

THE LIGHT OF LUXOR

SPECIAL EDITION

MASONIC PAPERS AND
SPEECHES BY ANNIE BESANT



INDEPENDENT THEOSOPHICAL MAGAZINE

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Independent Theosophical Magazine



Theosophy

We often speak of Theosophy as not in itself a religion, but the truth, which lies behind all religions alike. That is so; yet, from another point of view, we may surely say that it is at once a philosophy, a religion and a science.

C.W.Leadbeater

The Society

"The Theosophical Society was organized for the purpose of promulgating the Theosophical doctrines, and for the promotion of the Theosophic life. The present Theosophical Society is not the first of its kind."

H.P.Blavatsky

Its Objects

1. To form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour.
2. To encourage the study of comparative religion, philosophy and science.
3. To investigate unexplained laws of Nature and the powers latent in man.

"Freemasonry comes from both Mysteries and the Operatives. Take the penalty. In the middle ages they may have enforced it; I do not know; but the secrets of building were very carefully guarded. When the candidate could no longer function in his subtle body - and - go through closed doors - the great truths were acted in the form of a drama. Plato was initiated in this manner. Finally, at the time when persecution became rife, when it became dangerous to believe in the mysteries, the great truths were thrown into symbols in order that the knowledge might never be lost. All those Lodges called the Rosary kept some of the knowledge, and the facts were given out in language only understood by initiates. The Teaching of Christian Rosenkreutz contained much of the knowledge.

With the rise of the Operatives a new explanation was given to the Masonic oath, and then we see the two lines of masonry working side by side, and in the world at the same time we see a double line of Masonry. Later we come to one peculiar line of the higher degrees, with which the Comte St. Germain was so closely associated.

If you would read some of George Sain's novels, you would find much in the way of story form of the powers of these initiates. From that continental line we derive much." Annie Besant 33°

Editor`s Note

In this special edition of the Light Of Luxor we present: Annie Besant: her Masonic life and writings. Annie Besant is known as a suffragette, a theosophist and key historical leader in the Independence Movement for India. What is little known, is that Annie Besant played a pivotal role in the expansion of Co-Masonry (Freemasonry for men and women) globally. Although she did not publish any books on freemasonry, she participated in many Masonic activities. Wherever she travelled to give Theosophical lectures she also attended Masonic meetings.

Annie Besant lived the Masonic life not just by showing up to Lodge meetings, she understood the Masonic mysteries and lived the life of a Mason until the end. She Lived for others and for the service of the Most High. Her Life is an example of what a life of true sacrifice is, she was not just a speaker but a doer, she used the masonic tools to leave a legacy that until today thousands of people still enjoy. Her vision for a better world is still in the making. In the following papers you will discover what she wrote about Freemasonry, and additional articles celebrating her memory and work in The Craft.

The Editor : Julian Ochoa.

Content

Papers and Speeches by Annie Besant:

8

Our Co-Masonic Order
Annie Besant

12

Co-Masonry a Revival of The Mysteries
Annie Besant

16

The Mysteries
Annie Besant

21

Masonry its Inspiration
Annie Besant

25

The Supreme Duty
Annie Besant

28

The Columns
Annie Besant

31

The Double Triangle
Annie Besant

34

A Righteous War
Annie Besant

41

A Silver Jubilee Address
Annie Besant

46

The Masonic Work
Annie Besant

Papers and Speeches Commemorating the V. Ills. Bro. Annie Besant:

51

Dr. Besant As Builder
James H. Cousins

57

The Advent of Annie Besant
Esther Bright

60

The Besant Centenary
The V. Ills. Bro. Arnold s. Banks, 33°

63

The V. ILLs. Bro. Annie Besant, 33°
By The V. Ills. Bro. Edith F. Armour, 33°

66

The V. ILLs. Sister Annie Besant, 33°
Illi. Bro. Cecile Bayer, 31°

72

Annie Besant as a Co-Mason

76

The Beginnings of English Co-Masonry
C. Jinarajadasa

Papers and
Speeches by
Annie Besant

"We are only at the beginning of a great forward movement, and because I believe in that great future, I want you to be free, in your liberty of thinking. Above all, do not criticize your Brethren for not liking what you like, as this keeps all higher influences away. Cultivate harmonious goodwill, good kind will, encourage every opinion; and the more diverse the opinions the better, for you cannot influence everyone without having every kind of opinion in your Lodges."

--Annie Besant

Our Co-Masonic Order

By The V. Ills. Bro. Annie Besant, 33°¹

OF all the great Initiations of the Mysteries of the past, you have in Masonry, speaking generally now, a faint reproduction; faint, because only in allegory and in symbol, and because those who belong to the ordinary Masculine Masonry are more apt though not in all cases by any means to trace it to what is called "Operative Masonry," Guilds of the Middle Ages, Guilds sometimes of ancient Rome; those are recognized as having part in its shaping. But if I may speak, with all respect, of a great Masonic institution, in Masculine Masonry they leave out two things of the greatest interest to human life, and a third thing that makes difficult the working of the ceremonies, for a very definite reason. As many of you, I dare say, know, the discussion of Politics and the discussion of Religion are forbidden in Lodge. The motive, I believe, is to prevent quarrelling or division in what is recognized as a Brotherhood. But these are the two most

vital subjects in human life; Religion, the spiritual life of human beings and of the world; Politics, the methods by which Nations can increase in happiness, in prosperity and in right feeling. If Masonry does not promote right action in Politics, right knowledge in Religion, surely then it throws away a tremendous weapon which can be used for the helping of the Nations.

The third lack that it has is in the exclusion of the women, and it is there that Co-Masonry is so peculiarly useful. You might as well try to see with one eye as with the two, as to think that you can judge of human affairs and human questions where only one of the sexes is concerned. Masonry ought to be a power which should teach the great lessons of human equality in a right sense, and not in the foolish sense in which it is so often taught in modern democracy; for as it is there taught it has no existence in Nature, as everybody knows when they

1. With acknowledgement to the Theosophical Publishing House London, for this extract from The Theosophical Society and the occult hierarchy, which is one of its publications.

begin to think. Children are not born equal in that sense; for they are very different in quality, very different in character—one a congenital criminal and another a little saint from the cradle. Nor are they born equal either in circumstances or in opportunities, or, what is more important, the power to grasp opportunities when opportunities come in their way. But there is an equality, a true equality which all should recognize, that all are equal in the Divinity of their own nature, and will be equal in the end, when the Inner Ruler Immortal is master of the whole life.

And in this question of the exclusion of the women, you have this to think of: that a Nation belonging to both sexes, as otherwise the Nation could hardly continue long, has to deal with many, many questions affecting both, and that the simile of the two eyes I used is a very, very exact one. For when you have two eyes, you see a little bit farther round an object, than when you have only the one available, and you cannot judge distance if you only have one eye; both are wanted. And in those subjects which touch the life of Nations, the matters that are dealt with by human beings in their Legislative Assemblies, and so on, you need the two human "eyes" in order to judge fairly all those questions; and that has been forgotten in Masonry.

Now I am perfectly well aware that there are some institutions in which a distinction is made as to sex, and rightly in those cases, because of the special work that has to be done; but difference of avocation

is not considered in Masonry. If it is really anything it is a presentment, by symbol and by legend, of the great fundamental truths of human life and human evolution; and therefore, just as in the great Mysteries—of which its forms are really the vessels surviving—no distinction of sex is permitted; and because of that fact in what we call Co-Masonry, it came into the position of being a possible instrument for helping in the evolution of mankind, helping in their evolution in matters of government, of social order; helping in their evolution into the really Universal Brotherhood which it proclaims.

The difficulty in the French Masonry, where this movement originated (Le Droit Humain), was that, because of religious differences and the spread of scientific materialism, they left out that universal landmark of Masonry, the recognition of the Great Architect of the Universe. But when some of us here, Theosophists, became Masons, taking our Initiations, as we had to do, from France, we said quite frankly that we could do nothing in England unless that great landmark is restored, that we believed in that Existence; and as they were willing to accept us, believing in It, it was necessary that we should be given perfect freedom to use His Name in our rituals and to acknowledge His Power in our workings. So that, in this respect, our English Co-Masonry differs from the French; but I believe that there are now some Co-Masons there, who are again beginning to recognize that great Foundation-Stone of the Masonic Temple. Certainly, so far as we are concerned, we

follow in that the English use, and not the French. Now the value of that, I submit to you, is very great in politics. It teaches that you may reconcile equality of nature with a hierarchical order ; that Wisdom is that which really has the right and the duty of ruling ; that ignorance cannot guide wisely the affairs of Nations, any more than the affairs of any ordinary business of a single individual; and that therefore, in Nations there should be recognized that hierarchical order of great human qualities, which make people fit to be the guides of their Nation, enable them to be true leaders of men.

And it seems to me that along these lines Masonry has much to teach the growing democracies of the modern world, as all point to the value of wisdom, the value of strength, the value of beauty in the national life. Those great national characteristics are the characteristics, remember, most prominent in our thoughts, of the Great Architect of the Universe; these, reproduced in human society, will build up a Nation beautiful in its surroundings, cultured in its thought, promoting strength of character, evolving wisdom and understanding in the relations between its members. And it is along those lines more and more, I hope,

that all Masons will learn to work ; and since the movement that admits women to a perfect equality with men uses similar rituals, similar Obligations and similar symbols, there may gradually come back to the world those great Mysteries of ancient days that were the inspirers of philosophy, teachers of the spirituality of religion, and the guides and helpers of men, by the development of the qualities that make a man fit to lead and to be recognized by his fellows as a natural and trained and cultured leader ; that we may see, gradually appearing in our world; literature deep and splendid in its thought, as were the great literatures of the Faiths of the world; and art as wonderful in its beauty as the remains of the past civilizations show us art has been, so that even the broken remains of its statues and its buildings are placed in our museums as models of beauty, of grace, of dignity, and of power. Nothing save the recognition of the inner life of man; nothing save the recognition that the Divine Architect lives in every one of the things that He has made, and pours down His strength on those who open their hearts to receive it; nothing else than that will save modern civilization from the destruction that fell upon one ancient civilization after another.

Besant, A. "Co-Masonry a revival of the Mysteries," The Morning Star Journal of the Eastern Federation of The British Empire, Vol. IV. No. 3, April 1938, pgs: 49-52.



Co-Masonry a Revival of the Mysteries

By The V. Ills. Bro. Annie Besant, 33°¹

Masonry is the most effective revival--no, I will not say revival is the most effective representation of the Mysteries of the past. This came out very curiously in the case of a gentleman who had rather an objection to Masonry, a sort of prejudice such as many people have against it. I did not try to persuade him to come into Masonry, although I am myself a Mason, because there are certain limitations to the persuasions you may urge upon anybody to join that great fraternity; so I left him alone, although I thought he would like it if he knew it. In another country he joined it and wrote to me afterwards that in one of the degrees through which he passed, he remembered that he had passed through that degree in ancient Egypt many thousands of years ago. And that is perfectly true. He is

a man who has a memory of his past. Any of you who have studied the Egyptian frescoes or paintings or carvings, will recognise Masonic gestures, if you know the Masonic gestures of course, and you will be able to trace for yourself in the processions that you very often find limned by the Egyptians, various positions of the body which you know in your Masonry.

Masonry, as you have it, was deliberately invented ill order to keep what may be called the vessels, the forms, to receive the water of life once more, when the days of persecution should be over, and it should become possible to carry on the higher teachings without fear, say, of the Inquisition's finding you and putting an end in rather a rapid fashion. That is the

1. With acknowledgement to the Theosophical Publishing House London, for this extract from The Theosophical Society and the occult hierarchy, which is one of its publications.

great future value of. Masonry even in the form in which it exists today. It is a system of symbols ; but many of the symbols are not understood by the mass of Masons. It does not much matter for the moment; the vessel is there and it will be filled after a time with the water of life. It remains as evidence of those ancient higher teachings which, as Plato said, "made a man sure of immortality " and gave him certainty of life on the other side of death. Along that line, then, or along the line of ceremonials of some of the churches, the revival of the Mysteries will come. Co-Masonry has kept many of the ceremonies of the ancient Mysteries. It is a descendant of those.

There are great bodies of invisible beings around us all the time. Some people call them Angels, other people call them nature-spirits, and there are all kinds of different ranks and different stages of evolution among them. We cannot speak to them in our language, merely because they do not understand our language. They only read the colours which the sounds give. You may have noticed that the older languages have a great many full vowel sounds. You would not hear a Roman Catholic say, as a great many non-Catholics say, in pronouncing Ave Marie, A-vee Mar-i-e; he would say Ah-vay Mah-ree-ah, quite a different pronunciation; that more full and soft sound gives rise to colours to the people of the intermediate world who read colours and not words. Ceremonies they will take part in and help in, if the ceremonial expresses to them something that they think desirable and

useful ; and people who know that, and realize that, make their ceremonies very much more alive than people who do not. I might take as an illustration of it the Liberal Catholic Church. I am not myself a member of that Church, although I admire it very much, My thought runs more on Hindu lines. But I notice that in the services in which I take part in the west, there is life, a vigour and an energy which come from the fact that most of the congregation believe that there are invisible beings who take part in and help them in their worship; so, the services are bright, alive and joyous. That co-operation between the invisible world and the visible world will grow more and more in the coming years.

What is alluded to as the Seventh Ray of communication between the worlds. Religious ceremonies and Masonic ceremonies will all become more vital. As you know, with regard to Masonry one cannot go into particulars, because going into particulars would be to break the secrecy which governs the proceedings of Masonic bodies to some extent; and under those conditions I can only say to you that the advantage gained by the ceremonial is that of conscious co-operation with the invisible beings of the next world. So far one can go. Many masculine Masons would say: "This is not. We have symbols, certainly; but we do not take these in the same important way." I am not admissible to a masculine Lodge; so I can only judge by what masculine Masons say.

Co-Masonry admits women on the same

terms as men, and the advantage of that is that the two sexes, having different organisms, the two organisms, mental and emotional, co-operate naturally with each other, each having qualities the other has in lesser measure. Hence you can have in Co-Masonry a far more complete working of the ceremonial than you can have where one-half of humanity is entirely shut out as in masculine Masonry.

