

The Hidden Life in Freemasonry  
by C. W. Leadbeater

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The Hidden Life in Freemasonry

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## FOREWORD

IT is once more my privilege to usher into the world, for the helping of the thoughtful, another volume of the series on the hidden side of things written by Bishop Charles W. Leadbeater. True Mason that he is, he is ever trying to spread the Light which he has received, so that it may chase away the darkness of Chaos. To look for the Light, to see the Light, to follow the Light, were duties familiar to all Egyptian Masons, though the darkness in that Ancient Land never approached the density which shrouds the West today.

This book will be welcomed by all Freemasons who feel the beauty of their ancient Rite, and desire to add knowledge to their zeal. The inner History of Masonry is left aside for the present, and the apprentice is led by a trustworthy guide through the labyrinth which protects the central Shrine from careless and idle inquirers. Places that were obscure become illuminated; dark allusions are changed to crystal clarity; walls which seem solid melt away; confidence replaces doubt; glimpses of the goal are caught through rifts in the clouds; and the earth-born mists vanish before the rays of the rising sun. Instead of fragments of half-understood traditions, confused and uninterpreted, we find in our hands a splendid science and a reservoir of power which we can use for the uplifting of the world. We no longer ask: "What is the Great Work? We see "that it is nothing less than a concerted effort to carry out the duty that is laid upon us, as those who possess the Light, to spread that Light abroad through the World, and actually to become fellow-labourers with T.G.A.O.T.U. in His great Plan for the evolution of our Brn".

The detailed explanations of the ceremonies are profoundly interesting and illuminative, and I commend them very heartily to all true Freemasons. Our V . . . I . . . Brother has added a heavy debt of gratitude by this book to the many we already owe him. Let us be honest debtors.

*Adyar*  
ANNIE BESANT  
December 25, 1925

## AUTHOR'S PREFACE

THE Masonic fellowship differs from all other societies in that candidates for membership have to join it blindfold, and cannot receive much information about it until they actually enter its ranks. Even then the majority of Masons usually obtain only the most general idea of the meaning of its ceremonies, and seldom penetrate further than an elementary moral interpretation of its principal symbols. In this book it is my object, while preserving due secrecy upon those matters which must be kept secret, to explain something of the deeper meaning and purpose of Freemasonry, in the hope of arousing among the Brn. a more profound reverence for that of which they are the custodians and a fuller understanding of the mysteries of the Craft.

Although the book is primarily intended for the instruction of members of the Co-Masonic Order, whose desire, as is expressed in their ritual, is to pour the waters of esoteric knowledge into the Masonic vessels, I hope nevertheless that it may appeal to a wider circle, and may perhaps be of use to some of those many Brn. in the masculine Craft who are seeking for a deeper interpretation of Masonic symbolism than is given in the majority of their Lodges, showing them that in the ritual which they know and love so well are enshrined splendid ideals and deep spiritual teachings which are of the most absorbing interest to the student of the inner side of life.

Before we can gain this fuller understanding we must have at least some slight acquaintance with certain facts concerning the world in which we live - a world only half of which we see or understand. Indeed, undignified as the statement sounds, it is quite true that our position resembles very closely that of a caterpillar feeding upon a leaf, whose vision and perception extend but very little beyond the leaf upon which he crawls. How difficult it would be for such a caterpillar to transcend his limitations, to take a wider view, to understand that his leaf is part of a huge tree with millions of such leaves, a tree with a life of its own - a life outlasting a thousand generations of lives such as his; and that tree in turn only a unit in a vast forest of dimensions incalculable to his tiny brain! And if by some unusual development one caterpillar did catch a glimpse of the great world around him and tried to explain his vision to his fellows, how those other caterpillars would disbelieve and ridicule him, how they would adjure him to waste no time on such unprofitable imaginings, but to realize that the one purpose of life is to find a good position on succulent leaf, and to assimilate as much of it as he can!

When later on he becomes a butterfly, his view widens, and he comes into touch with a beauty, a glory and a poetry in life of which he had no conception before. It is the same world, and yet so different, merely because he can see more of it, and move about in it in a new way. Every caterpillar is a potential butterfly; and we have the advantage over these creatures in that we can anticipate the butterfly stage, and so learn much more about our world, come much nearer to the truth, enjoy life much more, and do much more good. We should study the hidden side of every-day life, for in that way we shall get so much more out of it. The same truth applies to higher things - to religion, for example. Religion has always spoken to

mankind of unseen things above - not only far away in the future, but close around us here and now. Our life and what we can make of it largely depend upon how real these unseen things are to us. Whatever we do, we should think always of the unseen consequences of our action. Some of us know how useful that knowledge has been to us in our Church Services; and it is just the same in freemasonry.

Though this vast inner world is unseen by most of us, it is not therefore invisible. As I wrote in *The Science of the Sacraments*:

There are within man faculties of the soul which, if developed, will enable him to perceive this inner world, so that it will become possible for him to explore and to study it precisely as man has explored and studied that part of the world which is within the reach of all. These faculties are the heritage of the whole human race; they will unfold within every one of us as our evolution progresses; but men who are willing to devote themselves to the effort may gain them in advance of the rest, just as a blacksmith's apprentice, specializing in the use of certain muscles, may attain (so far as they are concerned) a development much greater than that of other youths of his age. There are men who have these powers in working order, and are able by their use to obtain a vast amount of most interesting information about the world which most of us as yet cannot see. ... Let it be clearly understood that there is nothing fanciful or unnatural about such sight. It is simply an extension of faculties with which we are all familiar, and to develop it is to make oneself sensitive to vibrations more rapid than those to which our physical senses are normally trained to respond.\* (\*Op. cit., pp. 9, 10.)

