Chapter 11: Return to the Society

Those who believed that what was known as "the Leadbeater affair" had been resolved were mistaken: it continued as a subject for argument within the Society. As Josephine Ransom noted in her history of the TS:

For about two and a half years the Society seethed over this affair. Masses of "evidence" against Mr Leadbeater were accumulated. Every admission of his to the Advisory Board was made the basis of endless argument. Many held that spiritual capacity and greatness went together with observance of certain conventional physical moralities. [1]

When Olcott visited Chicago in 1906 "there was much violent discussion about Mr Leadbeater's case", and in the United States the "violent discussion" was encouraged by Dr Weller van Hook, an ardent disciple of Leadbeater, who was elected General Secretary of the American Section.[2]

Leadbeater was beginning to take the role of a martyr, remaining quietly remote from the Society that was being increasingly torn apart by argument about him, and patiently awaiting the re-instatement which he had doubtless
foreseen. His relationship with Annie Besant, whatever it may have been (and critics have offered some remarkable suggestions [3]) was too strong to be broken either by scandal or separation. As Mrs Besant's biographer Nethercote noted:

However strongly she may have felt about Leadbeater's teachings and their effect on the Society, her heart had never turned away from her friend even though her face may have done so. The period of their estrangement was brief. His persistence, his humility, his constant reminders of the many astral meetings they had been privileged to attend with the great Hierarchy from the lowest rank to the very Highest, were too much for her to stand against. [4]

And even Olcott, perhaps giving a hint that he, too, was preparing for a change of heart, informed the International Congress at Paris that he had once been rebuked by a Master for judging the inward and spiritual character of a member by his outward and worldly behaviour. In a letter of January 3, 1907, Olcott reinstated Jinarajadasa, declaring that a "serious although unintentional injustice" had been done to him.
Olcott's health was failing and his condition was aggravated by worry about the state of the Society and its division over the Leadbeater affair. On the right of January 5th, whilst he was at Adyar, the two Masters Morya (M) and KH visited him "plainly visible, audible, tangible", in the presence of Mrs Besant and Olcott's private secretary, Mrs Marie Russak. [5] According to the reports of the meeting, the Masters declared Mrs Besant was to be Olcott's successor as President, and ordered her to go to Benares to complete some urgent business. They reappeared on January 11th to rebuke Olcott for his behaviour in the Leadbeater case, especially for allowing the matter to have been made public. They instructed him to write a letter to Leadbeater, which they returned on the 13th to read. He was also instructed to write an article for The Theosophist, some of which was dictated by the Master M.

Olcott hastily despatched the letter to Leadbeater:

My dear Charles,
The Mahatmas have visited me several times lately in their physical bodies and in the presence of witnesses. [6] As my life seems to be drawing to a close, they have wished to discuss with me matters which they desired arranged before it was too
late. They asked me to set right the dispute between you and Annie concerning the glamour question and I enclose what they said about it, which Mrs Russak took down at the time. I am glad to know it was no glamour, for I have always felt that she [Annie] made a mistake in saying that it was. Concerning the other matter about the disturbance your teachings have caused, both Mahatma H. and Mahatma K.H. assured me that you did well to resign, that it was right to call a council to advise upon the matter, and that I did right in accepting your resignation, but they said we were wrong in allowing the matter to be made so public, for your sake and for the sake of the Society. They said you should have stated in your resignation that you resigned because you offended the standard of ideas of the majority of the Society by giving out certain teachings which were considered objectionable. [7] Because I have always cherished for you a sincere affection, I wish to beg your pardon, and to tell you before I die that I am sorry any fault of judgment on my part should have caused you such deep sorrow and mortification, for I should have certainly tried to keep the matter quiet, had I not thought that it would have reflected on the Society if I did
so. I feel sure that the Blessed Ones are striving to calm the present turmoil and hold together our Society from dividing itself and I also feel sure that you will be called upon to help, and to forget the self for the good of the whole. There is nothing I think that would tend to quell the present turmoil so much (and I should die happy if I knew you had done it) as for you to bow to the will of the Divine Ones behind the movement and save the situation. Certainly Their wisdom is your law as it is ours, and They have told both Annie and myself that your teaching young boys to masturbate is wrong. I do implore you from my death-bed to bow to Their judgment in the matter and make a public statement that you will give Them and us your solemn promise to cease giving out such teachings. [8] It might be that if you did this the Masters would open out the path of reconciliation to the Society, and you could take up the great work you were obliged to give up, because you unwisely placed yourself in the position of being unable to defend yourself against charges that gravely offended the accepted moral standards of your country, thus bringing upon the Society you loved a great blow which shook it to its foundations, because you were so
universally loved and respected. Once more, my dear friend, I beg you to consider what I ask. With all good wishes,
Yours sincerely,
H.S. Olott. [9]

It was a curious and ambiguous letter, and suggested a curious and ambiguous position on the part of the Masters. Leadbeater was nowhere rebuked because his teachings were wrong, although this was the interpretation placed upon the letter by Mrs Besant and others, but only because he had given them out, and because they were "considered objectionable" by society and by the majority of members of the TS. And he was only required to promise not to give them out in future, not to accept that they were wrong. The Masters had settled the question of glamour: they declared that both Mrs Besant and Leadbeater had been working with them on the higher planes, that neither was under a glamour, and that because perfect instruments did not exist through whom they could work, they had to take what they could get. And they rather ridiculed the Theosophical moralists, who

with an exaggerated moral sense, believe that the Teachers of mankind cannot employ agents who are not above the weaknesses of the physical body, and contact with whom would be supposed to morally
They also argued that Theosophists ought to shield one another from "being held up unnecessarily to general public condemnation and ridicule", as well as trying to prevent their Brothers from wrong doing. The Masters could not interfere with disturbances arising from the karma of individual members, but suggested "Brotherly Love" would solve such problems: "Are not your Brother's sins your own " [11]

The Masters KH and M continued to visit the Colonel, now accompanied by the Master Serapis, until his death on February 17th. Further dissension was stimulated within the Society by the publication of Olcott's statement that the Masters wanted Mrs Besant as the next President; Sinnett, as Vice-President controlling the Society during the interregnum, considered her "misled by the Dark Powers". He also argued that the appearances at Olcott's bedside were not the Masters. Mrs Besant, meanwhile, had issued a statement entitled "The Basis of the Theosophical Society" in which she argued that the Society did not possess any moral code which could be regarded as binding upon its members.

On February 14th, 1907, Leadbeater had written to
Mrs Besant assuring her that he would heed the Masters' decision and not repeat the advice: he was, not unexpectedly, quite certain that the Masters had appeared to Olcott, and rejected Chakravarti's opinion that they had not.

If I may be allowed to speak quite frankly Mr Chakravarti's theory that the appearance of the Masters to the Colonel was a masquerade by black magicians seems to be ridiculous. I know exceedingly well how closely evil entities can simulate the appearance of the Masters, but I am quite certain that such a test would not be permitted at the death-bed of the President-Founder, an old faithful and devoted servant, even though, like all human beings, he made mistakes in his time. Besides a black magician would not put in power a person like yourself, whose whole life is such as to make it impossible for him to influence you: he would obviously choose a weak person who could be swayed by his will like poor Bertram [Keightley], with points in his past life that give the dark people power over him. [12]

He suggested that Mrs Besant being elected President would
be the "salvation of the society", but stated that he had no wish to be reinstated in the Society.

Now that I am not a member of the Society, I have no wish to be reinstated, for I am much freer as I am, but my whole life is devoted to Their work, and if I can serve you I am always at your command, though at the moment I do not quite see what I can do. But you know that you can always thoroughly depend upon me to the uttermost – and that is a useful quality in these days. [13]

During his time in exile, Leadbeater's correspondents included A.P. Sinnett, with whom he exchanged critical remarks about Mrs Besant. On February 16th, 1907, Leadbeater commented in a letter to Sinnett that Chakravarti (whom he suspected of being about to move back as Mrs Besant's guru) was not an advanced initiate, and was not "attached to any Master we know." Sinnett, on July 5th, responded by noting that there were "cunning black powers at the back of Mrs Besant". Neither Sinnett nor Leadbeater were averse to making disparaging remarks about fellow Theosophists with whom they maintained cordial relations in public, including Mrs Besant and Weller van Hook, whom Sinnett called "this absurd creature". Sinnett, criticizing Leadbeater's ready acceptance of what had come to be known
as the "Adyar manifestations", noted that the supposed Masters were unclear on the question of "your behaviour with the boys", and commented on Leadbeater's "evasion of any repudiation of your famous teachings." Leadbeater, on October 27th, declared that he had "not changed in any way whatever" as a result of the "severe test", and that he "never for a day lost continuous touch with the Masters". He believed that Mrs Besant was suffering from a glamour; Sinnett, however, diagnosed her problem as megalomania. [14]

On June 28th, 1907, Mrs Besant was declared President of the Theosophical Society, having received an overwhelming majority of the votes: of 12,984 members 7,072 had voted for her, 153 against her, and 5,760 had not voted. She immediately asked Sinnett to relinquish his office as Vice-President for doubting that the Masters has appeared to Olcott, and appointed Sir S. Subramania Iyer, an eminent Indian judge, in his stead. [15]

By August, 1907, Leadbeater and Mrs Besant were together again, working on their occult investigations at Weiser Hirsch in Germany; accompanying them were Jinarajadasa, Miss Bright, Mrs Russak, Mrs van Hook, and her son, Hubert. [16] The devoted most of their time to continuing the occult investigations of previous years, before the "Leadbeater affair", and frequented the forest
where they would examine nature spirits and molecules, the latter as a continuation of their explorations into the nature of matter and occult chemistry. Jinarajadasa busily drew diagrams of what they saw, and these were included when the material was published in *The Theosophist* between January and December, 1908. They also continued their investigations into past lives, focussing once again on Miss Willson ("Arcor") and looking into the past of Esther Bright ("Bee").

