

# LIGHT INVISIBLE

BY VINDEX

- WHO IS MR. HANNAH?
- WHAT IS THE CONSPIRACY BEHIND DARKNESS VISIBLE?
- WHAT IS THE REAL TRUTH ABOUT FREEMASONRY?

An unjustified and unprincipled attack has been launched against an ancient and honourable society long known for its distinguished membership and charitable activities.

Freemasons usually treat these sporadic outbursts with the contemptuous silence which they deserve. *Darkness Visible*, however, has achieved considerable notoriety, and threatens to cause a rift between the Masonic Brotherhood and organized religion which would be disastrous to the moral welfare of the nation.

*Light Invisible* gives a factual, point-by-point refutation to these baseless charges and fallacious arguments. The author, with profound Masonic knowledge and insight as well as loyalty to his Church, places the whole controversy in its true perspective, and shows up the sinister designs and unworthy motives which prompted the attack.

*Light Invisible* is a "must" for every Mason who wants a clear, logical, and irrefutable answer to the slanders that have been circulated; indeed every Mason who has been distressed or puzzled as to why such an attack was ever made has a clear duty to himself and to the Craft to read it.

*Light Invisible* should be read by every fair-minded non-Mason who wants to get at the facts behind this sinister and shabby conspiracy.

*Light Invisible* is an overwhelming book, brilliantly and clearly written, which will put a triumphant end to paltry attacks on the craft for at least a generation, if not for all time.

**THE REGENCY PRESS, 43, NEW OXFORD STREET,  
LONDON, W.C.1.  
COVent Garden 3044**

# LIGHT INVISIBLE

LIGHT

INVISIBLE

VINDEX

THE  
FREEMASONS  
ANSWER TO  
DARKNESS  
VISIBLE

by "VINDEX"

THE FREEMASONS' ANSWER TO  
DARKNESS VISIBLE

Regency  
Press  
*The Regency Press.*

*Light Invisible* will be greeted with enthusiasm and relief by everyone who has been puzzled and disturbed by recent unwar-  
ranted attacks on Freemasonry.

The author brings to his task a profound insight and know-  
ledge both of his Craft and of  
The Church of England, and has  
written an overwhelming and  
unanswerable refutation to the  
objections which a certain  
Clergyman has alleged against  
Masonry.

More than this, he reveals the  
true motive behind the attack, a  
conspiracy within The Church of  
England to sabotage the efforts of  
the Archbishop of Canterbury  
towards the re-union of Christen-  
dom.

Not only every Mason, but  
every man of good-will, will be  
grateful for the prompt appear-  
ance of this timely publication.

THE REGENCY PRESS,  
43, NEW OXFORD ST.,  
LONDON, W.C.1.

**10/6**  
Net

# LIGHT INVISIBLE

it published in 1952  
by  
The Regency Press  
47 Oxford Street, W.1.

## THE FREEMASON'S ANSWER

ed in Great Britain  
by  
The Regency Press  
Street, London, W.C.2

## DARKNESS VISIBLE

by  
"Vindex"

Copyright  
Rights Reserved

LONDON  
THE REGENCY PRESS

# LIGHT INVISIBLE

First published in 1952

by

The Regency Press

43, New Oxford Street, W.1.

# THE FREEMASON'S ANSWER

to

# DARKNESS VISIBLE

by

# “Vindex”

Printed in Great Britain

by

The Reynard Press

Flitcroft Street, London, W.C.2

*Copyright*

*All Rights Reserved*

LONDON

THE REGENCY PRESS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Chapter</i>		
I	A MASON STRIKES BACK .....	11
II	A MASON SURVEYS THE FIELD .....	15
III	AN APPEAL FOR ACTION .....	20
IV	WHAT IS FREEMASONRY? .....	22
V	THE VITALITY OF FREEMASONRY .....	33
VI	A MASON LOOKS TO LAMBETH .....	39
VII	A MASON'S FAITH .....	44
VIII	THE THEOLOGY OF EXCLUSIVENESS .....	54
IX	THE VALUE OF SYMBOLISM .....	66
X	THE MASON AND THE BIBLE .....	74
XI	THE MASON AND HIS OATH .....	80
XII	A MASON LOOKS TO HIS LANDMARKS .....	84
XIII	A MASON'S CHARITY .....	88
XIV	A MASON IN HIS PARISH .....	96
XV	CATHOLICS AND FREEMASONRY .....	110
XVI	PROTESTANTS AND FREEMASONRY .....	113
XVII	THE MASON IN BUSINESS .....	116
XVIII	THE MASON IN POLITICS .....	121
XIX	THE MASON AND THE JEW .....	124
XX	A MASON LOOKS AT SECURITY .....	128
XXI	FREEMASONRY THROUGHOUT THE WORLD... ..	133
XXII	CONCLUSION .....	144