It is by the use of those perfectly natural but super-normal faculties that much of the information given in this book has been obtained. Anyone who, having developed such sight, watches a Masonic ceremony, will see that a very great deal more is being done than is expressed in the mere words of the ritual, beautiful and dignified as they often are. Of course, I fully understand that all this may well seem fantastically impossible to those who have not studied the subject at first-hand; I can but affirm that this is a clear and definite reality to me, and that by long and careful research, extending over more than forty years, I am absolutely certain of the existence and reliability of this method of investigation.

It is no new discovery, for it was known to the wise men of old; but, like so much else of the ancient wisdom, it has been forgotten during the darkness of the early Middle Ages, and its value is only gradually being rediscovered; so to many it appears unfamiliar and incredible. We have only to remember how utterly inconceivable the wireless telegraph, the telephone, the aeroplane or even the automobile would have seemed to our great-grandfathers, in order to realize that we should be foolish to reject an idea merely because we have never heard of it before. Only a few years ago the powers of research put at our disposal by the invention and development of the spectroscope were as far beyond popular thought as those of clairvoyance are now. That by it we could discover the chemical constitution and measure the movements of stars thousands of millions of miles away might well have been regarded as the baseless fabric of a dream. May not other discoveries be impending?

Men of high scientific attainments, such as Sir Oliver Lodge, Sir William Crookes, Professor Lombroso, M. Camille Flammarion and the late Professor Myers, who have taken the trouble to inquire into this matter of inner sight, have convinced themselves that this faculty exists; so if there be those among the Brn. to

whom this claim seems ridiculous, I would ask them notwithstanding to read on and see whether the knowledge obtained by a means which is strange to them does not nevertheless supply for obscure or incomprehensible points in our ritual an explanation which commends itself to their reason and common sense. That which gives them a better grasp of the meaning underlying the mysteries of our Craft, and thereby increases their veneration and love for it, cannot be unworthy or absurd. Any student who wishes to know more of this fascinating subject may be referred to a little book entitled *Clairvoyance*, which I wrote some years ago.

I should like strongly to recommend for the perusal of my Brn. Of the Craft two books by Wor. Bro. W. L. Wilmhurst - *The Meaning of Masonry* and *The Masonic Initiation*; I have myself read them with great delight and profit, and have gathered many gems from their pages.

I desire to offer my heartiest thanks to the Rev. Herbrand Williams, M.C., B.A., for his kindness in placing at my disposal his vast stores of Masonic erudition, and for many arduous months of patient and painstaking research; also to the Rev. E. Warner and Mrs. M. R. St. John for the careful drawing of the illustrations, and to Professor Ernest Wood for his untiring assistance and cooperation in every department of the work, without which the production of the book would not have been possible.

C. W. L.

**CHAPTER I**  
INTRODUCTORY

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

THE origins of Freemasonry are lost in the mists of antiquity. Last century there were many who thought that it could be traced no further back than the mediaeval guilds of operative masons, though some regarded these in turn as relics of the Roman Collegia. There may still be some who know no better than that, but all students of the Ancient Mysteries who are also Freemasons are aware that it is along that line that we find our true philosophical ancestry; for there is much in our ceremonies and teachings which could have had no significance for the mere operative mason, though when examined by the light of the knowledge received in the Mysteries it is seen to be pregnant with meaning. Many Masonic writers claim various degrees of antiquity for the Craft, some assigning its foundation to King Solomon, and one at least boldly stating that its wisdom is all that now remains of the divine knowledge which Adam possessed before his fall. There is, however, plenty of evidence less mythical than that, and to that evidence I happen to be able to contribute a fragment of personal experience of a rather unusual kind.

By devoting some years to the effort and many more years to practice, I have been able to develop certain psychic faculties of the kind mentioned in the Foreword, which, among other things, enable me to remember the previous existences through which I have passed. The idea of pre-existence may be new to some of my readers.\* (\*Those who wish to learn more about this most fascinating subject should read *Reincarnation*, by the V. ... Ills ... Bro ... A. Besant, and the chapter on Reincarnation in my *Textbook of Theosophy*.) I do not propose now to advance arguments in its favour, though they exist in abundance, but simply to state that for me, as for many others, it is a fact of personal experience. The only one of those previous lives of mine with which we are here concerned was lived some four thousand years before Christ in the country which we now call Egypt.

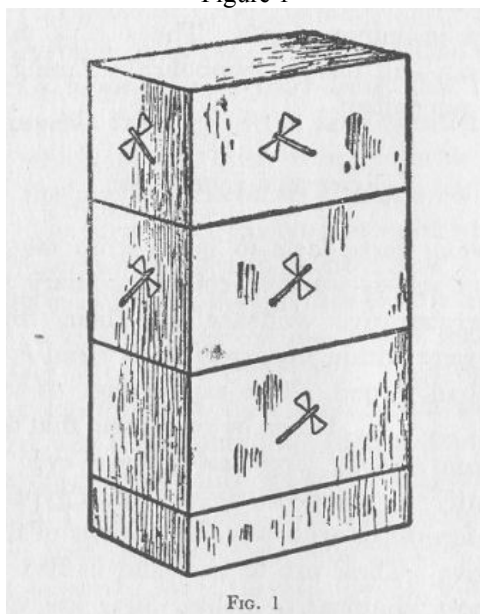
When I was initiated into Freemasonry in this life, my first sight of the Lodge was a great and pleasant surprise, for I found that I was perfectly familiar with all its arrangements, and that they were identical with those which I had known six thousand years ago in the Mysteries of Egypt. I am quite aware that this is a startling statement; I can only say that it is literally true. No mistake is possible; coincidence will not serve as an explanation. The placing of the three chief officers is unusual; the symbols are significant and distinctive, and their combination is peculiar; yet they all belonged to ancient Egypt, and I knew them well there. Almost all the ceremonies are unchanged; there are only a few differences in minor points. The s ... ps taken, the k ... s given - all have a symbolical meaning which I distinctly remember.