One of the problems associated with occult chemistry investigations in the past had been that of actually obtaining specimens of the chemical elements to be examined. Through Sinnett’s influence some specimens had been obtained from Sir William Crookes, with whom Leadbeater had been initiated into the TS, but there were difficulties in obtaining the rarer elements. Jinarajadasa acquired various samples from local chemists and grocers. For less readily available material, Leadbeater and Jinarajadasa visited the nearby Dresden Museum, and Leadbeater found that he could "picture" the elements without having to hold them in his hand, and, better still, once having seen an element could use the "distance-flash-line" method to recreate the image at will so that he and Mrs Besant could examine it at their leisure. Initially they worked separately, but found this created complications when they each saw the same
element differently. A ready solution was forthcoming: Mrs Besant had been examining them sideways, Leadbeater from the top. Notwithstanding these practical problems, the pair examined and recorded the structures of fifty-six elements and six isotopes, although they did not regard this as the end of the occult chemistry investigations. [17]

In addition to discoveries in the scientific field, Leadbeater also "discovered" some of the evidence upon which he had been charged in 1906. A copy of the famous "cypher letter" was sent to him, together with the name of the boy to whom it was allegedly sent. Leadbeater commented that he feared it was not a copy of the original, but one in which words had been "transposed to distort their meanings". He also claimed that there seemed to be insertions which he did not remember or recognize. All these denials were sufficiently vague or imprecise to be largely meaningless, and instead of either affirming or denying that he had written the letter or a letter in code to this boy or another boy, Leadbeater merely hedged. One wonders what sort of transposition could have been made to produce the passage which most readers found offensive. The whole matter remained clouded with mystery. Josephine Ransom noted:

It is on record in the Archives that at least one person was sure that the "cipher" [sic] letter was
not a correct copy of the true original. [18]

This person was Johan van Manen, who suggested that Alex Fullerton had forged the letter; however, van Manen went on to ask why Leadbeater did not either affirm or deny the genuineness of the letter. [19]

Yet these minor difficulties seemed insignificant at the time, and feeling was widespread that Leadbeater had been wronged, and should be reinstated. This feeling was encouraged by the increasingly important role of his psychic powers, especially in the investigation of the past lives of important Theosophists. The explorations at Weisser Hirsch began a long and complex series of investigations into past incarnations which became known as "the Lives", and involved the tabulation of past lives for all the major figures, good and evil, in the Society's history. [20]

Leadbeater's occult powers were also impressing members as the series on occult chemistry was published, and even Sinnett was appealing to him to employ his psychic powers to investigate the nature of aether. Sinnett was engaged in an argument with Sir Oliver Lodge on the nature of matter, and sought Leadbeater's views. [21] In a letter to Mrs Besant in April, 1908, Leadbeater noted that the whole universe was built out of "fragments of force",
"bubbles which seem empty to the highest sight we can bring to bear" but which were actually filled with "the force of the Logos". [22]

By the end of 1907 Leadbeater was answering questions in *The Theosophic Messenger*, the American journal, despite the strong objections of his enemies in that section. The objections became so vociferous that Dr van Hook, the General Secretary, felt obliged to conduct a referendum, resulting in an overwhelming vote in favour of Leadbeater's articles: 1,245 in favour, and only 285 against. This led, as Josephine Ransom notes, to "The malcontents banding into various groups and hoping to find enough support to form independent organizations." [23]

At the annual convention of the TS at Adyar in December, 1907, the issue of Leadbeater's return to the TS was the burning question. Dr van Hook, inspired, so he said, by the Masters, issued a series of letters in support of Leadbeater, calling for his reinstatement. The first of these appeared in April, 1908, and was titled *The Enemies of Mrs Besant are the Enemies of Charles W. Leadbeater, of the Masters and of the Future Religion of the World*. It began:

It must be clearly seen by all that the defence of Mr Charles'W Leadbeater is closely associated with
and indeed, involves the defence of Mrs Annie Besant, President of the Theosophical Society, who for many months has been the object of insinuations, innuendoes and open malicious charges of unfairness, duplicity, cavillation, lying and greed of power. [24]

Van Hook went on to note that Mrs Besant was following HPB in insisting that the Society had a role in the establishment of a new world religion, and further, to encourage acceptance "of the validity of the evidence furnished by sixth sense perception" and the fact that "all religions have their esoteric occult side". He went on to link the "Adyar manifestations" (that is, the Masters appearing to Olcott on his death-bed) with the defence of Leadbeater, noting that those who believed in one believed in the other. And he clearly linked the defence of Mrs Besant and the defence of Mr Leadbeater:

It must have been seen by all that it is Mrs Besant's desire to stand or fall with Charles W Leadbeater. How can he be an Initiate and not be acknowledged as such by her. At Munich, at Chicago and elsewhere, she has boldly stated in no uncertain terms that he is her fellow-Initiate. And in Chicago she made in addition this
awe-inspiring statement: "Let me assure you in all solemnity that the Initiates who are disciples of the Masters do not press their presence upon the Theosophical Society or any other society in the world. We stand on other ground. We offer our services. You may reject them or take them, as you will, but after the experience that H.P.B. endured, that he and I have endured, let me assure you that there is not anxiety in the ranks of the Initiates to come forward and offer services which you do not desire to accept." [25]

The second statement appeared in May, and began with a brief account of Leadbeater's early life, his meeting with HPB and Theosophical career in India. Van Hooik noted that, after the death of HPB, it was Leadbeater and Mrs Besant who, "practically alone, carried the burden of teaching for the Society", Olcott being wholly engaged in administration. Leadbeater's work of psychic investigation, "his ability to functionate [sic] upon the higher planes and to bring back perfect records of his experiences", his work on thought-forms, the aura and life after death, all these were mentioned as clear evidence of his vital importance to the Society, and of his status as a disciple of the Masters. A highly emotional account of the attacks on Leadbeater and the procedures of the "farcical mock-trial", together with
other indignities he had suffered at the hands of "bitter and jealous enemies who for years had carried in their hearts the most unjust suspicions", followed. The Committee hearing became a "venomous and deeply acrimonious cross-examination designed to entrap him into incriminating admissions which might be used to slay his life-long reputation for personal purity and decent living". Van Hook directed the attention of "any unprejudiced reader" to the transcripts of the trial, in which the innocence of this "dignified gentleman who had given the ripest of his years to unceasing activity for the Theosophical Society" could clearly be seen.

Van Hook then went on to consider the actual charges and Leadbeater's reply to them, repeating very much Leadbeater's own explanation. Being able to see clairvoyantly the sexual desire tormenting the boys, Leadbeater had advised masturbation as a solution which would eliminate the possibility of incurring karmic consequences demanding many incarnations for their expiation. Although presently misunderstood, this procedure would someday be widely recognized.

The introduction of this question into the thought of the Theosophical world is but the precursor of its introduction into the thought of the
outer-world. Mr Leadbeater has been the one to bear the persecution and martyrdom of its introduction. [26]

Van Hook concluded:

No mistake was made by Mr Leadbeater in the nature of the advice he gave his boys. No mistake was made in the way he gave it. Nor did he make any mistake in the just estimation of the consequences of any other solution of the terrible problem which was presented to him. If any mistake was made it was a mistake of judgment in trusting too much to the confidence of the parents of the boys who, he thought, knew and loved him so well that they would accept his judgment on matters about which ordinary people have little or no knowledge and about which he, by the nature of his occult training, had a full comprehension. [27]

This second letter was duly followed by a third on theoretical aspects of the will, the ego and evolution.

These letters had been inspired by Mrs Besant w. h., according to a letter she published in the journal of the ES, had been told by HPB (on the inner planes) that a
defence of Leadbeater must be prepared, but that she was not to do it personally. [28] Van Hook initially said only that the letters had been inspired by the Master M, although he later claimed that they had been dictated verbatim. [29] No explanation was forthcoming for the contradictions between the Master's opinion in conversation with Olcott and dictation to Van Hook, although critics of the letters and of Leadbeater were not slow to point them out.

The American Theosophists were generally very impressed with the letters and took them seriously. They had already been warned by Jinarajadasa of the dangers of opposing the work of an Initiate: in the Theosophical Messenger for July, 1908, he noted that such opposition would lead to complete loss of "occult privileges" for three or four lifetimes. [30]

The British Theosophists were less impressed. The 1906 transcript was published and sent to all members, no doubt in an attempt to discourage them from following the strange logic of the Van Hook letters. At the annual convention of the British Section, a motion allowing for the reinstatement of Leadbeater produced violent arguments. A special committee was appointed to prepare a report on the matter; it consisted of Mrs Maude Sharpe (the General Secretary of the British Section), Edith Ward, G.R.S. Mead,
Herbert Whyte and Herbert Burrows. [31] Numerous pamphlets were circulated giving the broadest possible publicity to the opinions of the special committee's members. All the details of the 1906 trial were resurrected, copies of letters to and from Leadbeater were re-published, and emotions ran high. [32]

Herbert Burrows drew attention to the discrepancies between the Masters talking to Olcott, and the Masters dictating to Van Hook, and demanded that

the last vestige of this foul teaching which adiaphorically calls in the Masters to its aid, must absolutely disappear from the Theosophical Society. [33]

Burrows was supported even more vehemently by G.R.S. Mead, who declared that the TS was on "the brink of an abyss" into which it would be "inevitably plunged, if an imperative halt is not instantly called". And he declared:

At all times of great spiritual revival, the foul reflection, the distortion, the perversion of the most Sacred Mysteries accompanies it; at all such times the true Mysteries have been surrounded and besmirched with the foulest of sex crimes. For the
High Mysteries have to do chiefly with the Mystery of Regeneration. [34]

An amendment was moved to the motion calling for Leadbeater's reinstatement, and it demanded "the repudiation by the Society of this pernicious teaching", the Council declaring

its abhorrence of such practices, and in view of its incalculable harm to Theosophy, and of the disgrace which this teaching must inevitably bring upon the Society, earnestly calls upon its members, especially the President and the members of the General Council, to unite in putting an end to the present scandalous state of affairs...[35]

The amendment was overwhelmingly carried, and conveyed to Mrs Besant. She replied with a long letter "To the Members of the T.S." on September 7th, 1908, in which she reviewed the "Leadbeater Case". She noted that

...occultism condemns "Neo-Malthusian practices" as tending to strengthen the sex passion...it condemns the medical advice to young men to yield to their "natural passions"; it condemns solitary vice as only less harmful than prostitution; all
these things are degrading, unmanly, unwomanly. It exhorts man to remount by self-control the steep incline down which he has slipped by self-indulgence, until he becomes continent, into incontinent, by nature. On all this, Mr Leadbeater and myself are at one. [36]

She dismissed the 1906 Committee hearing with ridicule:

The so-called trial of Mr Leadbeater was a travesty of justice. He came before Judges, one of whom had declared before hand that "he ought to be shot"; another, before hearing him, had written passionate denunciations of him, a third and fourth had accepted, on purely psychic testimony, unsupported by any evidence, the view that he was grossly immoral, and a danger to the Society...[37]

She similarly dismissed the suggestion that Leadbeater had ever given the advice to boys who had not sought it, and likewise dismissed the "cypher letter", saying that, when he had seen a copy of it, Leadbeater had "repudiated it in its present form"; Mrs Besant did not explain what that phrase may have meant.
She concluded by calling for his reinstatement, and asked that the convention of each Section of the Society should request her to invite him back to membership. She also challenged the Society to disapprove of her own position by demanding her resignation, in which case she would seek the Master's permission to resign. Mrs Besant concluded with the assertion that the trouble was confined to "a small number of American and a considerable number of British members". She called upon all the members who had overwhelmingly voted for her as "chosen by the Masters" to lead the Society, to accept her direction.