To a Mother of Masons—  
MY MOTHER LODGE

*Appendix*

A	<i>The Nature of Freemasonry</i> (Dr. H. S. Box) .....	147
B	THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY'S BOSTON SPEECH .....	153
C	WHAT CRITICS HAVE SAID .....	155

## A MASON STRIKES BACK.

*All roads that lead to God are good;  
 What matters it, your faith or mine?  
 Both centres at the goal divine  
 Of Love's eternal brotherhood.*

*A thousand creeds have come and gone,  
 But what is that to you or me?  
 Creeds are but branches of a tree,  
 The root of love lives on and on.*

*Though branch by branch proves withered wood,  
 The root is warm with precious wine:  
 Then, keep your faith and leave me mine:  
 All roads that lead to God are good.*

Ella Wheeler Wilcox

A VENOMOUS and utterly unprincipled attack has been insidiously launched against one of the noblest and most ancient institutions of our land. The slow poison of slander has been poured forth to belittle and besmirch honourable men (whose very honour prevents them from replying in full detail), in the eyes of those who are obviously quite incapable of knowing the true facts. *Darkness Visible* is, therefore, more than preposterous rubbish which can be ignored with dignified silence. It is cowardly and felonious; its author, not very convincingly disguising himself as an angel of light, is not only trying with truly Satanic subtlety to besmirch and deceive, but, like the Father of Lies in every generation, to sow seeds of discord and mistrust.

Without honour, without decency, but with diabolical cunning, *Darkness Visible* is a sinister and disruptive book. It publishes solemn and sacred dishonestly discovered secrets which it is utterly forbidden to disclose. It is like stripping a mother naked, and exposing her to the jeers of the profane multitude. *Darkness Visible* distorts, perverts, and seeks malevolently and spitefully to undermine by deliberate misrepresentation a brotherhood in which the highest and most honourable in the land are proud to claim membership. It is an attempt to torpedo the finest bulwark of our civilization and democratic way of life.

The anger and bewilderment that have been aroused by this attack are indeed considerable. Should Mr. Hannah be taken seriously by the world outside Freemasonry, and by the Churches in particular, the position might become dangerous and explosive, for there is a degree of provocation which cannot be exceeded without fear of righteous reprisals. Freemasonry, solidly founded on the Rock of Ages, the Rock of Truth eternal and divine, has indeed nothing to fear from the paltry tommy-rot spewed forth in *Darkness Visible*, but should the Church of England make herself ridiculous by "investigating" (in plain English, snooping) or by taking any hostile steps, the reprisals might be incalculable. Freemasonry, in its broad charity, is incapable of deliberate vindictiveness, but a pitying contempt can be even more damaging. And that is an emotion which it would be exceedingly difficult to control.

Were Freemasonry to be declared incompatible with the Church, many bishops, clergy and laymen, from the Archbishop of Canterbury downwards, would be faced with a cruel dilemma. *From which body would they resign?* From the universal Brotherhood of true Christian principles to which they are bound by the most sacred oaths on the Bible, or to a body which, claiming to follow in Christ's footsteps, had nevertheless preferred darkness and ignorance to light in attacking it? To those capable of clear and honest thinking, the course, however unwelcome, would be clear. And there yet remain the Free Christian Churches which

would welcome them with open arms.

Shorn of many of her leaders, bereft of her most influential laymen, incredibly impoverished by dwindling financial support . . . these are the prospects which Mr. Hannah holds out to the Church of England should *Darkness Visible* be acted on. Convinced that such a stupid and unnecessary tragedy must be avoided at all costs, I write this book in the sure confidence that sanity and truth must prevail.

Although there is hardly a Mason in England who would not like to see Mr. Hannah horse-whipped, unfrocked from his sacred office, and driven from the country for his infamous conduct, he is, like the Dean of Canterbury, a nuisance which must be borne with patience. But not in silence, lest the ignorant, the deceived, and the gullible should fear that we have no answer.