## EGYPTIAN EVIDENCES

Knowing these facts to be so from my own experience, I set to work to collect ordinary physical-plane corroborative evidence for them from such books as were within my reach, and found even more than I had hoped. The explanation of the First Degree t ... b ... begins by remarking that the usages and customs among Freemasons have ever borne a near affinity to those of the ancient Egyptians, but does not furnish us with any illustrations of the points of similarity. These are to be found in Bro. Churchward's most illuminative books, *Signs and Symbols of Primordial Man* and *The Arcana of Freemasonry*, also in *The Arcane Schools*, by Bro. John Yarker, and *Freemasonry and the Ancient Gods*, by Bro. J. S. M. Ward. I will proceed to summarize, with grateful acknowledgment, the information derived from these volumes. Masons of various degrees will be able to select from it the features which remind them of their own ceremonies.

Some interesting illustrations have been collected from the wall-pictures of ancient Egypt, and from vignettes on various papyri, chiefly from *The Book of the Dead*, of which there are many recensions. It is clear from these sources that the formation of the temple in Egypt was

Figure 1



a double square, and in the centre were three cubes standing one upon another, forming an altar\* (\*Churchward, *The Arcana of Freemasonry*, p. 43.) upon which were laid their Volumes of the Sacred Lore - not the same as our own, of

course, for ours had not yet been written. Those cubes represented the three Aspects or Persons of the Trinity - Osiris, Isis and Horus - as may be seen from the signs engraved on them (see Fig. 1) which, however, is copied not from an Egyptian altar, but from an illustration in Mr. Evans' book on Crete; but at a later period we find only a double cube.

There were two pillars at the entrance to the temple, and on them were squares representing earth and heaven.\* (\*Ibid., p. 44.) One of them bore a name which signified "in strength" while the name of the other signified "to establish".\* (\*Ibid., p. 121.) This gateway was regarded as leading to the higher world of Amenti, the world where the soul was blended with immortal spirit, and thereafter established for ever; so this was the figure of stability. At the entrance of the Lodge there were always two guards armed with knives; the outer was called the Watcher, the inner was known as the Herald.\* (\*Ibid., p. 47.) The candidate was divested of most of his clothing, and entered with a c ... t ... and h ... w ... He was led to the door of the temple, and there asked who he was. He replied that he was Shu, the "suppliant" or "kneeler," coming in a state of darkness to seek for Light. The door was an equilateral triangle of stone, which turned on a pivot on its own centre.

As the candidate entered he trod on the square, and, in so doing, it was supposed that he was treading on, and leaving, the lower quaternary or personality of man, in order to develop the higher triad, the ego or soul. (In modern Masonry the same idea is expressed in the First Lecture, where it is stated that a Mason comes to the Lodge "to learn to rule and subdue his passions, and to make further progress in Masonry".) He was conducted through long passages, and led round the Lodge seven times; and, after having replied to many questions, he was eventually brought to the centre of the Lodge, and there asked what he required. He was told to answer: "Light". In all his perambulations, he had to begin with the left foot. If the candidate violated his O., so it is stated in *The Book of the Dead*, his throat was cut and his heart torn out. Another degree is mentioned in the papyrus of Nesi-Amsu, where it is said that the body was cut to pieces and burnt to ashes, and these were spread over the face of the waters to the four winds of heaven.

There is in the temple of Khnumu in the island of Elephantine, just off Assouan, a bas-relief which shows us two figures, one of the Pharaoh and the other of a priest wearing the ibis head-dress of Thoth, standing in an attitude strongly suggestive of the f ... p ... of f ..., though not exactly agreeing with our present practice. (See Plate II a.) It is intended to represent an initiation, and the word given is "Maat-heru," which means "true of voice" or "one whose voice must be obeyed".\* (\*Churchward, *The Arcana of Freemasonry*, p. 49.) I have also seen a painting in which four attendants are depicted saluting a Pharaoh with the p ... s ... of an I.M., and the s ... of s ... is often to be found on the monuments, and is characteristic of Horus. The gavel was then made of stone, and was a model of the double-headed axe.

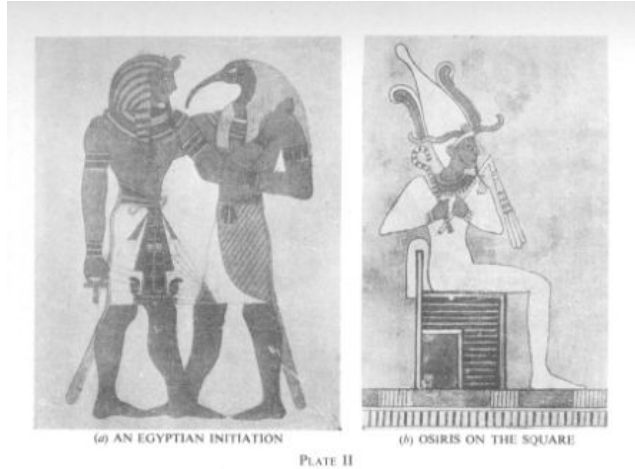
Plate I



In those days the aprons were made of leather, and were triangular. That of the First Degree was pure white, as it is now; but the M.M.'s apron was brilliantly coloured and heavily jewelled, with tassels of gold. (See Plate I.) Our t ... f ... i ... g ... was represented by a cubit of twenty-five inches. The Blazing Star in the centre of the Lodge existed, but it had eight points instead of six or five. It was called "The Star of Dawn" or "The Morning Star," and represented Horus of the Resurrection, who is pictured as bearing it upon his head and as having given it to his followers.