Meanwhile, the British Section continued as a centre of dissension. The special committee prepared its report, which the General Secretary and the Executive Committee then suppressed by a vote of nine to five. The nine who voted to suppress the report then also resolved that, having considered all the evidence in the case, there was no reason why Leadbeater should not rejoin the Society. Much was made of this Executive resolution in later years, when it came to be interpreted as a re-hearing of the 1906 charges, and it is therefore important to note who were the members of the British Executive Committee voting in Leadbeater's favour: Miss Bright, Miss Green, Mrs Larmuth, Mr Leo, Miss Mallett, Mr Hodgson-Smith, Mr Wedgwood, Mr Whyte and Mrs Sharpe. [38]
In December, 1908, at the annual convention of the TS, the Leadbeater Case continued to provide material for endless debate. Argument encouraged argument, and the debating became increasingly fierce, both sides producing large quantities of "evidence" to support their cases. Pamphlets were produced in quantity, notably in India, in the USA and in Britain. [39]

On December 26 the General Council of the Society debated the issue of Leadbeater's reinstatement, and passed a lengthy resolution declaring, amongst other things, that Leadbeater had resigned 'to preserve peace and "undesirable controversy"'. It went on to declare that the TS affirmed inviolable liberty of thought of every member of The Theosophical Society in all matters philosophical, religious, and ethical, and his right to follow his own conscience in all such matters, without thereby emperilling his status within The Society or in any way implicating in his opinion any member of The Society who does not assert his agreement therewith. [40]

The General Council therefore resolved:
That in pursuance of this affirmation of the individual responsibility for his own opinions, it declares that there is no reason why Mr C.W. Leadbeater should not return, if he wishes, to his place in the Society which he has in the past served so well. [41]

The resolution was carried by a vote of twenty-three out of twenty-five for the general motion regarding liberty of thought, and twenty-one out of twenty-four for Leadbeater's reinstatement. Thirteen of the national General Secretaries were in favour, and one abstained; of the other members of the Council, one abstained and two voted against the resolution. These were Bertram Keightley and Francesca Arundale. Curiously enough, in the light of later events, the council also resolved that belief in Mahatmas was not obligatory and that the T.S. remained neutral "as to authenticity or non-authenticity of any statements issued as from the Mahatmas". [42]

At the Convention, Mrs Besant had already referred to Leadbeater as a martyr, wronged by her and by the Society, and she declared that "never again would a shadow come between her and her brother Initiate". [43] A ready explanation was found for the difficult events of 1906-7:
...this dreadful ordeal which he had to undergo was the symbolic crucifixion through which every candidate for the Arhat Initiation must pass. [44]

Leadbeater himself later explained the occult significance of such a trial:

It is one of the features of the Fourth [Arhat] Initiation that the man shall be left entirely alone. First he has to stand alone on the Physical plane; all his friends turn against him through some misunderstanding; it all comes right afterwards, but for the time the man is left with the feeling that all the world is turned against him. [45]

Leadbeater had also to endure the evil thought-forms which his enemies directed, consciously or unconsciously, towards him; in most cases, he told his pupils, the thought-forms had been so weak as to provoke nothing more than amusement or pity in him. Sometimes, however, when they were really unpleasant and he did not feel they should be allowed to wander about, he would transform them through his own power into positive and good thought-forms, sometimes sending them
back to their originators in the hope that they might be inspired with brotherly love.

However torn the TS may have been by the arguments and dissension, Leadbeater himself remained placid and serene, choosing to ignore his critics and the attacks they made upon him. To his friends this represented spirituality and detachment; to his enemies it was an indication that the charges were all true and he dared not try to answer them. He arrived back at Adyar on February 10th, 1909, accompanied by Johan van Manen, his Dutch secretary, and re-occupied the same octagonal room in which he had previously played host to the Masters. To welcome him Mrs Besant wrote in her *Adyar Bulletin*:

Welcome, thrice welcome is he, and most glad shall I be of his help, both in writing and in teaching work. [46]

Adyar had so changed that he barely recognized it, for although the old estate remained, Mrs Besant had added more property. To the original twenty-seven acres some eighty-three were joined when she purchased a property from
the Prince of Arcot, and another twenty-one acres were added along the Indian Ocean. The former property was known as Blavatsky Gardens, and the latter Olcott Gardens. In January, 1909, another twenty acres were added, and called Besant Grove. [47] To Leadbeater, the extended estate was even more glorious than the smaller original. As he was to write a few years later:

Nowhere else in the world at this present moment is there such a centre of influence - a centre constantly visited by the Great Ones and therefore bathed in Their wonderful magnetism. The vibrations here are marvellously stimulating, and all of us who live here are therefore under a constant strain which brings out whatever is in us. Strong vibrations from other planes are laying all the while upon our various vehicles, and those parts of us which can in any sense respond to them are raised, strengthened and purified. To live at Adyar is the most glorious of all opportunities for those who are able to take advantage of it, but its effects on those who are constitutionally unable to harmonize with its vibrations may be dangerous rather than helpful... The seekers here live mostly in the great central building within the immediate aura
of the shrine room and the President. [48]

The shrine room was the centre of the ES, a small room between the meeting room of the ES and a large room which Leadbeater later occupied on the roof of the headquarters building.

It was closed to all but a select few, and was cleaned by devoted members rather than ordinary servants. The marble floor had the sacred word \textit{OM} in Sanskrit set into it in marble mosaic, and on the far wall hung the portraits of the two Masters chiefly concerned with the Society, KH and M, painted by Herr Schmiechen under HPB's direction. On other walls hung paintings of various Masters, including one of the Master Jesus said to have been phenomenally produced by HPB. [49] Those who lived at Adyar, and were deemed worthy, could obtain permission to spend half an hour each day in meditation in the shrine room.

Leadbeater immediately settled down into the routine of Theosophical life almost as if he had never been away from it. He was given charge of \textit{The Theosophist} whilst Mrs Besant was away on her many lecture tours, and gave regular talks on the roof-top of the headquarters building. These talks were transcribed and subsequently found their way into print in one or other of his numerous books. He
so devoted himself to revising, checking and editing his
tions of investigations into past lives, and other research
to the past past of the earth and its people, later to be
lished as Man: Whence, How and Whither, and it was from
his research that the next facet of his multi-faceted career
as to begin. Ernest Wood served as his secretary. [50] Each
by Leadbeater began work around 6.30 a.m., continuing until
ome time before midnight, or even up to 2.00 a.m. the
llowing morning, every minute being spent on Theosophical
vity. [51]

At Adyar he was surrounded by friends, even if
he Theosophical movement had been split by his return to
. The production of pamphlets continued unabated, eminent
ugures in the Society resigned, or broke away to form
parate movements. [52] But Leadbeater, the fallen prophet
stored, had now become a martyr of Theosophy, chosen of
e Masters. Having undergone suffering and symbolic
ucifixion, he was now returned to his rightful place in
he occult order of things.

It now remained only for Leadbeater to don the
bes of a John the Baptist and proclaim the imminence of
e Second Coming, taking the Society into yet another
iod of crisis, dissension and turmoil. As he continued
s occult research into past incarnations he moved steadily
towards that new role, and assumed it one day in April, 1909, when he "discovered" Krishnamurti.
Chapter 12: The Discovery of Krishnamurti

One day in April, 1909, not long after he had returned to Adyar, Leadbeater, accompanied by some of his disciples, including Johan van Manen, Ernest Wood, and B.P.Wadia, walked to the beach on the TS Estate for a swim. [1] A number of Indian boys, the children of Theosophical workers living on the Estate, joined the party and Leadbeater was especially attracted to one of the boys whom he had not seen before. He patted the head of this thin, unhappy looking child, and commented to B.P.Wadia that he felt a sense of well-being with the boy.

When they had returned from the beach, Leadbeater told Dick Balfour-Clarke that he had been interested by the size and beauty of the boy's aura, as also by that of his brother.[2] He was startled when Ernest Wood commented that the boy, whose name was Krishnamurti, was particularly dim-witted, and that Wood, who had been assisting him with his home-work, considered him to be without any great potential. Undeterred, Leadbeater predicted that the boy would become a great spiritual teacher and speaker. Wood was astounded, and asked whether he would be as great as Mrs Besant. The reply shocked them all: Krishnamurti was to be much greater than Mrs Besant.
Certainly it was not his physical appearance that attracted Leadbeater; as Mary Lutyens noted:

...apart from his wonderful eyes, he was not at all prepossessing at that time. He was under-nourished, scrawny and dirty; his ribs showed through his skin and he had a persistent cough; his teeth were crooked and he wore his hair in the customary Brahmin fashion of South India, shaved in front to the crown and falling below his knees in a pigtail at the back; moreover his vacant expression gave him an almost moronic look....Moreover, according to Wood, he was so extremely physically weak that his father declared more than once that he was bound to die. [3]

Krishnamurti was the son of a dedicated Theosophical worker, Jiddu Narayannah, a Brahmin who had retired from his employment in the Civil Service in 1908 to work for the TS, and who resided in a small house just outside the Adyar Estate. Narayannah was a widower, the father of thirteen children, only four of whom had survived. All four were boys, and one of them, Sadanand, was mentally deficient. Krishnamurti, the eighth child, had been born on May 11th, 1895, in a small town about one hundred and fifty miles to the north of Madras, and he was thirteen when his
father moved with his family to Adyar. [4]

Some time after his first meeting with Krishnamurti, Leadbeater told Ernest Wood that the boy was, in all probability, to become the "Vehicle" for the Lord Maitreya, and that he was to be trained for this purpose. To understand the meaning of this, one must understand the operation of the Inner Government of the World according to Leadbeater. [5]

In Leadbeater's evolutionary scheme of things, life, having descended into matter, passed through the stages of mineral, plant and animal, and then into Man. His view of human evolution was very much that of the nineteenth century: at the bottom of the ladder of evolution were the primitive peoples, like the Australian Aborigines, and at the top were the Europeans, notably the British. [6] But evolution did not stop there. As Man evolved thus far, so he could evolve further and deliberately develop the powers and potential which were latent within him. If he made a definite effort to evolve consciously, he would pass out of the stream of ordinary, slow human evolution, onto a Path of higher and quicker development.

The scheme of evolution progressed upwards from Man as he now is, through various stages of development
(called Initiations) to the level of the Masters, or super-men, of whom there were also varying degrees and grades, and beyond them to even more exalted beings, beyond whom was that Being Man calls God (called by Leadbeater the "Solar Logos"). And even beyond God as understood by Man there were yet higher and more exalted Beings. [7] (For an outline of Leadbeater's evolutionary scheme, see Appendix 1)

Whilst most people were content to go along with the slow, steady movement of evolution, carrying them over thousands of lifetimes towards perfection in the far, far distance, the occultist desired to speed up the process, and therefore to acquire those virtues which were prescribed by the Masters who rule the world.

