Chapter 21: Final Years

If Leadbeater spent his final years in disillusionment and regret, he gave no indication of it. Krishna seemed to be as quickly forgotten, as he had been discovered. Various explanations were presented by leading Theosophists to deal with the failure - or the apparent failure, in some theories - of the Coming. Publicly, Leadbeater said only: "The Coming has gone wrong". [1] Privately, he explained that Krishna's personality had got in the way, and prevented the Lord from occupying the body which had been prepared for him as a Vehicle. No explanation was offered as to why other Vehicles, temporary or permanent, could not have been found, or why one of the Twelve Apostles could not have been a suitable Vehicle.

Leadbeater believed that Krishna's teachings were destructive and dangerous. Above all, he resented the authority with which they were vested by some Theosophists, and the fact that they intruded into his own sphere of influence. The "Two Paths" theory had failed to satisfy many Theosophists who saw the basic contradiction in the idea that the World Teacher was presenting only one of two equally valid Paths. And, of course, Krishna said there were 10 paths.
Other eminent Theosophists found consolation in ore exotic theories. Wedgwood claimed that the Blacks had ot to Krishna, hinting thus at dire and unseen onspiracies. But Wedgwood had never really accepted the dea of the Coming in the sense that Leadbeater had foreseen t, and had not found Krishna especially attractive as a otential Vehicle. His own work was never really concerned ith the Coming, except insofar as Leadbeater brought theurch and ceremonial activities into the Plan via messages om the Masters. Wedgwood's sanity was precariously alanced, and he was receiving treatment from the German alyst, Georg Groddeck, encouraged by Oscar Köllestrüm, e of the Groddeck's pupils. [2] His visions and meetings th Masters, angels, archangels and denizens of the higher alms increased, and continued to be taken seriously by his voted band of disciples. [3]

Arundale supported Leadbeater's "obstructive rsonality" theory to explain the failure of the Coming. riginal close relationship with Krishna had faded as a ult of Krishna's increasing criticism of Arundale's visions and messages, and his ridicule of ceremonial ements in which Arundale had become increasingly rvolved.

Jinarajadasa believed that the Coming had been
deliberately delayed by the Occult Hierarchy, since they could foresee the coming War (1939–45), and a "period of universal peace" was necessary, both for "the Coming of a new Messiah, a great spiritual teacher bringing a new religion" and for the drawing together of the branches of the fifth sub-race (the Teutonic) in preparation for the emergence of the sixth sub-race. But Jinarajadasa believed that Krishna had a role to play in "World Reconstruction". Most of the problems leading to the postponement of the coming derived, so Jinarajadasa said, from the fact that Germany had never been properly defeated in World War I, and its "Maleficient forces of opposition" had been allowed to continue.[4]

There were some Theosophists who declare quite imply that the Coming did not happen because it was all in the imagination of those who propagated the idea, and there are others who claimed that it had indeed happened: Krishna is the World Teacher, and the fact that he taught things which were in clear contradiction to the teachings of his mentors was in accord with the predictions of those same teachers. Indeed, Mrs Besant and Leadbeater had both stated, prior to 1928, that when the World Teacher came he might teach things which seemed unacceptable, contrary to their existing beliefs and undermining of their beloved institutions. If he did this, they said, his followers would
simply have to lay aside their old beliefs and ideas and institutions, and take up the new ones he offered.

Most Theosophists, however, were simply disillusioned and confused, and many of them left the TS and associated movements. Even those, like Lady Emily Lutyens, who were at the heart of the movement, found the shattering of their hopes profoundly disturbing. [5] A few, more sceptical than the rest, felt betrayed by the inadequate explanations offered by their leaders. Dr van der Leeuw, for example, wrote:

It takes the mental acrobatics of trained theosophical students to reconcile the contradictory facts contained in the earlier revelations and the subsequent teachings of Krishnamurti. Even though he himself strongly denies being used by another consciousness, they claim to know better than he does what is actually taking place in his own person, the "real" World Teacher, living in the Himalayas, who occasionally speaks through Krishnamurti. This real World Teacher entirely endorses all previous revelations, especially the Liberal Catholic Church. The fact that Krishnamurti denies the value of all these is then explained by the fact
that he, being "only a vehicle", cannot express fully the "glorious consciousness" which they, the speakers, know so much more intimately than he. Thus it means nothing that he should contradict things previously revealed, it only shows that at that time, it was not the World Teacher speaking — but only Mr Krishnamurti. [6]

Regarding the psychic powers and occult standing of theosophical authorities, van der Leeuw commented:

One is inclined to think that the source of unseen authority for each is a strictly individual and subjective one, an exteriorization of their own unconscious motives. This is still more evident with regard to all messages revealed as coming from the World Teacher during the last fifteen years. [7]

Throughout 1930 plans had been underway to ebrate HPB's Centenary in August, 1931, and there had n hopes that all Theosophical groups could unite for this asion as an act of solidarity and a preparation for a manent union in the future. Whilst Leadbeater and Mrs ant had been in Geneva, they met with a representative of Point-Loma TS, now headed by Dr Göttfried de Purucker
following the death of Mrs Tingley in 1929. [8] I hoped that the heads of what he referred to as the Adyar Society would join him at Point Loma, in California, for the centennial of HPB's birthday. Mrs Besant was enthusiastic, and cabled her acceptance of the invitation for herself and Leadbeater. However, de Purucker replied that those who tended must come as delegates of a Section or Lodge of the, the implication being that Leadbeater could attend only accredited by some Section or Lodge, not simply in his right. Mrs Besant (or, more probably, Leadbeater through a Besant) took offence at this, interpreting it as a liberal slight to Leadbeater, and accordingly, Adyar was represented at Pt Loma.

At the Annual Convention of the TS held in December, 1930, the subject was "The Future of Theosophical Society". It was a timely theme, considering the continuing problems in the Society over what became known as "the Krishnamurti affair", as the result which the TS, the LCC, Co-Masonry and associated ements had suffered considerable losses in membership, her by members leaving to follow Krishna, or by members coming disillusioned and simpl, dropping away.

The Society's membership and number of lodges had en steadily during Mrs Besant's presidency, reaching...
heir peak in 1928, from whence they moved into a steady and
continuing decline.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Lodges</th>
<th>Number of Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td>567</td>
<td>12,863</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>778</td>
<td>20,356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>991</td>
<td>25,696</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>1,244</td>
<td>36,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>1,571</td>
<td>41,645</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>1,586</td>
<td>45,098</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>1,490</td>
<td>39,311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>1,279</td>
<td>30,836</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935</td>
<td>1,226</td>
<td>30,317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937</td>
<td>1,160</td>
<td>29,182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>1,105</td>
<td>28,105</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Membership figures for the period of apparent rapid
growth leading up to Krishna's dissolution of the Order of
the Star are somewhat misleading: they imply an
indefinitely increasing membership, but they fail to show the
substantial departure of old members. For example, in 1927,
many of former members in Australia resigned. The rapid
flux of new members concealed this loss. The loss of
members undermined the foundation of the Society, making
Krishna's departure more devastating since it involved also...
the departure of those who rushed into membership on account of him.

Between 1908 and 1925 81,436 new members joined the TS, but the net gain was only 25,562. [11] Census figures for Theosophists in Australia during this period show both a rise and a fall, but under-state the numbers:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Society's Records</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>358</td>
<td>no record</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>781</td>
<td>1,004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>1,102</td>
<td>2,168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>540</td>
<td>1,433</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[12]

Mrs Besant, in her Convention address, considered the two questions which she saw as being the most immediate concerns of the Society: the place of the Masters, the lives of Theosophists, and the need for more attention to be given to Adyar. The latter issue was, she said, raised at the suggestion of the two Masters who had encouraged the establishment of the Society, KH and M. This so led her to direct that the publication of Theosophist, which she had temporarily transferred to the A, should be returned to Adyar so that members might again receive it from "the Centre on earth for the forces of..."
Shamballa". Ernest Wood, recently settled at Adyar as Treasurer and Secretary of the TS, was disconcerted to hear Leadbeater deliver a message that the Masters had disapproved of the transfer to America, since Mrs Besant had undertaken the transfer because she said the Masters had ordered it. [13]

Mrs Besant's health and mental state had begun to decline seriously. She had never fully recovered from the sickness resulting from being told that Krishna rejected the message about the Apostles. Her memory now began to fade, she became increasingly concerned about the past, and found it difficult to focus on the problems of the present. The journey to Europe in 1930 had proved too much for her, and her broken health was never restored. [14]

Both Dick Balfour-Clarke and Ernest Wood, who had not seen her for some years, were shocked when they met her in 1928 and 1930 respectively. Ernest Wood recalled:

Her memory with regard to material things had been failing for some time. It was not unnatural at her advanced age – she was eighty-five – and would not have seemed so pathetic had not a few devotees who looked after her physically tried to hide the facts of her decline. [She spent her time in...
reading and quiet reflection, they announced, and was really doing more work than ever before by radiating beneficial forces upon the world. But the fact was that she did not attend to the practical work any more because she could not. [15]

He was saddened by his last conversation with her, occupied as they were with "little fairies" and why little animals die young. He concluded:

Her loving heart was never impaired by her decline in other respects. It shone all the brighter when she was released from material affairs. The world never overcame her. It broke her strength and her mind, but it could not stain her heart, though it were betrayed by many a kiss. [16]

Leadbeater himself, though aging, was not as old as Mrs Besant, the popular legend notwithstanding, and those who considered him remarkable for his age, did not know him to be seven years younger than they imagined. He continued writing, compiling yet more of his collections of lecture notes and articles. In 1930 he published an account of his introduction to Theosophy, How Theosophy Came to Me, which had previously been serialized in Theosophy in Australia.
This included details of his introduction to spiritualism, his meeting with HPB, and his training in psychic development at Adyar. The work began with an account of his last life, when he had been a pupil of Kleineas (now the Master DK), the successor of Pythagorus.

He also published a small book, *Messages from the Unseen*, which seems to have been an explanation, or attempt at explanation, of the differences between his teachings, said to derive from his clairvoyance or from the Masters, and the teachings contained in the works of HPB, which she said came from the Masters, and the teachings promulgated from others on the basis of the letters which were said to have been received from the Masters. [17] A. Trevor Barker and published the collection of *The Mahatma Letters to H.P. S. S. T. L.* in 1923, much to the horror of Theosophists who, as anxious as they were to have access to these documents, considered them too sacred to be made available to the public at large. [18] The effect of the publication of the letters was to make even more evident the differences between the teachings of Leadbeater and Mrs Besant, and the original teachings of HPB and her Masters, regardless of the origin attributed to what became known as the "Mahatma Letters". The popular view of these letters was that they
had been sent in the normal manner, having been written by
Masters, or had somehow been precipitated supernaturally by
the Masters, in much the same manner as the original letters
to Leadbeater. Others, more critically, said that HPB had
forged them, or procured them to be forged. [19] However, if
the "Mahatma letters" were genuine, and had been written (in
whatever manner) by the Masters, it would have been
difficult for Leadbeater and his followers to explain away
direct contradictions between the teachings written in the
letters of the Masters, and the teachings given by
Leadbeater as coming from the same Masters. [20] Leadbeater
himself did not believe that the "Mahatma letters" were
written by the Masters directly. When Mr W.G.John, the
General Secretary of the Australian Section, wrote to him in
1912 asking for clarification of apparent differences
between his teachings and those of HPB, Leadbeater replied:

Remember that the letters to Sinnett and Hume were
not written or dictated directly by a Master, as
we at the time supposed, but were the work of
pupils carrying out general directions given to
them by the Masters, which is a very different
thing... But we do not trouble ourselves in the
least about reconciling the earlier statements
we just describe what we ourselves see, or repeat
what is said to us by those whom we trust. [21]
In *Messages from the Unseen*, he repeated this theory: it was a convenience in much the same way as the theory that sometimes Krishna was speaking as the World Teacher, and sometimes as an individual Indian youth. Any differences could be accounted for satisfactorily by the careful selection of material.

Leadbeater's widely circulated statement on Krishna and his mission came under attack from E.A. Wodehouse, who wrote in the *Adyar Theosophist* expressing his indignation at Leadbeater's suggestions about Krishna. [22] Krishna did not, said Wodehouse, appeal only to those interested in horse-racing, prize-fighting and football, nor was his mission to these people. Wodehouse reminded Leadbeater that, although in his explanation he stated that Krishna as the Vehicle of the World Teacher was an idea based on "the testimony of our great President", it was essentially Leadbeater's testimony which began the whole movement, and was taken up by Mrs Besant. Wodehouse concluded:

(...) Krishna, for the Bishop, has no importance except as the puppet at the end of a string, or, perhaps, as the telephone through which advice is occasionally, but by no means always, speaking. [23]
But Leadbeater's ideas about the Coming had not completely vanished, for he was able to write in The Theosophist almost twelve months later - four years after Krishna had dissolved the Order of the Star - an article on "The Vehicle of the World Teacher", and state:

I think there is a certain danger that before the Lord comes we shall have built up in our minds a definite thought form of what we expect Him to do and be, and that some of us may feel hurt and a little doubtful if He does not conform to our idea of Him. This is quite a possibility. [24]

Included in the same volume of The Theosophist were articles by Leadbeater on "The Lives of Acor", "The Fifth Root Race and its Migrations", and "The Great War and the Sixth Sub-Race", almost as if the time-scale had been altered, and 1929 had never happened. In The Australian Theosophist he was making his contribution to the problem of widespread unemployment, in an article entitled "A New Industry". He suggested that those unemployed by day should devote themselves to helping the newly dead entering the astral world. The angels had previously been responsible for this, but they now had other work to do, and would be...
grateful for the assistance. Wedgwood had already informed those who might be interested that the angels originally did the "invisible helping" of those in trouble on the astral plane, but had turned this over to Leadbeater and his pupils. [25]

Leadbeater had come to see his own particular work as being concerned with "invisible helping" to bring about a change in the world, initially on a small scale. He now no longer felt that a massive world movement - incorporating all the pretentiously titled schemes which had seen their birth in 1925 - could accomplish this, and with the departure of Krishna the rapid progress towards the birth of the sixth sub-race seemed even further away. Even by 1928 his focus had been turned to two areas of special work: a community of young people, and ceremonial.

Ernest Wood, who worked very closely with Leadbeater at The Manor from 1928 onwards, described Leadbeater's concept in this way:

"I think that Bishop Leadbeater had come to the conclusion that his clairvoyance and the powers associated with it were useful only for occult purposes. He wanted humanity to undergo a change of heart. People were too self-centred, thinking..."
of personal comfort, pleasure, ambition, pride and acquisition. Could they be persuaded to come out of themselves and look at life from the standpoint of the general good instead of individual desires, the whole would change. This was the one essential of progress, from his point of view, both for the individual and the world. One could do little for the world at large, for who would take heed of the preaching of this truth. Therefore he would (1) concentrate his attention upon a small community of people, especially young people, earnestly trying to become unselfish in thought, feeling and life, and (2) work for the ceremonial movements by which occult forces could be caused to play upon the auras of people, and thus facilitate the impersonalizing process from the outside. [26]

Wood did not agree with this idea. He felt that Leadbeater was operating "occult beauty parlours", where the auras of his people became more and more beautiful every day, looking prettier to the clairvoyant eye, but lacking in essential qualities. Wood felt that community life encouraged such inadequate personalities, and concluded that Leadbeater was "painting dolls". Wood saw little use in "making black salamanders turn yellow by keeping them in yellow boxes".
And it would seem that Leadbeater himself eventually came to a similar conclusion. He had not retained any of the pupils of his earlier years except Raja, and none of the pupils had gone on to greater things in the Theosophical movement, or, indeed, in the world. In fact, most of the pupils had either definitely rejected Theosophical work, or drifted away from it into other fields. The Manor, as an "occult forcing house" (as Mary Lutyens called it) had not achieved any impressive results on the visible planes, whatever forces may have been churned out at higher levels.