The Masonic square was well-known, and was called *neka*. It is to be found in many temples, and also appears in the great pyramid. It is said that it was used for squaring stones, and also symbolically for squaring conduct, which once more resembles the modern interpretation. To build on the square was to build for ever, according to the teachings of ancient Egypt; and in the Egyptian Hall of Judgment Osiris is seen seated on the square while judging the dead. (See Plate II)

Plate II



Thus the square came to symbolize the foundation of eternal law.\* (\*Churchward, *The Arcana of Freemasonry*, p. 59.)

The Egyptians used the rough and the smooth ashlar with much the same meaning that Masons attach to them today.\* (\*Ibid., p. 60.) A wand surmounted by a dove is represented, not only in ancient Egypt, but also in some of the monuments in Central America, and those who bore it were called “conductors”. It is a curious fact, also, that the descendants of the Nilotic negroes, who emigrated long ago from Egypt to Central Africa, when called to take an oath in a court of law, still do so with a gesture which, still do so with a gesture, were I at liberty to describe it in writing, would be universally recognized by the Craft.

Another point that struck me much on looking at engravings of vignettes in *The Book of the Dead* is that the h ... s ... of the F.C. is depicted perfectly clearly; a group of people is shown as worshipping the setting sun, or paying respect to it, in that attitude.

This *Book of the Dead*, as it has been somewhat unfortunately called, is part of a manual which in its entirety was intended as a kind of guide to the astral plane, containing a number of instructions for the conduct both of the departed and the initiate in the lower regions of that other world. The chapters which have been collected from the various tombs do not give us the whole of that work, but only one section of it, and even that is much corrupted. The mind of the Egyptian seems to have worked along exceedingly formal and orderly lines; he tabulated every conceivable description of entity which a dead man could by any possibility meet, and arranged carefully the special charm or word of power which he considered most certain to vanquish the creature if he should prove hostile, never apparently realizing that it was his own will which did the

work, but attributing his success to some kind of magic. *The Book of the Dead* was originally intended to be kept secret, although in later days certain chapters were written on papyrus and buried with the dead man. As is said in one of the texts: "This Book is the greatest of mysteries. Do not let the eye of anyone look upon it - that were abomination. *The Book of the Master of the Secret House* is its name."\* (\*W. Marsham Adams, *The Book of the Master*, p. 96.)

In ancient Egypt they recognized seven souls, or life-forces, coming forth from the Most High. Students of Eastern philosophy call them the primordial seven, and they are mentioned in *The Book of Dzyan*.\* (\*See *The Secret Doctrine*, by H. P. Blavatsky.) Six of these were prehuman; the seventh was our humanity, and was brought forth from the virgin Neith. The symbol attached to that bringing forth was that of the pelican, who was fabled to draw blood from her own breast in order to feed her young; this later became a prominent symbol in the Rosicrucian philosophy, which seems to have been derived largely from Egyptian teaching. We read in Egyptian hieroglyphics of "the One and the Four," referring to Horus and his four Brothers. Of that we also read in *The Stanzas of Dzyan*; and another expression common to both is "The One from the Egg". In Egypt the egg was the symbol for the setting sun, which is often seen in that shape when about to touch the horizon. That egg passed into the underworld, and was hatched there, and out of it came the young sun the next morning, rising in his strength, which was called "the flame born of a flame". All this bore a deeply mystical significance, which was explained in the Mysteries.

When Osiris died, Isis and Nephthys - in turn tried to raise him, but it proved a failure; then Anubis attempted it and succeeded, and Osiris returned to the world with the secrets of Amenti - a significant statement which seems to suggest that the secrets which we possess are closely connected with the underworld and the life after death.

These are some of the most striking of the evidences which I have been able to collect; and there are others which may not be written. I feel that many more can probably be found, but even these, when taken together, make any theory of coincidence impossible. There is no doubt that this to which we have the honour to belong today is the same fraternity which I knew six thousand years ago, and it can indeed be carried back to a far greater antiquity still. Bro. Churchward claims that some of the signs are six hundred thousand years old; that is quite likely to be true, for the world is very ancient, and assuredly Freemasonry has one of the very oldest rituals existing. We must of course admit that the mere appearance of one of our symbols does not necessarily involve the existence of a Lodge, but at least it shows that, even so long ago as that, men were thinking along somewhat the same lines, and trying to express their thoughts in the same language of symbol that we employ today.

## PRESERVATION OF RITUALS AND SYMBOLS

That the rituals and symbols should have been preserved to us with so wonderfully little alteration is surely a marvellous thing; it would be inexplicable but for the fact that the Great Powers behind evolution have taken an interest in the matter, and gradually brought people back to the true lines when they had swerved somewhat away from them. This business was always in the hands of the Chohan of the Seventh Ray, for that is the ray most especially connected with ceremonial of all kinds, and its Head was always the supreme Hierophant of the Mysteries of ancient Egypt. The present holder of that office is that Master of the Wisdom of whom we often speak as the Comte de S. Germain, because He appeared under that title in the eighteenth century. He is also sometimes called Prince Rakoczi, as He is the last survivor of that royal house. Exactly when He was appointed to the Headship of the Ceremonial Ray I do not know, but He took a keen interest in Freemasonry as early as the third century A.D.

We find him at that period as Albanus, a man of noble Roman family, born at the town of Verulam in England. As a young man he went to Rome, joined the army there, and achieved considerable distinction in it. He served in Rome for some seven years at any rate, perhaps longer than that. It was there that he was initiated into Freemasonry, and also became a proficient in the Mithraic Mysteries, which were so closely associated with it.