In this book I have tried above all things to be completely honest and open. Frankness and candour can hurt no one, and many Masons with whom I have discussed it agree with me that previous defences of the Craft against former attacks have sometimes tended to lack candour through being written in the idiom of the attacker. That is, the religious side of Freemasonry has all too often been played down to the level of the knife-and-fork Mason's conception of it, in the language and phraseology of Christian theology, in order to pacify a narrow and exclusive interpretation of Christianity which can brook no rival. In other words, Freemasonry has been defended on premises

and arguments, which the loyal honest Mason cannot altogether whole-heartedly accept. Even the Masonic clergy have done this, either through timidity, expediency, or lack of Masonic understanding. This may have been policy in the past, even though it lacked complete sincerity. To-day, however, plain speaking is in fashion, and the Church is no longer, even by the Christian, to be taken for granted in its present form without question. Masonry stands for something vital and essential in eternal values, and has nothing to fear from complete outspokenness.

## A MASON SURVEYS THE FIELD.

It is too early as yet to assess the immensity of the damage that has been done to the spiritual life of the nation by the publication of Mr. Hannah's disastrous excursion into the realms of fantasy in which he professes to make darkness visible. Despite the author's profound ignorance of the real and inner nature of Freemasonry, it must be conceded that he is a clever controversialist. Indeed my own first impression on reading his glib yet tortuous logic based on scraps of largely irrelevant and certainly inaccurate data was that Mr. Hannah could make out a superficially convincing case for—or against—almost *anything* if it were made worth his while to do so. It is not for me to question his sincerity, but from what I have myself heard of him in past years I suggest that Mr. Hannah could with little difficulty whip himself into a state of self-deceptive sincerity on any topic which would make headlines or place a book in a best-seller category. In its cleverness and in its shallowness, then, lies the danger of *Darkness Visible*.

But Mr. Hannah prefers duets to solos. He must not be allowed to shoulder the entire blame for an unseemly and unnecessary disturbance, for a certain Dr. Box has also leapt into the unworthy fray. As a scholar Dr. Box leaves his associate far behind, for he is an acknowledged authority not only in Canon Law but in the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, another past-

master in the art of twisted logic based on insecure premises. And the danger of Dr. Box is that, as well as holding the office of Rural Dean of Cuckfield in Sussex with his tiny parish of Scaynes Hill, he is also a Proctor in Convocation, the spiritual parliament of the Church of England. Dr. Box has already achieved notoriety by attempting to unsettle the minds of this august assembly with the Masonic bogey, and he will doubtless attempt to do so again and perhaps again.

In private life, however, Dr. Box is also known as an expert conjuror and a member of the Magic Circle, a body, incidentally, which guards its secrets with a truly Masonic fidelity. It is the essence of a good conjuror to be able to produce rabbits out of a hat—and to make them look like *real* rabbits. He should also have a line of glib, deceptive, and convincing patter to accompany the act.

I am aware that the wise and customary policy of the Grand Lodge of England is to treat the sporadic and petulant attacks which have broken out from time to time since her foundation with the dignified and contemptuous silence which they deserve. It is difficult and even heroic to remain silent in the face of slander and misrepresentation, but such is often the most effective course.

*Darkness Visible*, however, comes into a category entirely different from Mr. Hannah's first attack in the pages of the review "Theology." It appears destined to have an enormous sale, stimulated as it was by a good deal of publicity in the worst possible taste in the

less savoury organs of Fleet Street. Financially, Mr. Hannah seems on to a good thing, and this should certainly be weighed in mind in assessing the sincerity and validity of the book. Yet it must be admitted that the arguments of *Darkness Visible*, although based on data the accuracy of which we are forbidden by solemn oath to confirm or deny, are plausible to the extent of unsettling a few of the Brethren who share the author's narrow and bigoted interpretation of Christianity, and at the same time fail to realise the true meaning, the full depth, height and breadth of our glorious and eternal Masonic principles, which have survived the wreck of mighty empires, and have resisted the destroying hand of time.

Hence as misunderstandings may arise and be perpetuated to the distress of many, and as any rift between Freemasonry and the Established Church of England, those twin pillars which are the bulwark of our national greatness and spiritual heritage, would be disastrous particularly to the Church, I have ventured on this reply. I write as one who *knows*; as a clergyman of the Church of England and as one who humbly claims to have penetrated a little deeper than some beneath the surface of the Masonic mysteries I have the advantage over Mr. Hannah, who fails to understand even the teachings of his own Church, and who only guesses, and guesses very wildly, when he deals with Freemasonry.

In saying that *Darkness Visible* may do incalculable harm to the spiritual life of the nation, therefore, I do



"Creeds arise, have their day, and pass : but Masonry remains. It is built on the rock of truth, not on the shifting sands of superstition." That Christianity is also built on a rock of truth I passionately affirm as a humble follower of the Divine Master. But Mr. Hannah in trying to align our liberal and enlightened English Christianity with the bigotries and superstitions, not only of Rome but of the equally narrow Protestant fundamentalists who have followed Rome in her blindness to truth and enlightenment is only hastening the decay and fall of his own communion.