Leadbeater's final attempt to achieve his desired effect of merging the idea of a community of young people with ceremonial work came in his last group of pupils. These were all girls from the Dutch East Indies, chosen by Leadbeater during one of his visits to Java. The girls were sent to The Manor by their parents, willingly or otherwise, in 1927-8, and remained there with Leadbeater until he moved to settle permanently at Adyar early in 1929. They were known as "The Seven Virgins of Java", and were related in Leadbeater's scheme of things to the World Mother, who would manifest her special force through them, to the powers behind the LCC and Co-Masonry, and to the still-surviving idea of the World Teacher.
Leadbeater long had an interest in Java, and wrote a book on its occult history. [27] The seven girls were treated as a group, an innovation for Leadbeater, since he had always previously emphasized the need for individuality and individual attention. They were told that they had to function as an organic whole, and would pass through Initiations and other psychic experiences corporately. They were all trained in Co-Masonry, and rigidly drilled in ceremonial by Leadbeater's secretary, Miss Maddox. [28] Eventually, despite their youthful years, they were all elevated by Leadbeater to the highest grade of Masonry, the 33rd Degree, and were all made members of the ES.

Leadbeater planned to established yet another ceremonial movement in which these seven girls would have a vital function. It was known as the "Egyptian Rite of Ancient Freemasonry", and remains a secret inner group within the TS. It traditionally required potential members to be members of the TS and the ES, and to be Co-Masons, although these requirements seem to have been liberalized in recent times. Although the Egyptian Rite (or ER, as it came to be known) now has few members, it continues to work its six degrees in centres throughout the Theosophical world. [29]
Leadbeater planned that the ER would draw together the angels associated with Church ceremonial, and those of Co-Masonic working, and in this he claimed the encouragement and inspiration of the Master The Count, who assisted in the drafting of the rituals. The rituals were originally compiled by Wedgwood, since he was said to have a special relationship with The Count. However, Leadbeater did not like the results, and submitted them to Arundale for revision. The final work was said to constitute "the most powerful occult ritual in the world", and the seven girls were kept busy rehearsing their parts in it to ensure that they were perfect for the day when the ER could be inaugurated in the Co-Masonic Temple at Adyar. This was done in 1929, after the ES had been re-opened.

The published Ritual was issued on Christmas Day, 1931, bearing the *imprimatur* of Mrs Besant as Grand Master, and a solemn warning from Arundale, as Grand Secretary, that the ritual was the property of the "S.S." (presumably the "sovereign sanctuary") and "must be returned on demand and provision must be made for the return on the death of the member". When not in actual use, the Ritual should be kept under lock and key.

The Rite consists of six degrees or stages: The
first is the Temple of the Quest, which includes three stages, Fire, Form and Life, intended to purify the physical and emotional bodies, the mind, and the intuition and the will respectively. Once a candidate has passed through these stages he will normally be ready for presentation to a "Lord of Light" to be placed on probation. The rituals take place in a Temple "symbolic of the human spirit with bodies", and are to be "regarded as a dramatization of the true functions of the various principles and bodies, so externalized that, as in a mystic mirror, the individual sees himself as he is destined to become". [30]

Various officers represent different bodies and qualities, although their titles derive from several languages - thus "Artifex" and "Agni" and "Eth" work together - and some of them sound distinctly quaint. It is noted that all participants need to have a sound knowledge of At The Feet of The Master, "the teachings of which the Rituals of these degrees are largely destined to emphasize".

By the time the candidate completes the three stages of the Temple of the Quest, he should be on probation. He is then ready to advance to the fourth stage, the Temple of the Rose and the Cross. Once accepted as the chela of a Master he can go on to the fifth stage, the Outer Temple of the Dawn, followed by the sixth stage.
the Inner Temple or Temple of the Star. These are the
degrees to be worked by the members, and above them is the
seventh stage, the Sovereign Sanctuary of the Masters of the
Light, the governing body of the ER. Beyond that is the
Great Hierarchy. It was emphasized that the ER was mainly for
young people, and that wherever possible all the officers
should be young people; with the passage of time and the
disappearance of young people from the TS generally, it can
be presumed that this is no longer the case.

The rituals themselves have a distinct
Leadbeaterian, if such a term might be used, feeling about
them, and include copious references to and quotations from
At The Feet of The Master, in additional to numerous
modified Anglican hymns. "O Trinity of Burning Light" and
"There is a King of Glory" are found, together with some
appropriate original material drawn from The St Alban Hymnal
of the LCC. Oaths are sworn on a copy of At The Feet of The
Master and a silver star, and once admitted to the Temple of
the Quest members are invested with a "symbol of the Dawning
of Light upon the darkness" which they wear around their
necks; openly in the Temple, and concealed when in the
world. Leadbeater found that the occult effects of these
most powerful of all occult rituals were very pleasing and
felt they accomplished a blending of two streams of "angelic
assistants, and emanated highly potent evolutionary currents."
upon the world.

James Wedgwood meanwhile had become more and more disturbed. The Theosophist announced that he had suffered "a most serious nervous collapse" from which there was "little hope of recovery". [31] The O.E. Library Critic was less discrete: it proclaimed that Wedgwood had become insane whilst on his way to a mental specialist in Germany, and had to be taken to Camberley in England, where there was a Theosophical centre. [32] The St Michael's News had already reported that he was on his way "to receive special help at a sanitorium, first in Germany and later in England", with Bishop Bonjer acting as Head of the Centre until Arundale arrived to take the position at Leadbeater's instruction. [33] St Michael's was essentially a centre of the LCC, the church being the main instrument for "creating the requisite magnetic conditions in the Centre and sending abroad spiritual powers". The Centre also served as a training institute for Liberal Catholic clergy.

On August 11th, the HPB Centenary was celebrated at Adyar. The following day Leadbeater informed a meeting that he had recently met HPB in her new body, and invited her to attend the celebrations for the anniversary of the birth of the old one. She (or, as far as the new body was concerned, he) declined the invitation. [34].
The year ended with the 56th Annual Convention held at Adyar. The addresses were intended to reveal "The Practical Application of Theosophy to the Problems of Life", and Leadbeater spoke on "The Ground-work of Human Relations". Mrs Besant was too ill to attend, except briefly on two occasions. On one of these she delivered her last address to the Society, urging members to make more use of their "higher bodies" so that they might be of more help to the people amongst whom they lived.

Her declining years were an appropriate time for a biography to appear, but Gertrude Marvin Williams' The Passionate Pilgrim was hardly the sort of biography calculated to win prizes at a TS convention, especially with its reference to Leadbeater as Mrs Besant's "astral Svengali". [35] The conclusions to be drawn from the biography, as from the past year, were sombre ones.

The official history notes that "The Society was in a state of pause." [36] Membership was continuing to decline, and there were quite serious financial problems in a number of Sections. The ES had "suffered from suspension": members were leaving or becoming disillusioned by the continuing critical comments of Krishna. Leadbeater's literary activities were slowly diminishing, and no new
material was forthcoming, although some previously unpublished material was released after his death.

On February 25th, 1932, Leadbeater left Adyar for a visit to Australia, intending to undertake a lecture tour which would include New Zealand. However, he injured his foot, contracted a severe chill and was unable to fulfil all his obligations. Although he did not visit New Zealand, the facilities of 2GB were used to enable him to broadcast across the Tasman Sea to members there.

After his arrival in Sydney on March 17th he had intended to preside over the Australian Convention, but ill-health prevented this, so 2GB was again employed and he broadcast his Convention address to the assembled members. He had also planned to consecrate a successor to himself as episcopal Bishop of the LCC in Australia, and plans were prepared for this to take place in St Alban's Cathedral in edern. However, continuing ill-health kept him from any large public functions, and he performed the consecration, without assistants, in the chapel of The Manor, on May 14th, the day before Whitsunday. [37] This consecration of David Orton Tweedie was Leadbeater's last. He broadcast over 2GB two Sundays, and managed to celebrate High Masses in St. Alban's on Palm Sunday and Easter Day, and on both occasions the Church was filled to overflowing.
Leadbeater departed for Adyar at the end of May, arriving there on June 18th, and taking with him a copy of the recording of him talking "To Those Who Mourn" and one "The Great White Lodge" which had been released on Columbia records in Sydney, and which was sale for five shillings. He continued his work on occult chemistry with the encouragement of Jinarajadasa, who saw in this field ample opportunity for scientific proof of the claims of Theosophy. The explorations into atoms and molecules which had begun in 1895, and continued, sporadically, throughout the years until 1932, had produced great masses of material which Jinarajadasa compiled and collated, and which he intended to publish. [38] It was the one area of clairvoyant investigation which Leadbeater pursued up until his death.

Jinarajadasa obtained samples of various compounds from a firm of chemical suppliers in London, and looked for less usual materials in local chemists. Sometimes he was unable to obtain a sample, and on those occasions Leadbeater would astrely visit the showroom of Helger and Company, in Camden Road, London, where he could examine chemicals without having to wait for them to arrive in Adyar. But some elements were so extremely rare that no suppliers seemed able to provide specimens. On some such occasions even astral visits were useless if
eadbeater did not know where to find specimens. In the
quest of one such rarity Leadbeater asked the help of a sea-
atre spirit in Ceylon to search in the mines of
abaragannuwa for Polonium atoms. Heeding the request, given
strally whilst Leadbeater was lying in bed in Adyar, the
ea spirit and its friends engaged in what they thought was
new game, and finally produced some atoms of the rare
lement for examination. They were at a loss, however, to
nderstand why Leadbeater wanted such a thing. [39]
inarajadasa claimed that, on several occasions, had
eadbeater's research been published when his results were
first known, he would have beaten orthodox chemists with
heir discoveries of various facts about the elements, and
us have "proved" the validity of occult chemistry.

At the 1932 Convention, Leadbeater spoke on the
same "A World In Distress: The Remedies as Seen by the
esosophist". And the Society, also in considerable
stress, observed amongst the reports from its Sections a
continuing decline in membership. The highest rise in
embership had occurred in 1925, with a 15% increase; 1930
produced a 16% decrease. [40]

Throughout 1933, Leadbeater continued to work
only and patiently for the Society in decline. Mrs.
'ant's health was deteriorating. Eventually, she was unable
to eat, refused to drink, and was unconscious for much of
the time. On September 20th, Leadbeater went to her bedside,
accompanied by Jinarajadasa, her Secretary, Sri Ram, and her
physician. Also present was the servant, Lakshman, whose
testimony caused such trouble in the Krishna custody case,
but whom Mrs Besant had retained. At 4.00 p.m. Mrs Besant
died. Leadbeater commented that he did not understand why
her departure from the body had taken such a long time,
"except that the Masters needed to use the body as a focus
for their forces".

The following morning, the body was taken to the
Hall of the Headquarters Building, and placed on the stage
in front of the statues of HPB and Olcott. The Prayers of
the Religions, a selection taken from the major world
religions customarily used at TS gatherings, was recited,
and hundreds of people poured ...ough the Hall to pay their
last respects to this remarkable woman. Vast crowds had
gathered hours before the proceedings began at 8.00 a.m.,
and they crowded around the buildings of the TS Estate
during the funeral. Leadbeater pronounced the First Ray
Benediction — "May the Holy Ones Whose pupils you aspire to
become..." — which Mrs Besant had written; and the body was
then carried in procession past the TPH building to the
Co-Masonic Temple, where a Masonic service was held. The
route was lined, as the Hall had been, with the flags of the
lifty-four nations in which the TS was established.

From the Temple the body was borne to the
platform of the Suryashrama, a site consecrated by Mrs
Besant for the never completed headquarters of the Order of
service. There, by the Adyar River, tributes were paid to
Mrs Besant by A.P. Warrington, the Vice-President now acting
President, by Leadbeater and others. Finally, the funeral
re, scented with sandalwood, was ignited, and verses from
the Bhagavad Gita were chanted as the body was consumed by
re.

The following day, the ashes were collected in an
urn. A portion was deposited in the Garden of Remembrance at
Adyar, and another portion was carried in great state to
Madras, and thence to Benares, where Bhagavan Das carried
urns to the Ganges, depositing them in the middle of the
river from a decorated boat. Another portion of the ashes
was taken to the Centre at Huizen.

Adyar was inundated with tributes to Mrs Besant:
throughout India many public offices and institutions were
used in her honour; streets were named after her in
Mumbai, Madras, and Benares. A large statue of her was
erected in Madras, and for several days the Indian
papers were filled with glowing tributes to her.
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Throughout the world, obituaries featured prominently in leading newspapers. In London, on the Sunday after her death, Wedgwood celebrated a Requiem Mass for her in St Mary's Liberal Catholic Cathedral, and similar services were held in Liberal Catholic Churches throughout the world.

Four days after her death, Jinarajadasa convened a meeting at which he announced that Leadbeater had been appointed by Mrs Besant to succeed her as the Outer Head of the ES. It was the established practice that each OH would appoint his or her successor.

It was to be expected that messages from the recently dead Mrs Besant would be forthcoming, and they were. Leadbeater received some of them and they were duly published in various Theosophical journals. [41] They offered little more than friendly encouragement to continue the good work. Arundale later recorded some conversations he had with the deceased Mrs Besant, concerned mainly with his importance in the Theosophical scheme of things. [42]

Following Mrs Besant's death, her room (which she desired to be kept as something of a shrine) was used by Arundale and his wife, against Jinarajadasa's wishes.
could have continued her work for India, was one of the causes of the "horrible events in the Punjab" (i.e. the secession of Pakistan). [43]

While most Theosophical journals excelled themselves in hymns of praise to Mrs Besant, the Canadian Theosophist, ever a thorn in Adyar's side since it had taken a distinctly anti-Leadbeater line but refused to leave the Adyar Society, was more critical.

The abomination of desolation was never more truly set up in a shrine than when the Theosophical Society had its sanctuaries defiled and violated in the quarter century of Mrs Besant's Presidency. She had been Svenegalized and for the most part was unaware of the wreck she was contributing to. [44]

Krishnamurti was non-committal, simply informing the New York Times that he neither refuted nor claimed the title of Messiah, and that he held Mrs Besant in very high regard. [45]

By November, 1933, the nominations for the coming Presidential election had been received. George Arundale and Ernest Wood had been nominated. Arundale was confident that
he was the chosen successor to Mrs Besant, and Jinarajadasa published some letters from Mrs Besant to Arundale stating that she had been told by the Masters that he was to succeed her. [46] These had been deposited in the ES archives but Jinarajadasa felt obliged to publish them.

Leadbeater wrote letters declaring that it would be wrong to oppose the Masters' wishes in their choice of President; he said he had heard Mrs Besant speak of Arundale as her successor on many occasions, and no "true Theosophist" would oppose such a choice. Ernest Wood, and his supporters, including (it seemed) Mrs Jinarajadasa, disagreed, and something of a fight ensued.

Leadbeater concluded what was to be his last year with further occult chemistry work. On October 13, 1933, he had been trying to see an electron, but was tired and unwell, and found the strain too great. The following day, Jinarajadasa set out for a lecture tour of South America, and the work was never completed.

The struggles for the Presidential election were temporarily set aside as Theosophists from all over the world gathered at Adyar for the Convention in December, 1933. The original subject, "Occultism", was set aside for a memorial convention, devoted to the life and work of Mrs
Besant. Arundale spoke of her as "Warrior", Ernest Wood lectured on her work for the Theosophical Movement, Hirendranath Datta talked about her work for India, and Leadbeater described her role as an occultist. There was a vague suggestion of criticism in Wood's address, considered unsuitable for such an occasion, and against which a number of protests were registered. This was a matter which reappeared during the election campaign.

The unity and fraternity created by the memorial addresses somewhat paled in the light of the annual reports and further announcements of loss of members and financial difficulties. The Recording Secretary, Mr Frei, suggested three reasons for the problems: the world-wide financial depression, the lack of leadership and propaganda in the Society, and the influence of Krishnamurti's teachings. The Society was clearly divided on the solution to the latter two, with Arundale, seen as Leadbeater's successor, having a clear majority. His solution, like that of his mentor, was more organizations, more activities, more revelations, and more publications.

