

We find ourselves flung into a plethora of obscure but somehow strangely moving symbolism. We will do our best to draw a guiding thread throughout its labyrinth but the secret, as ever, lies not in trying to come to some intellectual explanation of the imagery, but in direct experience of it by spiritually intentioned visualization. This, it may be realized, is a very feminine form of mental perception, as opposed to the masculine mode of intellectual analysis.

The text we choose is known as *The Chymical Marriage of Christian Rosencreutz*. It was first published, anonymously, in 1619, although it had apparently circulated in manuscript some time before that. Indeed there are coded links in the text with the famous Elizabethan magus, Dr. John Dee (1527–1608).

THE CHYMICAL MARRIAGE OF CHRISTIAN ROSENCREUTZ

The Invitation of Isis Urania

This symbolic story commences on Easter Eve, with all its connotations of transformation and resurrection. The protagonist, who is called Christian Rosencreutz, is approached by a fair glorious lady. She wears sky-colored garments spangled with stars, and has beautiful wings full of eyes, like a peacock's tail. She is obviously a form of the Heavenly Isis—Isis Urania—the heavenly or cosmic aspect of the feminine principle. She carries a bundle of letters in all languages and a golden trumpet. She leaves Christian Rosencreutz a letter, which is an invitation to a wedding, and departs with a resounding blast of her trumpet.

Christian Rosencreutz, or C.R., dreams that night that he is confined in a dark underground dungeon. It is packed with other prisoners who swarm all over each other, regardless of inflicting injury. Their overriding desire is to heave themselves over others. In short it is an image of the outer world. Trumpets and drums sound and the cover of the dungeon is lifted. The prisoners scramble toward the light and an old man speaks to them from above. He tells them that if they would be less selfish and self-centered *his mother* could help them the more.

As it is, a cord can be let down seven times, and whoever can cling to it will be released. There is a mad scramble to seize the descending rope but C.R. is successful without joining in this mêlée, for he earnestly