Mr. Hannah is a most irresponsible man. There are times when devilry cannot be met with silence, when the truth, so far as may be done without violence to Solemn Obligations, must be fearlessly proclaimed in order that it may prevail.

not mean to imply that any harm is likely to result to Freemasonry once the motives for this attack are properly understood, and the whole controversy seen in its right perspective. If a few sacerdotally-minded fanatics who agree with Mr. Hannah's interpretation of Christianity should resign their lodges, Masonry is better without them. We have no room for them anyway, as it is quite contrary to the spirit of Masonry to claim that any one interpretation of God is exclusively the right one, and that all who humbly approach Him from another angle are of necessity groping in the outer darkness. It is the Church of England that will suffer incalculably from the attack on Masonry. Devoted laymen illumined by the light of Masonry will leave it in increasing numbers, and will make their charitable contributions elsewhere. If the Church insists on the insult of a Commission of Inquiry, and should that inquiry result in the disaster of a condemnation of a body more ancient than Christianity itself, which is the essence of a religion more fundamental, more enlightened, and more truly "English," than the Anglican communion as interpreted by Mr. Hannah, then the Church will only make herself a laughing-stock, and her diminishing influence will dwindle yet further. As a clergyman of that Church it is my hope that this answer to *Darkness Visible* will help to restore sanity and a sense of proportion, to dissuade Convocation and the Church Assembly from meddling with private concerns that are no business whatsoever of the Church.

As Sir John Cockburn so magnificently pointed out,

## AN APPEAL FOR ACTION

ALL that is needed to silence for ever the anti-Masonic conspiracy, which is more sinister than many appear on the surface, is one courageous gesture from those of the Anglican hierarchy who are also Past Grand Chaplains of the Craft. For they represent officially, at top level in both Church and Masonry, what Mr. Hannah is pleased to describe at the 'overlap.' A clear statement from them would be acceptable, official, and final to both parties.

Their reticence is understandable and Masonically commendable. They may well believe that the attacks on the Craft are too infantile and insignificant to warrant such an official rebuff; such indeed is the customary policy of Grand Lodge. But in the interests of peace and charity, in the interests of the true welfare of the Church and indeed of the Nation, an emphatic declaration from these leaders to the effect that the conclusions adduced by Mr. Hannah and Dr. Box and their supporters and the slanders of *Darkness Visible* in particular are wholly false and based on erroneous data, that there is nothing whatsoever in Freemasonry that could possibly be incompatible with the teachings of true Christianity, would surely stop the mouths of calumniators, relieve the minds of the anxious, and speedily put a final end to the unworthy agitation.

Such a statement would carry overwhelming weight and finality. The Archbishop of Canterbury's signa-

ture alone, as head of the Anglican Communion, would suffice, and the Freemason may again thank God that he is our Brother as well as our Archbishop. But joined by the other Masonic Bishops, two of whom (the Bishop of Norwich and the Bishop of Crediton) are also in the secular sphere Provincial Grand Masters, by the Bishops of Chester and Carlisle, by the Suffragan Bishops of Reading, Woolwich, Selby, Whitby, and many others, the non-Masonic clergy and laity would have any misgivings amply allayed.

It might be argued that the Church Assembly debate in June, 1951, did, in fact, dismiss the agitation summarily and effectively. Yet the fact remains that this body, although including a great number of most distinguished Freemasons, many of whom took part in the debate, represents and commits the Church of England alone; no Mason spoke officially for the Craft as Past Grand Chaplain because obviously no Mason present had any authority to do so. Joint action from the Masonic Bishops in collaboration with the two Grand Chaplains in present office, is surely the only effective and final measure. Such a statement would cut the ground from under the feet of those who have been misled into supporting agitation for a Church inquiry. I do most earnestly appeal to those concerned, even if a breach of precedent and a departure from the wise normal policy of silence is involved, to take it boldly in the wider interests of the spiritual welfare of our land.

## WHAT IS FREEMASONRY?

THE source and origins of the great order of Freemasonry have long been the subject of endless research, discussion, and speculation. Opinions regarding its antiquity have ranged from the height of credulity to the depth of disbelief and denial. On the one hand there are iconoclasts who throw all tradition and probability to the winds, and assert that the revival and re-organization of Masonry in the establishment of the Grand Lodge in 1717 was actually the beginning of the Order, refusing to acknowledge any anterior ancestry. These are the type who ignore all evidence and tradition not fully supported by unquestioned documentary evidence.