On January 31st, 1934, Leadbeater left Madras, addressing meetings in Bombay and the Juhu Colony, and boarding a ship to return him to Australia. He was extremely ill and frail, and it seemed improbable that he would
survive the journey. Many people speculated on his reasons for such a trip at his stage of life and health. The *Canadian Theosophist* suggested that he wanted to destroy the correspondence between Mrs Besant and himself remaining at The Manor, and claimed he had already destroyed that which was kept in the ES office at Adyar. [47] Dick Balfour-Clarke stated simply that Leadbeater did not want to die in India; he loathed the country and the people, and wanted to die in peace amongst his "own people", in a country which he had come to regard as his home. [48] Certainly the reason must have been a strong one to force him to undertake a tiring voyage in such a weakened condition, with little prospect of survival.

Leadbeater's health deteriorated on the journey to Australia; it was aggravated by his refusal to adhere to the diet prescribed for his diabetes. He struggled to deal with his correspondence, but managed to write to his old friend, W.H. Kirby, "I shall be 87 - in a few days." [49] On February 13th the ship arrived at Fremantle, in Western Australia, and he was met by officials of the TS, the LCC and Co-Masonry, and taken by ambulance to a private hospital. His heart was in a bad state, and he was suffering from dropsy. The extremely hot weather in Perth did not help his condition.
On February 18th, Harold Morton, who had been his private secretary in Sydney and was General Secretary of the TS in Australia, arrived in Perth, urgently summoned at Leadbeater's direction. He took notes of much of what Leadbeater said, including instructions as to the future work of those organizations with which he was associated. Leadbeater's condition continued to decline, and he was unable to see anyone other than Morton.

Finally, on February 29th, he saw Morton for the last time, and as he left the room, Leadbeater said: "Well, if I do not see you again in this body—carry on." His final words—"Carry on"—have been invested with almost prophetic authority by later disciples. At 4.15 p.m. that day, he died. Only Miss Heather Kellett, his private secretary, and Harold Morton, had seen him alive once he entered hospital.

His body was robed in cassock, alb and white stole, after it had been embalmed. There was no provision for cremation in Western Australia at that time, and so it was arranged that the body would be shipped to Sydney on an inter-state steamer departing Fremantle on March 8th. On Sunday, March 4th, a Requiem Mass was celebrated in the Liberal Catholic Church of St John the Divine, in Brewer Street, East Perth. The coffin was placed in the sanctuary
on the Gospel side, with a mitre at the head and a cross of flowers at the foot. Leadbeater's 33rd Degree Masonic regalia was placed on a table near the coffin. The Church was full as Harold Morton celebrated the Mass according to the rite on which Leadbeater had devoted so much time. That evening, in the TS headquarters in Perth, a special memorial meeting was held at which five speakers spoke in terms of highest praise for their late Elder Brother.

The final funeral service was held in Sydney on Saturday, March 17th. The body, which had been lying in The Manor chapel, was taken to the Ryde Crematorium, where more than three hundred people crowded into the chapel and the grounds around it for the service, led by Bishop Tweedie, assisted by the Vicar of St Alban's, Lawrence Burt, and Harold Morton. The St Alban's choir sang the liturgy. Krishnamurti, in Sydney on matters unconnected with Leadbeater's death, was present at the service, although he remained outside the chapel, presenting, as a writer in The Theosophist described him, a "picturesque figure". [50]

A Requiem Mass was celebrated by Bishop Tweedie at St Alban's the following Sunday, and broadcast over 2GB. If canonization were possible in the LCC, the Bishop declared in his eulogy, Leadbeater would be worthy of it, for he
lived a truly saintly Christ-like life, a man of stainless purity; his name, his teachings, the marvellous example of his life, will be handed on throughout time for a thousand years. [51]

Obituaries of Leadbeater appeared in all the Theosophical journals and magazines of the associated organizations. The Theosophist, for May, 1934, was devoted to memories and hymns of praise. It included the mis-titled "Authentic biographical notes on Bishop Leadbeater", an article on Leadbeater by Arundale, together with a reprint of Mrs Besant's biographical article about Leadbeater from an earlier Theosophist. And there was an article on "The Last Words of Bishop Leadbeater", the "Carry on" being repeated throughout the Theosophical world as a final directive from the disciple of the Masters. An account of his last days was presented under the title "He Lives! He Lives! He Lives!", and a poetic tribute by F H Aldhouse declared

Prophet and prelate! now your work is done
You find your visions true;
And you await another morning's sun
For new days dawn for you. [52]
Others also took to verse to express their tributes:

He was our talisman clear inscribed
With the glyph of the ages' subtle lore,
The seal upon which our souls relied
To value the treasures of hidden store. [53]

You hear the ancient call of mystery
Spreading your spirit's wings
To see beyond this life's despondency
The Hidden Side of Things. [54]

The Liberal Catholic hoped that he would continue to watch over the church, and help it from "the other side".

After working so hard and for so long for the movements to which he had devoted all his energies for at least half of his long life it is not likely that he will lose interest in them just because he is removed from the physical vehicle. So, though we can no longer consult him by word of mouth or by correspondence we may as well try to continue to invoke his aid especially in those matters, occult matters chiefly, in which he was also so particularly useful to us. If we invoke his aid, or even if we do not, he will find some
way of giving it even though we know nothing about the when or the how of his giving it. [55]

And the editor, Bishop Pigott, recalled the letters he had received from Leadbeater referring to the help Mrs Besant had been giving him since her death: "more active and zealous for the welfare of the Theosophical Society, he said she was, than she had been for the few years immediately before her passing". The Editorial was followed by an article of Leadbeater's on "God", and "His famous talk on the consciousness of rocks" was promised for the following month. Wedgwood wrote a tribute in which he described Leadbeater as "by nature concrete and analytical" thereby complementing Mrs Besant who was "by nature intuitional and synthetic".

Various newspapers throughout the world noted his passing. The Times in London referred to him as "The Rev. Charles William [sic] Leadbeater", and briefly traced his history, with reference to the "serious charges" and the "Dissensions" leading to a split in the TS. It mentioned that he was consecrated as an Old Catholic Bishop, and subsequent issues of the newspaper included correspondence correcting this error, both from Wedgwood and from the Secretary of the Society of St Willibrord, or Anglican and Old Catholic Union. [56] In India, The Hindu told the
traditional story of his early life in South America and his attendance at Oxford, and recorded the memorial meeting at Adyar. [57]

In Sydney, the Daily Telegraph included a photograph with its description of him as "over six foot tall, with athletic proportions and massive head", and noted that

In lifetime Bishop Leadbeater claimed communication with the "astral world" of the Theosophists of which (according to his teachings) he is now a part. [58]

It included the standard biography, and concluded with reference to him "purporting" to investigate worlds closed to "the commoner species of mankind". The following day, it devoted an article to "Leadbeater as Prophet: World of the Future", with an account of the coming of the Sixth Root Race. It mourned the passing of "a picturesque figure" from Australian life.

The New Statesman described him under a headline reading "A Bishop in Partibus", commenting that "The police of three continents displayed continuous interest in him" and stating that "around few adventurers of the time can a
larger dossier have been built up". [59]

The Canadian Theosophist, not unexpectedly, recalled Leadbeater with no great affection:

He had infinite patience, a good memory, a persuasive pen and tongue, and a great vogue....I saw the T.S. laid in ruins by him——and one might almost say, by him alone. [60]

The author of the obituary was William Loftus Hare, the only one of his critics to whom Leadbeater had ever replied.

Many of his disciples recalled Mrs Besant's words written on Leadbeater's 77th birthday:

Our world is not the world of transient phenomena, but the world of Power, of Wisdom, of Right Activity, and we strike together to serve our Elder Brethren, careful only to make ourselves the channels of the One Will in the Service of which is Perfect Freedom. [61]

Some Theosophists wondered whether Leadbeater himself, known to his disciples as an "Elder Brother", might not have become an Elder Brother, a Master, after his death. Had he
really passed through the Initiations leading to Adeptship? Was he now beyond the cycle of life and death and rebirth? He had told his last group of pupils, "The Seven Virgins of Java", that he would re-incarnate, and that he would have a special way of letting them know who he was in his new body: it does not seem that he has done so.

Despite the losses of its two greatest figures, the TS and its associated movements continued. In the election for the Presidency of the TS, George Arundale soundly defeated Ernest Wood: the election results were declared on June 20th, 1934, and Arundale received 15,604 votes (54.14% of those who voted) and Wood 4,825 (16.76%). Only 72.16% of the membership voted. [62] Arundale was inaugurated into the office on June 21st, and Wood began a gradual withdrawal from the movement. [63]

Successors were found for all the offices Leadbeater occupied at the time of his death, and most of his successors carried on in his tradition. Jinarajadasa succeeded as OH of the ES, and Arundale became Grand Master of the ER. In Australia, Bishop Tweedie had already taken over as Regionary Bishop of the LCC, and in London Pigott was elected Presiding Bishop. Leadbeater had been requested to make his choice for successor known to the Episcopal Synod, and did so in a pompously worded decree written in
November, 1930. It began:

We, Charles Webster Leadbeater, by the Grace of God Presiding Bishop of the Liberal Catholic Church....

and concluded

Given at our Palace at Adyar, near the City of Madras....[64]

Pigott, however carefully chosen, was often accused of departing from the Leadbeater tradition, and returning to more orthodox Christianity. He had suggested Wedgwood should be reinstated as Presiding Bishop in succession to Leadbeater, but Leadbeater declared that there was an occult principle whereby a man could not take up a position he had laid down. Wedgwood's sanity was too intermittent for him to be trusted with any major responsibility.

If Leadbeater brought messages from the great leaders who preceded him almost as soon as they passed away, it was to be expected that his reappearance at TS gatherings would not take long. Addressing the Annual Convention at Benares in 1936, Arundale declared that the ghosts of both Mrs Besant and Leadbeater had been present at a Congress in
Geneva earlier that year. [65] And by 1938 Geoffrey Hodson was declaring that Leadbeater still resided at The Manor, where he was involved in supervising the work, assisted by The Manor angel. [66] In 1939 Arundale was assuring Theosophists that when they pass from this life they will certainly be met on their passing through the valley by one or other of our Elder Brethren, and, of course, by Dr Besant, to whom they were so much devoted, and by Bishop Leadbeater no less. They will help to look after them...[67]

Leadbeater's mortal remains, in the form of ashes, were distributed between The Manor (where they occupy an unprepossessing concrete box set in the garden overlooking the Harbour), St John's Liberal Catholic Church, Perth (where they sit behind a memorial plaque on the wall), and the Centres at Adyar and Huizen. At Adyar, beside the river, near the scene of meetings with Masters, occult explorations into matter, time and space, not far from the site of the discovery of Krishnamurti, and overlooking the island on which he had encountered nature spirits and evil demons, the ashes of Charles Webster Leadbeater were mingled with those of his friend and colleague, Annie Besant, in the Garden of Remembrance.
Chapter 22: Epilogue

In his eighty years, Charles Webster Leadbeater had risen from an obscure birth in an English industrial town, through a dull curacy in the Church of England, to an international reputation as saint, seer and sage, or charlatan, paedersae and hypocrite. The legacy he left behind included a large quantity of books, pamphlets and journal articles, several organizations which regarded him as an infallible psychic and agent of the Inner Government of the world, enthusiastic disciples in almost every nation, and enemies throughout the world still eager to denounce him. And several amounts of ashes carefully deposited in places sacred to his memory.

In the file marked "C.W.Leadbeater - Biographical" in the TS Archives at Adyar also reposes an envelope labelled "C.W.Leadbeater - Hair" in which is a small quantity of yellowy-white hair removed, according to the label, by Harold Morton after Leadbeater's death in Perth. And there was a legend that one Liberal Catholic bishop, until his death in recent years, always kept a small portion of Leadbeater's ashes in a case on his watch-chain. [1]

From 1906 onwards Leadbeater had endured an
extraordinary amount of criticism, ridicule and quite obvious slander; he replied to but one of his critics, and took none of his slanderers to court. To his disciples this evidences sanctity. To his critics it proves that the allegations were true.

Leadbeater created a Vehicle for the Coming Christ, and lost interest in the Vehicle. He saw Krishnamurti grow away from him and denounce the very things he held most dear. Yet publicly he made no real reply.

He was a man of many interests, many obsessions, and all focussed essentially on himself. In everything in which he participated, he was the centre of attention, authority and power. Well into his seventies he was extremely active, physically and mentally, writing, talking, planning for future activities. And he died without any indication of regret or anxiety, to enter into a new dimension with which, in life, he had claimed a personal familiarity.

His closest friend, colleague, and one should say, disciple, Annie Besant had predeceased him by five months. But his other disciples remained. Krishna had clearly broken from him and from the Theosophical milieu, and was to declare a few years after Leadbeater's death that
there was no common ground on which he could meet Theosophy. He has continued as a teacher in his own right, proclaiming a philosophy without Masters, Initiation or World-Teachers. [2] And, surprisingly, commands a strong following in the TS, including members who were involved with the Order of the Star prior to its dissolution. [3] His talks are usually published, and transcripts of most of them are available. Krishnamurti Foundations in India, England and the USA administer his work, with organizations in other parts of the world doing likewise. Several schools have been established based on Krishna's ideas of education. At The Feet of The Master, by whomever it was written, continues to be published in many editions, and to sell widely. [4]

George Arundale, who succeeded Annie Besant as President of the TS, continued to travel throughout the world. His election on June 20th, 1934, came too late for Leadbeater to know, at least in the physical world, that one of "our people" (as he used to call them) had been elected. Arundale continued in the Leadbeater style, though less subtle than his mentor, and messages from the Masters and details of Initiations and progress on the Path continued to be given by him.

After his death in August, 1945, Rukmini Devi Arundale devoted herself to work for the arts in India.
especially dance, establishing the world famous Kâlekshêtra school in Adyar. She continues in this work, and is a prominent figure in cultural and welfare work in India. [5] However, her position in the TS is less favoured, especially since the election in 1980 of her niece, Radha Burnier, as President. Mrs Arundale is seen to represent the old, pro-Leadbeater, anti-Krishna regime (of Leadbeater, Arundale and Jinarajadasa), away from which the Society moved with the election of Mrs Burnier's father, Sri Ram, as President in succession to Jinarajadasa in 1953.

Jinarajadasa succeeded Leadbeater as the OH of the ES, and, after Arundale's death in 1945, was the only candidate for the Presidency of the TS, which he held until his death in 1953. [6] He caused a great deal of historical material to be published in his endeavour to show the validity of Leadbeater's claims in various fields, though some of it would seem to the outsider to do just the opposite. He and his wife, Dorothy, separated not long after their marriage, and Mrs Jinarajadasa, after becoming involved in the arguments over the Arundale-Wood battle for the Presidency, drifted into other areas of activity.