After this time in Rome he returned to his birthplace in England, and was appointed governor of the fortress there. He also held the position of "the Master of the Works", whatever that may have meant; he certainly superintended the repairs and the general work in the fortress at Verulam, and he was at the same time the Imperial Paymaster. The story goes that the workmen were treated as slaves and wretchedly paid, but that S. Alban (as he was afterwards called) introduced Freemasonry and changed all that, securing for them better wages and greatly improved conditions generally. Many of our Brn. must have heard of the Watson MS of 1687. In that a good deal is said about S. Albans work for the Craft, and it is specially mentioned that he brought from France certain ancient charges which are practically identical with those in use at the present time. He was beheaded in the persecution by the Emperor Diocletian in the year 303, and the great abbey of S. Alban was built over his remains some five hundred years later.

In the year 411 he was born in Constantinople and received the name of Proclus - a name which in after life he was destined to make famous. He was one of the last great exponents of Neo-Platonism, and his influence overshadowed to a great extent the medieval Christian Church. After that there is a gap in his list of incarnations, as to which at present we know nothing. We find him reborn in the year 1211, and in that life he was Roger Bacon, a Franciscan friar, who was a reformer both of the theology and the science of his day. In 1375 came his birth as Christian Rosenkreutz. That also was an incarnation of considerable importance, for in it he founded the secret society of

the Rosicrucians. He seems some fifty years later, or a little more than that, to have used the body of Hunyadi Janos, an eminent Hungarian soldier and leader. Also we are told that about 1500 he had a life as the monk Robertus, somewhere in middle Europe. We know practically nothing about that, as to what he did or in what way he distinguished himself.

After that comes one of the greatest of his births, for in the year 1561 he was born as Francis Bacon. Of that great man we hear in history little that is true and a great deal that is false. The real facts of his life are gradually becoming known, largely by means of a cipher story which he wrote secretly in the many works which he published. That story is of entrancing interest, but it does not concern us here. A sketch of it may be found in my book *The Hidden Side of Christian Festivals*, from which I am epitomizing this account.\* (\*Op. cit., p. 303.)

A century later we are told that he took birth as Jozsef Rakoczi, a prince of Transylvania. We find him mentioned in the encyclopedias, but not much information is given. After that considerable mystery surrounds his movements. He seems to have travelled about Europe, and he turns up at intervals, but we have little definite knowledge about him. He was the Comte de S. Germain at the time of the French Revolution, and worked much with Madame Blavatsky, who was at that period in incarnation under the name of Père Joseph. He also appears to have disguised himself as Baron Hompesch, who was the last of the Knights of St. John of Malta, the man who arranged the transfer of the island of Malta to the English. This great saint and teacher still lives, and His present body has no appearance of great age. I myself met Him physically in Rome in 1901, and had a long conversation with Him.

In Co-Masonry we refer to Him as the Head of all True Freemasons throughout the world (abbreviated as the H.O.A.T.F.) and in some of our Lodges His portrait is placed in the east, above the chair of the R.W.M., and just beneath the Star of Initiation; others place it in the north, above an empty chair. Upon His recognition and assent as Head of the Seventh Ray the validity of all rites and degrees depends. He often selects pupils from among the Brn. of the Masonic Order, and prepares those who have fitted themselves in the lower mysteries of Masonry for the true Mysteries of the Great White Lodge, of which our Masonic initiations, splendid though they be, are but faint reflections, for Masonry has ever been one of the gates through which that White Lodge might be reached. Today but few of His Masons acknowledge Him as their Sovereign Grand Master, yet the possibility of such discipleship has ever been recognized in the traditions of the Order. It is said in an ancient catechism of masculine Masonry:

*Q.* As a Mason whence come you?

*A.* From the W . . . t.

*Q.* Whither directing your course?

A. To the E . . . t.

Q. What inducement have you to leave the W . . . t and go to the E . . . t?

A. To seek a Master, and from Him to gain instruction.

Fortunately our ancestors have recognized the importance of handing down the working unchanged. Some few points have been dropped during that vast lapse of time; a few others have been slightly modified; but they are marvellously few. The charges have become longer, and the non-officials take less part in the work than they used to do; in the old days they constantly chanted short versicles of praise or exhortation, and each one of them understood himself to be filling a definite position, to be a necessary wheel in the great machine.

From this knowledge several points emerge. It is noteworthy that the Masonic ceremonies, which have so long been supposed to be rather in opposition to the received religion of the country, are seen to be themselves a relic of the most sacred part of a great ancient religion. Like every product of these ancient and elaborately perfected systems, these rites are full of meaning, or rather of meanings; for in Egypt we attributed to them a fourfold signification. Since every detail is thus full of import, it is obvious that nothing should ever be changed without the greatest care, and only then by those who know its full intent, so that the symbology of the whole may not be spoiled.

#### THE EGYPTIAN OUTLOOK

It is exceedingly difficult to explain to twentieth century readers all that this work meant to us in the sunny land of Khem; but I will try to describe the four layers of interpretation as they were taught when I myself lived there.

The first idea of its meaning was that it conveyed to us and symbolized in action the way in which the Great Architect had constructed the universe - that in the movements made and in the plan of the Lodge were enshrined some of the great principles on which that universe had been built. The vortical movement in the censuring, the raising and lowering of the columns, the cross, the anchor and the cup upon the ladder of evolution - all these things and many more we interpreted in that way. The different degrees penetrated further and further into the knowledge of His methods and of the principles upon which He works. For we not only held that He worked in the past, but that He is working now, that His universe is an active expression of Him. In those days, books filled a far less prominent place in our lives than they do now, and it was considered that to record knowledge in a series of appropriate and suggestive actions made a more powerful appeal to a man's mind, and established that knowledge better in memory, than to read it from a book. We are, therefore, preserving by our unvarying actions the memory of certain facts and laws in nature.