In any other subject of academic research this cautious attitude is doubtless wholly praiseworthy. In dealing with Freemasonry, however, it ignores the vital factor that written documents are not even to be expected; a cautious and scrupulous observance of their obligations would have precluded our predecessors from leaving any legible trace of their transactions behind. In all ages, past as well as present, the Mysteries have invariably been subject to hostility and persecution, and whatever records there were from time to time were peculiarly liable to summary destruction at short notice. But the evidence of antiquity is indelibly stamped upon the usages and customs of Freemasonry today; those who really under-

stand their workings, and know something of the ancient mysteries, can be in no doubt on this point.

From the beginning of time men have always been attracted to the mysterious, the numinous, the sacramental. There has always been an inherent longing to penetrate deeper, to achieve a more profound personal communion with nature, with reality, and with God, than was possible through official State religions. The mysteries differed, therefore, from State religions in that the latter were associated with official and public worship, whereas the former, filling the gaps which these official observances necessarily left in the spiritual needs of mankind, were essentially secret. Hence arose a familiar pattern, as old as religion itself, which Mr. Hannah is endeavouring to perpetuate even in this twentieth century. State religions, the official paganisms of Egypt and Assyria, Greece and Rome, militant Islam in the East, the Caesero-papism of medieval Christendom in Europe, and even, alas, the post-Reformation State-established Protestantisms, backed by the authority of civil autocracy, have always shown a tendency, at best to show suspicion of those who find the official forms of approach to the Deity inadequate and seek to supplement them by something more real and personal, at worst, to persecute them bitterly as rivals that cannot be tolerated.

Mr. Hannah, however, is hopelessly behind the times in seeking to perpetrate this vicious pattern.

For the State religion of England, though containing certain Erastian elements, is no longer an enforced or compulsory monopoly backed by an autocratic and intolerant government. It stands for complete religious freedom. Freemasonry, the heir and legitimate successor of the ancient mysteries, is no longer a separate or rival religion, though it remains, in the truest sense, a "mystery"—a mystery of symbolic morality, a mystery of the numinous, an elite and inner fellowship of "brotherly love, relief, and truth". As such, it is no longer in conflict or rivalry with the State religion, or indeed with any religion of enlightenment and tolerance, though it still fulfils its ancient function of supplying certain deep and intimate needs in man's spiritual being which no official or public religious organization can altogether meet. Freemasonry today provides a moral backbone to both Church and State, complementary but in no sense competitive.

Great and eternal truths, however, cannot be exterminated or permanently suppressed. What was true and eternal in these ancient mysteries lives on; what was purely ephemereal or even unworthy has perished in the crucible of time and religious experience.

The members of the suppressed societies could not be restrained from carrying on their work of spiritual enlightenment. The very efforts to destroy led them to an even wider diffusion of their principles.

When Cambyses in B.C. 525 overran Egypt, many

of the priests versed in the ancient mysteries of Isis and Osiris fled to Greece, and communicated their secret doctrines to those worthy of it in that country, the land of philosophers. And undoubtedly these Egyptian mysteries strongly influenced, if indeed they were not the source, of the great Mysteries of Eleusis. These Mysteries, Plato said, were established by men of great genius who, in the early ages, strove to teach purity, to ameliorate the cruelty of the race, to exalt its morals and refine its manners, and to restrain society by stronger bonds than those which human laws impose. Based on the legend of Persephone, the Eleusinian Mysteries became the chief agent in the conversion of the Greek world from the Homeric view of Hades to a more hopeful belief as to man's state after death. Tully wrote of them "Athens hath produced many excellent, even divine intentions and applied them to the use of life, but she has given nothing better than those Mysteries by which we are drawn from an irrational and savage life and tamed, as it were, and broken to humanity. They are truly called *Initia*, for they are indeed the beginnings of a life of reason and virtue."

Secrecy was strictly enjoined because it was regarded as essential that the profane should not be permitted to share the knowledge of the true nature of Demeter and Persephone, and because it integrated the Initiated into a deeper fellowship. Without going into what little we know of the details of the ceremonies,

Freemasons today will recognise an affinity with these ancient mysteries.

When in their turn the Eleusinian Mysteries were prohibited and persecuted in the fifth century A.D. by Theodosius the Great, they nevertheless continued under a changed name, possibly for some hundreds of years.