When a man has succeeded in unfolding his latent possibilities so far that he attracts the attention of the Masters of the Wisdom, one of them will probably receive him as an apprentice upon probation. The period of probation is usually seven years, but may either be shortened or lengthened at the discretion of the Master. At the end of that time, if his work has been satisfactory, he becomes what is commonly called an accepted pupil. This brings him into close
relations with his Master, so that the vibrations of the latter constantly play upon him, and he gradually learns to look at everything as the Master looks at it. [8]

The pupil is first placed upon probation, and then accepted as the pupil of a Master.

He then begins to progress through the Great Initiations of which there are ultimately ten, although the tenth is held by the Logos alone. Most pupils aspire perhaps to the first four Initiations, although even this would be rare in any one lifetime. The Fourth Initiation is that of the Arhat, and brings the consciousness of the individual into the buddhic plane whilst he is in the body, and into nirvana when he leaves the body in trance or sleep. [9] The Fifth Initiation, Asekha, makes one into a Superman, he becomes an Adept, and can take pupils of his own. Beyond this, the individual usually passes from contact with the earth, but those who determine to remain become members of the Occult Hierarchy, the Inner Government of the World.

The seven Masters principally concerned with the government of the world on the inner planes exist on the level of the Sixth Initiation, the Chohan Initiation; but above them stand the three principal officers in the
administration of the world from an occult point of view: the Mahachohan, the Bodhisattva and the Manu. [10] These are on the level of the Seventh Initiation. The Eight Initiation is that of the Buddha, above whom comes the Lord of the World. At the very top of the occult bureaucracy stands the Trinity of the Logos of this solar system. Leadbeater noted Trinities in all the major world religions, and equated them directly with this Logos.

It is certainly easier to understand this scheme for the Inner Government of the World by means of a diagram, although even that can not convey the overwhelming mass of detail which Leadbeater described about the officers and their work. (See Appendix 2) The three principal officers concerned with world affairs are the Mahachohan, the Manu and the Bodhisattva. The Bodhisattava is the "World Teacher, Minister of Education and Religion", and his work is concerned with the spirituality of the world and of each civilization. He occupies the position of "heart" in the way the Manu occupies that of "brain", and works out the details of the world's evolution. The Mahachohan "directs the minds of men so that the different forms of culture and civilization shall be unfolded according to the cyclic plan". Leadbeater likens the three to the Head, Heart and Hands, "all active in the world, moulding the race into one organic being, a Heavenly Man". [11]
These three are positions rather than persons, and hence Leadbeater taught that the Lord Gautama, commonly thought of as the Buddha, once held the office of Bodhisattva, but that was now occupied by the Lord Maitreya. [12] The Bodhisattva not only inspired the great religious leaders, like Laotze (c. 600 BC) and Confucius (c. 551-478 BC) in China, Pythagorus (c. 582-500 BC) in ancient Greece, Shri Shankaracharya (8th century AD) and Mahavira (6th century BC) in India, but also on two occasions actually took over the body of one of his pupils to speak directly to the world. One the first occasion he manifested as Sri Krishna in India, and on the second as Christ in Palestine. On neither occasion was an actual incarnation of the Bodhisattva involved; the body of a close pupil, carefully prepared, was temporarily occupied by the Great Being, who spoke and taught through it. In the case of Jesus Christ, Leadbeater taught that the body of the pupil Jesus was temporarily used as a vehicle for the Lord Maitreya, known in Christianity as the Christ, after his Baptism, and periodically until his Crucifixion.

But the Bodhisattva's involvement in the religions of man was not a thing of the past:

He will come to earth many times more during the
progress of the root race, founding many such religions, and each time drawing round Himself such men of that race as are prepared to follow Him, from among whose number He chooses some whom He can draw into closer relation with Himself, some who are pupils in the innermost sense. Towards the end of the race, when it is already far past its prime, and a new race is beginning to dominate the world, He will arrange that all His special pupils, who have followed Him in those previous incarnations, shall come to birth together about the time of His last life on the world. [13]

As early as 1901, it seems, Leadbeater was presenting a group of students in London with teachings regarding "the coming of a new Messiah, a great spiritual teacher bringing a new religion", for whose coming a period of peace was required. [14] Obviously, this concept developed until it reached the world view held by Leadbeater in 1909, within which the boy, Krishnamurti, was to be located.

Leadbeater believed that the Aryan Root Race, the fifth root-race of the seven which made up one world period, was preparing to enter into its final phase. By race, Leadbeater did not specifically mean an homogeneous,
physically identifiable group, although this was involved in
the concept; he referred literally to a group of incarnating
entities, and the present population of the world was seen
as consisting not only of the root race dominating this
stage of evolution and called, rather unfortunately, the
Aryan Root Race, but also remnants of Man's evolutionary
past. These remnants included peoples who belonged to the
Atlantean Root Race, which preceded the Aryan, or the
Lemurian, which preceded the Atlantean. [15] The Aryan Root
Race was preparing to enter its sixth sub-race, from which
would develop the stock from which the Sixth Root Race would
be developed.

The present sub-race, the Teutonic, was
characterized by the development of commercial and
scientific fields, by individualistic pursuits. The next
sub-race was to be called the Austral-American, and was to
be characterized by the development of intuitive faculties,
and the emergence of a cooperative and fraternal spirit. It
was seen to be developing in Australia, and on the west
coast of America.[16]

In preparation for the emergence of a new
sub-race, and the new Root Race, marking a new epoch in
Man's evolution, Leadbeater believed that the World Teacher,
the Lord Maitreya, was again going to incarnate temporarily
to the body of one of his pupils. Lord Maitreya, who cupied the office of Bodhisattva, possessed a body of his n, of course:

The Lord Maitreya is wearing a body of the Keltic race at the present time, though when He comes to the world to teach His people as He intends to do very shortly, He will make use of a body prepared for Him by one of His disciples. His is a face of wondrous beauty, strong, and yet most tender, with rich hair flowing like red gold about His shoulders. His beard is pointed, as in some of the old pictures, and His eyes, of a wonderful violet, are like twin flowers, like stars, like deep and holy pools filled with the waters of everlasting peace. His smile is dazzling beyond words, and a blinding glory of Light surrounds Him, intermingled with that marvellous rose-coloured glow which ever shines from the Lord of Love.

[17]

lived in a house in the Himalayas, overlooking gardens d terraces, and the Indian planes. No explanation was ven as to why he did not appear in his own physical body en teaching, or why he found it necessary to occupy a body one period, but was satisfied with inspiring a teacher in
leadbeater was equally familiar with the
ance, residences and work of most of the other
ers, and described them in some detail in private papers
ulated amongst members of the es. [18]

leadbeater believed that the second coming, in the
ian sense, was about to happen, and in this he was not
The latter years of the nineteenth and the ear-
s of the twentieth century were punctuated with
ments proclaiming the adventist message. [19]

The origin of leadbeater's identification of the
st of Christianity with the Maitreya of Buddhism is not
itional theosophical one. His critics were quick to
it out basic contradictions between his teachings and
le of HPB. She had declared:

no master of wisdom from the east will himself
appear or send anyone to Europe or
America....until the year 1975. [20]
said of Maitreya:

Maitreya is the secret name of the fifth Buddha,
and the Kalki avatar of the brahmans - the last
Messiah who will come at the culmination of the
Great Cycle [21]

and

He will appear as Maitreya Buddha, the last of the Avatars and Buddhas, in the seventh Race. Only it is not in the Kali yuga, our present terrifically materialistic age of Darkness, the "Black Age", that a new Saviour of Humanity can ever appear. [22]

The origins of Leadbeater's identification of Maitreya with Christ, and of the Christology which followed it are unclear. They may have derived from a relatively obscure magical fraternity, the Order of the Sat B'hai. For a time this was controlled by an eccentric Englishman, John Yarker (1833-1913), who offered its rituals to HPB when she was contemplating developing the TS along semi-Masonic lines. [23] In the Second Grade of the Sat B'hai the ritual refers to Christ and Maitreya as one and the same. [24]

Nor is it clear when first this identification, or the imminence of the Coming was proclaimed. It has been said that HPB told a group of Theosophists in 1889 that the real purpose for establishing the TS was to prepare humanity for a further teaching ministry by the World Teacher. [25] However, there is nothing in HPB's published works to
support this claim. Mary Lutyens claimed that Mrs Besant was giving out similar teachings in 1896. [26] Certainly, Mrs Besant did proclaim the imminent coming of the Bodhisattva in a speech on the last day of 1908, and the idea received more attention in her speeches throughout the following year.[27] For example, during her August, 1909, tour of the USA, many of her lectures were on "The Coming Christ" or "The Coming Race".

Whatever the origins of the idea, or whenever its first proclamation within the TS, shortly after his discovery of Krishnamurti Leadbeater was teaching that the Master who had appeared as Sri Krishna and as Christ was preparing to return to lay the foundations of religion for the Sixth Root Race. Initially this teaching was confined to the secret papers of the ES, but eventually it became a matter of speculation and rumour within the TS, and finally the subject of open discussion and was taken up enthusiastically, and publicly, by Mrs Besant.

At the time of his meeting with Krishnamurti, Leadbeater was engaged in research that was to be published as *Man. Whence, How and Whither* (1913). Mrs Besant's name appeared as co-author, though as with all their collaborations her contribution was minimal. Leadbeater began with research on the future development of the Sixth
Root Race, assisted by Wood, who asked him questions as he reclined on his couch, and van Manen, who transcribed the answers. In the course of these investigations, involving examinations of the past lives of many people, Wood asked whether Hindus, like Europeans, travelled from race to race and country to country in the course of their incarnations. Leadbeater decided to investigate, but felt that it would be preferable not to delve into the lives of members of the TS. "Theosophists are always abnormal anyhow", he commented. It was suggested that he should examine the past lives of the two boys whom he had met on the beach, and, after their father had given his enthusiastic support, the research began.