James Wedgwood continued to wander between sanity and insanity until his death on March 13th, 1951, and during the lucid periods, devoted himself to the work of the
Centre at Huizen, and to the establishment of a lesser Centre at Tekels Park, near Camberley, Surrey, in England, where he lived almost entirely from 1937 onwards. He wrote some defences of ceremonial in response to Krishna's attacks, and contributed articles to The Liberal Catholic. His eventual death was the result of a fall which broke several ribs and ruptured a lung. During his last months he had been kept from any involvement in public activities, even from eating in the communal dining room at Tekels Park, because of his unpredictable behaviour. [7]

His death provoked extravagant eulogies from his most devoted followers. Bishop Vreede wrote:

His crucifixion is at an end...In utter defencelessness and harmlessness and in utter humility he took upon himself the vicarious atonement for the bearers of the apostolic succession be brought over to the Liberal Catholic Church and by that sacrifice occultly founded the church and opened a possibility for the redemption of the Lord's Church at large. [8]

Another disciple wrote that Wedgwood had taken on himself the karma of the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church, and
However, E.L. Gardner, an eminent British Theosopist who was responsible for arranging for Wedgwood to be looked after in his declining years, wrote privately:

J.I.W. was a 'dual' - at times skilled, able and impressive. Then a bout of sensualism of the worst grade, sexual perversion. [10]

Having considered six of the Apostles - Mrs Besant, Leadbeater, Arundale, Rukmini, Wedgwood - what of the others? Most lists included only one more, Oscar Köllnerström (1903-1978). Having been a close disciple of Leadbeater, he travelled to Europe with Wedgwood (contrary to Leadbeater's wishes), and was eventually ordained to the priesthood by Wedgwood at Huizen. He studied psychoanalysis under Georg Groddeck (1866-1934) at Baden Baden, and spent some time in China lecturing on English and philosophy at the University of Peking. He returned to England, and established himself in a successful psychoanalytical practice. He had no continuing association with Theosophy or the LCC, although he maintained an interest in the Mass, and published a work concerning liturgy in his final years. [11] Later editions of The Science of the Sacraments included additional notes of a different clairvoyant investigation of parts of the Eucharist which were the...
Küllerström and Wedgwood. [12]

Some lists of the Apostles included three more: Lady Emily Lutyens, Theodore St John and Rajagopal. Lady Emily Lutyens resigned from the TS and associated movements in 1930 in following Krishna, although she admitted that she could never really understand his teachings. She remained closely devoted to him until her death in 1964, when she was eighty-nine. In 1957 she published a moving autobiographical account of her involvement in the TS and the Coming, entitled Candles in the Sun. It caused a great flutter in Theosophical and Liberal Catholic circles, and was generally denounced as "all lies", or as a breach of confidence, frequently by people who had not read it. Dr Adrian Vreede, then Presiding Bishop of the LCC, however, declared that the book was "absolutely true as to the facts therein". [13]

Theodore St John, once Leadbeater's favourite boy, was killed in a motor cycle accident in England while still quite young. Leadbeater told Dick Balfour-Clarke one morning that he had foreseen Theodore's death; that afternoon a telegram was delivered containing news of the accident. [14] Rajagopal followed Krishna, and was for many years associated with Krishnamurti's work in America. He married and established his home in California. [15].
What of the pupils, the young boys (and much later, girls) who had been placed in Leadbeater's special care to be "brought on" occultly, and of whom he had such great hopes? Virtually none of them remained in the Theosophical movement, and most of them left Leadbeater and Theosophy. Hubert van Hook studied law and became an attorney in Chicago, having rejected both Leadbeater and Theosophy after his four years at Adyar from 1909. He later accused Leadbeater of "misusing" him. [16] Basil Hodgson-Smith graduated from Oxford in 1913, and joined the Royal West Kent Regiment in 1914. He was severely wounded in 1917, and remained a prisoner of war until 1918. He died in 1929. Basil was said to have died as the result of the "great cloud of sadness" which hung over him from his past lives, and therefore lost the will to live. The great promise of his early years (and the predictions of the Masters) thus came to nought. [17]

Fritz Kunz settled in the USA, where he edited a journal, Main Currents in Modern Thought, and was involved in educational work until his death in 1972. He remained on the edge, rather than in the midst, of Theosophical work. His wife Dora (nee van Gelder) continued active in the TS, and is currently National President of the TS in America. She is also a noted clairvoyant and has published material
based on her psychical research. She had been the only girl 
at The Manor in its early days, and had been much respected 
by Leadbeater for her natural clairvoyance. [18]

The Seven Virgins of Java, Leadbeater's last 
group of students, gradually drifted away from Theosophy, in 
which, according to one of them, they had had no real belief 
even in their days at The Manor. It had been an experience, 
partly colourful, mostly dull, into which they had been 
placed by their parents. It was, one of them recalled, not 
very demanding, and therefore bearable.

But most of us had never really believed it all, 
and, once we'd heard Krishnamurti, we began to 
question and the whole thing became unbelievable. 
[19]

The rituals, the occult work, the ER and the angels were 
things in which Leadbeater believed intensely, and which the 
girls accepted merely because there was nothing else to do.

Harold Morton, one of Leadbeater's closest 
disciples in later years, summarized his feelings in a 
letter written to another close disciple, Dick 
Balfour-Clarke, ten years after Leadbeater's death:
At that time I believed in his wisdom, etc. as a complete devotee does. Then came my complete rejection of his teachings. I cannot accept his occult claims any longer, can you? Do you still accept Initiations and the whole story woven by C.W.L. along those lines? The World Mother? red and green angels from Alpha Centauri!!! and what about the five (or seven) sacred virgins of the Java legend? My, what an imagination, what audacity; what a set of mad followers to listen to such stories. [20]

And, at the bottom of the letter, Dick Balfour-Clarke had written that, when he received the letter in 1944 he could not sympathize with its views but now "I have changed my views so much that I can no longer take issue with" Morton. That comment was dated 1977.

At any time, Leadbeater had two sets of pupils: those who were really close to him, and few in number, and a peripheral group, greater in number, but more distant from him. Of this latter group, many remain in the TS and are ardent defenders of their teacher.

What of the movements with which Leadbeater was so closely associated? The TS has continued, though
declining in numbers and influence, with its headquarters at Adyar in India. Jinarajadasa was succeeded as President by N. Sri Ram, Rukmini Arundale's brother in 1953, and he, in turn, by John Coats from Great Britain in 1974. Following Coats' death in 1980, Sri Ram's daughter, Radha Burnier, was elected President. Membership of the TS based at Adyar underwent a slight increase as the result of the "occult revival" of the early 1970's, but remains less than at the height of the era of Leadbeater and Mrs Besant. [21]

The splendid expectations which the early leaders had for the Society have failed to be fulfilled. Arundale, for example, proclaimed at the 1935 Annual Convention that by 1975 the TS Estate would extend to both sides of the Adyar River, with the two parts being linked by a bridge, and speak to the world directly through radio and television: the world, he said, would eagerly await advice from the TS on all matters of importance. He promised that a World University would be based there, with branches throughout the world. He also proclaimed that by 1975 the Adyar River would be "so pure and clean" that it could safely be used for bathing. [22] Not one of these prophecies has been fulfilled.

The centenary of the TS in 1975 was celebrated with functions drawing together representatives of most of
the rival claimants to HPB's original society. [23] There
had been much speculation about the occult significance of
1975 and HPB's promise of a new "Messenger" to the Society
in that year. The failure of anything significant to
eventuate has simply been ignored in Theosophical
publications.

The Manor remains as a centre for the ES, its
Heads having included Jinarajadasa, Dr van de Broek, James
Perkins, Jack Patterson, and, currently, Norman Hankin. The
chapel in the basement is still used for occasional Liberal
Catholic services. In a letter to the ES in October, 1951,
Jinarajadasa described the "inner purpose" of The Manor as
the Centre for the Southern Hemisphere, organized by the
Supreme HEAD of the Hierarchy" and the "representative on the
physical plane of SHAMBALLA". [24]

The Liberal Catholic Church has expanded in the
sense of spreading throughout the world, although
numerically it seems to have undergone a steady decline. It
has, in some places, attracted people from outside the
Theosophical movement, although its links with the TS remain
close. [25] Leadbeater was succeeded as Presiding Bishop by
Frank Pigott in 1934, and he was followed by Adrian Vreede
(of The Netherlands) in 1956, Sir Hugh Sykes, Bart., (of
Great Britain) in 1966, Sten von Krusenstierna (of

Within the TS there has been a degree of suspicion of the LCC. When Arundale became President of the TS he felt obliged to state publicly that he would give up his episcopal activities altogether, although he occasionally acted as a bishop. Similarly, when John Coats, also a Liberal Catholic bishop, was elected President he was obliged to give up public activities as a bishop.

St Alban's Cathedral no longer stands next to Mortuary Station in Redfern; it fell into disrepair and the cost of renovations was prohibitive. It was sold and has been replaced by a petrol station. St Alban's Co-Masonic Temple, however, remains, and the Co-Masonic Order continues to function throughout the world. The former General Secretary of the TS in Australia, Elaine Murdoch, now holds the office of Administrator General for Australia, once held by Leadbeater. The current President of the TS, Radha Burnier, represents the Supreme Council in India, just as Mrs Besant did in her day.
The Egyptian Rite continues in major TS centres, although it appears to have changed the requirements for membership; it is no longer necessary to be a member of the ES. Leadbeater appointed Arundale to succeed him as Grand Master, and Mrs Arundale currently claims the title as, it seems, does Radha Burnier. [26]

The ES has diminished substantially in numbers, but remains an important influence in the TS, with all major Society leaders also being members of the ES. It had some 5,000 members in August, 1935 [27], and is generally believed to involve something less than ten percent of the overall membership of the Society. Jinarajadasa was succeeded as Outer Head by Sri Ram in 1953, followed by I.K. Taimni in 1974, and, since 1978, Radha Burnier, now also President of the Society.

The Amphitheatre at Balmoral continued as something of a Theosophical "white elephant" until it was sold in 1931. After being used for a variety of secular purposes, it was demolished in 1951, and replaced by a block of flats. [28] The failure of the project, as also of the Coming itself, led to some remarkable changes of mind in the TS. By 1931, Harold Morton, as General Secretary of the TS in Australia, was declaring that the TS was "in no way responsible" for the Amphitheatre, and in a letter to the
Sydney Morning Herald on November 6th, 1931, proclaimed it had been a witness to the faith of Dr Rocke and her supporters.

The World Mother has attracted continued interest, both within the Liberal Catholic Church where various attempts have been made to establish a Christianized version of devotion to the World Mother [29], and in the TS where people like Sandra Hodson, wife of the Theosophical clairvoyant, Geoffrey Hodson, have promoted the concept.

In his last years Leadbeater claimed to have been instructed by the World Mother to establish a form of ministry for her worship, including a type of "apostolic succession" which would be passed on through women, and lead to the foundation of a feminine religion to parallel the masculine religion of Christianity. Claiming the authority of the World Mother, Leadbeater transmitted this "succession" from her to several women disciples, who were instructed to pass it on to other women. This feminine religion has not made any public appearance, but it is said the "succession" is perpetuated within Theosophical circles privately. [30]

The World University, more as an idea than as a practical reality, carried on until 1934, when its work was
given to the Theosophical Research Centre in London. But the
Council of the World University continued to meet annually
to encourage the establishment of other research centres. In
1964, Sri Ram, as President of the TS and Rector of the
World University, changed the title to Theosophical World
Trust for Education and Research, feeling that the term
"University" gave a wrong impression. [31] The influence of
Theosophy on innovative educational systems, including
educational experiments in Australia, was significant in the
first half of this century, but has subsequently faded.
[32]

The Order of the Round Table, as a chivalric
movement for young people, has continued since Leadbeater's
time, although its ideals seem rather too old-fashioned to
attract great interest. The current Chief Knight is Mrs
Arundale.

Throughout all the movements which do continue,
and throughout the TS, especially in Australia, India and
America, the influence of Leadbeater continues to dominate
thought. Although there have been various attempts at "Back
to Blavatsky" moves in the TS, these have never been
especially successful, and most officials of the Adyar-based
TS are reluctant to talk about contradictions between
Leadbeater's teachings and Blavatsky's. [33]
Leadbeater's books remain in demand. In modern format, some of his "classics" have achieved high sales throughout the world in paperback editions published by Quest Books, a subsidiary of the TS in America. [34] As one Theosophical commentator has noted:

[Leadbeater] was the author of some of the most popular works of Theosophical literature and wrote English prose of exceptional clarity and sometimes achieved passages of quite distinguished classical simplicity. Much of his work is devoted to describing the phenomenological side of theosophy, the nature of man and the universe, and other subjects suited to his clairvoyant capabilities. His books are among the most popular in theosophical literature because of their apparent simplicity; but at the same time they contain much more than meets the eye and imply principles that they do not express. [35]

One would need to add that Leadbeater also wrote a lot of ponderous, rambling prose devoid of any literary skill.

Leadbeater's popularity - especially through his major works on the psychic nature of man: The Chakras, Man
Visible and Invisible, and Thought-Forms — in the "occult revival" of the 1970's was considerable, and his books may be found alongside contemporary best-sellers in any occult or "alternative" bookshop. Concepts such as Masters, reincarnation, karma, Askashic Records, Atlantis, Lemuria, Shamballa, the astral plane, psychic powers, kundalini and clairvoyance, so often used in modern occult writings, owe more to him than to anyone else. Across the range of material from various occult groups, whatever exalted source they claim their special information, his influence is evident in different degrees of reinterpretation or misunderstanding. And even those who claim that they derive any Theosophical influence they may have from Blavatsky tend, in fact, to be presenting teachings which derive instead from Leadbeater. [36]

One of the less obvious areas of Leadbeater's influence is in modern art. An exhibition mounted in London under the title "The Art of the Invisible", devoted a considerable amount of space to the original art work for Man Visible and Invisible and Thought-Forms, which had been discovered in the TS Archives at Adyar and were sent to London for the exhibition. [37] These were displayed with, and in the catalogue compared with, works by Piet Mondrian (1872-1944) and Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944). The suggestion of the compiler of the catalogue was that the
"inner side" paintings had inspired the artists. [38] The catalogue drew some interesting comparisons between the writings of Leadbeater and Kandinsky. Kandinsky had written:

Is everything material – or is everything spiritual? Can the distinction we make between matter and spirit be nothing but relative modifications of one or the other? Thought is matter, but of a fine and not coarse substance. [39]

Even a brief reading of Kandinsky's theories of art immediately brings to mind parallels in Leadbeater's writings, and also in the works of Blavatsky and other Theosophists. [40]

The compilers of "The Art of the Invisible" viewed their collection as representative of an expression of something new, a new view of man, of science and of religion, which had begun to emerge at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. They concluded:

Participants in the system of mutually supportive beliefs we have been examining thought themselves
to be the harbingers of a new cultural epoch which would embody a new science, a new religion, and a new art. They foresaw a world in which materialism and the envious striving that goes with it would be set aside. The art certainly emerged and proliferated, contemporary physics has left the certitudes of 19th century rationalism far behind, but whether there has been a corresponding moral advance remains debatable. [41]

In his lengthy and scholarly analysis of the work of Kandinsky, Sixten Ringbom examines both Leadbeater's influence on that painter and considers those sources which could have influenced Leadbeater. [42] He concludes:

The chief value of Thought Forms was that it presented Kandinsky with a glimpse of the appearance of that "fine matter" which was to become the content of the new art. The observations of the theosophists showed that fine matter did indeed look different from hard matter, and that on the higher levels it is the thoughts and feelings that count, not the material things. [43]

Kandinsky, he noted, owned a copy of the first German
edition of *Thought Forms*, translated as *Gedankenformen*, published in 1908, and was still referring to it in the 1920's.

The most forceful claim on behalf of Leadbeater as an influence on modern art comes from T.H. Robsjohn-Gibbings. [44] He notes that *Thought Forms* was widely read and discussed in artistic circles in Paris in the early years of this century, and he suggests that the similarities between the first abstract paintings of Gino Severini (1883-1966), Robert Delaunay (1885-1941), Albert Gleizes (1881-1953), Frank Kupka (1871-1957) and Kandinsky are more than coincidences. He notes "striking similarities" between *Thought Forms* and *Man Visible and Invisible* (published in 1903 and 1905 respectively in their first English versions) and Kandinsky's "non-objective" compositions which were begun in 1911. There are also interesting similarities between Kandinsky's idea of the "language of form and colour" and Leadbeater's theory of astral coloration. [45]

Whereas most modern art authorities say that non-objective art (that is, art without a vestige of recognizable subject matter) was a German innovation, beginning in Munich with Kandinsky, Robsjohn-Gibbings declares it to have been "a by-product of astral
manifestations as revealed by Theosophy, spiritualism and occultism". He concludes:

In view of the fact that many of the first abstract paintings...bear a striking resemblance to the thought forms, it is highly probable that further investigations will place Annie Besant and Mr Leadbeater among the pioneers of modern art.

[46]

While few authorities are likely to be this enthusiastic, it is an interesting by-way of what might be called "Leadbeaterian influence". [47] The extent of this influence in scientific areas will be considered in the next chapter.