The Greek Mysteries always had a fascination for their Roman conquerors, and influenced the Dionysian Mysteries of the Imperial city, with which they had many striking points of similarity. It is in the history of this tradition that we begin to see a connection between the Mysteries and the trade of the operative stone-mason, for when the Collegia in Rome were suppressed a remnant fled to Como, where they carried on the traditions of the Dionysians. Thence they appear to have issued as bands of expert artificers and masons who travelled about Europe and pitched their tents wherever a sacred edifice was to be erected. These Comacine Masons brought with them the canons of construction of Romanesque architecture, which afterwards attained its full flower in the Gothic style, which is the very embodiment in stone of mystic and spiritual interpretations.

Hence Freemasonry today undoubtedly derives much of its ceremonial from the Collegia of Rome, where the pattern for imitation was a personification of the Sun under the name of Dionysius, Hercules, or Bacchus, whose death and resurrection formed the

central theme of the mystic rites. In more recent times, however, Freemasonry has substituted for these pagan gods a figure from the Old Testament as the type, and as we shall see in a later chapter, has introduced many Jewish elements into the Ritual. The reason for this may lie partly in the fact that when the Bacchanalia were suppressed in Rome after becoming increasingly licentious, the Jews, and the Jews alone, were given a measure of religious freedom, and were allowed to continue their rites. This was wholly beneficial, for the Jews clung with obstinate tenacity to the greatest contribution to world religion—an uncompromising monotheism in the Unity of the Deity, as expressed by the Sacred Tetragrammaton, their rallying-cry. And for the benefit of my Masonic readers I might point out that this emblem, the tetragrammaton, was almost certainly the original, enclosed in an irradiated triangle, for which has been substituted a certain letter that occupies such a prominent position in our Lodges today. It has been said that the Jews drank from the fountain, the Greeks from the stream, and the Romans from the pool. Freemasonry, however, has returned to the fountain.

Hebrew, indeed, might almost be called the official language of Masonry. From time immemorial the secrets of Masonry have been couched in that language, and some knowledge of it is essential truly to grasp their meaning. The Symbolic words and Pass Words of the Three Degrees in Craft Masonry, and for

the most part the Words used in the Royal Arch are Hebrew, handed down orally from generation to generation.

Another vitally important source of Hebraic influence is Kabbalism, which has even been called the parent of Freemasonry. The Kabbalists were a Jewish secret and mystical society, with their own symbolical interpretation of the Scriptures and the Talmud, professing peculiar ideas about the nature of God, and had a great deal in common with the Gnostics of earlier days, who were also organised as a fraternity with secrets. The Kabbalists had great reverence for the Scripture, and yet they did not tie themselves to a literal or legalistic interpretation of them. They were certainly extremely devout, treasuring up their mystic lore as a possession of great value. They were syncretists in believing that at heart all the great religions are practically one, yet they sought to find common ground for Jews, Christians, and Moslems, and thus harmonise into monotheism these several systems of thought. Again particularly in the Royal Arch Degree there are very striking similarities, past accounting for by co-incidence in the symbolism of Freemasonry and Kabbalism.

Another direct or indirect ancestor of the Grand Lodge of England was Templarism, and here again we may feel a legitimate pride that this truly glorious crusading tradition has left its mark upon us.

Here again history has left little in the way of

reliable documentary evidence. The Knights Templar were founded to fulfil a glorious, if somewhat narrowly sectarian ideal—to wrest by force the Holy Sepulchre, the most sacred of all Christian shrines, from the hands of the warlike Moslem Saracens. There was much of romance, of chivalry, and of glory in the history of the successive Crusades, yet ultimately they failed in their military and religious objectives. Perhaps they deserved to; perhaps it was in God's providence and divine wisdom that bloodshed and warfare were not the weapons with which to further His Kingdom on earth.

But the significance for us of the Knights Templar was that in their close contacts with Near Eastern countries and their mysteries, there seems little doubt that they gradually discovered that they had spiritually much to learn from those very people whom they had set out to conquer. They seem to have adopted into their own Catholic rites much of the hidden wisdom and secret cults of the East. This of necessity had to be kept a profound secret, for they were living in intolerant times when "heresy" of any kind was a crime punishable by death, when any deviation from the letter of Roman Catholic orthodoxy was held to forfeit eternal salvation.

The Knights Templar were great Church builders, and there is no doubt that the grateful generosity of the faithful gradually endowed them with considerable wealth. This, as much as their alleged heresies, was the cause of their eventual persecution and extermina-

tion; the greedy eyes particularly of the Pope and of Philippe Le Bel of France cast many covetous glances at their manifold possessions, jealous of their power and influence.