These explorations culminated in two large volumes detailing some thirty lives of the young Krishnamurti, under the symbolic name of "Alcyone".[28] Leadbeater again collaborated with Mrs Besant, although he completed twenty-eight of the lives, and she but two. Great excitement was created at Adyar by the news of these occult researches, and an audience of enthusiastic Theosophists ascended to the roof of the headquarters building each evening after dinner to hear the latest revelations, all desperately hoping that their past lives would figure prominently, and favourably, in one of the instalments.
Following the public descriptions, Leadbeater and Wood would retire to the octagonal room where Leadbeater would finalize and clarify the evening's readings, walking up and down in the room, occasionally checking some detail in his library, while Wood put his stenography to use taking it all down. They often worked until two or three o'clock in the morning. As Nethercott noted in his biography of Mrs Beant:

Usually, to an outsider, the process would have seemed identical with that in which an imaginative and fertile author dictates his copy to a private secretary and even at times asks the opinion of the secretary as to the impression he is producing. [29]

Leadbeater now declared that Krishnamurti and his family had been brought to Adyar for some special reason, and that both he and his younger brother, Nityananda, were undergo special training at the direction of the Masters. When Nitya's Upayanam took place - the ceremony in which a Brahmin boy becomes a man, and is given his sacred thread - Leadbeater watched Krishnamurti intently, and afterwards asked the boys' father to bring them to his cottage one afternoon after school. When Narayanish did so, Leadbeater placed his hands on Krishna's head and described one of the
oy's former lives. Krishna later recalled:

When I first went over to his room I was much afraid, for most Indian boys are afraid of Europeans....the Europeans in India are by no means generally kind to us and I used to see many acts of cruelty which made me still more bitter. It was a surprise to us, therefore, to find how different was the Englishman who was also a Theosophist. [30]

fter this, the boy was taken to Leadbeater ever.Saturday and Sunday afternoon, when the descriptions of the past ives continued, transcribed first by Narayaniah, and later by Wood. At the time the boy spoke little English, and was xtremely shy and frightened. This not only hindered ommunication with Leadbeater, but made Krishna's schoolife very difficult and unpleasant. He was frequently put of class, or caned, and suffered greatly at the hands of his teacher.

Mrs Besant was in America at this time, and Leadbeater did not tell her of his "discovery" right away. ren when more important developments occurred he maintained ilence in his letters. On August 1st, 1909, he was irected by the Master to take Krishna and his brother to
the Master's house, in their astral bodies, whilst their physical bodies were asleep, and there they were placed upon Probation as the Master KH's pupils.

When [the Master] thinks of a man as a possible pupil He usually asks one who is already closely linked with Him to bring the candidate to Him astrally. There is not generally much ceremonial connected with this step: the Master gives a few words of advice, tells the new pupil what will be expected of him, and often, in His gracious way, He may find some reason to congratulate him on the work he has already accomplished. He then makes a living image of the pupil - that is to say, He moulds out of mental, astral and etheric matter an exact counterpart of the causal, mental, astral and etheric bodies of the neophyte, and keeps that image at hand, so that He may look at it periodically. Each image is magnetically attached to the person whom it represents, so that every variation of thought and feeling in him is accurately reproduced in it by sympathetic vibration and thus by a single glance at the image the Master can see at once whether during the period since He last looked at it there has been any sort of disturbance in the bodies it
represents—whether the man had been losing his temper, or allowing himself to be a prey to impure feelings, worry, depression, or anything of the kind. It is only after He has seen that for a considerable time no serious excitement has taken place in the vehicles represented by the image, that He will admit the pupil into near relations with Himself. [31]

rishnamurti represented the first in a series of young people who, much to the chagrin of the older Theosophists, suddenly found themselves entering the occult path. To pacify the older brethren, Leadbeater wrote:

Because the time is exceptional many young people have been put on probation in recent years, and their parents and the older members of the Society have sometimes wondered how it is that, notwithstanding their own sincere sacrifices and labours, often extending over twenty, thirty or even forty years, they have been passed over and the young people chosen. [32]

The answer was simple: the older members had to remember
It has been your karma to work all this time preparing yourself and preparing the way for the coming of the World Teacher; and just because you are good old members, you have attracted some of the souls who have been working up a high level of development in previous incarnations, so that they have been born to you are your children. [33]

As was his custom, Leadbeater kept notes of his recollections of the occasions upon which Krishna, Nitya and one other boy were placed on probation, and these were eventually published. Not unnaturally the boys had no recollection whatsoever. Leadbeater, however, remembered every detail:

We found the Master Kuthumi seated on the verandah of His house, and as I led the young ones forward to Him, He held out His hands to them. The first boy dropped gracefully to one knee and kissed His hand, and then reforward remained kneeling, pressing against the Master's knee. All of them kept their eyes upon Him, and their whole souls seemed to be pouring out through their eyes. He smiled on them most beautifully and said: "I welcome you with peculiar pleasure; you have all worked with me in the past, and I hope you will do
so again this time. I want you to be of us before
the Lord comes, so I am beginning with you very
erly. Remember this, that you wish to undertake
is one of the most glorious of all tasks, but it
is not an easy one, because you must gain perfect
control over these little bodies; you must forget
yourselves entirely and live only to be a blessing
to others, and to do the work which is given us to
do." Putting His hand under the chin of the first
boy as he knelt, He said with a bright smile: "Can
you do that " And they all replied that they
would try. Then the Master gave some valuable
personal advice to each in turn, and asked each
one separately: "Will you try to work in the world
under my guidance " And each said: "I will." Then
He drew the first boy in front of Him, and placed
both His hands upon his head, the boy once more
sinking to his knees. The Masters said: "Then I
take you as my pupil on Probation, and I hope that
you will soon come into closer relationship with
me, and therefore I give you my blessing, in order
that you may pass it on to others." As He spoke,
the boy's aura increased wonderfully in size, and
its colours of love and devotion glowed with
living fire; and he said: "Oh Master, make me
really good; make me fit to serve you." [34]
The Master then blessed Nitya and the other boy who had accompanied Krishna, and led them along a sloping path, to a bridge and across a river, and then into a cave. He showed them the living images of all his probationary pupils, and materialized images of them to add to the collection, much impressing and amazing the young boys. However, the Master rather embarrassed one boy:

In one of the images there was a patch of reddish matter, and the Master said to its original with a humorous glance: "What is that?" "I don't know", the boy replied; but I think he guessed, for it was the result of an emotional strain the night before. [34]

Leadbeater's auriic colour chart, "reddish" would have indicated sexual or sensual desire. [36]

Despite these developments, Leadbeater did not tell Mrs Besant of Krishna's role, or even that he had been placed on probation. In a letter to her on September 2nd, 1909, he commented that he had called on Narayananiah, and had been shocked to see the standard of their living quarters. There was no water closet, and a "pariah village" crowded the house in at the back. Leadbeater asked Mrs Besant.
urther a larger house with some conveniences could not be
ranged "for really he is one of our best and most reliable
kiers and I do not like to see him in this condition of
comfort". He then mentioned Krishna for the first time.

Naraniah's [sic] children are very well behaved,
and would cause us no trouble; van Manen and I
have taught some of them to swim, and have also
helped the elder with English composition and
reading, so we have come to know a little of them.
Also (but this is not generally known) I have used
one as a case to investigate for past lives and
have found him to have a past of very great
importance, indicating far greater advancement
than his father, or indeed than any of the people
at present at Headquarters - a better set of lives
even than Hubert's, though I think not so
sensational [37]. I am sure that he is not in this
compound by accident, but for the sake of its
influences; I should not be at all surprised to
find that the father had been brought here chiefly
on account of that boy; and that was another
reason why I was so shocked to see the family so
vilely housed, for it seems to me that if we are
going to have the karma of assisting even
indirectly at the bringing up of one whom the
Master has used in the past and is waiting to use again, we may as well at least give him the chance to grow up decently. [38]

And on September 28th he wrote to her again:

The set of lives upon which I have been engaged proves of quite enthralling interest, and of the greatest importance. [39]

He forwarded her the latest ten in the series of accounts of past incarnations, hoping that she would have a chance to consider them before her return to Adyar.

Leadbeater noted that he was working on the previous ten lives and hoped "by degrees to continue them back quite a long way and to find out how this curious intensifying type came from the Moon Chain, and if possible how it differs from the rest". He suggested that Mrs Besant, being "distinctly a member of that class", should have an interest in the subject. Leadbeater's view of evolution tried the life-force which had become man on earth successively through a number of planets, and included a phase on what is now the moon; Man had been in the mineral stage of evolution in one "chain-period", then in the vegetable, then in the animal on the lunar chain.
There [on the Moon] some of us attained our individualization, and so we were enabled to enter this Earth-chain as men. Others who were a little more backward did not succeed in attaining it, and so had to be born into this chain as animals for a while before they could reach humanity. [40]

Leadbeater wrote again to Mrs Besant on October 6th, noting what a contrast there was between the lives of Orion (Hubert van Hook) and Alcyone (Krishnamurti). Although the former's were characterized by "stirring adventure and crushing karma", the latter's were full of "curiously persistent self-sacrifice". Leadbeater was being assisted in his investigations by B.P. Wadia, and they had produced completed versions of the ten Alcyone lives which they sent, via commercial paper post, to Mrs Besant. Leadbeater noted in his letter that he did not use the real names of the characters, with a few famous exceptions, and enclosed a private list giving the key to the meanings of the "Star names". [41]

It was in this letter that he announced the identity of Alcyone to Mrs Besant for the first time:

Alcyone is at present a boy of 13 [in fact, he was
14 now], named Krishnamurti, the son of your E.S. Assistant Secretary Narainia. His present father appears in the lives sometimes, and is called Antares; his younger brother Mizar [Nitya] is important, and his dead mother (Omega) and his elder brother Regulus also appear but not prominently. With the assistance of Mr Clarke [Dick Balfour-Clarke] I am trying to teach him to speak English, and hope to have made some progress by the time you come. [42]

Letter of October 14th continued the news of Krishnamurti's English lessons, and he noted:

Narainia has had a providential difference of opinion with his schoolmaster, who seems to have been utterly inefficient, so the two boys in whom He [the Master] is most interested are at present at home, and I am utilizing the opportunity to have them taught as much English as possible, taking them myself when I can spare the time, and getting Clarke, Wood and Subramania [Iyer] and others to assist. I hope to have made considerable progress before your return, so that they may be able to talk intelligently to you. I am endeavouring to steer a rather cautious course; of
course, I must carry out the instructions given to me, but after all that has happened within the last three years, I must not take too prominent an interest in boys of 13! When you are here I shall be bolder, and can do more of what He wishes.

[43]

Leadbeater forwarded her another set of lives of Alcyone, hoping that she would find time to read them on the steamer on her way back to Adyar, and yet another batch of lives was sent to Mrs Besant at Port Said.

Mrs van Hook, who had come to Adyar at Mrs Besant’s suggestion to ensure that Hubert, previously the candidate for the Vehicle of the Lord Maitreya, should be properly trained, was now tutoring Krishna and Nitya, together with her own son. Mrs Russak and James Wedgwood were also present, and Leadbeater was very pleased to have the "old Weisser Hirsch party" almost reconstituted, lacking only Mrs Besant, who was coming, and Basil Hodgson-Smith, who was in England preparing for Oxford.