The legacy left after Leadbeater's death was substantial, in terms of literature, organizations and influence. It reached those who knew nothing of the man beyond his name and his status as a clairvoyant; it even reached those who didn't even know his name but were indirect recipients of his teachings and the concepts he popularized. As the organizations he inspired diminish with the passage of time, it is evident that the indirect influence continues, even increasing in times of renewed popular interest in occultism.
Chapter 23: Assessment and Conclusions

In the biography of Charles Webster Leadbeater there are a number of "mysteries" that have nothing to do with the Occult Hierachy, the depths of the atom or incarnations on the moon: they relate to the facts of his life story. The first of these is clearly the problem of his early life: what was the true story of his life up until he was ordained in the Church of England at Farnham. Where was he, and what was he doing, between 1854 and 1878 Only a piece of major genealogical detective work - or recourse to the Akashic Records - could, at this stage, uncover that period with absolute certainty. But it is certain that he was not born in 1847, was not born on February 17th, did not have a brother named Gerald, did not go to Oxford (or Cambridge). The story of the adventures in Brazil is highly improbable: if the family did go to South America, it did so at a time when Leadbeater was too young for even a person of his unique gifts to be driving railway engines or engaging in sword fights with rebel generals. Why were these stories of a "life of manifold adventures" told? and when were they first told?

It is important to understand that at the time - the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries - the proliferation of documentation which is
regarded as an integral part of modern life was unknown. Passports were generally not required for travel. Identity papers were virtually unheard of in England, and the word of someone who appeared to be a gentleman was taken at its face value. It would have been odd, and insulting, to ask for proof of someone's claim to have a particular birthdate, or even a claim to a University education, provided that the person appeared to be educated.

The stories told by Leadbeater probably developed in two stages. First, upon joining the London Lodge of the TS in 1884 - his application having been made on November 21st, 1883 - Leadbeater was brought into some quite distinguished company, as he himself emphasizes in his recollections of the events. [1] Even the ordinary members of the Lodge were quite distinguished people, drawn from the upper-middle-classes and the professions. The early years of the TS in England abound in the names of the eminent, and its members were usually people of education. [2]

Leadbeater was at a distinct disadvantage. He was a clergyman, and he was, from the formal Victorian point of view, uneducated. Self-educated or self-made men were not considered acceptable in a society that believed the established order to have been divinely appointed. Hence the need to explain both his origins and family, and his lack of
a formal education. To be the son of a Manchester
book-keeper, who died of tuberculosis, would hardly do. A
ccompany director, or, better still, the chairman of a
compny, was substituted. His failure to attend a good
public school was explained by his time in South America
with his family, a time of manifold adventures. His failure
to attend one of the great Universities was explained: he
did begin a career at Oxford, but it was cut short by a
terrible financial disaster, which most of his associates
would have recalled.
So the fictional early life appears, and, having appeared,
cannot really ever go away. With his increasing role as
occult adventurer and explorer of the unknown, it proves yet
more useful, as the lost secrets and treasures of the
Aztecs, and objective proof of life after death are added.
By the time he finds Jinarajadasa in Ceylon, brother Gerald
is added. No-one is likely to check the details because it
seems unlikely that anyone would lie about such matters.

The birth date is almost certainly a later
invention. It would be too much of a coincidence if
Leadbeater chose a year that just happened to coincide with
the year of Mrs Besant's birth. Clearly, that story came
after he had met Mrs Besant, felt a close affinity with her,
and decided that their occult relationship should be
reinforced with a temporal link. It is equally improbable
that he simply chose February 17th at random; again, it would be too much of a coincidence for him to have chosen at random the date on which Olcott died. The new birthdate—February 17th, 1848—had distinct advantages, symbolically, over the old—February 16th, 1854. And when, in 1922, Adyar Day was instituted, it must have seemed divinely providential.

Did Leadbeater tell these stories with deliberate intent to deceive? Did he begin to tell them until he believed that they were true? Considering the nature of his claimed clairvoyance and his power of creating history visually in his mind, it seems likely that he came to believe the revised story was the truth. Throughout his life he was not averse to modifying the past. Thus, for example, the 1906 Committee's decision was thrown out by the 1908 Committee, including eminent barristers and judges. Or so he said: but there was no 1908 Committee, and the group of people to whom he referred by this title included no-one, eminent or otherwise, in the legal profession. Yet he seemed to believe the claim, and his disciples certainly did.

The second mystery in the Leadbeater biography concerns his relationship with Helena Petrovna Blavatsky. Leadbeater claimed to have been a pupil of hers, and Mrs Besant claimed that she and Leadbeater were HPB's chosen
successors. [3] The evidence against Leadbeater's claim is virtually overwhelming. He was never a member of HPB's group in London, nor was he a member of her Esoteric Section, or of its Inner Group. The membership of both is known, and his name is not included. Nor is there any correspondence between HPB and Leadbeater which suggests anything other than a fairly formal and distant friendship between them; their letters were rare and certainly not intimate. Boris de Zirkoff, acknowledged by Theosophists generally as the greatest authority on HPB's works, and editor of her massive Collected Writings, stated that there was no evidence in any of her papers or correspondence to suggest any special relationship with Leadbeater. [4] Mrs Alice Cleather, one of HPB's Inner Group, specifically denied ever having heard HPB mention Leadbeater as a pupil, and says she never saw him at London Headquarters during HPB's lifetime. [5]

There are also clear contradictions between HPB's teachings and those contained in the letters alleged to have come from the Masters, and those given out by Leadbeater, usually claiming the authority of the same Masters. [6] Leadbeater was a member of the London Lodge of the TS, which continued an almost independent existence apart from the Blavatsky Lodge in London, under HPB, and apart from the TS as a whole for a number of years. During this period Leadbeater was active as a psychic via whom A.P.Sinnett
obtained communications from the Masters, and continued to teach doctrines which HPB had specifically denied. The most notable of these is the Mars-Mercury controversy, still a Theosophical debating point.

Yet Leadbeater stated:

In my own case, Madame Blavatsky taught me very much on behalf of the Master, but I was separated from her for some five years and sent out to India when she was in Europe. Consequently, it was impossible for her, except by occasional letters and on the astral plane sometimes to give me any help. Therefore I was put into the care of Swami T. Subba Rao. [7]

Where are the "occasional letters"? Those which are available are simply polite social correspondence. Why, when Leadbeater returned from India, did he visit HPB only twice, and on both occasions merely socially? And why did he only make public the claim to be a pupil of HPB well after her death, and once he had risen to fame within the TS?

Similar questions might be asked regarding his claims to have been a pupil of T. Subba Rao (who was not a Swami). These claims were only made after Subba Rao's death
in 1890, and after the death of the one person who was known to have been a pupil of Subba Rao, and whom Leadbeater disliked intensely, A.J. Cooper-Oakley. Subba Rao certainly talked occultism to Leadbeater, but this did not in itself make their relationship guru-chela. Subba Rao broke with HPB over two matters: he did not believe that the world was ready for the revelation of occult knowledge such as she proposed to make in The Secret Doctrine, and he held to a four-fold classification of man, rather than the seven-fold system which HPB taught. On both of these issues Leadbeater was in direct contradiction with the man he claimed as his teacher: he popularized occult knowledge extensively, and he taught very definitely the seven-fold classification as a fact verified by his psychic powers.

If one assumes that Leadbeater was not a pupil either of HPB or of T Subba Rao, a third mystery arises: where, when and how— if at all— did Leadbeater develop the abilities which he described as clairvoyance? He claimed to have developed his powers under the direct supervision of the Master DK and T Subba Rao at Adyar whilst he and Cooper-Oakley were the only Europeans there. This means that it must have been between May and October, 1885, whilst Olcott was away on a lecture tour, and before Leadbeater went to Ceylon in January, 1886. Leadbeater, Cooper-Oakley and Subba Rao were members of the Executive Committee
appointed by Olcott to manage the TS in his absence. If this was the period involved, it is curious that no-one else was told about it until Leadbeater returned to London with Jinarajadasa in 1890. Even Sinnett, who was making use of Leadbeater's psychic powers, claimed he did not know their origin until some time after Leadbeater returned from Ceylon. Yet they had been corresponding regularly all the time Leadbeater was away from England, and the subject had never been mentioned. [8] Nor was it mentioned in correspondence with HPB, nor was Olcott told of it.

Despite all this, there seems no reason to doubt that, at some stage during his absence from England, quite possibly during the miserable years in Colombo (1886–1889), Leadbeater underwent some sort of psychological experience which led to the development of what he believed to be psychic powers. This may have been the result of efforts on his part to produce such powers. But he could never admit this; in his own writings and those of other Theosophical authorities there are grave warnings against any attempts to awaken psychic faculties. [9] They are said to either develop gradually over many years in the course of the individual's spiritual growth, or, in rare cases, to be developed quickly under the supervision of a Master. Any deliberate attempt to "force" their development via systems of meditation or occult exercises is regarded as positively
dangerous and spiritually harmful. [10] Thus, if Leadbeater had developed his psychic powers and "unblocked" various channels by a particular type of meditative exercise alone and unaided in two months or so, this would have been regarded as a highly dangerous and unspiritual activity, producing clairvoyance of a dubious type.

What sort of process or experience could Leadbeater have undergone which led him to develop what he believed were psychic powers? The answer lies in his own theory of how such powers could be self-developed, a method not publicly taught, but given to his close pupils. It was the same method employed by James Wedgwood, and is known as "forced imagination". Ernest Wood recalled one instance of its being taught by Leadbeater:

One of our prominent members had been through an important ceremony on the astral plane during the sleep of his physical body, and had therefore become what was called "an Initiate". It happened that he was to be called as a witness in a certain case. He was full of anxiety about it. "Whatever shall I say if they ask me about my being an Initiate? I do not remember anything of it at all." Mr Leadbeater's reply was: "But why don't you remember? You ought to be able to remember."
"Well, if I let my imagination play on it, I can get a sort of impression about it." "That is just what you ought to do. There is a cause for such imagining. How can you expect your clairvoyant power to develop if you destroy its delicate beginnings?" The member followed this advice and became one of the prominent clairvoyants in the Theosophical Society, though years later he mentioned in conversation, that he never really saw anything; only he received an impression so vivid that he felt it must be so, and he was justified in saying with confidence that such-and-such a being was present and saying such-and-such a thing. [11]

Another of Leadbeater's pupils recalled that Leadbeater had mentioned, on one occasion, the presence of a nature spirit in their vicinity. The pupil expressed the wish that he, too, might see it. Leadbeater assured him that there was no reason why he could not, and that he should imagine that he could see it until the imagination became so real that he could see the spirit. [12]

The psychological dangers in this sort of approach are quite evident, and there are, in Theosophical teaching, said to be additional occult dangers, as are also
described in traditional Indian teachings about such matters. [13] If, in the loneliness of a dirty and uncongenial slum in Colombo, with no European friends, in the midst of a people he loathed, as witness his frequent letters asking to be brought back to England, Leadbeater withdrew from the intolerable reality into himself, seeking a better and more congenial world within, and began desperately to cultivate the psychic gifts he so admired, there is little doubt that something would happen. It may well have been that he began to see the Masters to whose service he had committed himself, and to perceive the worlds about which he had read so much.

There are several factors which suggest that this may have been the case. Firstly, Leadbeater never discovered anything via his clairvoyant faculties which conflicted in the slightest with his own beliefs or wishes. His visions always confirmed his opinions. [14] Secondly, his visions were virtually identical with those of the spiritualism with which he was so familiar: the other world was simply a parallel to this one, the inhabitants behaved according to the laws of this world, the Masters were little more than the supernatural upper-classes who pontificated with the air of Victorian Anglican Bishops, in a style identical to Leadbeater's, addressing candidates for confirmation.
It is interesting to consider the opinion of an eminent Theosophical writer, much given to defending Leadbeater, whose comments on what might be called "imaginative clairvoyance" apply exactly to Leadbeater's perceptions.

Nearly everybody of experience in the Theosophical Society has on a number of occasions been approached by people claiming guidance from exalted personages who are obviously merely the mental creations of the guided persons. Such synthetic "Masters" are always exuberant in their approval of the persons who proclaim them or of the undertakings of those persons. They smile their assent; benignly they nod their heads and break into portly and long winded eloquence. All the responsibilities of the world may be upon them, but they are never in a hurry, never have something else on hand, when there is an occasion to express approval of the opinions or projects of their devoted followers. [15]

One has only to read The Masters and the Path to discover innumerable instances of such benign masters, and the whole history of Leadbeater's contact with them was one of approval, assent and "portly and long winded eloquence".
This leads on to a question which is beyond the scope of this work to answer, but which is of considerable importance in examining the life and work of Leadbeater: was his clairvoyance genuine? Leadbeater refused to allow his psychic powers to be tested in any scientific or objective manner, even when challenged to do so. He stated that it was an impertinence to suggest such a test, and claimed that there were occult reasons why no-one possessed of genuine powers could ever allow them to be "proved". Hence he rejected any suggestions of reading letters in sealed envelopes, or producing next week's newspaper headlines. This annoyed his critics, who saw it as proof that he was a charlatan, and led his disciples to proclaim him to be a man above such sordid worldly things as tests. Views of his clairvoyance therefore range from those which see it as absolutely and infallibly true, to those who see it all as deliberate fraud on his part. Somewhere in the middle are those who hold it was a delusion and a fantasy on his part, for which he was not responsible.

Johan van Manen, who lived and worked with Leadbeater on Sicily, left a description of his state during clairvoyant research: Leadbeater became flushed, his eyes watered, and he became "abstracted", and drowsy, and began to yawn frequently, eventually having to end his
investigations or fall asleep. At that time he never worked for more than an hour at a time. The actual "seeing" was intermittent, and punctuated with conversation. Once during an attempt to examine "the permanent atom on the astral, cosmic plane", he suffered a severe headache which lasted for several days and was followed by "brain lag" for months during which no work could be undertaken. [16] This process became more relaxed and sophisticated in later years.

As Hugh Shearman noted, Leadbeater never tried to produce a systematic version of his psychic investigations. A.E. Powell in a series of works based on Leadbeater's books and articles, with some material drawn from HPB, Mrs Besant and other Theosophical writers, attempted to produce a synthesized system incorporating Leadbeater's discoveries. However, Powell's works are limited to the simpler material, and ignore contradictions. [17] An attempt to produce a systematized world-view based on Leadbeater's teachings would involve a massive research project to work through everything he had ever written. Despite his popularity and influence in the TS, such a detailed synthesis has never been attempted.

There are four areas in which Leadbeater's clairvoyance might be considered in an attempt to evaluate it: his "scientific" work, the Lives, the Coming and his
works on life after death.

His "scientific" work essentially refers to occult chemistry. Initially, this work was considered to have no scientific value at all, and Hugh Shearman noted:

When C.W. Leadbeater tried to describe his experience of the physical atom, he seems quite simply to have expressed it in the conceptual idiom which his age and background provided....Based upon this view of the atom, as well as upon further clairvoyant investigations, a beautifully self-consistent system of occult chemistry was built up....There is, however, no clear correlation between this system of occult chemistry and the view of atomic structure taken by contemporary scientists. [18]

This was written in 1959, and the conclusion - that both systems were internally consistent, but separate and distinct - echoed the findings of E. Lester Smith, FRS, V. Wallace Slater and Gerard Reilly in their work, The Field of Occult Chemistry. They stated:

The task of exact correlation between occult and orthodox science has proved discouraging.
difficult. The structure described by the two schools are utterly different in most cases; apparent relationships have been shown on closer study to be merely superficial, or to lack generality. [19]

However, by 1975, two English scientists, Dennis Milner and Edward Smart, were suggesting that Leadbeater and Mrs Besant possessed some sort of "objective mysticism", the results of which could be seen to harmonize and integrate with the latest scientific work on the atom and the structure of matter. [20] In a later work, the same two authors further explored relationships between "objective mysticism" and modern science, and suggested that there were no fundamental contradictions.