It is hard to say to what extent the charges of non-Christian religious practices which were brought against them were actually true, for the evidence very largely consists of depositions made under torture, which are obviously unreliable. They cannot have been entirely groundless, but on the other hand the measure of their truth is only the measure of the bigoted intolerance of the Medieval Church, which could see no good thing, no aspect of truth, no approach to God outside its own narrow formalities.

Early in the fourteenth century the last Commander of the Knights Templar, Jacques de Molay, was burned to death in Paris, and hundreds of his followers met a similar fate throughout Europe. Their estates were seized by their rapacious murderers, and at least on the surface, the noble order ceased to exist.

It seems, however, that this extermination was not as complete as has often been imagined. In England the persecution was far less severe, due to our greater innate sense of tolerance and fair play. King Henry objected to summary orders from the Pope to extract confessions by torture, and the process of annihilation was more humane. Probably, therefore, it was also less complete. It is only reasonable to suppose that many Knights would have fled from the greater wrath

on the Continent to our shores in disguise, and that in secret De Molay even appointed a successor to shepherd such elements in diaspora as managed to preserve an underground continuity. And as they had been prolific Church builders well versed in the lore of Masonry, there is no reason to doubt that such elements as survived infiltrated the Stonemasons' guilds, and imparted to them much of their mystic wisdom.

We see, then, how all these ancient mysteries and hidden wisdoms have converged on England as the ancestors of Speculative Freemasonry as we know it today. There is no conclusive historical proof, but we who understand the Ritual in all its many-sided riches can trace elements from all these great traditions of the past, purged of their grossness and superstition, refined by the English religious genius for sanctified common-sense. This survey is far from exhaustive. Much might be said of Rosicrucian influences which came to us through Elias Ashmole. Something might even be said of Theosophy, though the subject is delicate, and the Theosophical Co-Masonry, largely a legacy from Annie Besant, is not recognized at all by the Grand Lodge.

Enough has been written, however, to indicate the breadth, the antiquity, the variety and almost universality of the sources of moral and spiritual wisdom from which Freemasonry derives. Above all, it inherits a glorious tradition from the builders of old, true craftsmen who with honest labour inspired

by this inner wisdom made the architecture of Medieval England the wonder of the world. The symbolism of this craftsmanship lives on, for we apply it to our morals in raising on a sure foundation the temple not built with hands, the temple of a just and upright personality, the cathedral of the immortal soul.

And certainly the Ritual of Freemasonry is deeply imbued with the spirit of the Medieval Stonemasons' guilds. Could we but revive that spirit in the world today and expand further the beneficent influence of our Lodges, particularly amongst employers and trade union officials, the disputes that so frequently paralyse industry in this post-war age of blindness and greed would be ended. The Sacred Symbol in the Middle Chamber of the Temple stood for justice between master and man, and had a deep practical meaning for them. The wage was received by the Craftsman without scruple and without diffidence, for it was ungrudgingly given as a reward for honest work. A workman who through lack of skill or negligence failed to reach the required standard was a disgrace not only to himself but to his fellows, whereas today any attempt to discipline him is all too often countered by the weapon of the strike.

It is, then, to the spirit and practice of Masonry, making alike for international and industrial peace, that civilization may look for the best pledge of restoring tranquility to a distracted world.

## THE VITALITY OF FREEMASONRY

St. John's Day, 1717, was indeed a momentous occasion in the history of the world, charged with a Pentecostal significance of which we in the twentieth century are seeing perhaps only the preliminary stages to the glory that yet lies ahead.

No one would say that this auspicious date marked the beginning of Freemasonry, for the Craft is as ancient as civilisation itself. But just as the Spirit of God moved up on the face of the waters at the creation of the world, and again descended upon the disciples of Christ in the close-tyled Upper Room on Whit Sunday to mark God's renewed operation in the world through the Christian message, so the mystery of Freemasonry has operated since the dawn of history, and yet at this point of time in the early eighteenth century, surely according to the wisdom and plan of the Great Architect, underwent a new birth and in a sense a fresh beginning.

Four Lodges, perhaps prophetically aware that a growth and revival of the ancient mysteries was imminent, met together to provide a central guiding authority for the movement. Did they, I wonder, foresee that some two and a half centuries later the number of Lodges on their roll would reach the astonishing figure of six thousand and five hundred under the English jurisdiction alone? "Fear not, little flock," might well have rung in their ears, "for it is your



Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." And the foundation was well and truly laid.