If you do not like ceremonial, I should advise you not to join Masonry, because it is essentially a ceremonial body. If you do like ceremonial, then you may find very great help in it. There are different lines of ceremony, as in the Christian Church and the Co-Masonic Lodge. You may take part in both, if you like ceremonial generally; or you might take either, and follow the ceremony which you prefer. That is, of

course, a matter of individual choice. When I was first asked to join Co-Masonry, I refused. I said I did not think it was worthwhile. After I became a Theosophist, I learnt that it was worthwhile, because you could do things much more easily, with less exertion of will power, through the ceremony than by using the much higher power of will, which you can keep for larger purposes. Masonry ought to be, wherever there is a Lodge, a centre of good influence to the whole neighbourhood surrounding it. You may have read that in Egypt there were only three great Lodges, and the Pharaoh, the Ruler, had to be an Initiate into the Mysteries, as well as have a mind trained in all ordinary knowledge. The revival of the reality of the Mysteries will come largely through Co-Masonry. It is a way of working, just as are other ceremonies in various religions.

Besant, A. "Co-Masonry a revival of the Mysteries," The Morning Star Journal of the Easter Federation of The British Empire, Vol. IV. No. 3, April 1938, pgs: 49-52.



ANNIE BESANT (1847 - 1933)

The Mysteries¹

By The V. Ills. Bro. Annie Besant, 33°

LOOKING at religions in the past, we find a universal recognition that religion has two sides : one, the public or exoteric, meant for the masses of the people; the other, the hidden or esoteric, open practically only to those who were willing to strive to perfect themselves more rapidly than their fellows ; open to those who were willing to pay the price of knowledge everywhere—industry, labour, self-surrender—in order that the knowledge might be gained.

The esoteric side takes the good man, who has followed out the precepts of exoteric religion, and begins to unfold in him the powers of the spiritual intelligence ; it takes the spiritual nature of man, and, developing the higher intellect, it leads him to a real understanding of himself and of the worlds in which he is living. It takes the second aspect of the Spirit,

intuition, and unfolding that, it leads him to realization of the higher truths, so that he knows instead of believing, and realizes instead of only accepting. It takes the will-power in man, the third great manifestation of Spirit, and it trains that human will to work in perfect accord with the Divine Will. It teaches the man to be a conscious helper in the evolution of his race; it shows him how, by utilizing his intellect and intuition, he can become an effective co-worker with Nature, and so it changes him from one who is carried on the stream of evolution to one of the forces that make for evolution, teaches him to become a lifting wing for humanity, helping humanity to rise more swiftly to higher levels of life and thought. It takes the inner nature and moulds that from within, not from without, as the exoteric religion does by precepts and by law ; and

1. An excerpt from *Super-human Men*, by our late V. Ills. Leader.

so it gradually unfolds, from the basis of the good man, the divine man, who is the crown of human evolution, preparing him to pass on into other fields of work, into other fields of labour, full of the knowledge by which he can co-operate with Divinity, and full of the love and the compassion that stimulate him to the higher service.

Now, how does he do it? It is by the method of that esoteric side of religion which has always been worked out in what have always been called the Mysteries—Mysteries because hidden, because not proclaimed in the public world, since they are of no use to men until the lessons of the exoteric religion have been learned and have been applied-intended to unfold in him the powers of consciousness whereby he may live consciously, not unconsciously, in all the subtler worlds of being, in which by evolving his inner faculties he may know by observation and not only learn by authority ; in which in the emotional, in the mental, world he may master all his powers as the scientist masters the powers of the lower world; he may live in these worlds using their laws, exercising their powers, controlling their manifestations, and so utilizing them all for the guidance of conduct, making himself of greater use for the masses of his fellow-men. It helps him to open these up, to evolve them more rapidly, and leads him on into still higher worlds, until the spiritual nature has become in all its aspects fully evolved, so far as in human form that evolution be possible, lifting up the lower mind into the higher intellect, lifting up the emotional nature into the

intuitive, into the Christ-nature in man, lifting up man's lower will, which is selfish, into the higher will which is one with the Divine, and so perfecting the human nature, and leaving the divine man with other ranges of evolution in front of him, but the lessons of this world learnt for evermore.

The existence of such methods, of such teaching, of such more rapid evolution, is a testimony, which we find traced over all the history of the ancient world, that it is possible for a man thus to learn, possible for a man thus to evolve; and we are told that in the great religions of the world, when a World-Teacher comes forth, when he gives again in a form suited to the time the eternal verities of religion, that then, side by side with the teaching of the doctrines, he also establishes Mysteries suitable to the time, to the place, to the stage of evolution, by which those who have learned the lessons of the outer faith may continue the higher evolution ; and that it is from such a World-Teacher that not only the outer religions but also the inner Mysteries have come. In all of these in the ancient world-and in the foundation of the great religion of the west, in the Christian world-the supreme Teacher gave the method of the higher evolution and made the open way by which men more rapidly might become divine.

The method of the higher evolution and the opening of the way by which men may become more rapidly divine is that of preparation for what is called Initiation. Now what is Initiation? Put very briefly,

it is an extension of consciousness. The consciousness that you know as working in your brain, that is extended remains realized by yourself, but embraces a new world, active in that as the physical brain-consciousness is active here, and each Initiation extends the consciousness over a new area; so that this Self-consciousness, this possibility of gaining knowledge, enlarges with each successive Initiation, gains new powers to be exercised, as well as a new world in which those powers can be exercised.

Now, where the Mysteries lead up, as they always do, to the first of these great Initiations, there is a long preparation that goes before the presentation for Initiation, during which powers are gradually evolved which enable the man to grasp what is called the key of knowledge and turn it in the lock that opens to him a new world for study. And so we find in each Initiation that which is called the test, or the tests, to which the aspirant is subjected; that these are always along the line of exercising the various forces and energies of that world, and showing that he has acquired the knowledge that brings them under his control. Just on the same lines as, dealing with physical plane knowledge, you may test the knowledge of your candidate by practical experiments, so in those higher realms, where examination has the name of Initiation given to it, you have this practical testing of the candidate to see how far he has acquired the powers of the world of which he claims to be the ruler, and the exercise of those powers is tested by seeing how he is able to use them under various difficult experiments

that are placed before him. It is a definite gaining, then, of power, of knowledge, and knowledge and power are identical. It makes the man fit to be a candidate for one of the Initiations.

This training is carried on in what were known in the older world as the Mysteries. They were the schools of the preliminary training; they were places where the man was taught how to leave his body at will, how to utilize the organs and the senses of the subtler body in which he is ever clothed ; how to use them in full consciousness, when the physical organs he is accustomed to have been temporarily cast aside. He is taught how to observe, how to examine, how to discover for himself the laws of the subtler world into which he passes ; and so step by step, trained in this knowledge, he becomes, as it were, a scientist of the subtler world, as here you may have the scientist of the lower world. And just as you would regard a man as ill-trained in science if he had only studied text-books, if he had never worked out experiments in the laboratory ; as you would not regard a man as a competent chemist who had only read the books of other chemists and had never acquired for himself the practical experience, the manual dexterity, the knowledge as to how to do as well as how to repeat ; as you would not regard such a man as a real scientist, so the true religionist cannot regard a man as deserving of that name if his knowledge is second-hand instead of first-hand, -and if he has only learnt to believe on the authority of others and has never re-verified their statements by

his own individual experiments. And it is that individual training, that turning of theoretical knowledge into practical, that trying of experiments in the subtler worlds, and not only reading books about them-it is that which ever made up the instruction given in the Mysteries, so that the man is able to go on to that great world-examination which has been known by the name of Initiation. When the man thus studies and thus equips himself, then his instructors present him to pass through the gate of Initiation,

and it is the Mysteries that make the preparatory school for that passing, and that train him in the knowledge without which it is impossible that he should go across the threshold.

"Does the road wind up-hill all the way?"

"Yes to every end."

"Will the day's journey take the whole long day?"

"From morn to night, my friend."

Christina Rossetti.

Besant, A. "The Mysteries," The Morning Star Journal of the Easter Federation of The British Empire, Vol. IV. No. 2, April 1938, pgs: 27-30.

"Hence when you come and take part in a meeting of Masonic Lodge, the very first thought in connection with the Lodge ought to be that you are coming to the Lodge to perform a ceremony which will carry a blessing to the outer world, that from your Lodge will radiate, as it were, great streams of benediction, that it will improve the atmosphere of the whole of your neighbourhood, and that by improving that atmosphere you make all good things easier of growth in it, and all bad things to a certain extent sterilized. That should be your thought when you are coming into Lodge and singing hymn in procession as is normally done."

--Annie Besant

Masonry: Its Inspiration

By The V. Ills. Bro. Annie Besant, 33°¹

ONE great use the Masonic body will have in the future is to help a world which is blundering through ignorance, the ignorance stimulated by a passionate desire to help human suffering, but taking ways that are not the ways of wisdom, that are not the ways of curing by constructive love but by pulling down, by exasperation and passionate hate due to an unimaginable misery for which there seems no cure. Masonry will be one of the great methods of social improvement. It has hidden within it two great principles, equally important for the progress of the world along the path of evolution. One is that equality so misunderstood in the outer world. You must all know, if you think about it, that there is no such thing as equality in Nature from the outer standpoint. One child is born a genius with powers to develop, another is born almost an idiot perhaps; one is born with the seeds of the saint to blossom into the exquisite flower of sainthood; another is born the congenital criminal to be redeemed only by the helping hand of

his brothermen. All these differences you see in human beings. And the world cries out at the injustice, and tries to force an equality where none exists. But there is an equality which is taught in Masonry, the true equality, the inner life of God which makes all men equal. At the very preparation for his first Initiation, the candidate is taught his own poverty and helplessness, his own ignorance and blindness; and he is bidden to remember that as he came into Masonry poor and penniless, so should his heart ever be tender and open to relieve a brother's needs. But with that fundamental equality of divine sonship, which makes the prince and the peasant equal on the floor of the Lodge, there is a great hierarchical order, which is not based on birth, which is not based on social rank, which is not based on any of the transient changes and distinctions of our world; but which depends on knowledge and on wisdom, wisdom, the only thing that gives the right to govern men; power, the only power of the will guided by love,

1. Extracted from an address delivered in 1925.

which enables those at the head of the Order to invite co-operation from those in the lower grades, remembering that everyone in turn may rise to the highest place ; a miniature representation of the ladder of evolution in life after life, some with few lives behind them, some with myriads of lives, all beginning the same in nescience, all ending in Omniscience. That is the true equality, guided and guarded by the Hierarchy of wisdom and of power and of love.

As Masonry recognizes its work, it remembers how that great Mason, the Comte de Saint-Germain, travelled through Europe, trying to win the kings, the nobles, and the priests of Europe to come down and help their starving and miserable brethren. As he failed in his mission of mercy, frustrated by the folly, the greed, the oppression, the ignorance, the pride of the then rulers and guides of men, the blind leading the blind, the crippled leading the crippled, he founded his secret Lodge, whereat candidates might be received to help in hidden ways in that mighty work. The French Revolution which he foresaw was the uprising of the mad crowd out of the agony of starvation and oppression. That was the frustration of the noble endeavour. Those who were highly placed would not bend to help their brethren, and their brethren rose and tore them down from the rank of which they were not worthy; chaos ending in the despotism of a Napoleon, and in the long restlessness and later revolutions of France the beautiful. And so today in Europe, still he seeks for help. Still the

Rosicrucian walks our earth silent, quiet, dignified and stately, giving the light to those who are ready for it, healing the miseries of the social anarchy, so far as it is possible to heal them while the wills of men are set against the will of God.

He is the One who for the fifth sub-race is the helper, the hidden worker, the silent sufferer often for the miseries he cannot cure. Wondrous have been his previous lives. We can see him in Britain, when Britain was barbarian, bringing the message of the Christ. He was a saint and martyr, and still his name lives in the religion that he gave, and still St. Alban is a sacred name in England. Then we find him again in Robertus the monk, Robertus, self-martyred by his experiments, stretched helpless in his monastic cell ; but by his experiments he pointed modern science the way to chemistry. From him in his mortal body was hidden the knowledge that he had on the higher planes in his true self ; and his body, as you know, was not only struck unconscious time after time, but he lost an eye, a finger, by the explosions which made chemistry safe for those who came after him. His was the suffering for the sake of service, of sacrifice for the sake of shielding his more ignorant brethren. Then we come across him in that wonderful man, born in England, whom you know as Roger Bacon, the man who was said to know every science, to deal with science as though it was a plaything, who bore silently slander and accusation, and allowed that to pass in order that he might shield another who was the real culprit; careless that he left a stain on his

name among men, for what is the opinion of men, when the conscience is pure and the courage high ? He had appeared as Christian Rosencreutz earlier, and had gone to save the country of Hungary, taking a body there of one who had died on the field of battle ; and into that body he came, revivified it, and led the army as that great leader, Hunyadi Janos, bearing the name he had borne before he drove back the Turks and saved Hungary from the Turkish invasion sweeping over Europe; turned it back and let it stay in its own place, while Christianity was freed from the menace and was saved to be purified and made more useful. Then we meet him as the Comte de Saint-Germain, who is recorded as a marvellous, mysterious figure, moving through Europe, appearing now and again, with a century of knowledge behind him, but with the body and the strength of early manhood. And when he bade farewell to that hapless Queen Marie Antoinette of France; who wrote some memoirs on the Comte de Saint-Germain, he said: "At the end of the next century I shall come again, in the new century I shall again work for Europe." And since the words of a Master must certainly be true, because He is the embodiment of the truth, the accuracy, the justice, the courage, which marks every such embodiment, still He lives among us, though you know Him not, still He travels through your continent, searching for those who are willing to do

His will, to aid His work, Is it any wonder then that some of His ancient Brethren are around Him, that His Brother-Chohans are grouped round Him, that another great effort is being made for the salvation of the world? Is it any wonder that the inspiration you find in modern thought has come through Him and the Great Ones who are His Brethren in the higher worlds ?