By 1979, The Liberal Catholic was publishing an editorial headed "C.W. Leadbeater Vindicated", reporting the work of Dr Stephen Phillips, a Cambridge graduate, who came across Occult Chemistry and began examining it in the light of modern atomic physics. Dr Phillips, a Theosophist, suggested that whereas Leadbeater and Mrs Besant had said that they saw the atom, they had more probably seen a recently identified particle called the quark, a hypothetical structural unit from which elementary particles are believed to be constructed. [21] Dr Phillips concluded:
Progress has recently been made in formulating a comprehensive theoretical basis for understanding a body of theoretical investigations whose results were compiled and published in the three editions of *Occult Chemistry*. Until now, it has proved impossible even to relate their observations with the structures established by nuclear physics and chemistry and crystallography, let alone to compare their possible differences. There has been a theoretical impasse in the way leading to a proper scientific evaluation of occult chemistry and this has led to a questioning of its validity and significance for modern science. In conclusion the clairvoyant description of matter appears to have very close contact with chemistry, nuclear physics and the quark structure underlying the physical universe. At present one can with a measure of confidence claim that quarks were observed by Annie Besant and C.W. Leadbeater, using yogic techniques, 69 years before scientists suggested that they existed. [22]

Dr. Phillips's conclusions and scientific basis for his arguments were published by the TPH in America in 1980 under the title *Extra-sensory Perception of Quarks*. [23] Azless
scientific, although still difficult for the lay-person, summary of Dr Phillips' work also appeared, in 1982: Occult Chemistry Re-Evaluated, was by one of the authors of the original study, The Field of Occult Chemistry, E. Lester Smith. [24] He commented:

For decades Occult Chemistry has been something of a skeleton in a cupboard, a book to keep quiet about when introducing friends to theosophy. Now, as Dr Phillips wrote to me, Occult Chemistry is a book that theosophists can be proud of. None of us can doubt that its authors Annie Besant and Charles Leadbeater were highly competent occultists. Their outstanding psychic powers enabled them to observe many phenomena unknown to the scientists of their time and to report them clearly and unmistakably in simple language. [25]

And he concluded:

Those of us who had any doubt may now be assured that the work of Besant and Leadbeater in Occult Chemistry was largely accurate, whereas until recently it seemed the most dubious of their contributions. The rest of their work cannot be expected to be totally correct, but at least our
confidence in it should now be greatly increased.

[26]

However, since the subject of quarks is such a highly technical one, it is extremely difficult for anyone other than an expert in the field to properly evaluate Phillips' claims. His work has thus far not received any detailed scientific review which supports his arguments.

Dr E Walker, a research physicist at the Ballistic Research Laboratories of the United States Army Aberdeen Research and Development Center at the Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland, and a member of the Mechanics and Materials Science Department at John Hopkins University, wrote a brief review of Extra-Sensory Perception of Quarks. He concluded:

The awkwardly titled Extra-Sensory Perception of Quarks is a technically excellent Chariots of the Gods....I will not question that a strong case has been made that Besant and Leadbeater saw visions that parallel current theory. And there is something noble in Phillip's efforts to vindicate Besant and Leadbeater. But does the case for psychic perception succeed? At times I felt Phillips just might pull it off. Yet I could never
escape the feeling that the author was searching for the origin and forms of atoms and elementary particles amid the shapes of snowflakes in the sky and figures of diatoms in the sea. [27]

Leadbeater's work on the occult structure of man, if it may also be called scientific, has received some attention from scientists working on the aura, or in more scientific language, the subtle electro-magnetic energy field around the physical body. In his work on this subject, Leadbeater drew on previous authors, notably A. Marque's *Human Aura*. [28] In 1974 Drs J. Moss and K.L. Johnson at the Neuro-Psychiatric Institute of California, conducting research into the aura, concluded:

We are amazed at similarities between our photographs and the drawings and descriptions of human auras of psychics, Annie Besant and C.W. Leadbeater. [29]

And a report of further investigations in the USA, concerned with "the body electric", noted that scientists had drawn attention to similarities between the illustrations in *Man Visible and Invisible* and their own descriptions of the electro-magnetic vibrations from the body. [30] Evidence from what is called "Kirlian photography" has also tended to
confirm the general conclusions of the occult investigations. [31]

If in the areas of atoms and auras the work undertaken by Leadbeater has attracted some scientific interest, his claims about the past history of the earth, and the nature of life on other planets, has been carefully avoided by Theosophically inclined scientists, and has not attracted the attention of those outside the Theosophical movement. This material tends to be found scattered through Leadbeater's lesser known works, and is not readily accessible in the popular format of works like Man Visible and Invisible. None of Leadbeater's claims about other planets has been confirmed by modern scientific investigation.

A subject on the edge of the scientific in which Leadbeater had a passing interest was the analysis of dreams. In 1913 he and Johan van Manen jointly compiled a work entitled Some Occult Experiences, which was basically an account of various dreams experiences by van Manen, annotated in occult terms by Leadbeater. [32] It is interesting to note that every dream, no matter how trivial, is given occult significance as the "reflection" of an experience on the higher planes. This is true even in cases in which a dream has clear psychological importance, or is a
"classic" — for example, the sensation of falling. Hugh Shearman suggested that Leadbeater "concentrated altogether on the psychic meaning of the dreams and was not aware of the possibility of a psychological meaning". [33] Yet the whole analysis leads one to wonder why every dream necessarily had an occult or psychic basis. There is no report of him determining a dream was stimulated by a meal the evening before, or some emotional entanglement. Everything was neatly fitted into the scheme he had created.

The second major area of his clairvoyant research was the monumental investigation into the Lives. This is the only area in which there has been open accusation of deliberate fraud. [34] Although the subject matter — covering innumerable situations over thousands of years and in a wide variety of locations — could have provided many instances of tangible evidence for the validity of the research, it provided none. The two cases offered as real evidence — an inscription on a Greek statue, and some phrases in Sanskrit — were not evidence of anything more than Leadbeater's ability to recall brief phrases in other languages, which he may have acquired in any number of ways.

This leads on to the general area of Leadbeater's
statements on historical or archaeological matters. Two of them can be considered as good examples of his research confirming his own preconceptions, and being contrary to all available non-occult evidence. First, his claim that Jesus lived around 100 BC, as presented in The Inner Life and The Christian Creed.[35] There is a not a single, reputable Biblical scholar, archaeologist or historian who supports this claim, and, on the basis of modern research, there is no reason to seriously question the traditional date for the birth of Jesus by more than five years or so. In a similar area, Leadbeater's account of the writing of the Gospels, as given in The Inner Life, is in direct conflict with the findings of modern research, and the internal evidence of the Gospels themselves. [36]

The second claim which might be considered is that unfermented grape juice was used at the Last Supper. [37] There are two clear objections to this: Jewish custom required wine, not unfermented grape juice, and it would have been practically impossible to provide unfermented grape juice at that time of the year. There was no known way of preserving grape juice for long periods after the grapes came to their ripe state except through fermentation. Any grape juice left for any period in the prevailing climate would have fermented naturally.
The third area of clairvoyance of major importance was that related to the Coming. How did Leadbeater select Krishnamurti, a ragged, sickly, unintelligent Indian child from all the Indian children around the TS compound? Was Krishnamurti a genius from birth who could have achieved international status as a religious teacher regardless of who had taken him out of his environment of poverty, or did he become what he is as the result of Leadbeater's training? Krishnamurti, despite his rejection of Leadbeater, offers no explanation for his "discovery."

This leads on to the question of the failure of the Coming. Leadbeater predicted it, and stated it as a positive fact. But it did not, in the sense predicted by Leadbeater, occur. Leadbeater's private explanation - the theory that Krishna's personality got in the way - does not seem to satisfactorily dispose of all the promises which preceded the failure. Others suggested that the Coming had occurred, although "not as expected". [38] A few, like Bishop Pigott, said simply that, "Leadbeater was wrong". Yet a whole edifice of revelation and vision had gone to establish the foundation of the Coming. Does the failure of the prophecy lead to the collapse of all the associated expectations?

The final area of special interest in a
consideration of Leadbeater's clairvoyance is that regarding the life after death. Here he is in direct conflict with HPB and the teachings given in the "Mahatma Letters". His accounts derive, essentially, from his spiritualist period, and represent precisely the sort of after-death state that was given out by Victorian clairvoyants and mediums. It was a model based firmly on the Victorian world order, roles clearly defined, the social order well established. The "invisible helpers", led by Leadbeater, paralleled the charity work of the upper classes amongst the less fortunate. Duty was all important, on both sides of the grave. However clear the distinction between Theosophy and spiritualism in Leadbeater's mind, in practice there was little with regard to life "beyond the veil". Even the Masters and the Occult Hierarchy, complete with charts of duties and responsibilities, follow the model of the society which he knew and held to be the best. Here, as in all his work, his own preconceptions were confirmed.

Amongst Theosophists there have tended to be three views of Leadbeater's clairvoyance. The first, and the majority opinion, has been that he was genuinely possessed of extraordinary occult powers, and that these powers were as he claimed them to be. The second, and a minority view, has been that he possessed no such powers, was a fraud and a charlatan who fabricated material to establish and maintain
his own position of power; this would be the position taken, for example, by The Canadian Theosophist and by the most of the Back-to-Blavatsky groups. The third opinion, an even less widely held view, is that Leadbeater was neither really possessed of psychic powers, nor a fraud: he did indeed see things, and reported what he saw, but what he saw had no real existence, being an illusion created in his own mind. This is not to say he was psychologically disturbed or subject to hallucinations. The explanation is more complex than that, relating to a view of the nature of mind, will and imagination in Theosophical theory.

In November, 1963, the Theosophical Publishing House in London published a booklet by an eminent British Theosophist, E.L. Gardner. [39] Entitled There is No Religion Higher Than Truth, it was a serious questioning of Leadbeater's clairvoyance and presented a theory explaining his supposedly psychic powers. [40] Gardner began by reminding his readers of that most painful experience in the history of the TS - the failure of the Coming of the World Teacher.

About forty-five years ago announcement of the Coming of the World Teacher was made by Mrs Headant and Bishop C.W. Leadbeater. Most of the Sections and Lodges of The Theosophical Society accepted
this proclamation with confidence and diverted much of their energy to the Star Campaign - in preparation for his Coming. Obviously there has been no Coming. [41]

After a brief outline of the Theosophical career of Leadbeater, Gardner then examined his clairvoyant investigations, noting that all his discoveries confirmed and endorsed the views that Leadbeater himself held.

In suggesting a theory which would explain Leadbeater's clairvoyance, whilst not attributing conscious fraud to him, Gardner considered the occult doctrine of "unconscious kriyashakti". In another work he defined kriyashakti:

The creative power of the mind, now becoming increasingly well known, was familiar knowledge in earlier times. The Sanskrit terms Ichchha = Will and Kriya = Thought are evidence of this. Linked to Shakti = Power the two functions of "destroyer" and "creator" are defined...The will clears the way and controls the flow of power, the mind creates forms in and through which power can play. Kriyashakti is thus thought power in action...The power may be exercised consciously and
purposefully, or almost wholly unconsciously, and the latter may be nearly as effective although unseen and unknown. [42]

The mind has the power to create "thought forms", and it can then "see" the things that it has created.

Gardner quotes from the Indian philosopher, Patanjali:

The mind may be compared to a lens in the form of a sphere, so constructed as to be capable of giving a three-dimensional image inside itself of every external object. [43]

In simple terms, Gardiner was stating that it was possible, and indeed usual, for men to build up pictures in their minds of the objects of their thought, their affection and their belief. This visualizing power - kriyashakti - in its "raw" form is the material from which visions, dreams and revelations are built. In Gardner's scheme communication from the Masters to their pupils involves the use of this power to build the forms through which the communication is made. However, he notes, while this power can be used by man to create image in his own mind, in its unconscious manifestations it represents a real danger to the
clairvoyant who allows his personal attitude to create artificial images which will distort his perception.

The clairvoyant can create a seemingly real world in his own mind which obstructs the actual objects of his perception, and his vision then becomes a reflection of his own creation. He has turned the lens through which he should be seeing into the world into a mirror in which he is seeing only a reflection of his own unconscious mind.

If this occurs at a conscious level — that is, if the occultist deliberately creates a thought-image and then observes it — it remains an interesting and useful exercise, since his ability to judge between the artificial and the real, the objective and the subjective, is unaffected. However, if the artificial forms are created by the unconscious mind, and lie outside the conscious awareness of their creator, distinctions between the subjective and the objective are blurred, if not totally obscured. Leadbeater argued that in the after death state, when the creative power of the mind was freer, each man would create his own "heaven" and believe it to be objective reality. [44]

The theory behind such ideas does not apply only to the man free from his physical body. Gardner notes that "where personal vibrations are allowed to enter any thought form" these are enhanced and
the elemental enclosed within the consciously
created thought-form, if vitalized by the skandhas
of its creator — i.e. personal desire vibrations —
will be awakened into a desire to live. [45]

Gardner's basic thesis is this: Leadbeater unconsciously
created an entire, artificial system, based upon his own
strongly held views, and, again unconsciously, used his
occult power to visualize this system into a state where it
had the appearance of reality, and appeared as an objective
reality to him when he viewed it clairvoyantly. Gardner
wrote:

I am sure that his 'forced vision' and the
confidence that it gave him, was the real cause of
his errors. Coupled with that, however, was the
memory of an incarnation in GREEC9. It was there
that he cultivated the creative force of the male
sex given a certain hatha yoga practice. [46]

There is a further implication of this for those who accept
the occult thesis: will not other clairvoyants "tuning in"
to Leadbeater's work also see the "artificial reality" he
has created, and therefore give apparently independent verification to his perceptions?

Gardner's book, not surprisingly, caused a furor in Theosophical circles, and attacks on Gardner were forthcoming from many of Leadbeater's disciples and followers. A response to Gardner was prepared under the title *C.W. Leadbeater. A Great Occultist*. [47] This did little more than defend Leadbeater against allegations of deliberate fraud, of which, in fact, Gardner did not accuse him, and note minor historical errors in Gardner's booklet. The *kriyashakti* theory was largely ignored by the reply, although Geoffrey Hodson, whose work is seen in Theosophical circles to parallel that of Leadbeater, and who had also done psychic research into occult chemistry, argued that his independent research had validated Leadbeater's material. [48] Although Hodson had not explored more than a few of the areas investigated by Leadbeater, and, in all cases, had access to Leadbeater's findings before he began his own exploration. Hodson ignored the fact that Gardner's theory could be extended to take account of supposedly independent verification of Leadbeater's findings. Hodson went on to deny that Leadbeater was "a self-deceived, deluded man".

Hugh Shearman, in his contribution to the defence, criticized Gardner for minor historical
inaccuracies, but had himself said of Leadbeater:

What he brought out of the occult world as observations took on the colouring of his own personal microcosm as well as his memories and anticipations. This seems often the more evident the deeper the experiences that he was trying to express. [49]

Gardner, of course, says very much the same thing.

The defence concluded with a statement - "C.W. Leadbeater - A Self-illumined Man by Some of His Pupils". They protested at Gardner's "attack" on a man who was no longer alive to defend himself, rejected claims of deception and criticized Gardner for minor historical errors. They affirmed that Leadbeater was "a great occultist, a seer, a sage, and a selfless servant of the human Race". The list of "Some of his Pupils" appended to the statement includes twenty-four names. Of those, only one (Axel Poignant) could really be described as a "pupil". Russell Balfour Clarke (better known as "Dick"), whose name appears on the list, had subsequently changed his mind about Leadbeater. Most of those on the list had met Leadbeater, even lived at The Manor, but certainly did not rank as
"pupils" in any meaningful sense of that word.

Then followed a list of the things for which "Humanity Today is Indebted to C.W. Leadbeater". These included the revitalization of Buddhism in Ceylon (usually attributed by scholars to Colonel Olcott), the reintroduction of esoteric teaching into Christianity, the writing of the Liturgy of the LCC (for which he was only partly responsible), and "the presentation of occult science in modern language".

Dr Adrian Vreede, Presiding Bishop of the Liberal Catholic Church, responded to Gardner with an editorial in The Liberal Catholic entitled "An Attack on Bishop Leadbeater". [50] He declared that

Bishop Leadbeater was right in announcing the intention of the Lord Christ to come and give a message to the civilization of the present time. [51]

reede seemed to blame the failure of the Coming on announcements, dreams and revelations" deriving from the phantasies" of Wedgwood, Arundale, Jinarajadasa and others. t was, he said, other men's "spiritual inflation" not
Leadbeater's "unconscious kriyashakti" that occasioned the "going wrong" of the Coming. Vreede defended Leadbeater on the ground that he was "precision itself", as his handwriting showed, though it does not seem to follow logically that one who is precise is necessarily precisely right. However, Vreede concluded:

...the reputation of trustworthiness of the greatest seer of this and the previous century should be upheld by those who like me, have followed all these events, if not close at hand at no great distance. [52]

He noted Lady Emily Lutyens' Candles in the Sun as confirmation of his explanation of the Coming "going wrong" because of the "most fantastic - and untrue - revelations" at Huizen.