After eight years, in 1725, we find a list of Lodges numbering several score, and the subsequent growth of the movement, which rapidly spread from London to the provinces, was phenomenal. The movement was early weakened and hampered by the schism between the 'Antients' and the 'Moderns', but this was dramatically and fraternally healed through the kindly mediation of the two Royal brothers, the Duke of Sussex and the Duke of Kent, and the two rival bodies came into a free and brotherly union in December of 1813, in the United Grand Lodge.

In this incident is seen the friendly interest and support that Freemasonry has always received from the Royal Family, who have since provided many Grand Masters, and have ever been pleased to become patrons of Freemasonry and its various charitable institutions. "To so high an eminence has its credit been advanced that in every age monarchs themselves have been promoters of the art; have not thought it derogatory to exchange the sceptre for the trowel; have patronised our mysteries and joined in our assemblies." In return, Freemasons have always shown an unshaken devotion and loyalty to the Crown and its lawful governments.

Masonic historians tell us that of the four original Lodges which came together in the first Grand Lodge, the fourth, meeting at the *Rummer and Grapes* was composed mainly of aristocrats and others of good

social standing, and had as its master the Duke of Richmond. It included in its membership Desaguliers, to whom we are largely indebted today for the present form of the Masonic Ritual, and Anderson, who drew up the original Constitutions. The other three, however, were mainly artisan in membership, probably still containing more than a sprinkling of 'operatives' actually connected with the stone trade. And so it has been ever since. From Royalty downwards, the Craft has included nobility and aristocracy, learning and scholarship, trade and commerce, and as always a firm backbone of artisans. It has embraced on the level a representative cross-section of the finest elements most truly representative of our national character and greatness.

The twentieth century has seen a growth in membership and in the number of Lodges, in a space of fifty years, more than equal to the progress of eighteenth and nineteenth centuries put together. On an average, about a hundred new Lodges are solemnly consecrated every year, and many have waiting-lists for initiation. The vitality of the movement is boundless. To what can it be ascribed?

Certainly not to proselytising zeal, and this is the most extraordinary fact about it. In two millenniums Christianity has spread (however nominally) throughout the Western world, and in its early centuries undoubtedly spread extremely rapidly. But Christianity is a missionary religion. The disciples were expressly bidden by their Master to go out into the world, make

converts, and preach the Gospel, and filled with zeal and the Holy Spirit they indeed accomplished wonders. Missionary societies, home and foreign, have poured out treasure in spreading the message of Christianity and in passing on the good news.

Freemasonry, however, has *never* proselytised, and it is quite firmly against its principles ever to do so. It is forbidden even to ask a non-Mason to come into its ranks. Freemasonry makes no publicity (though its enemies occasionally do), no parades, no literature distributed to the public, no great popular demonstrations or public meetings. Individual Freemasons very seldom talk about it at all or even mention the fact that they are Masons. It would almost seem as if we did not want to attract recruits, so little do we do to publicise ourselves.

Yet good men and true literally by the thousand seek out the Craft every year, attracted to it by some magnetism that seems almost the supernatural workings of the Holy Spirit. They hint and enquire of their friends until they find one who is a Mason, and then give him no peace until an introduction is arranged to a Lodge.

In these past fifty years of rapid growth it is painfully obvious that as the Churches diminish and empty, the Lodges proportionately fill and multiply. The decline of organised religion has gone hand in hand with the rising tide of Freemasonry. Narrow-minded little clerics such as Mr. Hannah and Dr. Box vent their jealousy by spitting at the craft in their

ignorance. The more intelligent will search deeper into their own religion, and ask what is lacking, what is still backward and superstitious in an age of enlightenment and increased knowledge, what is still cramping and narrow and exclusive in their creeds in a century of expanding horizons. They may well find the answer by seeking initiation, for Freemasonry is succeeding brilliantly when the Churches are failing. It is small wonder that the clergy in increasing numbers have themselves sought initiation, and in general it will be found that they are more successful in their parishes for having taken this step. It would be disastrous if *Darkness Visible* were to stem this flow.

I do not despair of the Church of England, or of its eventual ability to catch up with the spirit of the age, however great the leeway. Under the leadership of the first Masonic Archbishop of Canterbury in history great things are to be hoped for, despite the reactionaries. But the striking contrast between the exuberant vitality of the Craft and the relative deadness of the Churches is a phenomenon which should cause deep thought and heart-searching to every Christian, and the clergy in particular.

"We needs must love the highest when we see it." Despite the sneers of the cynic, this is still a profound truth, at least among men of good-will to whom Freemasonry is such an attraction. Were it the feeble hotch-potch of bogus mysticism, convivial dinners high-sounding titles and absurd dressing-up which Mr. Hannah presents for our consideration, it would have