The compassion for the miserable and the poor, stooping down that they may be lifted up to the possibility of a reasonable life ; thinking out ideas to soften the cruelty of modern industry, to build up garden cities for workers, where they may leave the crowded city when their work is over, and gain that touch with Nature--these are His inspirations, His works, and He chooses one here and there who is responsive to Him, who has a little of the intuition awake, who is ready to catch His whisper, and out of that whisper, melodious beyond all melodies that earth can make, to awaken in his or in her own heart a note that hereafter will swell into a chord. Is it any wonder that in the midst of our modern barbarism is born compassion, that in the hearts of our thoughtful and educated people, who are not suffering from the evils of our civilization, is born a passionate desire that all others shall be as they are and none shall be ignorant, miserable and poor -is it any wonder that a few have heard, that a few are working?

Besant, A. "Masonry Its inspiration," The Morning Star Journal of the Easter Federation of The British Empire, Vol. II. No. 4, October 1936, pgs: 83-86.



The Supreme Duty

By The V. Ills. Bro. Annie Besant, 33°

[We print the following exhortation from an address delivered by our late venerated leader some 16 years ago. The words, which are full of fire, need as much to be taken to our hearts now as they were ever before.]

UNLESS Masonry gives to you a living power so that your life has become different since you became a Mason, you are not using the great opportunity given to you. Do not be dogmatic to other people, that is not your business; leave to them the same free choice that is left to you. Do not try to impose your ideas of what is best on others. It does not follow that what is best for you is best for another. Help where you can. Never try to force. Wherever you can give assistance, give it. Do not try to coerce. Try to act in unity in the Lodge as much as you possibly can. Do not introduce sudden changes without consulting the Lodge and finding

out what the brethren want, because after all the officers of the Lodge are really the servants of the Lodge. It is literally true that "he that is greatest among you is he that doth serve," and the officers are to try to carry out the aspirations of the Lodge, suggesting, guiding, and helping, but not forcibly imposing.

I should like to feel in my far-off dwelling in India that every Masonic Lodge was harmonious, that not only was the Lodge conducted in harmony, but that the life of each member was lived in harmony with what he hopes for in the Lodge. Get rid of all small quarrels. Get rid of all petty jealousies and things of that kind.

Perhaps the thing that people want most is a sense of proportion, to realize what does and does not matter. It is usually found when quarrels arise that they are due to unimportant things, not important ones-

some particular word, some particular arrangement, so to speak; they are taken as if vital ; they are not in the least vital. The harmony which ought to prevail is enormously more valuable than any one of these little things.

And so my great wish for you on this visit of so many from a distance-although I do not suppose anybody has come as far as

I have-is that from this Lodge you go out with a solid determination that you will not quarrel, that you will not criticize other people, that you will not waste your time in finding fault with others, but that you will turn the whole of your strength to improving yourselves as instruments in Masonry, for spreading abroad in the world the great Masonic principles.

Besant, A. "THE SUPREME DUTY," The Morning Star Journal of the Easter Federation of The British Empire, Vol. III. No. 2, April 1937, pgs: 31-32.

"May you so in your lives guide your thought by Wisdom, carry it out by strength, make it manifest by Beauty, that all men may realize that Masonry is no empty shell of mere ceremony alone, but that the ceremonies vessels of living truth. By the drinking of this water of life, your thirst has been quenched, and you must carry that water to quench the thirst of the world."

--Annie Besant

The Columns¹

By The V. Ills. Bro. Annie Besant, 33°

THE one point perhaps that I should like to emphasize a little is how much of the strength of the work as well as the wisdom and the beauty comes from the columns of the Lodge, in every single Brother sitting in those columns will deliberately, consciously and continuously pour out into the Officers of the Lodge whatever of Wisdom, Strength and Beauty they have to give. For although it is true that our Officers have the responsibility of the outer working, we who are sitting and listening and then taking our own little part in the work—we can double, no, we can make a hundredfold greater that stream of the three qualities in one, which goes out from our Lodge for the helping of an unwise, a weak and sorrowful world.

To be able to meet here and to understand a little the riddle of life; to feel that by virtue of our harmony, our order, we can send out this stream of life to the

world that needs it so badly—this is one of the ways in which we can co-operate with the Great Architect in His undending work, not only we who are gathered here visible to the physical eye, but those other many Beings in varied ranks who, when the trumpet notes go out from a Masonic gathering, from north and south and east and west encircle us with their sympathy, guard us with their love, and are here round us all the time, ready to carry out the message of love and of light which we have the great privilege of creating here in order that they may carry it abroad.

If our lives happen to be very full of ordinary work in the outer world, if we are constantly in the tumult and the turmoil of that outer world, then perhaps to such of us who are thus engrossed in the duty of service, few things are more refreshing, more joy-giving than when the time comes round for the meeting of the Lodge,

1. An extract from an address delivered to Adelaide Lodge No. 406, Australia.

and we say with our hearts as we have done in words: "I was glad when they said unto me, we will go into the house of the Lord." For the moment we escape from the unreality which blinds us; we draw into a nearer view of the realities which are the life of our world; and in order that it may be so, let us keep our Lodges, whatever Lodge we belong to, in any part of the world—let us keep those Lodges untouched by any soil of disorder or disharmony or lack of peace, because if we poison the fount whence the stream pours out, how can that stream minister to the wants of men?

It is in no sense unmeaning, but full of meaning, when the R.W.M., addressing the newly initiated Apprentices after they have received the badge of Masonry, points out to them their great duty as regards the Lodge. For if they know that in the Lodge there is nay Brother with whom they are at variance, they shall call him

out and try to settle their differences, and there is a warning that if those differences cannot be so composed it is better that either or both should Leave the Lodge rather than its harmony should be disturbed by their presence. For a Lodge is sacred ground. A Lodge is dedicated to the work of the Great Architect of The Universe, and if we cannot help it we must not mar it. If we are not strong enough to be at peace with all the world, at least let us keep our lack of poise outside the Lodge. And so in every Lodge all over the world, if that first teaching of the Apprentice from the Master in the Chair be really followed out, then every new Lodge shall be a new centre of harmony, and out of that love which wells forth from the Lodges of the world there shall come a pacifying of the outer troubles, of all the unrest and the turmoil, and the Masons of the world have that in charge to do their duty as they are instructed to perform it.

Besant, A. "The Columns," The Morning Star Journal of the Easter Federation of The British Empire, Vol. II. No. 4, July 1941, pgs: 70-71.

"One object of Masonry, certainly a subsidiary object, but not all an unimportant one, is to master and control the physical body. The ceremonies, accurately performed make you much more a master of your physical body than. You would otherwise be. If you happen to observe people to whom attention may suddenly drawn in a crowd, perhaps people going up to receive something, it is not at all difficult to recognize a member of a well trained Lodge. He will know what to do with his hands and feet. He will not come slouching up. He will walk up as a soldier walks, with a disciplined bodily action, instead of looking clumsy and timid and generally rather foolish. That is one subsidiary advantage, that you ought to get, but only if you perform your ceremonies accurately and that is why each one of you ought to try to do that, to get the mastery of your body."

--Annie Besant

The Double Triangle

By The V. Ills. Bro. Annie Besant, 33°

THE double triangle which contains the Tau, or Egyptian Cross, is the symbol of the Universe, the macrocosm, the manifestation of Deity in time and space, the One showing Him self in the duality of Spirit and Matter; the triangles are interlaced to show the inseparable unity; they are two, to signify Spirit and Matter, FatherMother: the upward pointing is that of Fire, or Spirit; the downward of water, or Matter. Each

triangle, again, with its three lines and three angles, symbolizes the triple nature of that which it represents. The triplicity of the fiery triangle tells of Existence, Cognition, Bliss; of Activity, Knowledge, Will; of Creation, Preservation, Liberation. The sides are equal because "in this trinity none is afore or after other, none is greater or less than other"; because all are equally immanent in nature, equally present everywhere. The triplicity of the watery triangle signifies the three essential

characteristics of Matter: Resistance, Mobility, Rhythm (or vibration). The twelve equal enclosing lines of the figure taken as a whole signify the "twelve great gods" of Chaldea and of other ancient faiths, the twelve signs of the zodiac, the twelve months of the solar year. The subject would bear much working out.

The Crux Ansata, or Tau, enclosed within the double triangle, is the symbol of Spirit which has descended into Matter and has been crucified therein, but which has risen from death and rests triumphant on the arms of the conquered slayer; hence it is the "Cross of Life," the symbol of Resurrection, and with this are touched, the lips of the mummy, when the Soul returns to the body, in the Egyptian imagery.

The Svastika, or armed cross, or fiery cross, is the symbol of the whirling energy which creates a universe, "digging holes

in space," or, less poetically and no more truly, forming the vortices which are atoms for the building of worlds.

The Serpent swallowing his own tail is

the ancient symbol of Eternity, the circle without beginning or ending, within which all universes grow and decay, appear and disappear.

Besant, A. "The Double Triangle," The Morning Star Journal of the Easter Federation of The British Empire, Vol. XV. No. 1, First Quarter 1941, pg:5.



Leadbeater Chambers

A Righteous War

By The V. Ills. Bro. Annie Besant, 33°

RIGHT AND WRONG IN WAR

IT is our duty to throw the whole of our thought and energy into those ideals for which we must ever stand-of justice to small States, of public faith, of public honour, and the recognition of treaty obligations; and it is our duty to do that, because the whole future of the world depends upon the word of a Nation becoming a matter of honour to the Nation as well as to the individual. Treaties and international obligations are useful only in time of war. When Nations are fighting, then only is it that these things and other matters of civilized warfare come up. If they are to be thrown aside in war then it is useless to make them, and we are falling back into barbarism. So that I would ask you to remember that while war may righteously be waged for an ideal, or in discharge of a duty, there must be no feelings of hatred, no feelings of revenge, no feelings of an-

tagonism against the enemies as such¹ only against the principles that they may for the time embody : "So fighting thou shalt not commit sin." So may we perform at once our duty to our respective countries and also to humanity.

Now and again in the history of Nations, a great opportunity is offered by the Divine Providence that rules the world, and as that opportunity is grasped or missed, so is the upward or downward path followed by the Nation or the individual concerned. When the great struggle against slavery began in the United States of America, men like William Lloyd Garrison and Wendell Phillips, were execrated by their countrymen ; but their names are now written in gold in the Nation's Roll of Honour. As Lowell wrote:

"Once to every man and Nation comes the moment to decide,

1. An extract from an address delivered to Adelaide Lodge No. 406, Australia.

In the strife 'twixt Trust and Falsehood, for the good or evil side,
Some great Cause, God's new Messiah, offering each the bloom or blight,
Parts the goats upon the left hand and the sheep upon the right,
And the choice goes by for ever, 'twixt that darkness and that light."

Again we are under the terrible clouds of war, which shut out the world from the Sun which ever shines undimmed in the blue vault of heaven. Nor do these war-clouds show any signs of passing away, nor is there any loosening in the death-grip of the wrestling Nations. But in spite of all the horrors of the struggle, in spite of the destruction wrought, and of the ever-increasing burdens entailed by the prolongation of the strife, we, who believe that the destinies of mankind are guided by the highest wisdom to the noblest end, cannot but remain secure in that strong faith, and wait patiently through the long night for the breaking of the Day. The end is sure; for the world has climbed too far on its upward way to be again cast down into barbarism. Victory will crown the arms of those who are fighting for Freedom, and are at death-grips with Autocracy. Those who use falsehood and injustice, the weapons of the dark forces, must share in their defeat, for "God is a God of justice, and by Him actions are weighed."

Good citizenship in War

In times of peace and within the small areas of Nations the duties of citizenship are fairly well agreed upon, for the duty of the good citizen to preserve the peace, to

help in its preservation, and to maintain the social order, is recognised. It is seen that to permit violence, to permit the brutal use of strength to override the right, would be to allow society to retrograde into barbarism. To be neutral in such conditions is a social crime.

Therefore, in such a time as this, all citizens worthy of the name must surely recognise that they have a place, each a place of his own, in the great world-conflict that is raging, and that to each may fitly be addressed the question, to be answered in his own heart: "What is your duty?" For each has a duty, and on the right discharge of that duty his future progress depends. In a sense this is true of every duty which is ours, for progress is made by the little steps of daily duties, and as we discharge them, or fail to discharge them, so we go forwards, mark time, or fall back on the path of evolution. But there are periods in the world's history when we stand at a forking of the path, and the faithful discharge of duty means a step on the path which leads upwards, and the failure in the discharge of duty means a step on the path that leads downward. The world stands at such a forking of the road today, and the trend of civilization in the West will be either onward or backward, upward or downward, as the decisive step is taken. But we are concerned now not with the world as a whole, but with the individuals, and to each of them the question is put: "What is your duty?"

By "true service" I mean service done with

the object of co-operating with the Divine Will in evolution. Naught else but that is Service." Lo! I come to do Thy Will." Service does not depend on the outer shell of action, but on the inspiring spirit of motive. We may, therefore, choose any line of activity, realising that our choice may fairly be influenced by: (1) That which is most necessary in the place where we are: (2) our opportunities. The first of these is greatly important, and is perhaps the more weighty consideration of the two. Next comes the consideration of the physical, emotional and mental equipment, so that each may choose the work for which he is most fitted, and lastly let him consider the available opportunities, and seize the most suitable. Let each thus select his line of service, and then promptly labour on it.

Our duty clearly is to draw our bonds with each other closer, and to remember our unity, despite warring nationalities. Let our thoughts of peace and love mingle in the mental atmosphere with the thoughts of hatred that fill it, and while doing our national duties fearlessly and fully, let us remember the spiritual world where all is peace.

Why War?