A duplicate set of the lives of Alcyone had also been sent to Jinarajadasa, then lecturing in the United States; he also received a photograph of Krishnamurti, regarding whose destiny Leadbeater had written to him, and
inspired to cry out: "Ecce Homo - Thou art the man." He also inspired to write a poem of praise to him who was the Vehicle, giving vent to the Adventist emotion that soon to sweep over the Society:

Brother, great Brother, I long for Thy coming,
Long is the night, and dreary is the day;
Deaf are the people to my weak proclaiming,
Only a few come to watch and to pray...

Come to us soon, thou Captain of Salvation,
Give to the world the solace of Thy word;
Grant me release from my long tribulation,
O sweet compassionate Face of the Lord! [44]

dale met Krishna and Nitya at Adyar on May 29, 1910, two years later, recalled that Krishna's face was that the Boy Christ in incarnation before me". [45]

Mrs Besant had been fascinated by all the details had received of Krishna's past and the promise of his re, and when she returned to Adyar from America on bember 27th she assisted in the work of further invstigation. She investigated only two lives, however, and accounts of them are significantly different in style to beater's. [46] She also helped by checking details and
Providing background material for other lives.

Krishnamurti's role rapidly crystallized; he was to be the Vehicle which the Lord Maitreya, the Christ, would use in teaching the world, establishing the new world religion, and laying the foundations for the new Root Race. In this role, Krishnamurti was succeeding Sri Krishna, his human predecessor, and Jesus of Nazareth. Whilst he was not to be the Christ himself, he was to be the body which the Christ himself would use, whilst his own purified and super-sensitive physical body remained in the seclusion of the Himalayan retreat which was his home. In preparation for his occupancy, Krishnamurti's bodies, physical, astral and mental, had to be purified, refined and spiritualized, so that he would not only be worthy to contain the Lord, but that he would not be damaged or destroyed by the immense spiritual power which would pour into him, and through him to the world.

It was for this that all his previous lives had served a preparation, and as Leadbeater and Mrs Besant scanned the akashic records for details of the thirty or so lives which were finally published, they could no doubt see the workings of the Inner Government of the world clearly displayed. "The Lives", as they quickly came to be known in the Theosophical world, provided the foundation not only for
rising Star, but also for a great deal of spiritual
bbery, infighting and oneupmanship.

More than anything, never, they provided
tbeater with the strings whereby he manipulated, on a
et cosmic stage, the destinies of innumerable puppets in
universal drama the script of which he, and he alone,
lld write.
Although Leadbeater's research into the past lives of members of the TS had begun in the 1890's, it was with his investigations into the lives of Ishnamurti/Alcyone that this became a major preoccupation with him, and an obsession with many of his followers.

In April, 1909, a series began in The Theosophist under the title "Rents in the Veil of Time", and provided a graphic coverage of the past incarnations of various heroes and heroines, most of whom remained anonymously veiled by other names. The Lives spanned a period from 22,662 BC to 624 AD, and contained the sort of material that makes for ripping reading. Each instalment was awaited with eager anticipation by Theosophists, most of whom hoped to find themselves in at least some minor role in one of the adventures of the selected few.

In 1913 Man. Whence, How and Whither was serialized in The Theosophist prior to its publication as a hefty volume of 500 pages. By this time some 280 Star Names had been used, although not all were immediately connected with incarnated personalities, and a little more than forty were publicly identified. These works led on to The Lives of Alcyones: A Clairvoyant Investigation of the
Lives Throughout the Ages of a Large Band of Servers. The subtitle of Man, Whence, How and Whither had been somewhat more pretentious. It read: A Clairvoyant Investigation of Prehistory, Anthropology and Cosmology With Predictions for the Future.

For Leadbeater, reincarnation was a central fact in the occult life.

Every one of us has a long line of these physical lives behind him, and the ordinary man has a fairly long line still in front of him. Each of such lives is a day at school. The ego puts upon himself his garment of flesh and goes forth into the school of the physical world to learn certain lessons. He learns them, or does not learn them, or partially learns them, as the case may be, during the schoolday of earthly life; then he lays aside the vesture of the flesh and returns home to his own level for rest and refreshment. In the morning of each new life he takes up again his lesson at the point where he left it the night before. Some lessons he may be able to learn in one day, while others may take him many days.
A process of reincarnation could be viewed by occultists sufficiently advanced psychic development, looking down on the sweep of human history recorded in the akashic ords. This was the work which the Lives set before Mrs. Sant and Leadbeater, "two observers, two explorers" whose k represented the following of a very ancient path dden by few feet today "but that will be trodden more and e by thronging students as time shows its stability". [2] they declared:

Science is today exploring the marvels of what it calls the "subjective mind", and is finding in it strange powers, strange upsurgings, strange memories. Health and balanced, dominating the brain, it shows as genius; out of equilibrium with the brain, vagrant and incalculable, it shows as insanity. Some day Science will realize that what it calls the subjective mind, Religion calls the Soul, and the exhibition of its powers depends on the physical and superphysical instruments at its command, If these are well-constructed, sound and flexible, and thoroughly under its control, the powers of vision, of audition, of memory irregularly welling up from the subjective mind become the normal and disposable powers of the Soul...then its powers increase, and knowledge,
otherwise unattainable, comes within its reach.

[3]

These powers could tune in, as it were, to the memory of
God:

...as the infant of a day contains within himself
the potentialities of his sire, so do we, the
offspring of God, contain within ourselves the
potentialities of Divinity. Hence, when we
resolutely turn the Soul away from the earth and
concentrate his attention on the Spirit — the
substance whereof he is the shadow in the world of
matter — the Soul may reach the "memory of
Nature", the embodiment in the material world of
the Thoughts of the Logos, the reflection, as it
were, of His Mind. There dwells the Past in
ever-living records; there also dwells the Future,
more difficult for the half-developed Soul to
reach because not yet manifested, nor yet
embodied, though quite as "real". The Soul,
reading these records, may transmit them to the
body, impress them on the brain, and then record
them in words and writings. [4]
Theosophists who, like their spiritualist counterparts, evoked their work was an extension of the work of orthodox scientists, a belief supported by scientists like Sir J. C. R. James and Sir Oliver Lodge. Theosophy, caught as is in the Victorian world view, saw Science as an advancing method for the acquisition of knowledge by man progressively took a firmer grasp on his own. Leadbeater characteristically presented occult in the guise of scientific research, and spoke of it as the impartial and objective observer of the phenomena of nature.

The occult methods whereby Leadbeater undertook research were varied, but never fitted into any scientific - in the orthodox sense - scheme. Sometimes he approached directly, sometimes another and sometimes a combination of different approaches in the investigation of lives. First, he could "read" the memories of the "body" of the individual, which would include the level of memories of the individual's lives, or he psychometrize the causal body: it is the "permanent essence of the ego in the higher mental world". [5] In terms, it can be thought of as a link between the worlds of man, and the higher. As vague as its nature Leadbeater's clairvoyance revealed it as an ovoid thing the physical body to a distance of about
eighteen inches beyond the physical, its colour dependant on the development reached by the individual. [6]

The second method available to him was to psychometrize the "permanent atom", that is, the unit of continuing and unchanging "substance" which carried over from incarnation to incarnation, throughout the almost endless process of evolution. [7] This was, Leadbeater stated, more difficult to do.

The third method involved reading the ego's experiences via one's own buddhic faculties. Whilst a discussion of the relative advantages and disadvantages of the three methods would no doubt be fascinating, it requires specialist knowledge of Leadbeater's world view, and of the special language he created to describe it.[8]

The physical presence of the person whose past lives were being investigated was an advantage, but not essential. Initially, Leadbeater required the person to be present, but progressed away from that need, and could virtually look up past lives at will. He recognized, however, that there was an ever-present danger that the interviewer would impose his own pre-conceptions upon his impressions:
The statements of clairvoyants may and must be coloured by opinions already formed, as was clearly the case with Swedenborg, who used a very narrow Christian terminology to describe the facts of the astral plane, and unquestionably saw many things through strong thought forms which he had made in previous years. He started with certain definite pre-conceptions and he made everything which he saw fit into these pre-conceptions.[9] cried his critics, did Leadbeater. [10] But he believed voided this danger, having been specially trained by the ers to check and double check his findings. The question accuracy in his clairvoyance will be considered in the 1 chapter of this work.

If the inner process whereby the information on lives was obtained appears unintelligible to the an, the actual procedures employed by Leadbeater when this work were quite mundane. Ernest Wood, who worked ely with him on the Lives, recorded the way it ened:

...every evening, after the roof top meetings were over, we would retire to his room. I would sit at his roll-top desk, writing down the dramatic
incidents of a life, as he clairvoyantly looked at them while he walked round and round the room to keep himself awake. Thus we would go far into the night, sometimes until two or three o’clock in the morning, until the life under review was finished. At any moment I might interrupt him with questions or suggestions. Mr Leadbeater would become much absorbed while thus walking round, and more than once he kicked his bare toe against the corner of the desk with a force sufficient to draw blood, but without at all noticing it. So far as I could see, he had no time during the day to invent these stories; occasionally he would consult a book or encyclopedia with reference to some point that he wanted to verify. [11]

Interestingly enough, Jinarajadasa, in a letter intended to defend Leadbeater from suggestions that he faked the Lives, stated that Leadbeater did indeed prepare material in advance prior to looking up the Lives concerned. Jinarajadasa said that Leadbeater would begin his investigations by reading reference books and encyclopedias for background material to get "as it were, a framework of history", before he settled down to the clairvoyant investigation. [12].
The finished products of Leadbeater's research into past life make fascinating reading. Man, Whence, How and Whither includes an account of the incarnations of a small group of leading Theosophists on the moon when they inhabited monkey-like bodies, and were servants of those who re now the Masters. Various complicated, and to the cynics musing, relationships occurred in the course of thousands of years. In 40,000 BC, for example, Leadbeater was Annie esant's wife, and their children included Krishna, Nitya and more than ten others. Thousands of years later, Mrs esant married Leadbeater's daughter by his wife, Nitya. And a Peru, some 12,000 BC, Leadbeater married Francesca rundale, producing Basil Hodgson-Smith, Bertram Keightley and A.P.Sinnett as their sons, and adopting George rundale.

The complex and exacting detail that went into the material can be seen from the following extract from the genealogical data on life in Peru, about 12,000 BC; it is drawn from three pages dealing with this life, and containing nothing but information of this type.