Because that is so, and because the laws of the universe must be universal in their application and must act down here as well as above, we held that the Great Architect expected from us a life in accordance with the law which He had

made. The square was to be applied literally to stones and buildings, but symbolically to man's conduct, and man must arrange his life in agreement with what obviously followed from these considerations; therefore the strictest probity was demanded, and a high level of purity, physical, emotional and mental. Perfect rectitude and justice were required, and yet at the same time loving-kindness and gentleness, and in all cases "doing unto others what ye would that they should do unto you." So Masonry is indeed "a system of morality veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols," but it is a system based not on an alleged commandment, "Thus saith the Lord," but on definite facts and laws in nature which cannot be doubted.

The work is a preparation for death, and for what follows it. The two pillars B. and J. were supposed to stand at the entrance to the other world, and the various experiences through which the candidate passed were intended to symbolize those which would come to him when he passed out of this physical world into the next stage. There is a vast amount of information about the life after death to be derived from an intelligent consideration of Masonic ceremonies, and through constantly practising them these worlds will become really familiar to us; so that when we shall pass beyond the grave, no longer in figurative death, we shall feel ourselves quite at home in repeating once more what we have so often enacted in symbol within the Lodge. Above all, it is emphasized that the same laws hold good on the other side of the grave as on this, that in both states we are equally in the presence of God, and that where that holy Name is invoked there can be no cause for fear.

The fourth intention is the hardest of all to explain. To make you understand that, I must try to take you back, if I can, into the atmosphere of old Egypt, and to the attitude that religious men held there. I do not know whether it is possible to reconstruct that in these modern days, which are so hopelessly, so fundamentally different.

The religion which we know best at the present day is intensely individualistic; the great central objective put before most Christians is that of saving their own souls. That duty is represented to be of primary importance. Can you picture to yourselves a religion, just as much a religion in every way, in every respect as earnest, as fervid, as real, from which that idea was entirely absent, to which it would have been utterly inconceivable? Can you think, as a beginning, of a condition of mind in which no one feared anything excepting wrong, and its possible results in delaying unfoldment; in which men looked forward with perfect certainty to their progress after death, because they knew all about it; in which their one desire was not for salvation but for advancement in evolution, because such advancement brought them greater power to do effectively the hidden work which God expected of them?

I am not suggesting that every one in ancient Egypt was altruistic, any more than are all the people in modern England. But I do say that the country was permeated with joy and fearlessness so far as its religious ideas were concerned, and that every one who by any stretch of courtesy could be described

as a religious man was occupied not with thoughts of his personal salvation, but with the desire to be a useful agent of the divine Power.

The outer religion of ancient Egypt - the official religion in which everyone took part, from the King to the slave - was one of the most splendid that have ever been known to man. Gorgeous processions perambulating avenues miles in length, amid pillars so stupendous that they seemed scarcely human work, stately boats in a medley of rainbow colours sweeping majestically down the placid Nile, music triumphant or plaintive, but always thrilling - how shall I describe something so absolutely without parallel in our puny modern times? The common dress of all classes in Egypt was white; but in contradistinction their religious processions were masses of splendid, glowing colour, the priests wearing vestments of crimson and a gorgeous blue supposed to represent the blue of the sky, and many other brilliant colours also. The life of ancient Egypt, as indeed of modern Egypt, centred round the river Nile, slow-flowing and majestic, and richly decorated barges were used for all purposes of transit, and also for the celebration of religious festivals. On these the priests were arranged in certain symbolical figures, standing or sitting; and all wore the colours appropriate to the particular aspect of the Deity which they symbolized.

Not only were solemn sacrifices offered to the gods upon these barges at altars wonderfully adorned with flowers and precious embroideries, sometimes built up by stages to a hundred feet or more in the air; but living pictures or scenes were also enacted upon them, having a symbolical meaning connected with the festival which was being celebrated. In such ways was represented the judgment of the dead, with the weighing of the heart by Anubis against the feather of Maat, the characters of Anubis and Thoth being played by priests who wore the appropriate masks. I remember also a very gruesome performance of the dismemberment of Osiris, in which His body was cut into pieces and then put together again - not the body of a real person, of course, but none the less very realistically enacted. These splendid processions swept down the river between the thronging multitudes of worshippers, shedding the benediction of the gods as they passed by, and evoking tremendous enthusiasm and devotion in the people.

The ancient Egyptians have often been accused of polytheism, but in reality they were no more guilty of the charge than are the Hindus. All men knew and worshipped the One God, Amen-Ra, the "One without a Second", the centre of whose manifestation on the physical plane is the sun; but they worshipped Him under different aspects and through different channels. In one of the hymns addressed to Him it was said:

The gods adore Thee, They greet Thee, O Thou the One Dark Truth, the Heart of Silence, the Hidden Mystery, the Inner God seated within the shrine, Thou Producer of Beings, Thou the One Self. We adore the souls that are emanated from Thee, that share Thy Being, that are Thyself. O Thou that art hidden, yet everywhere manifest, we worship Thee in greeting each God-soul that cometh forth from Thee and liveth in us.

The “gods” were not considered to be equal with God, but rather to have attained union with Him at various levels, and therefore to be channels of His infinite power to mankind.

The cult of the gods was in reality but little different from the cult of Angels and Saints in the Catholic Church. Just as Christians look to St. Michael and to Our Lady as real personages and hold festivals in their honour, so in ancient Egypt adoration was offered to Isis and Osiris, and to other deities likewise. In the ultimate these august names referred to Aspects of the Godhead, Amen-Ra, for the Trinity in Egypt was represented by Father, Mother, Son - Osiris, Isis and Horus instead of the Christian presentation of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; but below that divine level there were then, as there are now, great Beings in whom the Ideal was embodied, who acted as representatives and as channels of God’s threefold power and grace to man. Furthermore there are hierarchies of Angels belonging to these different lines, just as there are hierarchies of Angels who follow the leadership of St. Michael and of Our Lady - each of whom is a channel and representative of his Order according to the level of his development. The celebration of the ritual of Isis, for instance, always attracted her attention, and invoked the presence of Angels of Her Order, who acted as channels of the divine blessing in that wondrous aspect of the Hidden Truth which she represented.