As in the great myths of ancient days, myths which embody eternal truths, we see before is the recurring conflict which marks the parting points on the road of evolution, where a civilisation must choose between Good and Evil, and survive or perish by its choice. Hinduism speaks of Rama and Ravana; Zoroastrianism of Ahu-

ra Mazda and Ahrima; Hebraism and Christianity of God and Satan; Muhammadanism of Allah and Eblis. These names are symbols whereby, in every age, man has recognised the great evolutionary force of Life or Spirit, ever unfolding its powers, and the retarding resistance of Form or Matter, obstructing the further growth of the embodied life, when the limit of expansion and adaptability of the form has been reached. Then is the outworn garment struck away, and the Spirit takes to himself a garment which is new. In its earlier days the form subserved evolution and for the time was good; when it has served its purpose and obstructs evolution it becomes evil. So even militarism and autocracy were useful and therefore good in their day; the savage needed sharp discipline that he might evolve, and militarism gave it; the ignorant needed knowledge to guide them and autocracy gave it; western civilisation had to be built up out of barbarism, and the work was done by the sceptre of iron and the sword of steel. State and Church were alike hard and unrelenting, and they built up the foundations of modern Europe.

Then came the wind of the Spirit, which is Freedom, sweeping over the countries of Europe, and the garments of medievalism became too small for the growing Life, and cramped the development of the Nations, the resistance of the forms threatening the dwarfing and distortion of the Life, and a great breaking up of the old was needed for the expanding of the new.

Occultism, which is the study of the Divi-

ne Mind in Nature, teaches that behind all force there is will, and that while Nature, which is Divine Matter, provides all the mechanism for activity, it is Life, which is Divine Spirit, that sets going and directs the mechanism. The Life may be embodied in animal, man, deva, angel, the Lord of a Universe-it is all the same, save in degree of manifestation, but that Life causes activity by Will, and wherever there is activity there is Will behind it. So in evolution there is the Will to Progress, and in resistance to evolution there is the Will to Inertia, and these wills are embodied both in men and in Super-men, who strive against each other for the mastery at the critical stages of evolution, when a civilization is to choose between the downward grade that ends in disappearance, and the upward grade which begins a new era. The men fight desperately, visible on the earth ; the supermen fight in the world invisible to mortal eyes. There is ever war in heaven as well as on earth in these struggles that decide the fate of the world for thousands of years.

We call the Super-men-who fight for the victory of the Divine Will in evolution and are Themselves the embodiment of a portion of that Will-the Occult Hierarchy, the Guardians of our world. And we call the supermen who fight against it, who would preserve the old outworn ways that have become poisonous, the Dark Forces, in the poetical Eastern nomenclature the "Lords of the Dark Face." Both sides work through men, and through men their triumphs and defeats are wrought out, the shadow here on earth of the events above. For it is the

fate of Humanity which is in the balance; it is the judgment Day of a race.

The Fruits of War

It is the custom in modern days so to praise peace, and to be so horrified at the ghastly physical concomitants of war, that it does not seem to strike people to look quietly into the question, and to ask themselves why a thing so obviously hideous and brutal should have gone on from time immemorial with the persistence of a natural phenomenon. There are many who are so obsessed with the visions of mangled corpses, of mutilated living bodies, of gaping wounds, of flowing blood, of the agony of unslaked thirst, of the irremediable maiming of strong young bodies, and of all the attendant torture of mothers, wives, sweethearts, children, living through long agonies of slow suspense to be ended only by the news of the beloved as a corpse or a cripple, that they cannot master the indignant emotion that tears at their hearts, nor see through their angry, tear-filled eyes any fair fruits from sowings so foul. To ask them to reason is almost to insult them, and they are ready to knock one down in order to demonstrate the beauty of peace.

None the less, as we look backwards over history, we see that invasions of one people by another have spread the knowledge and the arts of the more civilised nations throughout the less civilised; Alexander came and went, but he left behind him in Indian sculpture the serene beauty of the Greek art. But what of the individuals? If

people see in man only the creature of a few years of mortal life, born out of nothingness, to sink into nothingness again in dying; then indeed should all lovers of man raise the cry of "Peace at any price," for war means death, and death is the end of all hopes and joyous life. Or, if man believes himself to be a vessel moulded by God as clay by a potter, with no past to explain him and no future to evolve him; with a heaven or a hell on the other side of death, where virtue would be a seedless flower and vice an enduring weed; then, again, war would have no meaning and no use, bringing but worse doom of useless pain into a lot already but too dreary and too bootless.

But if man be an eternal spiritual intelligence, evolving through many lives into a nobler and loftier existence; if the fruits of each life be garnered and ripen into seeds for planting in another, and so on and on, as the Hindu believes, until the Self which was but as a seed has grown into a mighty tree; then war, like all other happenings in a world "that exists for the sake of the Self," has under the rough husk of evil the sweet kernel of lasting good. For though the body be slain or mutilated, the MAN is living still, he has learned to offer life and limb on the altar of a great ideal that otherwise he would not have known: he dies for King and Country—a King he may never have seen, a country which is not of plains and hills and cities, but of splendours and radiances and beauties of ideal might and loveliness that else he had not dreamed. And he does not only die; he lives through hardship and pain. The scen-

ted darling of a luxurious drawing-room and the village ruffian of the pothouse march side by side through

freezing torrent, across sun-parched desert ; they starve, they are fevered and chilled, they joke as they go to cheer each other, they learn to know each other as men, they suffer for the country's "honour," they die for the country's "flag." What is "honour," what is "flag"? Mere empty breath of a poet? Nay, they are the mighty forces which evolve the hero from the sybarite and drunkard, and turn the brute into the man.

When we read of the awful slaughter and image the piles of the wounded, let us forget the pain of the bodies, and realise the swift evolution of the man. Let us realise the unending life, rather than the broken form, and then we shall realise why the saffron-robed Rajput rode singing into the battle, leaving wife and daughter as fire-blackened corpses behind him, knowing that at eventide they would be reunited, and that over the agony of the shattered bodies the freed men and women would again join hands, smiling at the passing pain that brought them joy so rich.

"He is not born nor doth he die; nor having been, ceaseth he any more to be; unborn, perpetual, eternal and ancient, he is not slain when the body is slaughtered. As a man casting off worn-out garments taketh new ones, so the dweller in the body, casting off worn-

out bodies, entereth into
others that are new."

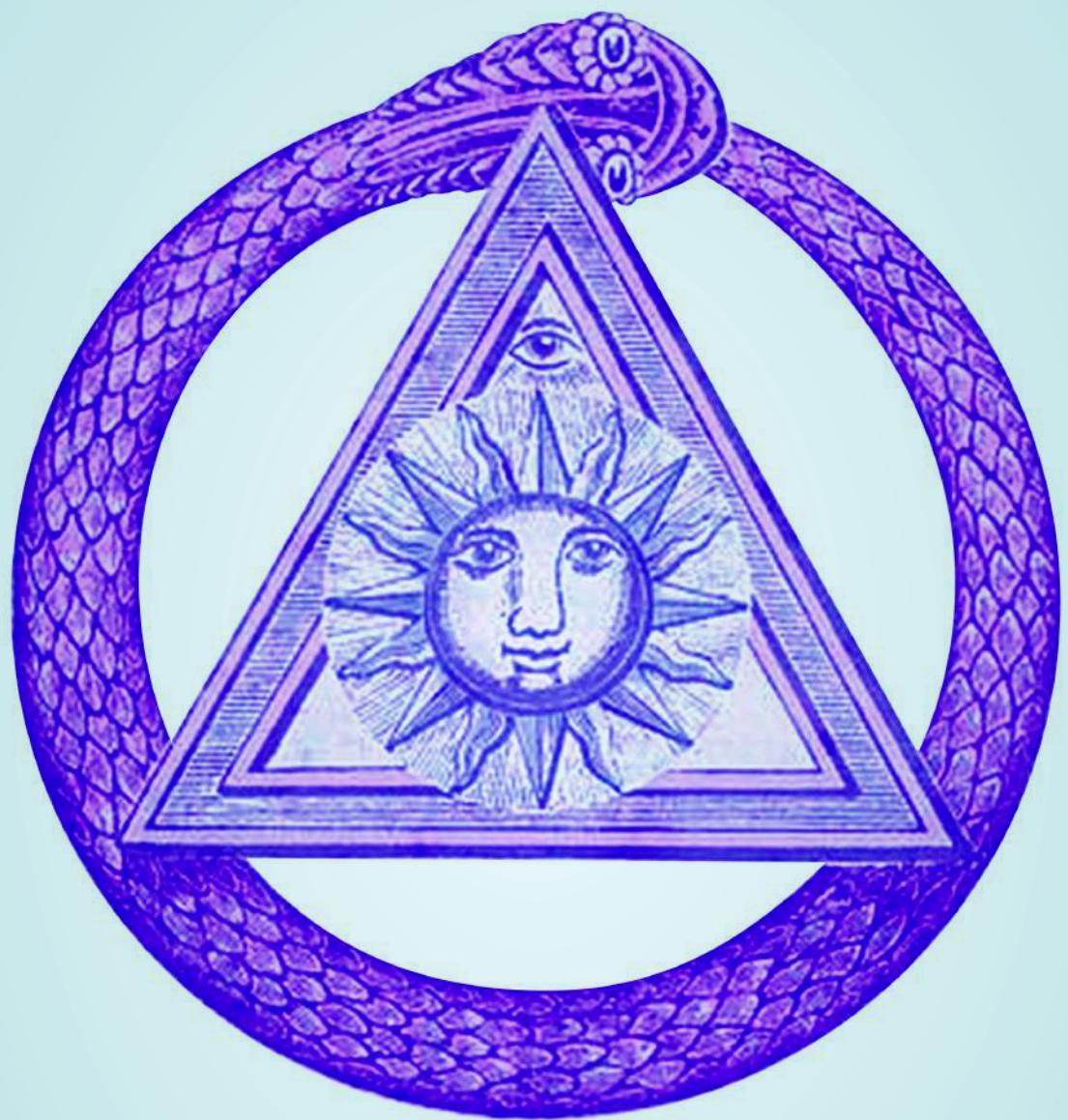
(Bhagavad Gita)

"Never the Spirit was born,
The Spirit shall cease to be never,
Never was time it was not,

End and Beginning are dreams,
Birthless and deathless and changeless
Remaineth the Spirit for ever,
Death hath not changed it at all,
Dead though the house of it seems."

EDWIN ARNOLD (The Song Celestial),

Besant, A. "A Righteous War," The Morning Star Journal of the Easter Federation of The British Empire, Vol. VI. No. 3, July 1940, pgs: 47-53.



A Silver Jubilee Address

By The V. Ills. Bro. Annie Besant, 33°

(The following oration was delivered by the V. Ills. Bro. Besant. Deputy of the Supreme Council for the British-Indian Federation, which included our present Eastern Federation, at a festival to commemorate the founding of the Order of Universal Co-Masonry in the Federation. It was published in Freemasonry Universal in 1927—Ed)

You are all aware that we are met here to-day in order to commemorate the conclusion of the first 25 years of Co-Masonry in the British Empire. Looking back to the day in 1902, (26th September) we see the first stone, as it were, of the Co-Masonic Order in Britain then laid, arid it may perhaps interest you to know that some years before that date the V. Ills. Bro. Marie Deraismes; and her colleague, Dr. Georges Martin, decided that the time had come when Masonry should again take up its place as a reforming agency, and that it was therefore necessary that both men and women should join in forming what was at first called in England "Joint Free Masonry", and in France, where the Order took its birth, "Maconnerie Mixte." Now we did not think that "Mixed Masonry" would be a

very favourable tide for us here in England, the term might have been misunderstood, and so we at first chose the word "joint," and then, a little later, taking the idea from the education of boys and girls together, we used the prefix "Co" to represent our position, and called it "Co-Masonry"—and that name it has continued to hold down to the present day.¹

When it was first founded, the original founder was good enough to invite me to become a member with her of this new Order—or rather, this revival of the old Order. But at that time English Masonry had not impressed me very favourably in some ways; it seemed to be, from an outside standpoint, very much a matter of banqueting, but with one splendid virtue;

1. The title has since been changed to "International Co-Freemasonry," to denote that our Order is international and that it is not different from the well known Freemasonic Order, except that we admit women--ED

which, all the world can see, 'the virtue of Charity . For everyone knows of the great Masonic charities, their education of the children of Masons, and their readiness to respond at any time to the call of suffering. That alone, however, did not seem to me quite a sufficient reason for Joining the Masonic Order, and so at that time I said that I did not care to take the responsibility of starting Masonry in England, and would stand aside for the time. Then, some time later, I received the expression of a wish from that Great One whom we speak of as the H.O.A.T.F., not in any sense suggesting that He is the Head of our comparatively small body, but, believing Freemasonry to be a fragment left of the Mysteries of the ancient world, we regard all who carry out the ancient landmarks as Freemasons and therefore heirs of the Ancient Mysteries, and we recognize that Freemasonry has, as of old, one great Knower of the Mysteries at its head. That, of course, is in no sense a dogma binding upon any member of the Order, but many of us, looking back at the origins of Masonry in ancient Chaldea and in ancient Egypt, saw a connecting link between Masonry and the Ancient mysteries, the link being recognizable in many of the old Egyptian monuments of the past by certain Masonic gestures that were shown, and certain resemblances in regalia on the figures painted on those monuments, Thus we regarded Masonry as a thing that had descended through the long past, gradually, because of the difficulties which surrounded it in the outer world, drawing more and more backwards out of sight, and passing through various stages of degeneration, as the conditions

became too difficult for those who did not regard it as a Mystery, veiling in allegory and in symbol profound truths of the Universe. In spite of this degeneration these symbols were preserved until knowledge again should arise and explain the great truths underlying every one of the symbols, allegories and legends in which the teachings of Freemasonry were hidden.

So some secret societies kept it up, and, as you know, certain books that were called Rosaries (because the Rose was the ancient symbol of secrecy), still in various secret cyphers, carried on, as it were, the memory of the past. When the Co-Masonic Order was instituted-long after Masculine Masonry had arisen and was again working along some of the old lines-it opened to that great work which had been performed by Masonry new possibilities of vitality and strength, for in the old Mysterjes sex was not recognized as a disqualification. Nowhere in the great occult truths is sex recognized as disqualifying a person from the true knowledge which is hidden under the name of Masonry, and the coming of women into the Order once more opened new possibilities to the great Science.

