

## ANNIE BESANT AND C. W. LEADBEATER

ONLY historians of the T. S. who will add to this book will be able to evaluate rightly the services of Dr. Annie Besant to the Theosophical Movement. Elected President in 1907, re-elected again in 1914 and 1921, the Jubilee year of the Society sees her at the head of a vast organisation which is full of enthusiasm in the cause of Theosophy. True that many who were once in the Society have left the organisation, each taking the message of Theosophy in his or her own way. But in spite of those who have left, the Parent Society founded by H. P. Blavatsky and H. S. Olcott is vaster than the Founders could have dreamt, when they made their small nucleus in New York in 1875.

### GROWTH OF THE T.S. DURING DR. BESANT'S TERM AS PRESIDENT

		H. S. Olcott 17th Nov., 1875 to 17th Feb., 1907	Annie Besant 17th Feb., 1907 to end of Dec., 1925	Total
Members	...	32,132	83,970	116,102
Lodges	...	913	1,523	2,436
National Societies	...	11	30	41

One part of the steady growth of the Society is due to the services of the two original Founders, but another part of its growth is due to Dr. Besant and to another who has worked with her as her colleague, C. W. Leadbeater. Each of these two has contributed to the development of the Movement. It is difficult to appraise the impetus given to Theosophy by the

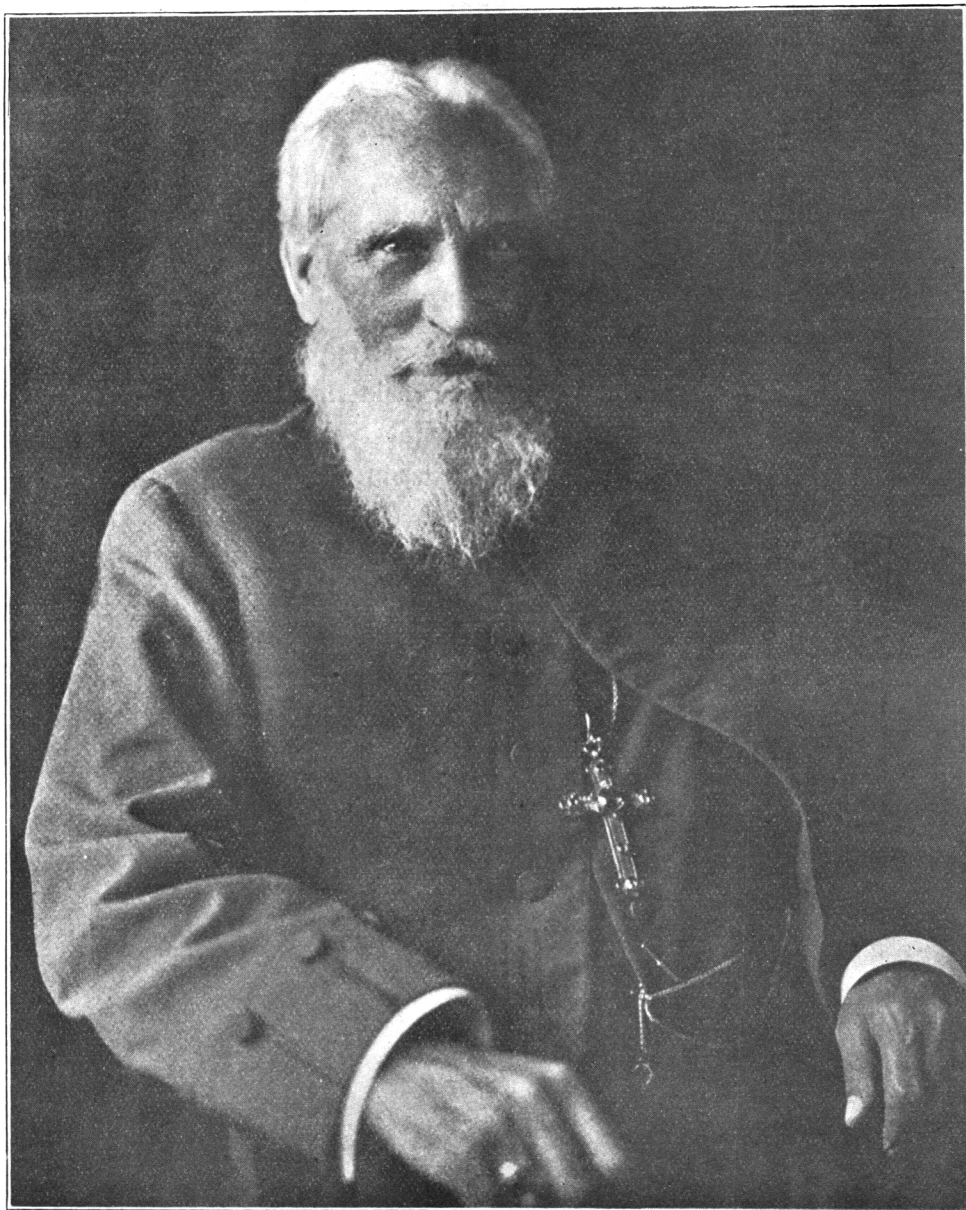


FIG. 196  
RT. REV. C. W. LEADBEATER

lectures and writings of the former. Theosophy has been presented by her with such lofty idealism and unbounded enthusiasm as have made it a living power in the lives of tens of thousands, to whom the Theosophical teachings of the earlier epoch have not especially appealed. To many, the reading for the first time of *In the Outer Court*, *The Path of Discipleship*, *The Ancient Wisdom*, *A Study in Consciousness* have been the beginning of a new life. In the same way, C. W. Leadbeater has helped to make the Movement strong by his special contributions. His clear, scientific and temperate presentation of our fundamental truths has made the Theosophical philosophy vivid to thousands, just because his exposition is so full of balance and common sense. His writings, *Some Glimpses of Occultism*, *The Hidden Side of Things*, *The Inner Life*, *The Science of the Sacraments*, recording clairvoyant researches into the invisible have been full of illumination and comfort to thousands of Theosophists, for they have made real the underlying principles of Theosophy enunciated by H. P. Blavatsky. It is true that some have not felt, like others, utter certainty in the truth of the occult investigations of Dr. Besant and Bishop Leadbeater. But equally it is the testimony of thousands upon thousands that, while they cannot prove those investigations at first hand for themselves, yet so reasonable are they, and so full of illumination, it is impossible to think to-day of the Theosophical scheme of evolution, without the additional knowledge about it which these two have added to the knowledge where H. P. B. left it at her departure.

Furthermore, these two leaders have done an unforgettable service to the Society in bringing to it new workers, who have caught from them the fire of enthusiasm and dedication. Both are supremely makers of men, for they have allied themselves to the enthusiasm of the youths and the maidens who have been drawn to Theosophy, and they have opened Theosophical careers for them in the service of the Masters and of Humanity. In all countries

of the world, there is rising a new generation of young Theosophists, full of enthusiasm, vigour and fire of sacrifice, and the Society in 1925 shows a strength which is the promise of wonderful work in the future. Each generation will pass on to its successor the torch of the truths of Theosophy. But the generation which comes after Dr. Besant and Bishop Leadbeater voice with unbounded gratitude the priceless boons received from them of that inner consecration, that heart of truth, which makes of life a living flame of sacrifice.



FIG. 197

MRS. ANNIE BESANT AND C. W. LEADBEATER  
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