#### THE HIDDEN YORK

No doubt the really religious man took his part in all the outward pomp which I have described; but what he prized far above all its amazing magnificence was his membership in some Lodge of the sacred Mysteries - a Lodge which devoted itself with reverent enthusiasm to the hidden work which was the principal activity of this noble religion. It is of this hidden side of the Egyptian cult, not of its outer glories, that Freemasonry is a relic, and the ritual which is preserved in it is a part of that of the Mysteries. To explain what this hidden work was, let us draw a parallel from a more modern method of producing a somewhat similar result.

The Christian plan for spreading abroad the divine power or grace is principally by means of the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, commonly called by our Roman brethren the Mass. We must not think of that grace as a sort of poetical expression, or as in the least degree vague and cloudy; we are dealing with a force as definite as electricity - a spiritual power which is spread abroad over the people in certain ways, which leaves its own effect behind it, and needs its own vehicles, just as electricity needs its appropriate machinery.

It is possible by clairvoyance to watch the action of that force, to see how the service of the Eucharist builds up a thought-form, through which that force is distributed by the priest with the aid of the Angel invoked for that purpose. It has been so arranged that the attitude of the priest, his knowledge - even his character - does not in any way interfere with the due effect of the Sacrament.\* (\*See No. 26 of the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England in *The Book*

*of Common Prayer.*) There is, in any case, an irreducible minimum which is transmitted. So long as he performs the prescribed ceremonies the result is achieved.\* (\*See *The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, by T. Waterworth, p. 55 (Session VII, Canon xii)) If he is also a devout man, those who receive the Sacrament at his hands have the additional benefit of a share in his love and devotion, but that in no way affects the value of the Sacrament itself; whatever his failings, the divine strength is outpoured upon the people.

The old Egyptian religion had the same idea of pouring out spiritual force upon all its people, but its method was altogether different. The Christian magic can be performed by the priest alone, and may even be done quite mechanically; but the intelligent assistance of the laity greatly increases its power and the amount of force which can be outpoured. The Egyptian plan, however, positively required the earnest and intelligent co-operation of a considerable number of people. It was, therefore, much more difficult to achieve perfectly, but when thoroughly done it was far more powerful, and covered a much wider range of country. The Christian scheme needs a vast number of churches dotted all over the land; the Egyptian plan required only the action of a few Grand Lodges established in the principal cities in order to flood the whole kingdom with the Hidden Light - the work of the ordinary Lodges being regarded as subsidiary to these, and rather as a training ground for membership in the Grand Lodges.

The central doctrine of the religion of the ancient Egyptians was that the divine power dwelt in every man, even the lowest and most degraded, and they called that power "The Hidden Light". They held that through that Light, which existed in all, men could always be reached and helped, and that it was their business to find that Light within every one, however unpromising, and to strengthen it. The very motto of the Pharaoh was "Look for the Light," implying that his supreme duty as King was to look for that Hidden Light in every man around him, and strive to bring it forth into fuller manifestation.

The Egyptians held that this divine spark, which exists in every one, could most effectively be fanned into flame by transmuting and bringing down to the three lower worlds the tremendous spiritual force which is the life of the higher planes, and then pouring it out over the country as has been described. Knowing that spiritual force to be but another manifestation of the manifold power of God, they gave to it also the name of the Hidden Light; and from this double use of the term confusion sometimes arises. They fully recognized that such a downpour of divine grace could be evoked only by a supreme effort of devotion on their part; and the making of such an effort, together with the provision of suitable machinery for spreading the force when it came, was a great part of the hidden work to which the noblest of the Egyptians devoted so much of their time and energy; and this was the fourth of the objects intended to be served by the sacred and secret ritual, of which that of Masonry is a relic.

## THE EGYPTIAN RACE

The Egyptian race of the period of which I have been speaking was of mixed blood, but dominantly Aryan. Our researches show that about 13,500 B.C. a band of men and women belonging to the highest classes of the great South Indian empire which then existed set out on an expedition to Egypt, by way of Ceylon, having been directed to do so by the Manu. The ruling race in Egypt in those days was a branch of what has been called in Theosophical books the Toltec sub-race - a branch probably identical with that Cro-Magnon race which inhabited Europe and Africa somewhere about 25,000 B.C. In *Ancient Types of Man*\* (\*Op. cit., p. 71.) Sir Arthur Keith remarks that this race was mentally and physically one of the finest that the world has ever seen. Broca has noted that the brain content of the skull of the Cro-Magnon woman surpasses that of the average male of today. The average height of the men of this race was six feet one and a half inches; the shoulders were exceedingly broad and the arms short as compared with the legs; the nose was thin but prominent, the cheek-bones high, and the chin massive.

It happened that the King or Pharaoh on the throne at the time when the expedition from South India arrived had a daughter but no son, his wife having died in child-birth. The newcomers were received with great cordiality by both King and High-Priest, and intermarriage with the strangers became a coveted honour in the Egyptian families, especially as the King had approved the marriage of his daughter with the leader of the band, who was a Prince of India.

In a few generations the Aryan blood had tinged the entire Egyptian nobility, and this produced the type, well known from the monuments, which had Aryan features, but the Toltec colouring. After many centuries there came a ruler who was influenced by a foreign princess, whom he had espoused, to cast aside the Aryan traditions and establish lower forms of worship; but the clan drew together and, by strictly marrying only among themselves, preserved the old customs and religion as well as their purity of race. Nearly four thousand years after the arrival of the Indians, there arose in Egypt certain prophets who foretold a great flood, so the clan in a body took ship across the Red Sea and found a refuge among the mountains of Arabia.