Theo, in 1902, the H.O.A.T.F. suggested that it would be well if some of us joined the Freemasonry in France and planted the seeds of Freemasonry, as Co-Masonry, of course, in England. After finding out that there was one member of the original French Lodge living amongst us, who was known well to many, Miss Arundale, I was directed to speak to her about it and learn

as to how things were going on in France, for I naturally did not myself know to whom to apply. So I asked her, and found to my surprise that she was a member of the Droit Humain Lodge, the first Lodge of Co-Masons in France. Then seven of us arranged to go over, she herself being a Mason of the 33°, and the rest of us only beginning to learn Masonry. We were initiated in that, our Mother Lodge, Le Droit Humain No. 1, and were duly passed and raised, and empowered to form the first Co-Masonic Lodge in England, which was founded under the name of Human Duty, the correlative of "Human Rights". That Lodge is still our central Lodge, if I may call it so, and parent of all the other Lodges of the Order in the British Empire. We began it in a very small way, as you may imagine, and our first Lodge room was the drawing-room of Mrs. Jacob Bright, who was one of our founding member!'

There our Lodge meetings were held, and initiations, passings and raisings performed, until at length we reached the number of 35. From that time onwards we continued to increase very rapidly, and now Co-Masonry has spread all over the world, from that small beginning in London. The British Federation has spread to the different 'countries of the British Isles, and we have Lodges not only in the British Isles, but all over the Empire. In England first, then in Scotland, now we have Lodges in Wales, and two of our youngest Lodges were founded, the other day, in Ireland. Long before that we went outside the British Isles and travelled over to Ceylon and to India, and founded

Lodges there, Nos. 106 and 107. The Lodges in India have had a remarkable effect upon the women of that country, for many of them have joined in Co-Masonic work and in one or more of our Lodges there we have an Indian woman as R.W.M. Talk is also being passed from one to the other of translating the ritual into some of the leading vernaculars; because many of the Indian women naturally do not know English.

Co-Masonry spread further and further, to Australia, to New Zealand, to South Africa and to Canada. At first Canadian Lodges were part of the American Federation, because it was difficult where the towns are so very, very scattered, divided by hundred of miles, to start Lodges and train Masons; so the American Federation was asked to help us, and for a time the Canadian Lodges worked under the American federation. Now, as Freemasons are becoming more numerous in Canada, it was thought well, (the V. Ills. Deputy for America, and I, consulting together) that these Canadian Lodges should join the British Federation, which includes not only the British Isles but those other countries I have mentioned and all the British Dominions. So all over the world; we may say, this British Federation has spread. When I went over lately to America, I visited many of these Lodges, with the welcome of the Deputy there, and found how well they carried out their work.

Then we began to feel—knowing that India, Australia and New Zealand were strong, and that the work there was admirably carried out—that when our

jubilee arrived we should be able to present to the world at large, orderly body of Masons, both men and women, carrying on the ancient Order in a regular way.

Latterly, from the various causes, we have been technically considered clandestine from the standpoint of the Grand Lodges of England and Scotland, but not from the standpoint of all Masons on the Continent.

I had visited Rome, and the Grand Master there invited me to the Rome Lodges as soon as they met again, and invited me to address them. I had to leave Italy, however, before the Lodges met again, and so I did not go. But they showed a liberal spirit. Now, unfortunately, as you know, Masonry is not permitted by law in Italy. Still there is, I think, in the future a possibility that the barriers will fall away.

The position of women to-day is recognized to be very different from the older western view of the "proper place of women;" they are now regarded as having the right to do any work which they are able to do. In India, there has never been any law shutting women out of occupations, and they have had to get over only custom and not laws.

I think that we may hope that when the 50 years festival (1952) comes along we may find doors now closed against us opened to us. At least it may be a pious hope, which we may cherish, trusting it may blossom into reality at some future time.

I look forward to the next Jubilee Convention as one in which we shall be able to welcome a very large number of Brethren, who will have realized that in the variety of non-essential details and in the more exact working of each ritual, which perhaps we shall have helped them to achieve, very much is added to the dignity of the Order in its proceedings, while nothing is lost of the freedom of discussion in our Lodges. More and more, I think, we shall be able to show that the Masonic Lodge is the pattern of Right Government. I have hoped from the beginning that the time would come when all democracies would realize that Wisdom should rule. When that point is gained very much will be gained in the government of many countries. And so let us cling fast to our Masonic traditions, and hold ourselves up to be examples of what Governments ought to be, and will be, when Wisdom rules, when Strength supports, and Beauty is the characteristic of all our activities.

Besant, A. "A Silver Jubilee Address," The Morning Star Journal of the Easter Federation of The British Empire, Vol. XIV. No. 2, Second Quarter 1948, pgs: 19-23.

"In Masonry we find a hierarchical system; each grade confers, or should confer, more power and more knowledge, and it is here that I think one great value of Freemasonry lies that the civilisation of the future will be built upon our Masonic Order; for in Masonry we find a reconciliation between the authority of the wise, combined with democratic institutions."

--Annie Besant

The Masonic Work¹

By The V. Ills. Bro. Annie Besant, 33°

IT is far too much overlooked that all great occult ceremonies which bring a number of people together are intended less for the benefit of the people who perform them than for the benefit of the outer world. Now one reason-putting it in a very concrete form, if you will permit me-why it is so much easier to meditate with concentration in India than over here is because it is definitely recognized there that every person in his morning meditation is sending out into the outer world the spiritual effect of his own concentrated thought; especially in the highest caste there, the Brahmana caste, that is peculiarly recognized. It is the function, so to speak, of the religious man to think of those whom he can help at his very best moments, and the best moment will be, if he prays, as part of his prayer, if he meditates, as part of his meditation; only he must think of what he is doing to make the thing really effective.

Hence when you come and take part in a meeting of a Masonic Lodge, the very first thought in connection with the Lodge ought to be that you are coming to that Lodge to perform a ceremony which will carry out a blessing to the outer world, that from your Lodge will radiate, as it were, great streams of benediction, that it will improve the atmosphere of the whole of your neighbourhood, and that by improving that atmosphere you make all good things easier of growth in it, and all bad things are to a certain extent sterilized. That should be your thought when you are coming into the Lodge and singing the hymn in procession as is normally done.

The House of the Lord, wherever it is pitched, in whatever religion it is found, should be a centre of benediction. We recognize in our Masonic ceremony the

1. Notes of an oration delivered by our late leader at a Masonic meeting in London.

existence of other grades of beings who are closely connected with the welfare of the outer world-and remember, not only with the welfare of the human races, but the welfare of the animal kingdom, the welfare of the vegetable kingdom, the welfare of the mineral kingdom even; the whole of these are susceptible to these spiritual influences. You are lightening the work of the unseen worlds and giving to the higher and less material of those worlds less burden to carry if you take up your share of it, as you ought lo do when you become Masons. Becoming Masons does not mean that you are just to come and go through a ceremony without thinking what you are really doing. It is meant to concentrate your minds along certain definite lines which become familiar to you so that when you make a form the outer action is almost automatic, and the whole of your mind is turned to the result of that action on the outer world.

You may have seen, for instance, or heard that one object of the perambulation round the Temple is in order to form a magnetic circle in the midst of the Temple. It reminds us, of course, of the creative circle in which the Logos works. And so all of you should think of yourselves as doing it, because if you only walk round with more or less vague thoughts, more or less empty minds, you are not contributing your proper share to the magnetism which is to come out from the Lodge.

You are not meeting here simply for yourselves. You are meeting here in order that you may give a great opportunity

to higher Jives to send down upon you a flood of spiritual life, in order that you may radiate it outwards, not that you may keep it simply for yourselves. When you welcome new Masons into Masonry and at every meeting of the Temple, you should send out to the outer world this blessing. Do not think it should all be done by the Officer , as many Masons do ; you should all take a real part in the Masonic meeting. Every single Mason within his own grade has to help in this and take an active share in it.

Whatever ritual you choose, whether simple or ornate, carry it out with the greatest accuracy, with concentrated thought and the greatest reverence for the higher Beings who are appealed to, the Ministers of the G.A.O.T.U. and the M.O.T.W. Remember that the Great Ones are only waiting to help, looking out for opportunities of helping, but They require disciplined bodies as well as disciplined minds.

Now one object of Masonry, certainly a subsidiary object but not at all unimportant one, is to master and control the physical body. The ceremonies, accurately performed, make you much more a master of your physical body than you would otherwise be, and if you happen to observe people whom attention may suddenly drawn in a crowd, perhaps people going up to receive something, it is not at all difficult to recognise a member of a well trained lodge. He will not come slouching up. He will walk up as a soldier walks, with a disciplined bodily action,

instead of looking clumsy and timid and generally rather foolish.

Now looking at what the effect of Masonry ought to be on yourselves, each one of you has deliberately trained your self and constantly tries to draw the attention of the higher worlds. You have no right to do that unless you are trying to lead the best life you can. If you think your Masonry consists in coming to a meeting and then going away again, and not carrying it out in your daily work, you are making a fundamental mistake. Remember that the E.A. Degree, it is virtue and the building up of character which is the duty of a Mason. Now we cannot practice virtue and build up character by simply coming to meetings. Just each of you think of the difference that ought to be in yourselves because you are Masons. Do you carry it out in the every day affairs of your life? Do you try to build up the virtues that make a fine character? Remember that the building of a virtue means the cutting off of an excess of a similar quality on the other side. "The middle path," the Greeks used to say, "is the path of virtue." The Lord Buddha taught very much the same thing. The middle path was the path that he advised His disciples to follow, and there is no truer definition of a virtue than the middle point between the opposite vices both related to it.

Take the virtues of courage, You may have an excess of courage, and then you have the vice of recklessness—that is a vice, an exaggeration—or you may have the vice of timidity. Now supposing you find

you have either of these excesses, you set to work then to think steadily of courage and make that middle point between recklessness and timidity the test of your character as a Mason. In all the virtues which gradually we have to build up in our characters, in order that in the future we may become the perfect man, in all those, steady, persevering, daily effort is necessary.

If all Masons did their duty, you would not have among the nations of the world to-day the hatreds that you have. You ought not to be able to find Masons anywhere hating people of another nation or race. We do not limit our Brotherhood to people of any race or nation and our attitude to all aught to be the attitude of a brother. That is a difficult lesson to learn nowadays. But if every one of you practiced that for yourselves, if every one of you recognized where there was evil and tried to win over the evil-doer to the good, if you knew how to teach him by the true method, by showing him what evil he was to get rid of and how he was to build up the opposite good—you do not want to think of the bad in the character, but rather of the good—we should get very much more quickly into a time of peace than we seem likely to do at the present time when antagonism is almost universal, nation against nation, class against class.

Those are the things you ought to be working out in yourselves and those around you—especially in yourselves. A great Teacher said: If you cannot make yourself what you ought to be, how can

you expect to make other people? If instead of criticizing your neighbours you turned your criticism on to yourselves anew by the power of thought. You only want to apply what you learn to your own individual case, and every one of you would be a centre of good wherever you may happen to live.

I want to put it to you as the outcome of this little talk to you, my brothers, to-night, that you should remember in your Lodge that you are to take an active part in thought and gesture right through the whole of the ceremony, strengthening your officers by throwing your thought into

their thought current, and then sending out over the whole neighbourhood where you are these great currents, sending them out, as you really do, by means of the Devas, the Angels—think or not think of their agency as you please—and then your Lodge becomes a light in a dark place.

Then think of what you ought to be as a Mason in character. Remember that every grade in Masonry is supposed to indicate an advance in the evolution of spirit. The Mason has to begin by character, that is the first, essential thing to have, and then to put things one after another as he rises up the steps of the Masonic Ladder.

Besant, A. "The Masonic Work," The Morning Star Journal of the Easter Federation of The British Empire, Vol. III. No. 3, July 1937, pgs: 57-61.

Papers and
Speeches
Commemorating
the V. Ills. Bro.
Annie Besant

Dr. Besant as Builder

By James H. Cousins

Dr. Besant's entrance to Freemasonry through the Co. Masonic Order that admitted women on the level with men, and her fidelity to its responsibilities for over thirty years, were natural to her temperament and character. The passing phases of her long and unusually active career sometimes brought her into wordy conflict with others that gave her the semblance of a fighter; but she was essentially a builder. She was not, perhaps, a creator in the sense of rearing a structure bearing aggressive signs of the builder's personality. But she was a supreme artificer, a person of power—in the original meaning of "craftsmanship"—who worked incessantly, calmly but intently, to rear an edifice of life as near as possible to her vision of the ideal ground-plan and elevation granted to her by Master Builders to whom she bowed in characteristic masonic obedience. To those who remember Dr. Besant's varied enthusiasms, a masonic interpretation of her life may perhaps not appear to cover the whole ground, particularly so in view

of her world-wide advocacy of Theosophy for almost half a century, and her election as President of The Theosophical Society for a fourth period of seven years in 1928. I believe, however, from long association with her in both activities, that The Theosophical Society and the Co-Masonic Order were as closely related in her mind as are the two aspects of doctrine and observance in a religion; the one explained the universe and humanity, the other expressed the explanation in dynamic symbolism. It could hardly be otherwise, indeed, since the basic principles of both are the same, and were reflected in Dr. Besant's characteristic qualities and public activities which sometimes puzzled those not having access to the plans and specifications of her ideal House of Life. A brief comparison will make this clear, and give a basis for the better understanding of the three major "pieces of architecture" that she gave to India in religious purification, educational expansion, and legislative reform.

The Three Objects of The Theosophical Society are (1) Universal Brotherhood, (2) Understanding through comparative study of all forms of human expression and achievement, (3) Extension of higher human capacity.

I am giving away no Masonic secrets, but only restating what has been freely published, in saying that the three main attitudes of masonry are (1) meeting on the level, (2) acting on the plumb, (3) parting on the square.

It does not require any subtle thinking to see that the principle of Brotherhood and meeting on the level are only differently phrased recognitions of the essential unity of human-ity; that the higher capacities of humanity are those that make for plumbness or uprightness; that understanding is only another way of making an intellectual square deal, of rectitude in human relationships.

If we translate the three masonic attitudes of level, plumb, and square into the more general terms, democracy, aspiration, and rectitude, I think it will be agreed by those who had close association with Dr. Besant that we have in them the three fundamental attitudes of her own life out of which arose Consistently the edifices that she sought to rear from the disorderly materials in the builder's yard of daily affairs.