Uranus married Hesperia, and had three sons - Sirius, Centaurus and Alcyone - and two daughters - Aquarius and Sagittarius. The wife of Sirius was Spica, and Pollux, Castor and Vega were their
sons, and Alcestis and Minerva their daughters. Fides was an adopted son and married Glaucus. Pollux married Melpomene and had three sons - Cyrene, Apis, Flora - and two daughters - Ereo and Chamaeleon. Apis married Bootes, Eros Pisces and Chamaeleon Gemini. Vega married Pomona and they had one son, Ursa, who espoused Lacerta, and two daughters - Circe and Ajax, the latter marrying Rex. Ursa's family included Cancer (daughter), Alastor (son), Phocea (daughter) and Thetis (son). Of these, Alastor married Clio and had one daughter, Trapezium, and a son, Mecab. [13]

It is difficult to know whether the names chosen for the personalities as they were in incarnation were intended to correspond to some individual traits. Leadbeater said:

The scheme was to employ the names of planets for Those who are now Masters, the only exceptions being that the names of Vulcan and Venus were given to Madame Blavatsky and Col.Olcott respectively. The names of fixed stars or constellations, and Greek heroes, indifferently were given to those other characters whom we know to be in incarnation at the present time; the
names of Greek letters were given to some people who recurred frequently in the lives, and took parts of some prominence, but are not known to us in the present incarnation. In one or two cases people who were at first unrecognized have since been identified. [14]

The identities of the Star names, with the exceptions of those who consented to having theirs published, remained a closely guarded secret. Readers could have recourse to lists included in Man. Whence, How and Whither, or The Lives of Alcyone, but these would reveal only forty or so names, quite a few of them famous figures from history rather than living Theosophists. Julius Caesar was Corona, for example, and the tenth Earl of Dundonald was Deneb. [15]

Other historical notables honoured by inclusion were Buddha (named Mahaguru), Sir William Crookes (Aries), Lao-tse (Lyra), Sir Thomas More (Vulcan) and Viscountess Churchill (Roxana). Of course, private lists were kept, built up, and privately circulated. [16] Some of those included in the Lives would presumably not have wished to be, and would, furthermore, have taken grave exception to the things they were alleged to have done, and the characteristics they were supposed to have manifested, in previous incarnations.
If the Lives gave great scope for the creation of heroes, they also allowed for the clearly define villains. Great mystery surrounded some of the obvious villains, readily identifiable in every life as evil, and an enemy of the Theosophical heroes. The principal villains were Ursa, Cancer, Hesperia, Lacerta and, the most evil of them all, Scorpio. This little cluster was found in numerous lives as malcontents, trouble-makers and the tools of the Black Powers. Whereas others rose and fell with different incarnations - or, as sceptics remarked, as they pleased or displeased Leadbeater - these five remained in the depths of nastiness.

The identity of the first four are relatively clear: Dr Elizabeth Chidester or Robert Dennis (Ursa), Mr Knothe (Cancer), Mrs Helen Dennis (Hesperia) and Mrs Kate Davis (Lacerta). These are all the "villains" of Leadbeater's 1906 "troubles" in the United States, and its aftermath. Scorpio has been identified with Dr Eleanor Hiestand-Moore, but however much Leadbeater may have hated her for her vitriolic attacks on him in The Theosophic Voice, the journal she established for that sole purpose, she remained an improbably insignificant figure. [17] It is more likely that Scorpio was retained as a mysterious, never-specified villain, capable of being recognized in
anyone who filled the role at any time, a subtle threat to any would-be enemies who might have found it uncomfortable to have been so identified in Theosophical gossip.

The major characters are identified in the following table. An analysis of the significance of the names attributed to them is an interesting, and not altogether unprofitable exercise.

George Arundale        Fides
Francesca Arundale     Spica
Annie Besant          Herakles
Esther Bright          Beatrix
Bhagavan Das          Capricorn
H.P.Blavatsky          Vajra
G.N.Chakravarti       Cetus
Alex Fullerton         Alastor
Basil Hodgson-Smith   Vega
Alfred Hodgson-Smith  Tiphys
Hubert van Hook        Orion
Weller van Hook        Aldebaran
Mrs van Hook           Achilles
Jinarajadasa           Selen
W.Q.Judge              Phocea
Krishnamurti           Alcyone
Fritz Kunz             Rigel
C.W.Leadbeater         Sirius
G.R.S. Mead  
Mityananda  
Harayianiah  
H.S.Olcott  
Mrs Marie Russak  
Johan van Manen  
James Wedgwood  
B.P. Wadia  
Ernest Wood  

Markab  
Mizar  
Antares  
Ulysses  
Helios  
Aletheia  
Lomia  
Polaris  
Xulon. [18]

If it seems complicated to the reader, it must have seemed even more complicated to those who were working on the compilation of the Lives. Ernest Wood recalled:

When the number of persons in the "Lives" had grown to over three hundred, the list was closed, as the investigation had become unwieldy. I used to keep a ledger showing each "star" name and where the character was in relation to others in all the lives. With this ledger I assisted Mr Leadbeater to compile his charts, by informing him of the periods during which a character might so far be missing, so that he might be looked up and accounted for throughout the whole period covered by the investigations. We regarded the use of such a ledger as quite legitimate for the saving of
psychic energy, though it deprived the "Lives" of any evidential value for those of us who knew the process. [19]

In addition to the ledger, enormous genealogical charts were compiled showing the inter-relationships between individuals in specific lives. "Accounts" were also prepared showing an individuals specific number of relationships to another character through the period of the lives. [20]

Thus, someone could be reassured that he or she had been Krishnamurti's brother twice, cousin eight times, and had married him once. Closeness to Alcyone meant closeness to the Masters, and spiritual development; it was therefore important. There were a few Theosophists who could even claim that he had been the offspring or spouses of the Masters themselves.

Detailed charts were prepared for the more significant individuals, providing data on the intricate details of lives from the present back some two hundred thousand years. The following represents a portion of such a chart prepared for Sirius (Leadbeater himself).
Subject A - Last 20 Lives

Average life on earth 66 1/3 years
Average period between incarnations 1208 1/2 years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of Birth</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Between Lives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BC 23,650</td>
<td>N. America</td>
<td>IV.1</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>929</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22,665</td>
<td>N. America</td>
<td>IV.2</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>1,135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21,466</td>
<td>Poseidonis</td>
<td>IV.3</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>1,826</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19,556</td>
<td>Bactria</td>
<td>IV.4</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>1,276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC 12,095</td>
<td>Peru</td>
<td>IV.3</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>1,266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10,747</td>
<td>China</td>
<td>IV.4</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>1,050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9,618</td>
<td>Poseidonis</td>
<td>IV.5</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>1,262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC 1,907</td>
<td>Arabia</td>
<td>V.2</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>1,338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>524</td>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>V.4</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>2,301</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AD 1,847</td>
<td>England</td>
<td>V.5</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[21]

The quality of Leadbeater's writing of the Lives was typical of all his works: precise, scientific, detailed. As, for example, in this description of how Sirius, Alcyone, Herakles and Mizar achieved individualization and left the animal world while living as monkey-creatures on the Moon.
They were servants to a family of Moon-men, the principals of which are now the Masters M and KH. The astral and mental bodies of the animals had grown under the influence of their owners' human intelligence "as those of domesticated animals now develop under our own".

One night there is an alarm; the hut is surrounded by savages, supported by their domesticated animals, fierce and strong, resembling furry lizards and crocodiles. The faithful guardians spring up around their masters' hut and fight desperately in its defence; Mars [Master M] comes out and drives back the assailants, using some weapons they do not possess; but, while he drives them backward, a lizard-like creature darts behind him into the hut, and catching up the child Surya [Maitreya] begins to carry him away. Sirius [Leadbeater] springs at him, bearing him down, and throws the child to Alcyone [Krishnamurti], who carries him back into the hut, while Sirius grapples with the lizard, and, after a desperate struggle, kills it, falling senseless, badly mangled, over its body. Meanwhile, a savage lips behind Mars and stabs at his back, but Herakles [Mrs Besant], with one leap, flings himself between his master and 'the weapon', and receives
the blow full on his breast, and falls, dying. The savages are now flying in all directions, and Mars, feeling the fall of some creature against his back, staggers, and, recovering himself, turns. He recognizes his faithful animal defender, bends over his dying servant, and places his head in his lap. The poor monkey lifts his eyes, full of intense devotion, to his master's face, and the act of service done, with passionate desire to save, calls down a stream of response from the Will aspect of the Monad in a fierce rush of power, and in the very moment of dying the monkey individualizes, and thus he dies - a man. [22]

Sirius, meanwhile, has been "very much chewed up by his lizard enemy", and is carried back into the hut, to spend the rest of his life as a cripple, his "dumb fidelity" to his mistress a touching sight.

...gradually his intelligence, fed by love, grows stronger, until the lower mind, reaching up, draws down responses from the higher, and the causal body flashes into being, shortly before his death. [23]

Thus, he too individualizes, as do Alcyone and Mizar,
departing from the Moon chain as human beings, to find incarnations on earth as the life-wave moves in that direction.

Not only individuals and their incarnations came under Leadbeater's psychic gaze; he observed fauna and flora with similar interest, noting, for example, that in Lemuria

In Lemuria there was some domestication of animals; the egg-headed Lemurian was seen leading about a scaly monster, almost as unattractive as his master. Animals of all sorts were eaten raw—among some tribes human flesh was not despised—and creatures of the grade of our slugs, snails and worms, much larger than their degenerate descendants, were regarded with peculiar favour as toothsome morsels. [24]

But the main interest in the Lives centred on that group of Theosophists known as "The Band of Servers". These were the elite of human evolution, now being reborn to prepare for the new Root Race, and they figured most prominently in the Lives; some 250 names were known for them, although this was not regarded as a final figure. Those mentioned in The Lives of Alcyone included 161 men and 91 women, "the major of them being British, (86), Indian, (59)."
or American (43). Only a few were drawn from Australia (14), although more were found there once Leadbeater had settled in Sydney. The rest came from Holland and the Dutch East Indies (13), France (13), Italy (8), Russia (5), Germany (4), with a few Spaniards, Burmese, Swiss and Parsis. The Band of Servers represented the spearhead of future evolution on this planet, drawn together in this life as the result of their close association with and devoted service to the Masters in the past.

The Lives were not without their critics, although those in the Lives claimed that their critics had generally those who had been left out. The most outspoken and enthusiastic critic was William Loftus Hare, a British Theosophist. Although Hare's attacks on the Lives came almost thirteen years after Leadbeater began this phase of his work, they relate to this period and offer valuable criticisms of the foundation upon which the Lives were based.

In The Occult Review for February, 1923, Hare criticized the Lives in particular and Leadbeater's clairvoyant work in general, saying that the material was either related to a period of place which lay beyond any possibility of confirmation or disproof, or, if it related to an historically accessible period, concerned such trivia
that no verification would be possible. There were, Hare noted, a few remarkable exceptions to this when Leadbeater was prepared to totally dislocate history when it suited him, as in the case of the 105 BC birthdate for Jesus.

Hare's criticism provoked three letters to the editor. The first came from B.P. Wadia, who agreed with Hare, and the second from a Sydney Theosophist and disciple of Leadbeater, K. van Gelder, who abused Hare and said that his criticism was simply the result of indignation at being left out of the Lives.