In 9,564 B.C. the prophecy was fulfilled; the island of Poseidonis sank beneath the Atlantic Ocean in the deluge mentioned in the *Timaeus* of Plato; at the same time the land rose and made the Sahara Desert where a shallow sea had been before, and a vast tidal wave swept over Egypt, so that almost its entire population was destroyed. Even when everything settled down, the country was a wilderness, bounded on the west no longer by a peaceful sea but by a vast salt swamp, which as the centuries rolled on dried into an inhospitable desert. Of all the glories of Egypt there remained only the pyramids towering in lonely desolation - a state of things which endured for fifteen hundred years before the clan returned from its mountain refuge, grown into a great nation.

But long before this half-savage tribes had ventured into the land, fighting their primitive battles on the banks of the great river which had once borne the

argosies of a mighty civilization, and was yet to witness a revival of those ancient glories, and to mirror the stately temples of Osiris and Amen-Ra. The first of the several races that entered the country was a negroid people from Central Africa; they had, however, been displaced by various others before the Aryo-Egyptians returned from Arabia, settled near Abydos, and gradually in a peaceful manner became once more the dominant power. Two thousand four hundred years later the Manu (under the name of Menes) incarnated, united the whole of Egypt under one rule, and founded at the same time the first dynasty and his great city of Memphis. This empire had already flourished for more than a millennium and a half before the reign of Rameses the Great, who was himself the Master of one of the principal Lodges at the time when I had the Honour to belong to it.

#### THE GRAND LODGES

During the time when I was living in Egypt, the government of the country was directed from within the organization of the Mysteries. Egypt was divided into forty-two nomes or counties, and the nomarch or ruler of the county was the Master of the principal Lodge of the nome. There was a Grand Lodge - not to be confused with the three Grand Lodges of Amen to be described later - which consisted of all the nomarchs, and of which the Grand Master was the Pharaoh. This Grand Lodge was convened at Memphis, and worked a different ritual from those of the lower grades. It was to this body that the Pharaoh announced his decrees; for although his power in the land was almost absolute, yet before any serious decision was made he always took counsel with his nomarchs - and, judging by their decisions, they were a very capable body of men. Lesser matters were settled by an executive committee of this Lodge over which the Pharaoh presided; but important steps were always discussed in Grand Lodge itself. Thus the Mysteries entered into political as well as into religious life in the old days; and politics were much less selfish in consequence.

There were in Egypt in those days three Grand Lodges of Amen, each of which was strictly limited to forty members, every one of whom was a necessary part of the machine. Including the officers, whose business was the recitation of the Office and the magnetization of the Lodge, each member was the representative of a particular quality. One was called the Knight of Love, another the Knight of Truth, another the Knight of Perseverance, and so on; and each was supposed to become a specialist in thinking and expressing the quality assigned to him. The idea was that the forty qualities, thus expressed through the Lodge as a whole, would make the character of a perfect man, a kind of heavenly man, through whom the power behind could be poured out upon the whole country.

These three Grand Lodges worked three distinct types of Masonry, of which only one has come down to us in the twentieth century. The Master of the first Grand Lodge represented wisdom, and his two Wardens strength and beauty, as in our Lodges today. The predominant power outpoured was that

wisdom which is perfect love, the quality that is indeed most needed in the world at the present time. The Master of the second Grand Lodge represented strength, and his Wardens wisdom and beauty, and the strength of the First Aspect of the Trinity was the predominant quality of the Lodge. The Master of the third Grand Lodge typified beauty, and the wisdom and the strength were made subordinate to that third aspect of the Hidden Light.

As every one present had to bear his part in building the form, exact co-operation and perfect harmony were absolutely necessary, and only people who could forget themselves entirely in the great work were selected from the ordinary Lodges to become members of these three Grand Lodges, whose power was such that their influence covered the entire country. The slightest flaw in the character of one of the forty members would have seriously weakened the form through which all the work was being done. It is perhaps a relic of this paramount necessity which dictates our present regulation that any Brn. who are not in perfect harmony with each other should not put on their aprons until they have settled their differences. In ancient Egypt there was an intensity of brotherly feeling between the members of a Lodge which is probably rarely attained now; they felt themselves bound together by the holiest of ties, not only as parts of the same machine, but actually as fellow-workers with God Himself.

The ritual worked by the Grand Lodges was known as *The Building of the Temple of Amen*; a translation of its actual wording will be given in another part of this book. It was indeed one of the most splendid and powerful sacraments known to man. It was celebrated for thousands of years, during which Egypt was a mighty land, but a time came when the egos most advanced in evolution began to seek incarnation in new nations, in which, as in different classes in the world-school, they might learn new lessons. Then this portion of the Egyptian Mysteries fell into abeyance, while the Egyptian civilization grew degenerate and formalized as it became a theatre for the activities of less evolved men.

#### THE ORDINARY LODGES

There were also dotted all about the country numerous other Lodges, which more closely resembled those of modern times. Their work was much more varied than that of the three Grand Lodges, and they met more frequently, for to them was entrusted the work of preparing their members for higher things, and giving them a liberal education. Their purpose was the same as that of the Mysteries everywhere, to provide a definite system of culture and education for adults, a thing which is not done on a large and public scale in our present day, when the rather curious belief is widely spread that education ends with school or college. The Mysteries were the great public institutions, centres of national and religious life, to which people of the better classes flocked in thousands, and they did their work well, for one who had passed through their degrees - a process of many years - thereby became what we should now call a highly educated and cultured man or woman, with, in addition to his knowledge about