From early womanhood Dr. Besant worked for the constitutional attainment of equality in basic human rights and

opportunities. But also, as a good mason before she knew anything intimately of Freemasonry, in order to safeguard rights and opportunities from possible abuse, she worked for equality of duties and responsibilities, recognizing a hierarchical order of office without administration based on universal eligibility for office without restriction save that of fitness. Her long life was marked by a constant striving upwards both in the comprehension of truth and in its expression in conduct. This is, I believe, the Clue to the occasional moving of her centre of interest and action which gave to the critical the impression of instability. But it was only the movement, so to speak, from one masonic office to another, now on the floor, within the entrance of the Lodge, or outside the entrance if occasion required, now in the South or the West, but always upwards, and always towards the exalted East, the place of light. Her personal rectitude and sense of moral obligation were proverbial among her colleagues.

When we turn to Dr. Annie Besant's work in nation-building in India, it is not, I think, merely fanciful to see in the succession of its phases a response to fundamental masonic principles. Her first work after her arrival in India in the early 'nineties was the setting plumb of the religious life of India which had fallen from its ancient ideals. To her, as to Masonry, aspiration towards the highest was an essential preliminary of apprenticeship to be developed under her constant guidance from the preliminary stage to graduation. She made possible the creation of the Benares Hindu University

for the levelling up of the education of the Hindu people. She brought into being the National University which, between 1917 and 1923, gave a demonstration of how Indian education and the Indian people could, if educational authorities so willed it, be put on the level with education in other countries.

In 1913 she began her political campaign which had as its ideal the securing of a square deal for India in the management of its domestic affairs and in its relationships with the British Commonwealth. For this she had, in her educational work, made provision for the creation of an educated electorate.

Looking at this threefold work, according to level, plumb and square, in what we may call its static rather than its chronological aspect, we observe again that Dr. Annie Besant worked as a true Mason; she built from the foundation upwards, though always with the whole plan up to roof and finial in her mind's eye. In her efforts to purify the indigenous religions of India she counselled each to get down to origins and fundamentals; for she had gathered from long and wide study of religious history that in these would be found an almost complete unanimity of view regarding essentials and an identity of aim in personal realization of individual association with the Supreme Life of the universe, and organized work for making earth a reflection of heaven. For herself, the forms of religious observance mattered but little. Her mind was as a Masonic Lodge in which followers of all faiths met

on the level. All she pressed for was that every follower of a religion should know what he and she followed.

The four corners of her educational ground-plan were—spiritual culture through the student's own faith; physical culture through indigenous systems; national culture through the student's mother-tongue; international culture through English—always from bases towards culminations.

But perhaps the most striking example of the natural Masonic bent of Dr. Annie Besant's mind is the Commonwealth of India Bill which, after two or more years of incessant labour with the collaboration of a group of political experts, she succeeded in getting through a second Reading in the House of Commons in 1921. Some years previously, in Liverpool, I heard her expound her idea of a future Constitution for India which would rise from the foundations of village representation in expanding stages towards a central co-ordinating legislature. I had no knowledge then of the Masonic import of what appealed to me on its plain merits as a drastic but wise idea. The Commonwealth of India Bill was based on the foundations of India's vast village life and traditional experience of government in the old village panchayats, and offered the stable basis of a future Constitution giving scope for a true Masonic constructive interaction between all phases of the national life such as would delight Annie Besant the nation-builder.

The true builder is always a follower of architectural truth, a disciple of the Architect of the Universe; otherwise, the building would begin as a ruin, with none of the picturesqueness of a ruin at the legitimate end of the building's career. The true builder is therefore a congenital optimist, with the future animating the materials and operations of the present. There is an optimism that goes no deeper than sound digestion; but there is also an optimism that has digested the toughest substances of life, and out of these substances has worked into the very essence of itself a power of calm reaction to the impacts of life. This is because the true builder, the true follower of Truth, sees achievement as one of the sources of pessimism; for the water of life lives not in stagnation, but in its flow. Hence the word "failure" has no place in the vocabulary of the optimist. One can only fail by striving after success, in its terminal sense. But success in its true derivation (to go up; Latin *sub-cedere*) is the invisible comrade of the true builder, who only regards progression in the real sense of success—ascension. The true optimist has no need to strive for success; she is success. When the exigencies of external circumstances caused the closing of the National (India) University, it was not Annie Besant, its initiator and inspirer and supporter, who laid the flowers of failure over its ashes; rather did she nail the hatchment of success above its temporarily shut door, for she knew that the abandonment of a scheme of true and needed education that had given to India a group of emancipated souls (and had incidentally given herself

the dignity of poverty) was but the quenching of a candle whose flame and light had passed on and only the future matters.

The valuations of the true optimist, whose optimism is the outcome of the true spirit of following, are based on reality. She or he does not quail at a difficulty as a brand new creation, such as the finalists who are attached to results and forms might regard it; she regards it as a happy disclosure of a fact which was there, and an the more menacing because unforeseen and therefore incalculable. In the unbalanced accountancy of life the wise auditor does not regard a discovered error as a failure, but as a step towards the truth of affairs.

To the builder of Truth, the true optimist, the end of effort is not the accumulation of garlands of finality, but the scattering of impulses and "thoughts . . . whose powers shall sleep no more". When Macaulay's New Zealander stands on London Bridge surveying the ruins of the once mighty metropolis, he will weep, because his vision will be backwards to false finalities; but when his sight clears, he will discover a figure with dreamful eyes sitting smiling in the midst of the ruins, with a case of sharpened pencils by its side, and on its knees a writing-pad on which it is planning "a city that bath foundations"; and whatsoever name the figure then hears, it will be a reincarnation of one who, in a former era of world-desolation, tramped the earth, crossed the seas, winged the sky under the pseudonym of Annie Besant, preaching the Coming

Day of Divine Manifestation and Human Regeneration, and who in the wreckage of universes will find only matter and occasion for prophesying and planning "a new heaven and a new earth".

Cousins J.H. "DR. BESANT AS BUILDER," The Annie Besant Centenary Book 1847-1947, Published by The Besant Centenary Celebrations Committee, Adyar Madras India (1947) Pg: 176-181.

“Studying Masonry is like looking at a sunrise; each man who looks is filled with the beauty and glory of it, but the splendour is not diminished. Over all alike its ineffable wonder falls, subduing the mind, softening the heart and exalting the life.”

--Annie Besant

The Advent of Annie Besant to Co-Masonry

By Esther Bright

DR. ANNIE BESANT became deeply interested in the possibility of starting a Co-Masonic movement in England in the summer of 1902. I think it was Bro. Francesca Arundale who introduced the subject to Dr. Besant, as she had been initiated into the -Organization some time previously.

Dr. Besant was living at that time with my mother and myself in our home in St. James's Place, London; she asked us if we would be willing to co-operate with her in the formation of such a movement. We were, of course, only too willing to stand by her and do all we could to help. I well remember those early days when she chose those whom she thought suitable to be the founders of the new movement, workers whom she trusted and who had been in close touch with her for many years. So we, whom she had chosen, all travelled to Paris-Dr. Besant,

Captain and Mrs. Lauder, Miss Arundale, George Arundale, my mother Ursula M. Bright, and myself Esther Bright. We were initiated, passed and raised into the Ordre Maconnique Mixte International.

The heads of Co-Masonry in France were Marie Georges Martin and her lively husband Dr. G. Martin, both charming, kindly people. She was the R.W.M. of her Lodge; he was Frere Orateur-a most important Orator. They were full of great enthusiasm and were delighted that the work to which they had dedicated their lives should find a fresh home on English soil. They gave Dr. Besant, my mother and myself the hospitality of their friendly home during our stay in Paris. We had to sit through long dinners amongst meat eaters, rather a trial to Dr. Besant. We had to listen to many very long speeches in the beautiful language of France in hot close rooms. But we enjoyed it all and

were at times rather frivolous in a mild fashion and very sleepy when we were allowed to retire for the night. We met many interesting members and received much kindness from everyone. I remember Dr. Besant came to my bedroom at six o'clock on the first morning and told me she felt she must have a real bath—would I come out with her in search of a place where we could get one? So out we went into the streets of Paris—and we did find one! I think few houses possessed such a luxury as a bath in the Paris of those days.

Later on, the heads of the movement came to London and stayed with my mother and me, and I remember how surprised they were to find a real, big bath waiting for them. They stayed some time in our home to help us in starting our new work. They were a most devoted couple and he, the husband, always deferred to his wife. He treated her Masonically with great reverence.

Many meetings and rehearsals were held in our home in St. James's Place and when the great day came for our first real Lodge meeting in a big hall we were all slightly nervous, anxious to play our parts as well as possible. I drove in a hansom cab with Dr. Annie Besant and for the first time she was going to do without her ritual book! It was a great occasion, but all went well.

The Human Duty Lodge, No. 6, was formed. Bro. Annie Besant was, of course, the R.W.M. I was the Secretary and my mother was Treasurer.

Many Lodges gradually were formed in these islands, also Chapters, and many male Masons became deeply interested in our working; and are today joining our ranks in increasing numbers. Thus we hope that men and women working together may help to build up a happier and a better world.

Bright, E. "The Advent of Annie Besant to Co-Masonry," The Morning Star Journal of the Easter Federation of The British Empire, Vol. XIII. No. 3, Third Quarter 1947, pgs: 41-42.



FOUNDERS OF HUMAN DUTY LODGE, NO. 6 (LE DROIT HUMAIN), PREMIER LODGE IN GREAT BRITAIN, FOUNDED 26TH SEPTEMBER, 1902.

Front row, left to right :

S. M. Sharpe, Ursula Bright, William Lauder, Annie Besant, Ivy Hooper, Edith Ward.

Second row, left to right :

Florence Faulding, Esther Bright, W. Faulding, Max Gysi, G. H. Whyte, Evelyn Lauder.

The V. Ills. Bro. George Arundale, though a Founder, does not appear in this photograph.

The Besant Centenary

By The V. Ills. Bro. Arnold s. Banks, 33°

M.P.G.C. of The British Federation

THERE are few of us now who can look back along the line of memory to those spacious early days in our Order when our first M.P.G.C. was with us and active in Masonry. The British Jurisdiction-for the day of "Federations" was not yet-was one and undivided. You in the East, and we in the West, shared the privilege of her rule and her presence. She was "Deputy" and "Vice-President of the Supreme Council". East and West alike were her jurisdiction, and she oscillated between us like Persephone of the great Myth of Eleusis. With this analogy, I may be asked which half of the Jurisdiction represented the night and which the day ; which was the underworld of Dis, and which the realm of Zeus. You in the East generally held her for the longer time, so perhaps her sojourns in India may be regarded as the analogy to those' of the soul in the heaven-world, and those with us in the West to the incident of physical life. But no person and no

thing ever " held " The V. Ills. Bro. Annie Besant, except that Grand Lodge Above and its Officers, to whose service she was dedicated.

Her ideal in Masonry was the restoration of the Ancient Mysteries. "The true Mysteries still exist," she told us, " and Freemasonry is an unconscious witness to their existence in the past." Under the impulse of her guidance and inspiration, Masonry became for many of us a conscious witness to their ever living presence.

To have been in Lodge with her on numbers of occasions is a precious memory. It seemed to me that with her regalia she had a curious quality of appearing to put on stature-I do not say "dignity", for in that she was always vested. One has noticed the

-same thing on the lecture platform too, for the towering figure that was our

impression of Annie Besant in action was, measured in terms of the illusory exactitude of this physical plane, quite small. Perhaps something of her real stature shone through, almost to the point of visibility, in Power. Power was her natural expression and surrounded her, yet would she sweetly defer its First-Ray directness of action to the chosen "ordered ceremonial" method of Masonry. Thus she would teach us by example, as well as by word, of that supreme harmony and co-operation between all types and methods in the G.L.A.

We lived laborious days at that time when she was among us. Her arrival would be the cause of an outburst of Masonic activity. People would arrive from other countries, desirous of becoming qualified to assist in the founding of the Masonic work there on their return. So normal rules of procedure were sometimes relaxed, •

For example, this happened in Emulation Lodge, No. 24, in June 1909. I was installed in the Chair on the 5th. On the 7th we initiated 3 candidates-a South African, one from France (L. Bayer) and a German. On the 14th we initiated 3 London candidates and passed the first two of the preceding week ; and the minutes state that "owing to the lateness . . . the Charges

were omitted". The following evening, the 15th, we raised 3 Brn. For Lodge Human Duty, No. 6, and on the 17th the pinnacle was set upon that month's work, by The V. Ills. Bro. coming, receiving the gavel; and performing the greater part of the ceremony of raising the Brn. from South Africa and France. But we began our work again on the 1st of the following month with the initiating of 7 candidates !

On 6th October next we celebrate the Centenary of the descent to physical surroundings on 1st October 1847, of this great Craftsman. We hope to receive and welcome at that General Lodge meeting The V. Ills. Bro. N. Sri Ram, 33", and to hear from him of something of the work in the Eastern Federation, begun by our Brother Annie Besant. ". Brethren in the East and " Down Under", we here greet you with hearty good wishes, and with thanks that she was our Mother too.

"In the world you should be an example of serious and harmonious living, endeavouring to lead a nobly simple life, dignified and beautiful, a silent Protest against the enfeebling luxury and the ugly ostentation of ordinary modern society."
-From a Charge.

Banks A.S. "THE BESANT CENTENARY," The Morning Star Journal of the Easter Federation of The British Empire, Vol. XIII. No. 3, Third Quarter 1947, pgs: 39-40.

THEOSOPHY

What the *true* occultist seeks, is not knowledge, or growth, or happiness, or power, for himself; but having become *conscious* that the harmony of which he forms part is broken on the outer plane, seeks the means to resolve that discord into a higher harmony.

This harmony is Theosophy—Divine or Universal Wisdom—the root whence have sprung all “religions,” that is all; “bonds which unite men together,” which is the true meaning of the word religion.

Therefore, Theosophy is not a “religion,” but religion itself, the very “binding of men together” in one Universal Brotherhood.

— H. P. BLAVATSKY, *Lucifer*, vol. 1, p. 48.

