yet do not abstain from their lies in this clear shining light: In Germany all their abominations and detestable tricks have been disclosed, that thereby he may fully fulfill the measure of sin, and draw near to the end of his punishment.

Therefore one day it will come to pass, that the mouth of those vipers will be stopped, and the three double horn will be brought to nought, as thereof at our meeting shall more plain and at large be discoursed.

For conclusion of our *Confession*, we must earnestly admonish you that you put away, if not all, yet most of the books written by false alchemists, who do think it but a jest, or a pastime, when they either misuse the Holy Trinity, when they do apply it to vain things, or deceive the people with most strange figures, and dark sentences and speeches, and cozen the simple of their money; as there are nowadays too many such books set forth, which the enemy of humanity's welfare doth daily, and will to the end, mingle among the good seed, thereby to make the truth more difficult to be believed, which in herself is simple, easy, and naked; but contrarily falsehood is proud, haughty, and colored with a kind of luster of seeming godly and of human wisdom.

Ye that are wise eschew such books, and turn unto us, who seek not your moneys, but offer unto you most willingly our great treasures: We hunt not after your goods with invented lying tinctures, but desire to make you partakers of our goods: We speak unto you by parables, but would willingly bring you to the right, simple, easy, and ingenuous exposition, understanding, declaration, and knowledge of all secrets. We desire not to be received of you, but invite you unto our more than kingly houses and palaces, and that verily not by our own proper motion, but (that you likewise may know it) as forced unto it, by the instigation of the spirit of God, by his admonition, and by the occasion of this present time.

What think you, loving people, and how seem you affected, seeing that you now understand and know that we acknowledge ourselves truly and sincerely to profess Christ, condemn the Pope, addict ourselves to the true philosophy, lead a Christian life, and daily call, entreat, and invite many more unto our fraternity, unto whom the same light of God likewise appeareth?

Consider you **not** at length how you might begin with us, not only by pondering the gifts which are in you, and by experience which you have in the word of God, beside the careful consideration of the imperfection of all arts, and many other unfitting things, to seek for an amendment therein; to appease God, and to accommodate you for the time wherein you live. Certainly if you will perform the same, this profit will follow, That all those goods which nature hath in all parts of the world wonderfully dispersed, shall at one time altogether be given unto you, and shall easily disburden you of all that which obscureth the understanding of humanity, and hindereth the working thereof, like unto the vain Epicides, and eccentric astronomical circles.

But those pragmatistical and busy-headed people, who either are blinded with the glistening of gold or (to say more truly) who are now honest, but by thinking such great riches should never fail, might easily be corrupted, and brought to idleness and to riotous proud living: Those we do desire that they would not trouble us with

their idle and vain crying. But let them think, that although there be a medicine to be had which might fully cure all diseases, nevertheless those whom God hath destinated to plague with diseases, and to keep them under the rod of correction, such shall never obtain any such medicine.

Even in such manner, although we might enrich the whole world, and endue them with Learning, and might release it from innumerable miseries, yet shall we never be manifested and make known unto any person, without the especial pleasure of God; yea, it shall be so far from him whosoever thinks to get the benefit, and be partaker of our riches and knowledge, without and against the will of God, that he shall sooner lose his life in seeking and searching for us, than to find us, and attain to come to the wished happiness of the Fraternity of the Rose Cross.