But, most interestingly, *The Occult Review* of September, 1923, contained a reply from Leadbeater himself. This was a remarkable departure from his consistent policy of never responding to critics or attack; he usually had his disciples write to defend him. In his letter, Leadbeater claimed that he simply wrote down what he saw on the akashic records, and regarded Hare's suggestion that he had copied material from other sources as a "gross impertinence", and accused Hare of "the gross rudeness of unwarranted accusations of deceit". [25]

But there were more serious allegations made by Hare and others who accused Leadbeater of actually deliberately faking the *Lives.* Ernest Wood, who was probably
in the best position to know just how the Lives had been compiled, expressed some doubts in his biographical work, *Is This Theosophy?* [26] He noted that, as Krishnamurti became more and more a favourite of Leadbeater, so the Lives he was said to have lived became progressively more exalted as the history was investigated backwards.

The first lives to have been examined showed nothing especially remarkable, because they were the most recent.

If the book of lives is now consulted, it will appear curious to the curious reader that Krishnamurti, one of the right hand men of the Manu, semi-divine King of the new Aryan race seventy-two thousand years ago, should gradually diminish in importance to become an ordinary man, though of fine character, in the last ten or fifteen lifetimes. I commented to myself that Krishnamurti was obviously growing upon Mr Leadbeater, and that imagination was seriously affecting the vision, though there would be no reason to regard them as fundamentally unsound. [27]

Wood noted that there were a few others at Adyar who also
noted some of the discrepancies in the Lives, although most were overwhelmed at the marvel of it all, accepting them largely because Mrs Besant did so, without hesitation or qualification. A few others simply rejected them as plainly ridiculous.

Wood's initial doubts seem to find confirmation in the suspicions of others. A Parsi noted that in one of the Persian lives, Leadbeater had confused the male and female names. This was also one of the very few lives in which he had given anything as substantial as personal names. The same Parsi produced what he regarded as additional evidence of fraud.

One night Mr Leadbeater had with much hesitation given me a few words in Sanskrit, to which he told me he was listening. There was much difficulty, he said, in getting words of foreign languages clearly. He asked me if I recognized the language. Yes, it was Sanskrit, quite recognizable. [28]

The following day this interesting fact came up in conversation between Wood, Leadbeater and the Parsi, who felt certain that he had heard the Sanskrit sentence somewhere else. He and Leadbeater wondered where.
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At that moment the Parsi gentleman's eye happened to fall upon a book that was out of alignment on the shelf. On the instant he remembered that the passage that they were talking about was quoted in that book. "Why" he exclaimed, "now I remember. It was in this book, The Dream of Ravan, which is out of line, that I read the sentence." Mr Leadbeater, he said, looked confused, remarked that the servant had been dusting the books, and diverted the conversation to some other subject. [29]

But it was the enlargement of the list of characters in the Lives and the filling in of the genealogical charts to accommodate newly arrived Theosophists that principally undermined Wood's confidence in Leadbeater's psychic powers. As Leadbeater was attracted to, and became interested in new people, especially boys, so their names would suddenly be added to the list, and places would have to be found for them in the Lives. People who had previously been unmarried found themselves given husbands or wives, and couples whose charts had been completed would suddenly be blessed with additional sons and daughters. Leadbeater even asked Wood to compile a list of prominent Theosophists who had been left out of the Lives so that he could investigate, and find places for them; this added thirty or forty names to the list.
As Wood began to study the charts with more critical analysis, a number of incongruities became evident. Virtually all the characters had always intermarried amongst themselves, life after life. And, if the names were divided between those who had been originally discovered, and those added later by Leadbeater, it was found that the earlier people always intermarried, and the later people intermarried; earlier and later rarely intermarried.

In some six thousand marriages, only two or three cases did not produce children. And, as Wood noted,

Still a third improbability was that the characters always married in their own generation, sometimes the oldest child of an oldest child of an oldest child with a younger child of a younger child of a younger child. Thus in the cases of large families, according to my most conservative calculations, a frequent difference in age between husband and wife would be fifteen years or more, as often as not the lady being the elder. [30]

Wood saw a further problem in the fact that when Leadbeater moved to Australia in 1915, a completely new set of people came into his circle, all prominent in the Society
and the work of the Coming. Yet most of them had no place at all in the Lives. Even had Leadbeater wished to include them, there was simply no more room. Although some of his Australian disciples were given Star names, and past lives were found for them, they did not fit into the Lives as such.

And, indeed, many of those who did feature in the Lives disappeared from the Theosophical sphere shortly afterwards, their exceptional past lives availing naught for their present rejection of Leadbeater and the Coming.

Wood also had the experience of being told by some other psychic of a past life, mentioning it to Leadbeater, and finding it immediately discovered in the Lives. He also spoke to an English doctor at Adyar who put Leadbeater to the test by telling him of a wholly fictitious vision he had of gigantic astral figures on either side of a stage in a theatre they had attended. Leadbeater confirmed the vision, and the accuracy of the description given by the doctor, saying it matched his own perception of what had occurred.

But Wood himself did not feel that Leadbeater was wholly fraudulent with regard to the Lives.
My own position with regard to Mr Leadbeater, therefore, was midway between the extremes of acceptance and rejection. It was that of one who had otherwise had convincing proof of the existence of clairvoyant power (though not on anything like the lavish scale presented by Mr Leadbeater, nor of the perfect accuracy which he always took for granted in his own case), who did not see any reason why Mr Leadbeater should cheat, but many reasons why he should not do so, who, knowing him and liking him, was prepared to give him the benefit of the doubt where at all possible...[31]

Having spent hundreds of hours in solid work on the Lives and other clairvoyant investigations, taking notes of what was seen, writing the answers of hundreds of questions on slips of paper which he then classified and arranged in order for Leadbeater to go through and dictate in literary form, Wood felt that Leadbeater was using the imaginative faculty of the fiction writer, rather than clairvoyance as such, or some kind of fraud.

There was no confusion or clash in the material. Still, as we know that Mr Leadbeater was very fond of H.G.Wells's scientific romances and the
adventure stories of Rider Haggard and Jules Verne, and had often told stories on these lines to boys, we did not consider it beyond the bounds of invention by his subconscious mind. Mr Leadbeater used to tell us how stories sometimes wrote themselves before the eyes, so to say, of some novelists, the characters in them taking matters into their own hands and conducting the whole affair, and how Conan Doyle would take up his pen and writing an imaginative story without knowing what he was going to write. [32]

Others, however, were less charitable. Hugh Gillespie, a Theosophist who had been at Adyar when the Lives were compiled, stated that they were "faked", that a conspiracy existed in this regard, and that Mrs Besant eventually discovered the truth. According to Gillespie, Hubert van Hook assisted in the faking of the Lives, and talked openly about this in the United States in 1917; his sudden removal from Adyar was a result of too many allusions to the fact whilst there.

There were, said Gillespie, rumours circulating at Adyar that one could "buy" exalted lives. The fact of the fraud was discovered, he said, during Leadbeater's absence from Adyar. Ernest Wood thoroughly cleaned out Leadbeater's
cluttered room, and found "absolute proof" of the deception. The nature of this "absolute proof", was unfortunately never disclosed. Wood showed the evidence to van Manen, another of Leadbeater's secretaries, who checked it and agreed with its significance. Together, they went to B.P. Wadia, who simply laughed and said that he had been sure all along that the Lives were fictional. He examined the evidence and confirmed their findings.

The book, The Lives of Alcyone, was already at the printer, parts already printed, and the first volume ready for distribution. At the insistence of Wood and van Manen, Wadia, who was then manager of the Theosophical Publishing House, agreed to hold up distribution, although the book had been widely publicized, was in great demand, and some de luxe advance copies had already been sent out.

Mrs Besant, absent during the discovery, returned and was confronted with it. Initially she fervently denied the allegations, but finally accepted them. The copies for distribution were stacked in storage in the Vasant Press, and as many of the de luxe editions as could be recalled were added to them. It is not known whether Mrs Besant spoke to Leadbeater about the matter. [33]
1911, denied claims that the book had been suppressed, saying that Mrs Besant (and she alone) had decided to postpone publication from 1913 to 1924 because of Krishnamurti's youth and his inability to cope with the likely results of publication. But Miss Neff noted that, just as she was arriving at Adyar, the original accounts of the Lives were being published in The Theosophist in the "Rents in the Veil of Time" series. [34] Since all the material had been published, and publicized, it is difficult to see what additional problems the book could have created for Krishnamurti.

Jinarajadasa stated that the printing was suspended and the distribution delayed because of Krishnamurti's fears that he would be "ragged" at Oxford, for which University he was then preparing, if the drama of his past incarnations became public knowledge. [35] Of course, details of the past lives had become public knowledge ever since The Theosophist articles, and newspapers had already mentioned them in less than serious articles about Krishnamurti. They had also been discussed in connection with the custody case, which is detailed in Chapter 15.

Jinarajadasa had The Lives of Aicrone released, at a considerably reduced price, in 1924. There were few
sales, although he ordered members of the ES throughout the world to purchase and study the book.

In the light of these events it is strange that B.P. Wadia should have been able to contribute an article to The Theosophist for January, 1911, acclaiming Leadbeater's clairvoyance and making a tribute to his reliability. By 1923, however, Wadia was writing to The Occult Review declaring that he no longer held this position, rejecting Leadbeater's accuracy and stating that he had come to this position as a result of "many circumstances, with confirming evidence in every case". [36] This Wadia repeated in The Theosophist for May, 1938, four years after Leadbeater's death, declaring that he no longer accepted Leadbeater's accuracy "because of physical plane knowledge and experience gathered later on". [37]

Whatever the doubts of those who worked closely with Leadbeater, the majority of Theosophists accepted the Lives, seeing them as validation of the promised Coming, and yet further evidence that Leadbeater was the greatest seer in the world. Mrs Besant was unquestioning in her acceptance of everything he said, and the public was quite frequently given the impression that she validated, clairvoyantly, all his research, especially in the books bearing their joint names. [38] This was not the case, although Leadbeater
preferred it to appear that way. Any questions that might have lingered in the minds of those who recalled the events of 1906-7 were cast aside on the assumption that is Mrs Besant verified his work it must be right, and that if it was right, he must be of impeccable morals and unquestionable spirituality, since these were (he said) the pre-requisites for psychic powers of the order he claimed.

Whilst most believed, and a few doubted, a minority ridiculed, and enjoyed reciting a lengthy poem which began:

In the Lives, in the Lives,
I've had all sorts of husbands and wives,
I've been killed and reborn,
Many bodies I've worn,
But my higher anatomy thrives.

In the Lives, in the Lives,
We've been busy as bees in their hives -
Whether Arab or Turk,
We were pining to work,
In the Lives, in the Lives. [39]