Yet not all who had "followed all these events" chose to support Leadbeater. Ernest Wood, already in the ranks of the apostate, replied to a criticism of Gardner by Hugh Shearman. [53] Wood recalled that he had been present on the occasion of the "discovery" of Krishna, and had spent some ten thousand hours working with Leadbeater on clairvoyant research. Wood endorsed "every bit" of Gardner's
booklet. He rejected Shearman's assertion that it had been Mrs Besant, not Leadbeater, who was the source of the proclamation that Krishna was to be the Vehicle for the World Teacher.

Wood made three statements which are important with regard to Leadbeater's clairvoyance. First, Leadbeater and Mrs Besant had "an arrangement" whereby she would accept his clairvoyance as if it was her own and he would support her decisions as to what to do: this led to his refusal to contradict her statements about the Apostles and associated revelations from Huizen, which Leadbeater told Wood were wrong and "due to her impulsive eagerness". Second, The Lives of Alcyone were written in fact by Leadbeater alone, with the exception of one life which Mrs Besant wrote, although her name appeared equally on the title page. And, third, Leadbeater objected to the letters from the Masters to Mr Sinnett, regarding them as unreliable. When The Mahatma Letters to A.P.Sinnett was published, Leadbeater referred to "that abominable book".

Wood stated:

[Gardner's] "unconscious kriyashakti" theory is undoubtedly correct...I have found and physically confirmed its operation in many clairvoyants who...
were colouring what they saw, or in some cases what they thought they saw, being affected by their own desires, though sincerely unaware of the process in themselves. Some people have such strong "visualization" that sometimes, even when they do actually obtain something quite correctly by clairvoyance or by intuition, they are likely to embellish it from their own subconscious mind and cannot distinguish it from actual seeing or hearing...I too came to the conclusion that Mr Leadbeater...was largely "seeing his own thought forms" and this not merely on theory, but on material evidences. [54]

In 1966, writing to Dick Balfour Clarke, in response to a letter from Balfour Clarke criticizing his booklet, Gardner said:

In 1932 I learnt how the many "Pupils" and "Initiates" were "made". His brilliantly built thought forms of the Lord M. and the Masters assembled and acquiesced and that was that...His strength lay in his sincerity and honesty for he undoubtedly believed he himself was "right"...The
pamphlet explains an honest mistake and clears C.W.L. of the charges of fraud and roguery in Nethercot's book and the reviews. [55]

Gardner concluded by suggesting a link between the charges of sexual misconduct made against Leadbeater and his "forced vision" variety of clairvoyance, and that will be considered in more detail later in this chapter.

Interestingly enough, Gardner's theory finds support in Leadbeater's own writings, although Leadbeater always pointed out that trained Theosophical clairvoyants (by which he always meant himself and Mrs Besant), under the direct supervision of the Masters, were immune from such dangers.

Much of Leadbeater's clairvoyant research yielded material based on his Anglican background, or his spiritualism phase. The origin of the distinctly occult material is less clear. His works fall into two fairly distinct divisions: those published (or written, at least) prior to his resignation from the TS in 1906, and those written after his return to the Society in 1908. In the former category are his major clairvoyant "classics": The Astral Plane, The Devachanic Plane, Thought Forms, Man
Visible and Invisible. The origins of Occult Chemistry also lie in this period. The books written after his return to the TS take a distinctly different approach and deal with more extravagant and fantastic subject matter; they include The Inner Life, Man. Whence, How and Whither, The Masters and the Path, and The Lives of Alcyone. In these works, there is far more emphasis on the importance of Leadbeater's position: he is no longer the detached observer reporting what he sees. He is the agent of the Masters, engaging in regular meetings with the Occult Hierarchy, scanning worlds and millenia with ease. Many of his critics still make use of his earlier works as sound clairvoyant investigations, whilst rejecting his later works.

Much of Leadbeater's occult material derives from Blavatsky, albeit in reinterpreted and almost unrecognizable form, and much of it from the period when Leadbeater worked with A.P. Sinnett. The oft-repeated Mars-Mercury controversy is a relic of those days, a doctrine held by Sinnett and rejected by HPB and her Masters, and taught by Leadbeater and his.

One possible origin for the material contained in The Masters and the Path, and for material on the Occult Hierarchy and Initiations lies in a wholly unexpected source. Although she was regarded as "misguided" because she
had both left the TS and claimed to be inspired by a Master, Alice Bailey (1880-1949) held a fascination for some Theosophists from the time she began her independent career outside the TS, in 1920-21. Leadbeater owned, read and highly regarded her earlier works, and although she was criticized officially within the TS for "falsely claiming to be in communication with DK" and others, Leadbeater did not criticize her. The material in her first "inspired" (that is, by the Master DK, better known as "the Tibetan") was *Initiation Human and Solar* (1922), and it bears interesting similarity to some of Leadbeater's work, in content, although not in style. It is unclear which set of teachings appeared first. [56]

The final "mystery" in the life of Charles Webster Leadbeater related to the allegations of sexual immorality which followed him throughout his Theosophical career, reaching peaks in 1906 and 1922. Was there anything to substantiate these allegations? And, if not, why did he consistently refuse to answer his critics publicly, or to take legal action against any of them for libel? The standard Theosophical answer, of course, is that the allegations were totally untrue, and that Leadbeater refused to take action against his enemies because he was far too spiritual for such things.
First, the allegations. Initially, Leadbeater was accused of teaching masturbation to adolescent boys, though this was quickly extended to include teaching masturbation to pre-pubescent boys, and to giving some form of "indicative action", though the precise meaning of that euphemistic phrase was never explained. In later years he was further accused of committing sodomy with his pupils, and of engaging in mutual masturbation with them. Some of the allegations he admitted. In the 1906 "trial" he admitted that he had taught (as opposed to condoning) masturbation. He also admitted that this might have occurred with pre-pubescent boys, and boys who had not actually sought his advice on sexual matters. Further, it might also have involved "indicative action", including touch. This seems to have so shocked the Committee that far from endeavouring to clarify what was meant, they promptly changed the subject.

Leadbeater later claimed that much of the evidence against him in the transcript of the 1906 hearing had been "fabricated" or was the result of transcription errors, but failed to clarify these claims. However, in the custody case over Krishnamurti in Madras in 1913, Leadbeater again admitted that he taught boys masturbation; the precise meaning of the word "taught" was never fully explored. He denied touching the boys, but in answer to one question talked about a case in which he had done so. He declared
that he gave specific sexual advice to boys on the basis of the thought forms he could see hovering about them, indicating their aroused sexual and emotional disturbances.

Claims that he had initiated sexual activities were specifically made by two of his pupils in the USA in relation to the 1906 "troubles", when it was claimed that he had indulged in mutual masturbation, claiming that this would promote physical vigour, manliness and occult development. Hubert van Hook also alleged, in later years, that Leadbeater had "engaged in sexual relations" with him. Douglas Petit, in a statement elicited by Mrs Tingley (of the rival TS in the USA) and presented as evidence in the Krishnamurti custody case, declared that he and Leadbeater habitually slept together, that Leadbeater had explained to him the practice of masturbation, and urged him to engage in it. This, Petit claimed Leadbeater taught him, would not only help him to overcome any desire for intercourse with women, but also carried the recommendation of his "Master and Teacher" for that reason. Leadbeater also urged him, claimed Petit, "not to speak of the matter to anyone". Petit declared that "This reciprocal practice continued for the greater part of seven months" [italics added], and that his health was broken as a result. [57] Other students and colleagues, including Dick Balfour-Clarke, reported that Leadbeater habitually slept with a pupil in his bed, and
usually had one share his bath. [58]

But, apart from these boys, and one other in Australia, none of his pupils ever offered any public evidence for sexual relations with their teacher. Mrs Besant stated that for an Initiate "sex was not possible", and his pupils all stressed that Leadbeater placed great emphasis on sexual purity. There were, however, some actions of his which led the suspicious to wonder. His habit of sleeping naked with young male pupils, and of sharing his bath with them led to speculation on his motives. His insistence on mutual (for him and his boys) and wholly nude bathing at The Manor did likewise. He was given an enema every morning by one or other of the naked boys, in the presence of the others who carried on bathing. [59] Dick Balfour-Clarke recalled that this gave rise to "misinterpretations".

There was a strange relationship between Leadbeater and his close pupils, which seemed to many to have unhealthy implications. In his article, "A Modern Socrates", A.J.Hamerster recalled that the pupil-teacher relationship often employed "spiritual induction" whereby the pupils not only receive something from their teacher, but also give "something from their vital energy whereby the ancient Teacher was enabled to recuperate some of his failing strength". In his own copy of this article, bound in
with his Collected Articles in the TS Library at Adyar, Hamerster has noted, in handwriting:

Often was this phenomena observed by me in C.W. Leadbeater's latter days in Adyar and many times have I heard from the lips of his young disciples how they actually felt their strength being drained from them. [60]

This practice had a long religious and occult tradition. It was known as shunamism (or shunamitism), so-called after the girl who rejuvenated King David in his old age. [61] The practice, which involved bringing a healthy, active young person into contact with one who needed rejuvenation, was based on the belief that the breath, body heat, physical contact and "vibrations" of the young person can restore the vitality of the aged. This idea found popularity amongst the ancient Egyptians, Babylonians, Greeks, Romans and Chinese. It was not uncommon amongst European nobility and popes. Francis Bacon wrote:

The spirits of young people can restore vitality to an aged body and keep it in good health for a long time. It has been observed that old men who spend much time in the company of youths live long, for their spirits emerge strengthened from
Most advocates and practitioners of shunamism required young girls for old men, but there were those who preferred boys. [63]

There were a few amongst Theosophists who acknowledged Leadbeater's sexual teachings and defended them in a way which suggested there was more to the teachings than popularly assumed. Some suggested that the teachings were already given occultly in Mrs Besant's work, The Pedigree of Man, a complex study of material originally confined to the ES. [64]. Others argued that Leadbeater's sex teachings were a necessary means for humanity to return to the original hermaphroditic state, and yet others said that it was too esoteric a system for anyone other than a disciple of Leadbeater to understand. The O.E. Library Critic even suggested that Leadbeater's book, The Monad, included a reference to some form of "psychic orgasm". [65]

Eventually, in research for this work, evidence was found that Leadbeater had taught a sexual technique, other than masturbation as understood in the 1906 enquiry, to a highly select group of his closest pupils. Details of the teachings were revealed in the written record of a
ceased pupil, in the recollections of that pupil's statements about the teachings by one of his widows, and in an interview with one of the few close associates of Leadbeater then still living. The diaries were those of Oscar Köllerström, but access to them was given but briefly, and withdrawn when authorities within the TS discovered that his source had been found. [66] Both Brigit Köllerström, and Jean Köllerström, Oscar's second and third wives, gave details of the teachings recalled for them by their late husband. [67] The close associate, Dick Balfour-Clarke, described the teachings in detail, both to the author and to ex Henry at Adyar, who transcribed the recollections in detail and had the written statement endorsed as accurate. [68]

In simple terms, Leadbeater taught that the energy aroused in masturbation can be used as a form of cult power, a great release of energy which can, firstly, elevate the consciousness of the individual to a state ofstasy, and, secondly, direct a great rush of psychic force towards the Logos for his use in the spiritual development of the world. Leadbeater declared: "The closest man can come to a sublime spiritual experience is orgasm". [69] During masturbation, the mind should gradually be elevated towards the Logos, and, in Leadbeater's words, "as soon as the seed be felt in the tube", the consciousness should be so
exalted that the great release of physical and psychical energy is directed to the Logos or to an image of him.

This occult knowledge of sex was regarded as too dangerous to give to the average person, or, indeed, to the average pupil. It was reserved for the specially chosen, who were sworn to secrecy, and told that they were justified in not telling the truth about this highly occult matter. This "justified dishonesty" was also found in some other occult contexts, as also in some Gnostic traditions, and was even advocated by Clement of Alexandria, the eminent Christian writer who lived at the end of the second century AD. He taught that "not all true [things] are to be said to all men", and argued that lying was justified in the protection of the "secret Gospel", even lying upon oath. [70]

Leadbeater's sexual teachings were presented as so secret and sacred a matter that a dual standard of morality - that of the ordinary man, and that of the spiritually evolved occultist - applied. It was even said that one of the boys told police that he would kill himself rather than give evidence against Leadbeater. [71] The select pupils, on rare occasions, engaged in a group ritual masturbation which was intended to send out especially powerful emanations. [72]
Once the sexual passions were aroused, Leadbeater taught, they should be properly directed, and not wasted. Such sexual exercises could lead to the development of psychic powers and experiences of Nirvana, and the higher worlds. In the light of this teaching, it is possible to read a passage in his book *Clairvoyance* in a new way:

Let a man choose a certain time every day - a time when he can rely upon being quiet and undisturbed, though preferably in the day time rather than at night - and set himself at this time to keep his mind for a few moments entirely free from all earthly thoughts of any kind whatever and, when that is achieved, to direct the whole force of his being towards the highest spiritual ideal that he happens to know. He will find that to gain such perfect control of thought is enormously more difficult than he supposes, but when he attains it it cannot but be in every way most beneficial to him, and as he grows more and more able to elevate and concentrate his thought, he may gradually find that new worlds are opening before his sight. [73]
other than meditation in the intellectual sense?

Some of Leadbeater's critics within the TS were convinced that he was teaching sexual magic, or tantra, which they automatically equated with black magic. They chose not to make this claim public for fear of the damage it would do to the movement, but they circulated privately within the TS documents arguing the case. The two principal exponents of this view were E.L. Gardner, the eminent British Theosophist, and Rex Dutta, an English Theosophist, who presently produces his own Theosophical journal, Viewpoint Aquarius. The horror with which these two, and those who agreed with them, viewed any suggestion of tantra was based on HPB's teaching that it was practised only by the most debased, and black, of occultists, the duggas. The differences between schools of tantra, and the theory behind them was generally ignored, or misunderstood by the Theosophical critics. [74] Any form of occultism which involved sexuality, let alone homosexuality, could only be evil.

E.L. Gardner is best known in TS circles for his works developing theories on the basis of the teachings of The Secret Doctrine. [75] But, in addition to his public work on the "Leadbeater problem", There is No Religion
Higher Than Truth (1963) he was also the author of two studies of Leadbeater, headed "Private", and circulated amongst those within the TS whom he believed he could trust. These were The Liberal Catholic Church and the Theosophical Society (April, 1966) and The Rev. C.W. Leadbeater Problem (September, 1966). He further expounded his theories in a lengthy correspondence with the editor of HPB's Collected Writings, Boriz de Zirkoff. [76]

This correspondence extended from 1964 to 1966. It began with a letter dealing with There is No Religion Higher Than Truth, which Gardner said was receiving favourable reactions within the TS; he even claimed that the then Presiding Bishop of the LCC (Sir Hugh Sykes of England) told me a month ago that he accepted the booklet throughout! - But the L.C.C. was in existence and he thought it was "doing good work". [77]

Gardner hinted at "certain teachings by CWL (himself clean but ignorant)" which had produced "disastrous effects", and sought de Zirkhoff's advice as to whether "H.P.B. [gives] in any published or private papers any further information about the use of the powerful Sex-Force for stimulation of the higher centres". Gardner concluded: "The colossal
mistake due to CWL's "forced vision" must never occur again!". In his next letter Gardner noted:

When I first knew the whole truth in 1928/30, I was much inclined to think the worst of [Leadbeater]. But the abundant evidence accumulated since, coupled with my personal contacts with him, I am am sure [sic] that his "forced vision" and the confidence it gave him, was the real cause of his errors. Coupled with that however was the memory of incarnation in GREECE. It was there that he cultivated the creative force of the male sex given a certain hatha yoga practice. [78]

In July, 1966, Gardner again wrote to de Zirkoff, saying that he devoted the last six months to research into Leadbeater's "interest in the many boys he contacted". He had, even in the 1920's, suspected that Leadbeater was undertaking occult experiments with semen, and had been undertaking research into the history of such practices. [79] Four months later Gardner wrote, enclosing a copy of Jinarajadasa's On The Liberal Catholic Church, which he claimed Jinarajadasa had published in 1925 in an attempt to bring about the closing down of the LCC, and which had only ever, at that time, been distributed privately to some
Towards the end of 1966, Gardner, having been referred by de Zirkoff to Franz Hartmann's *Paracelsus* for information on the occult use of semen, replied, and concluded that this represented "the blackest of black magic". The implication in the letter is that Leadbeater was making occult use of a "special substance" in semen. [81] A letter of December 8th, 1966, ended the correspondence (presumably with the death or incapacity of Gardner), but added nothing new.