The V. Ills. Bro. Annie Besant, 33°

By The V. Ills. Bro. Edith F. Armour, 33°

M.P.G.C. of The American Federation

IT was in the year 1909 that I first had the privilege of participating in Masonic work with The V. Ills. Bro. Besant. The occasion was the consecration and dedication of my Mother Lodge when Bro. Besant acted as the Consecrating Officer. I was J. D. at the time and very new in Masonry. It was the duty of the Deacons to accompany the V. Ills. Bro. as she walked about the Temple during the ceremony. The impression made upon me at that time will never be forgotten. It was like moving in the centre of a flashing vortex of tremendous force which somehow had the quality of concentrated stillness. In some mysterious way, one became part of that force and seemed to have capacities which were not known in the personality. It was quite an experience for me because I knew nothing at all about the ceremony in which we were engaged and was very scared, but as soon as we got started; suddenly there was a feeling of power and

smooth, effortless action. I discovered later that others had experienced that same magical transformation, a sense of unlimited capacity for accomplishment; there were no obstacles which could not be swept aside; the word "impossible" no longer existed.

Although Bro. Besant did not introduce Co-Masonry in the United States, it was through her that the Order received the greatest incentive toward development among English-speaking people in this country: The American Federation owes much to our V. Ills. Bro. and we are happy to share, with our British and Indian Brethren, the privilege of honouring her.

It is an interesting fact that Bro. Besant was a member of the American Federation. In the year 1927, she was regularly affiliated with Ojai Valley Lodge, No. 551. The M.P.G.C. of one Federation; The V. Ills. Bro.

Louis Goaziou, 33°, officiated as Master. It was a most unusual event for the M.P.G.C. of one Federation to receive affiliation at the hands of the M.P.G.C. of another Federation.

After her visit to our country in 1909, Bro. Besant did not return until 1926. At that time, she travelled extensively and visited many Co-Masonic Lodges. Her presence stimulated much interest in Co-Masonry and many people joined the Order. An important event was the laying of the corner-stone of the Theosophical Society at Wheaton, Illinois. The work was under the direction of Lodge St. Germain of Chicago with The V. Ills. Bro. acting as Master. About 1500 people witnessed the impressive ceremony. An interesting incident occurred as the line of officers moved slowly along a muddy path to the platform where the stone was suspended. A piece of broken glass lay on the path. No one had noticed it but Bro. Besant. When she saw the glass, immediately she stopped and removed it from the path, an action so characteristic of her ever-alert thoughtfulness for the welfare of others.

The final visit to the United States of Bro. Besant was in the year 1929. Again she attended meetings of Lodges of various Degrees and brought the inspiration of her presence to all the Brethren.

In closing this brief account of my personal contacts with The V. Ills. Bro. Besant, I want to quote from one of the addresses delivered by her at a gathering of Co-Masons, words which are especially significant today when the people of the world are struggling to find the basis of a lasting peace.

"May it not be that in our different countries our Masonic Lodges may gradually win the people to the realization that ignorance is blind and needs a guide, that the one rightful authority is the authority of Wisdom; that Wisdom should be supported by Strength, and that Wisdom and Strength should both be adorned by Beauty. Those are not mere symbols in our Lodges. They are fundamental truths in nature, and if we can help, all of us, to pave the way to that recognition among the nations of the world, that Wisdom should rule, should be supported by Strength, and that Beauty should be manifested in the work of both, then Masonry will do what it is meant to do in helping forward the evolution of mankind; and that will come when all will be united in one mighty Lodge, recognizing that all are Brethren; that all divisions are temporary, while Brotherhood is eternal, and that in this supreme truth the world will at last find peace, peace united with order, as they are united in the Masonic Lodge."

Armour F. E. "The V. Ill Bro. Annie Besant 33°," The Morning Star Journal of the Easter Federation of The British Empire, Vol. XIII. No. 3, Third Quarter 1947, pgs: 37-38



The V. Ills. Sister Annie Besant, 33°

By Ills. Bro. Cecile Bayer, 31°

(Notes of an address delivered at a meeting held on the 9th of September during the international convention of the "Droit Humain," at Paris under the auspices of the Supreme Council.)

As you all know, this meeting is intended to commemorate the centenary of the birth of a Sister of whom our Order can be justly proud, of the V. Ills. Sister Annie Besant, 33°, Vice-President of the Supreme Council of the "Droit Humain," First sovereign Lieutenant Grand Commander of the British Federation.

It was Sister Maria Deraismes, one of the Founders of the Order, who first spoke to her about the existence of the "Droit Humain," but it was some years afterwards that, through introduction by Sister Francesca Arundale, she applied for admission into our Order. In 1902 she founded the first Co-Masonic Lodge in England. Thus she became one of the workers of the first hour, one of the pioneers who have fought for the realization of the ideals of Co-Masonry. Thus she has earned the right that her name be kept in devoted and thankful memory.

In the darkness surrounding the so often painful evolution of humanity there appear from time to time a few chosen ones, pioneers, messengers of Light, heralds of better times, who illuminate like torches the deep and stifling darkness, showing to blind and stumbling pilgrims the way leading more directly to the goal of their ascending march.

Annie Besant was one of those light-bearers whom we love and admire. Let me quote here the testimony of somebody whom we cannot suspect of partiality, the well-known German philosopher, Hermann Keyserling. During a conversation with the famous French expert in Graphology, Crepieux-Jamin, the latter spoke to him about an essay written by him, based on the study of numerous samples of handwriting, and to which he had given, as far as I can remember, the title of *A Mirror of Rascals*. Keyserling

asked him why he should not rather write A mirror of Noble Souls. Crepieux-Jamin replied that in his studies it was extremely seldom that he discovered really noble souls! The philosopher, looking through his collection of autographs, picked out those which seemed likely to supply the material for the suggested book, but none of them was approved of, until he showed to Crepieux-Jamin two handwritings, one of the poet Rabindranath Tagore, and the other of Annie Besant. Tears came into his eyes, while he exclaimed : "But here we have two very big persons indeed!" He had those letters photographed and the reproductions afterwards adorned the walls of his house.

I know that it will be extremely difficult to do full justice to the nature of this extraordinary woman. I can only try to outline very succinctly a few aspects of her character and activities. We may compare her best with the gem to which, it has been said, she had the closest affinity in this material world, the diamond. She had the same splendid transparency. She possessed equally, I will not say, its hardness, for nothing would be more unfair on account of the exquisite tenderness shown so often by this soul. We had better say, instead, as a more appropriate term, its inflexibility. And finally she displayed the same great number of facets. Transparency, on account of the absolute sincerity, the marvellous veracity of her nature, its perfect honesty. Inflexibility, the inflexibility which no obstacle, no suffering, can weaken or unbend, which can alone conduct us to our goal. And

finally the multiple facets, for few natures show the same rich fullness as hers.

It is not only what she has done, it is still more what she has been, even in the humble routine of the first years of her life, that attract and inspire us. Her chiefly Irish origin explains' her generous and responsive nature. She was a tenderly beloved and loving daughter, a mother deeply devoted to her children, who responded without reserve to her great affection, a most faithful and loyal friend, who has inspired deep and lasting feelings. When she left her social and political work in order to consecrate her efforts to Theosophy, her former comrades deplored her departure, but they did not feel any grudge, which is quite exceptional in the political world, but came in great numbers to say farewell to her. When in 1924 she celebrated her political jubilee, some of them were present to acclaim her with enthusiasm.

Even during the period of bard and unbending materialism, she preserved, deep down in her heart a fiery mysticism. This mysticism included a certain combativity, but devoid of all traces of bate and cruelty. he loved a good fight for the sake of the fight. he possessed the indomitable courage which makes for heroes and martyrs. We have been told how she has contained with a simple gesture a seething crowd and confronted armed police ready to fire, thanks to her moral superiority and her presence of mind. She had a powerful magnetic influence on the masses. Hostile and noisy audiences have

been reduced by her to silence in a few minutes, only by the spell of her presence.

There is an aspect of her character which endears her more especially to us as Masons : her extraordinary spirit of sacrifice where her ideal is concerned, whatever this may have been. Her whole life has been one long act of sacrifice, so that she could truly render the following testimony of herself : " Looking back today over my life, I see that its keynote-through all the blunders, and the blind mistakes and clumsy follies-has been this longing for sacrifice to something felt as greater than the self. It has been so strong and so persistent that I recognize it now as a tendency brought over from a previous life and dominating the present one; and this is shown by the fact that to follow it is not the act of a deliberate and conscious will, forcing self into submission and giving up with pain something the heart desires, but the following it is a joyous springing forward along the easiest path, the 'sacrifice' being the supremely attractive thing, not to make which would be to deny the deepest longings of the soul and to feel oneself polluted and dishonoured."

(Autobiography)

We notice equally a wonderful spirit of fraternity, even in her early youth. Active service is the thing which attracted her from the beginning, and inspired all her life-work.

But above all she is marked by an intense worship of Truth, of all forms of Truth. While reading her Autobiography one is

struck by the great number of passages where the word " truth " appears under her pen. During the whole of her life she has served what she believed to be the Truth. All her faculties, all her thoughts, all her gifts, were placed by her at the feet of the severest of all mistresses, Truth. To her, she sacrificed everything, without keeping one single for herself: the sweet charm of home life, the joy of bringing up dearly beloved children, the approval of a mother whom she adored, precious friendships, a safe status in life, the good reputation of a woman. At the critical moment, she does not hesitate: "I seemed to hear the voice of Truth," she writes, "ringing over the battlefield, 'Who will go? Who will speak for me?' And I sprang forward with passionate enthusiasm, with the resolute cry: 'Here am I, send me'!..." (Autobiography)

"Here am I, Send me! ... send me to every place where there are rights to claim... for other people, injustice to fight, suffering to alleviate, grief to console, useful work to accomplish.

It is superfluous to insist upon her wonderful oratory. She was one of the greatest orators England has known, able to speak without using one written note, one whose style was so faultless that her stenographers were able to publish their notes with rarely a correction.

Her working power was marvellous, and seems the more wonderful today when most people find they have too much to do. Here is an account of what seems

quite an ordinary day for her. She would arrive in a town at about 05:50 a.m.; preside at a study class at 8; admit new members at 09:30 a.m. and talk to the local Theosophical Lodge. At 1 p.m. a delegation from a few other places; 2 p.m. a parade of Boy Scouts. 4 p.m. a visit to girls school; 4:30 p.m. a meeting of the Order of the Star 6:15 p.m. public lecture; 7:30 a.m. a meeting for students. The next day, she takes the train at 5:30 a.m. and goes through a similar programme. Then a whole day of travel, and the following day a repetition of similar proceedings.

Her long life (she died at the age of 86) was one of uninterrupted crusade of knight, sans peur ni reproche, in favour of weak and the oppressed, whoever they were. Already during her youth she began to battle in defence of women and children, neglected or crushed by iniquitous laws. With a tender and motherly solicitude, she took care of the children who came to school half starving, claiming and organizing for them canteens which were truly an innovation at that time. Being on the board of London schools, she contributed to a higher standard of teaching.

With keen and generous ardour she took up the defence of the unhappy and much-exploited factory girls, bringing into their hard and monotonous life a few rays of light and joy, creating club rooms where they could find some physical and moral comfort.

When she was nineteen, certain acts of

social and political injustice awakened her pity and her interest. With a heart full of compassionate indignation she was present at the iniquitous trial which condemned - to death several unfortunate Irish conspirators. Later in life, when seeking relief from the tempest of moral and religious doubts which nearly swept her away, she went to visit and help the poor and the sick and found so much dreadful suffering that she never forgot the lesson.

She accomplished a marvellous task in India, trying to preserve Indian youth, boys and girls, from the too exclusive occidental influence predominant in the schools, which to her judgment was harmful to the ancient Indian culture, for which she had a deep and sincere attraction. In the numerous schools she founded in India, her memory is still reverenced today. She tried to found the first truly national university based on Indian tradition.

The Scout movement, which quickly took root in the ancient soil of Mother India, had her fervid care. It was really touching to see this white-haired woman, still so full of martial ardour, salute her Scouts with the prescribed salute, with the authority of a chief and the tenderness of a mother. When she received from Lord Baden Powell the supreme distinction of the Silver Wolf, for the great services rendered to Indian Scouting, she certainly received it with satisfaction.

I shun the task of describing her social and political career, which is too much a part of

purely British history. Let us only mention that she has been an ardent and active socialist, at a time when much courage was needed in order to join a vanguard; daring misery, poverty, disgrace and prosecutions. She fought without respite for greater justice in the matter of wages, especially those of women, about whom nobody cared much then, attacking the shameless exploitation of certain groups of beings by other human beings, with all the ardour marking her generous nature, organizing the revolt of the working classes which she always kept within reasonable limits. One of the strikes which she organized is famous in the British annals. At that time it was not easy to arrange for protest meetings. Very often they were held at midnight. Frequently she went there plodding through snow and mud. Or they met very early in the morning, when there was such a dense fog that she could hardly perceive the faces of those who were assembled. She was one of the first instigators of Labour Unions, which, of course, were very badly received in the beginning. Thus she became one of the most popular leaders of the working classes.

Her political career was equally active. She always nobly took up the defence of the weaker and oppressed countries, pleading their causes with fiery indignation. In

particular she consecrated part of her life in defence of India, of a big nation in possession of an ancient and refined culture. She tried to restore to them the pride of their glorious past, to stimulate their sense of dignity and their thirst for freedom, claiming for them that Home Rule which has now become complete Independence. She was a very precious ally, an adversary dreaded by her opponents, on account of her great eloquence, her keen intellect, the irrefutable logic of her mind and her controversial vivacity. Her fame among the Indians oscillated between extreme worship and acclamations on the one side, and bitter rejection or opposition due

to certain extremists who judged her claims to be too timorous. In 1917 she was incarcerated by the Government. This unwise act provoked such an indignant protest through the whole of India that, for fear of worse reactions, she was soon liberated. This liberation became a genuine apotheosis for her. Tens of thousands of Indians hailed her with frenzied enthusiasm. But Fate did not allow her to witness India's Independence, for which she had sacrificed so much.

Her departure has meant for humanity the loss of one of its noblest representatives, one of its bravest champions, one of its most daring pioneers, one of its most audacious light-bringers.



Annie Besant As a Co-Mason

*(The following is taken from an old issue of the Australian journal, *Women's Weekly*, and will be read with interest by our readers.)*

ANNIE BESANT would have been 86, had she lived till the 1st of October 1933. Not only was Annie Besant (who left her physical body on the 20th September 1933) the greatest Theosophist in the world-President of a body of people renowned for their intellectuality-but she was as eminent a Co-Mason as she was a Theosophist. But for her there would probably have been no Co-Masonic Lodges in Australia, and there are at least six in Sydney, which admit men and women on equal terms-real Masonry deriving its Orders from the Grand Lodge of France.

Although "the Craft" does not recognize Co-Masonry in the British Empire, there have yet been some distinguished women Initiates. H. P. Blavatsky, the illustrious forerunner of Annie Besant, had the highest Masonic distinction conferred on her in London in 1877, her

diploma bearing the signatures of John Yarker, 33°, Sovereign Grand Commander; M. Caspari, 33°, Grand Chancellor; and A. D. Lowenstark, 33°, Grand Secretary.

Among the numerous lady Masons in Europe was the famous Mrs. Aldworth (Hon. Elizabeth St. Leger) who surreptitiously witnessed a ceremony of Initiation from behind a big grandfather clock in the Lodge room and in order to preserve the secrets of the Craft was initiated; she subsequently became Master of the Lodge. In some Latin rituals the word "she" is used as well as "he": "When he or she takes the oath."

It was not till 1882 that a world-wide Masonic Order was founded to admit women. The Freethinkers' Lodge meeting at Pecq, near Paris, had espoused the principle of "A free Mason in a free Lodge," and decided to put the principle into

practice by initiating a woman-Mdlle. Maria Deraismes-because they felt her services in feminist activities rendered her a fit candidate for Masonic privileges.

Mdlle. Deraismes was initiated on January 14, 1882, by the Master of the Lodge, Bro. Houbron, 18°. The Grand Lodge of Scottish Symbolical Masonry of France, which had jurisdiction over Pecq, professed horror at the initiation of a woman and suspended the Lodge workings for a time, but subsequently re-admitted the Lodge into full membership.

Ten years later (in 1892) Dr. Georges Martin, a Sovereign Grand Inspector-General, 33°, of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, urged the further admission of women into Masonry. His opinion was shared by other Brethren of high rank in the Grand Lodge of Scottish Symbolical Masonry. Mdlle. Deraismes was elected Master, and on March 14, 1893, she initiated several women in the presence of Dr. Georges Martin. On April 4, a Co-Masonic Grand Lodge was founded, mother of all the Co-Masonic Lodges in the world. Miss Francesca Arundale, sister-in-law of Dr. Georges Martin, was the first English lady member of this Craft (in 1895), and some years later spoke of it to Annie Besant, who was offered initiation by Mdlle. Deraismes, and, feeling that a Masonic movement open to men and women could be made a power for good in the world, went to Paris with a party of friends and was admitted into the three Blue Degrees in Lodge Le Droit Humain, No. 1, Paris. In 1900 the Craft Grand Lodge was raised to the Supreme Council of the Ancient and Accepted

Scottish Rite, with complete Masonic authority for the conferring of all Degrees and administrating in both hemispheres.

Subsequently Annie Besant was created Vice-President of the Supreme Council, and Deputy for Great Britain and its Dependencies, and under her genius the mixed Craft has spread throughout British Dominions the world over.

The first Co-Masonic Lodge was consecrated in London in 1902, Annie Besant being a founding member. Sydney Lodge, No. 404, was founded by seven Freemasons, and held its first meeting on February 24, 1912, Mrs. Kollerstrom being the first initiate, and Miss M. F. Needham the second.

Dr. Besant, when visiting Sydney in 1922, worked every Degree, from the Blue to the 18th, entirely from memory, which is amazing in view of her many activities and the international range of her interests. In lecturing to Lodges she gave a deep interpretation of Masonic symbolism and philosophy.

Dr. Besant 'considered a Masonic Lodge a model of secular government. Discoursing in Chicago, she declared that if we could introduce into our secular government the principles underlying the formation of a Lodge, we should get a democracy worth bearing that name.' Democracy would be no longer then a name for ignorance as it too often is. We should give to our nation that most splendid of all gifts, the gift of making wisdom the mark for those who should be elected to the guidance of the

nation. Then we should be able to bring about that willing subordination, that willing obedience which men and women readily yield to wisdom, and which they refuse to yield merely to an office which has its name and not its reality."

Under the Constitution of the Order of Universal Co-Masonry, Dr. Annie Besant, 33", was First Sovereign Lieutenant Grand Commander, the Most Puissant being obliged to reside in France, but she was the great power in the Order, and historians of the future will write of her as

the greatest Co-Mason of this era. She had several world dominions, and Universal Co-Masonry was but one of them.

"To live is to suffer; to know how to live is to be happy

To speak is to make a noise ; to know how to speak is to make melody

To use is often to abuse ; to know how to use is to enjoy"

-Eliphas Levi

Besant, A. "Annie Besant as a Co-Mason," The Morning Star Journal of the Easter Federation of The British Empire, Vol. X. No. 3, July 1943, pgs: 35-37.



The Beginnings of English Co-Masonry

By C. Jinarajadasa

TILL recently I was under the impression that the first English women to be admitted into Masonry by the Supreme Council of Universal Co-Masonry in Paris were those who went over to Paris to be initiated in the year 1902. The chief of this band was Dr. Annie Besant, but the document which I publish of Madame Maria Martin shows that there were four English ladies, besides Miss Francesca Arundale, who had already been admitted into Co-Masonry.

The reason for Dr. Besant joining Co-Masonry is interesting, and on many occasions she herself has described it. One of the most devoted disciples of Madame H. P. Blavaisky was Mrs. Isabel Cooper-Oakley. After H. P. B.'s death, she became deeply attached to Dr. Besant. Mrs. Cooper-Oakley was profoundly drawn to a personage whom historians have denounced as a charlatan; this was the Comte de St. Germain. She had read much

concerning various mystical movements in the Middle Ages, and her studies showed her that the Comte de St. Germain played a very striking role in certain of the Masonic organizations during the time which preceded the French Revolution. She therefore de-voted herself to historical research and travelled to several libraries of Europe, trying to consult original documents. Her thesis, which summarizes the investigations of years, will be found in her book, *The Comte de St. Germain, the Secret of Kings* (Milan, 1912). A brief synopsis of her thesis is as follows:

The Comte de St. Germain was in reality the elder son of Francis Rakoczi, the last Prince of Transylvania. The attempt of Francis to make his country independent of Austrian domination can be read in the old histories. They narrate that he had two sons who, at his flight when defeated,

were taken to the court of the Austrian Emperor, to be there educated, but also partly to be held as hostages. It is known in history that, after his flight, Francis was in Turkey, surrounded by his small band, and that from there he tried to regain his country. About a year before his death at Rodosto, the elder son who was at Vienna escaped and joined his father. At his father's death, he proclaimed himself Prince of Transylvania; but as a price had been set on his head by the Emperor and as the Church had excommunicated him, matters came to a difficult pass. History then states that this elder son, caught fever and died. There was an official funeral, and the Transylvanian movement for independence came to an end.

But Mrs. Cooper-Oakley holds that the young Prince did not die ; the funeral was a camouflage. She upholds the thesis that the Comte de St. Germain was in fact the young Prince of Transylvania ; since a price had been put on his head, he had to disappear off the stage with a funeral, and pass under another name. When many years afterward he comes into the life of European courts, those who know his real history receive him as one of themselves. One of the mysteries about the Comte de St. Germain is that if he was the impostor and charlatan that he is made out to be, how was it that the King of France and the great nobles treated him as one of themselves ? This can partly be accounted for by the story of his possessing magical powers and the secret of alchemy, etc. But Mrs. Cooper-Oakley shows by documents that in reality his treatment and the

conferring upon him of various secret missions by the French court was due to the fact that the King of France and others knew who he really was, though of course any claim to the kingdom of Transylvania was out of the question.

Madame Blavatsky had mentioned to her disciples that in a previous incarnation she had lived at the time of the French Revolution and had worked with the Comte de St. Germain. It is said in occult tradition that the Comte de St. Germain was given by the Adept Brotherhood a very difficult task to accomplish. This was to change, if possible, the destiny of France so that the French Revolution with all its horrors might be avoided. The Count tried to instil a sense of Brotherhood among the nobles and upper classes of France by reviving various degrees of Masonry. He had many disciples through whom he worked, and one was the well-known Count Cagliostro. Of course, we know that the Comte de St. Germain failed to ward off the Revolution ; the forces on the side of evil were far too great. Mrs. Cooper-Oakley publishes very striking historical material to show something of the secret plotting and counter-plotting in which the Count was the trusted messenger. As a matter of fact, he tried desperately hard to prevent the debacle, though he knew from his occult knowledge that he probably would not succeed.

In connection with this period of history, one day Mrs. Cooper-Oakley talked with Dr. Besant regarding her difficulties of disentangling the various threads of

history. The published documents were not sufficiently explanatory, and Mrs. Cooper-Oakley could not fully make out who were the principal agents of the Comte de St. Germain in his work. That same night the Master himself appeared astrally by Dr. Besant's bedside, and he gave her various names of those persons who were concerned with Him in His efforts to revive Masonry in France. She wrote them down, and among them was the name of Count de Zimsky, who was H. P. B.

It was on this occasion that the Master intimated to Dr. Besant that she might be of help to Him if she joined Masonry. Dr. Besant knew that Masonry did not admit women, and so wondered how it would be possible for her to join that institution. A year or two afterwards, when talking with Miss F. Arundale on the matter she found, much to her surprise, that Miss Arundale was already a Mason in organization which admitted women. Dr. Besant desired at once to join this organization, and the letter which follows is explanatory of the preliminary arrangements.

It should be mentioned that an elder sister of Miss Francesca Arundale was married to a French gentleman. Monsieur Martin (this is not Dr. George Martin who played such a prominent part in French Co-Masonry). Madame Maria Martin, Miss Arundale's sister, was a very prominent feminist, and was the first Grand Secretary of the French Co-Masonic Order. She founded in December, 1891, the feminist paper *Le Journal des Femmes*. Through her, Miss

Arundale was introduced to Co-Masonry, and she became Master Mason on August 16, 1896, and received the 33rd Degree on September 26, 1904.

LETTER OF MME. MARIA MARTIN TO Miss F. ARUNDALE

Maria MARTIN Gr... Chancel.-. Secret... 31, Rue Francoour.

GR.. LOG... SYMB.. ECOSS.. M1XTE DE FRANCE LE DROIT HUMA1N
Or.. de Paris, le

DEAR FANNY,

I have waited to answer your last letter till I had seen, Mme. Georges Martin. I dined with her yesterday, and this is what I am instructed to tell you. You are to initiate Mrs. Besant and George1 also, as well as any other person who may be willing to accompany you to Paris. You may and you should give them all the knowledge contained in the paper I sent you, that is to say, pretty well all except what can only be obtained by practice. When in Paris the Venerable will give them the consecration, and the Dr.2 is of opinion that they shall receive the consecration separately from the other candidates who may be received the same day. But that is of no great importance to you. They would be very glad if you could decide some other person to come with you—the more the better—for you must understand that the great desire of the Ven.. is not so much to receive Mrs. Annie Besant as to form a mixed lodge in London.

You know you are not the only lady Mason in England. I know of four, Mrs. Cobden Sanderson, Miss Gray, Miss Anderson and Mrs. Hutchinson.

The Dr. thinks it would be well for you to see Mrs. Cobden Sanderson (Cobden's daughter). Her address is 7 Hammersmith Terrace. You might write to her first and ask when you could see her. She seemed to me a nice person from the little I saw of her when she was in Paris. She is a subscriber to my paper.

As for Miss Gray I do not know where she is, travelling somewhere for the Temperance Cause—poor good old soul, she was getting [on] in years when I last saw her. I do not know Miss Anderson's address

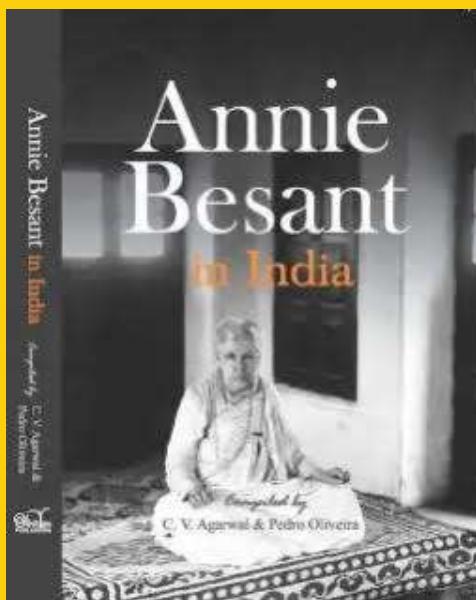
but the Ven. . . thinks she can get it. Mrs. Hutchinson we have quite lost sight of. The most efficient would be Mrs. Cobden Sanderson.

The Ven. . . told me again to write to you how glad she would be to receive you all—you especially she said politely.

You have nothing else to do-no reports, no papers. You see you are founding a new Lodge-doing a little work on your own hook-and i do not imagine you will have any difficulty as now the Supreme Council settles all these matters- and the Sup . . Coun.. Is a very serious and staid body, and understands things.

Your affle. Sister
Maria Martin.'

Jinarajadasa, C. "The Beginnings of English Co-Masonry," The Theosophist Vol. LV No. 4, (January 1934) pgs: 429-434.



For those interested in knowing more about the Life and Work of Annie Besant you can find more information in Pedro Oliveira's latest book about her life in India: *Annie Besant in India*. Orders can be placed at Olive Tree Publishing: otpublishing@bigpond.com Cost: A\$45.00 per copy, plus postage. Payment by PayPal.

The Light of Luxor Magazine

Independent Theosophical Magazine Annie Besant Special Volume 2022

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