In his two private studies of Leadbeater, Gardner presents only a veiled version of the material he made available to de Zirkoff. However, he included some material which, if true, is vital to the story of Leadbeater's involvement in the TS. Gardener claimed, for example, that Mrs Besant knew "the whole truth" about Leadbeater's psychic vision, and was "about to make the whole truth known to the T.S." when she became "broken physically and mentally". Gardner also noted that Jinarajadasa only published the letters in *On The Liberal Catholic Church* - which he had received as Leadbeater's executor in 1934 - in 1953 when he knew he was dying. Even then it had a strictly limited circulation. [82]
In his other study, Gardner quotes a woman who had been "a devoted admirer of CWL" whom he questioned when she returned, "distressed and almost vehement" from a period in Sydney. She refused to tell Gardner anything beyond the comments: "Leadbeater's a beast", and "He makes them drink it". [83] Gardner cited material on traditions associated with the magical use of semen, including a quotation from HPB in which she referred to Aristotle and others teaching of "a special substance contained within the pneuma, itself contained within the semen of man". [84] Gardner concluded:

CWL's "discovery" of the potency of the "semen of man" he shared, at least, with one (PWP)[presumably, Frank Waters Pigott] --- and thereby others. However well meaning CWL's intentions his errors of judgment led to catastrophic results in the Theosophical Society. [85]

Gardner did care to see that his private theories about the origin and nature of Leadbeater's clairvoyance were not widely known. After his death his papers passed into the possession of another English Theosophist, Rex Dutta, the editor of a curious Theosophical journal, Viewpoint Aquarius, which combines Blavatsky's
Theosophy with information about (and allegedly from) flying saucers, and other miscellaneous occult material.

In the July/August, 1982, issue of *Viewpoint Aquarius*, Dutta reviewed the author's *The Elder Brother: A Biography of C.W. Leadbeater*. [86] Dutta began a consideration of Leadbeater's claims to clairvoyance by reviewing the theory presented in Hitler's *There is No Religious Higher Than Truth*, and HPB's teachings about *kriyashakti*. However, he claimed that the "external stimulus" to Leadbeater's clairvoyance was "Semen from young boys", and he claimed:

He wanted the semen; to stimulate his dense-grade clairvoyance. He drank semen "holy water". [87]

Dutta concluded:

*Mr. Tillett* (pages 283-5) when he guesses at *Tantrika, Sexual Black Magic*, doesn't realize the half of it. Small wonder that HPB called him [Leadbeater] WC. [88]
movements which developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The first appears in aesthetic and religious circles, and focussed on the glorification of a spiritual relationship, with sexual implications if not sexual involvement, between a Teacher and a Pupil. Timothy d'Arch Smith, in his study of "Uranian" poets, began by noting:

...between the eighteen nineties and the nineteen thirties a boy was a very quiet, self-effacing and unobstrusive creature indeed. The Uranians' adoration of such a person was not therefore immediately suspect as it is in modern society where the state is intolerant of any intrusion into her perogative of wet-nurse or where certain Sunday newspapers are as thoughtlessly swift to condemn such relationships as they are immorally prompt to arouse their young readers' erotic ardour with pictures of near nude females, and it is probably that the Uranians' love of boys gave genuine help and affection where no official organization or counsel existed outside the home or school. [89]

The term "Uranian" was coined, he notes, by those who advocated "boy love" in the period to which he refers.
and included such literary figures as Oscar Wilde, Edward Carpenter, John Addington Symonds, William Johnson Cory and Ralph Nicholas Chubb. Of the last named, it was said that he endeavoured "to raise paederasty to a form of religious devotion". [90] Amongst the religious figures d'Arch Smith included Fr Ignatius of Llanthony, George Reader, Frederick Widdows, Frederick Samuel Willoughby (who consecrated Wedgwood) and Leadbeater. [91] Obviously, Wedgwood and some of his associates should also have been included. [92]

Many of the Uranians were characterized by a retrospective longing for the days of classical Greece, when the Teacher-Pupil relationship, including a sexual relationship between an older and a younger man, was held to be the pinnacle of culture. [93] Leadbeater, of course, made frequent references to his own last incarnation in ancient Greece, as the pupil of one of Socrates' disciples.

The religious component in "boy love" was not, as d'Arch Smith notes, merely a decorative element:

This spiritualizing of paederasty absolves [the Uranian] from the guilt which makes him hate society and turn into a recluse. His is no longer a common human weakness, for he has felt the cleansing fire of divinity. [94]
But Leadbeater's sexual teachings did not only link him with an aesthetic and religious movement; they also related directly to an occult and magical tradition which employed sexual activities to produce "power". It is commonly believed that the oriental tradition of tantra (or, more accurately, traditions of tantra) represents the only such use of sexuality in religion. This is not so, and in the West sexuality had been employed in a variety of religious and magical contexts, all agreeing with the principle of tantra summarized by Benjamin Walker as:

Sex is a natural activity, but like many other such natural activities has a transcendent and esoteric side which can be utilized in secret ways to reveal to man the hidden truths of the universe. The sexual act is a means to salvation, and one can obtain mukti (redemption) through bhuti (pleasure). Copulation brings siddhis [psychic powers] and knowledge of Brahma [god]. In gross sensual pleasure, as expounded in the erotics, we have the lowest and most transient form of this revelation, which in any case cannot be discerned because the participant's mind is clouded with the fumes of passion. To transcend this carnal state one must gain an understanding
of the true meaning of sexual activity. [95]

The magical use of masturbation is known in some traditions of both Eastern and Western occultism.

The theory of sexual magic may be summarized:

(1) Man possesses hidden powers (often identified with the subconscious mind) which give him greater perception, raise him to states of ecstasy, expand his consciousness, stimulate increased physical, emotional and mental powers;
(2) These powers lie "buried" beneath some "barrier" which conscious control cannot penetrate, but which can be overcome by a variety of techniques, including to some extent drugs and alcohol;
(3) This "barrier" can be penetrated through heightening the physical, emotional and intellectual focus of the body by sexual stimulation, leading to a "break through" at the point of orgasm, at which energy is released. [96]

Techniques employed in sexual magic may be heterosexual, homosexual or autosexual.
In the case of autosexual techniques, the aim was usually to heighten the consciousness of the practitioner and focus and stimulate his magical power, culminating in the release of energy at the point of orgasm. The English artist and magician, Austin Spare (1886-1956) employed a technique of "magical masturbation" as a means of concentrating, releasing and directing magical energy. [97] Aleister Crowley also employed magical sexual techniques - of every imaginable variety - in his occult work.[98]

If sexual magic seemed inherently immoral, and was certain to attract strongly hostile reactions, homosexual magic was many times worse and, until recently, inevitably involved criminal acts. Few magicians were prepared to openly advocate or describe their own practices of such a form of sexual magic; even Aleister Crowley wrote about it in code. [99] Most occultists vehemently denounced sexual magic generally, and "unnatural vice" in any form. Dion Fortune, for example, warned against the problem of homosexual vice in various of her writings. In her *Esoteric Philosophy of Love and Marriage* she commented:

It is more than tragic that young boys should be foully made use of in black occultism. [100]
And in *Psychic Self Defence* (1930) she warned against the moral dangers in certain occult groups. [101]

However, one contemporary magician, and probably the best known of all modern writers on sexual magic, Kenneth Grant, took a less critical approach, and implied that Leadbeater used sexual magic to invoke beings from another dimension, or at least was aware of the possibility of such invocation. [102]

Assuming that Leadbeater was teaching some form of sexual magic, it would be of importance of identify possible sources. Did he simply invent theories and practices which happened to fit into pre-existing schemes? Or did he have contact with groups or individuals from whom he learned them? Leadbeater claimed at the 1906 "trial" to have learned the principle of systematic masturbation as a means of overcoming moral lapses in an Anglican organization but, having made this startling statement, refused to give any further information about the matter.

The only Anglican organisations to which he is known to have belonged seem to be most unlikely sources. It is possible that, through his link with the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament, a controversial (at the time) body which attracted many eccentrics of the ritualistic variety,
he came into contact with some (probably informal) group of Anglican "boy lovers". Certainly, the Confraternity was alleged to have immoral associations as far as its critics were concerned, the ideal of celibate clergy leading to general assumptions of sexual immorality, usually with women, but also with boys. [103]

In many Anglo-Catholic circles (then and now) there has been a strong homoerotic element. [104] This has often led to the development of theories explaining and spiritualizing homosexuality. Frank Pigott, originally an Anglo-Catholic clergyman prior to becoming a Theosophist and (later) a Liberal Catholic Bishop, wrote, in a review of Oscar Wilde's *De Profundis*:

Even that little-understood "offence" amongst people of refinement, where it mostly flourishes, has its purpose in the ordering of things and has a useful and necessary part to play in the working of human evolution...Some of the finest flowers of the human race have been of that way; it is absurd to speak of such as criminals or even as moral perverts or pathological cases. [105]

However, the subject of homosexuality in Christianity has been sufficiently taboo that even in modern times very
little has been written about it in other than theological terms. If Leadbeater was associated with some sort of "Uranian" group within the Church of England, it seems that no trace of it remains.

However, if Leadbeater's sexual teachings cannot be traced directly to a religious organization, it may be possible to trace them to two sources of influence: oriental tantra, to which Leadbeater was exposed in India, and (directly in later years, but perhaps indirectly in earlier) to an occult organization specifically concerned with sexual magic. This was the Ordo Templi Orientis (the Order of Oriental Templars, generally known as the OTO). The OTO was established around 1895 by Karl Kellner, a wealthy German iron-master, who claimed to have journeyed through India and the Middle East, and to have received secret occult teachings from Arab and Hindu teachers. The original members of the OTO were also Freemasons, and in 1902 the Order received a Masonic authority to work the degrees known as the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, the Ancient Primitive Rite of Memphis and the Egyptian Rite of Misraim, from an eccentric British Mason, John Yarker. The OTO appears to have been dormant until around 1904 when, under the leadership of Kellner, together with Heinrich Klein and it was activated Franz Hartmann, the Theosophist. [106]
The Grand Lodge was formally constituted on January 22nd, 1906, and national grand lodges were subsequently established for Germany (including Germany, Austria and Switzerland), and later for France (1908), the Slavonic Countries (1912) and Great Britain (1912). Among the eminent figures who were at various times members of the OTO were the French occultist, Gerard Encausse ("Papus"), the Austrian occultist, Rudolf Steiner, and the English magician, Dr R.W. Felkin. Following the death of the first Outer Head (as the leaders were called), Kellner, in 1905, Theodor Reuss had became the second Outer Head, and during his time in office the Order expanded. In 1911 Reuss admitted the controversial English occultist, Aleister Crowley, to membership of the OTO, and in 1912 appointed him head of the Order for Great Britain. Following the death of Reuss in 1924, Crowley assumed the office of Outer Head of the OTO, although not with the approval of all its lodges or members, and the OTO subsequently fragmented and, to a large degree, dissolved.

The OTO was divided into nine grades or degrees, with a purely administrative tenth degree. These generally followed a semi-Masonic model. The first six grades were conferred ritually, the first three being similar to the first three degrees of Masonry. The next three were based on interpretations of Masonic symbolism. The seventh, eighth
and ninth degrees concern sexual magic, but were conferred without ritual, the initiates simply being given written instructions. The eighth degree taught an autosexual technique—called by one commentator on the degree "magical masturbation" [107]—and the ninth heterosexual magic based on the traditions of Bengali tantra.

The teachings of the OTO were kept highly secret, and, given the small number of members, received a limited circulation. But the sexual teachings were also written largely in a form of code which would not have made a great deal of sense to the uninitiated—for example, in some writings, the penis was called "the athanor", and semen "the Serpent" or "the blood of the red lion".

Although it is possible to see similarities between the teachings of the OTO and Leadbeater, there is no evidence that, in his early Theosophical days, he was a member of the Order, or had even heard of it. There is, however, evidence that, following the visit to Sydney of James Wedgwood in 1915, Leadbeater may have become a member of the OTO. The probable link between Leadbeater and the OTO is the mysterious figure of Vyvyan Hereward Rowden Deacon, a descendant of the poet, Robert Browning. [108]

Born in 1895 in England, Deacon migrated to
Australia with his mother at the age of fourteen, and became interested in spiritualism. He quickly developed a reputation as a clairvoyant, medium and healer. He established a number of spiritualist and occult organizations in Sydney and Melbourne — including the Christian Mystics of the Rose Cross, the Order of the Golden Girdle, and the Church Universal — and drew around him a number of literary and artistic figures. Norman Lindsay, for example, was a close friend, who made use of Deacon's mediumistic gifts. [109]

Deacon's public activities were associated with spiritualism; he led small churches, lectured, and organized the lecture tour of Australia and New Zealand by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle in 1920-2. In 1929 Deacon sued the Melbourne Truth for libel after it claimed he was fraudulent in his mediumship. The newspaper was represented by a then rising star of the legal profession, Robert Menzies, but Deacon won, and was awarded a (for the time) record sum of damages. In 1930, he returned to England.

Privately, Deacon had a great interest in a range of unorthodox occult activities. He had become a member of the OTO at a young age, and established lodges of the Order in Australia, in addition to experimenting with the use of psychogenic drugs for consciousness expansion.
Deacon had, according to his diaries, a close association with Leadbeater. Deacon's daughter has commented:

In 1914 my father was trained by Bishop Leadbeater in Theosophical and Rosicrucian practices. Leadbeater's books and Rudolf Steiner's books on Rosicrucianism and Free-masonry, although published many years after this time, reveal many of the subjects well known to the poet [Robert Browning] and my father as family tradition. [110]

Deacon was associated with a number of Leadbeater's activities, being a member of the TS and the ES, and attending meetings of the Order of the Star. When the Old Catholic (later Liberal Catholic) Church was established, Vyvyan and his young wife, Eunice, were both baptized. The ceremony took place on June 10th, 1916, and was performed by Gustav Kölleström; afterwards they were both confirmed by James Wedgwood. [111]

Wedgwood, greatly interested in the fringes of Masonry, was a close friend of John Yarker, from whom the founders of the OTO received a charter in 1902. Wedgwood
himself was admitted to the OTO in 1912 by its Outer Head, Theodor Reuss, at Yarker's request, and was attached as an honorary member to the Holy Grail Lodge in Munich. [112] After Yarker's death in March, 1913, his widow was supported by a small pension granted to her by the Co-Masonic Order, of which Wedgwood was Grand Secretary. While it cannot be proved beyond doubt, it seems likely, given that the evidence for the more clearly magical teachings about sex come from the post-1915 period, that Leadbeater was initiated into the OTO, probably by Wedgwood (who initiated him into Co-Masonry, and brought him into the Old Catholic Church), perhaps with some involvement by Vyvyan Deacon.

In a "Private Supplement" to his vigorous attack on Mrs Besant and Leadbeater, Neo-Theosophy Exposed, F.T. Brooks offered some interesting theories as to the origin and significance of Leadbeater's sexual teachings. He recalled that, whilst staying with Leadbeater in 1900, Leadbeater gave him to read some "dangerously suggestive stories by an author called Machen" and "certain papers of the Oneida Community". [113] Of the former, Brooks recalled that the image of the "Great God Pan", "an impersonation of sexless erethism" suggested to him "sensual psychic intoxication of an uncanny sort – commerce with some secret power of erethism (quite apart from Eros) in nature". Brooks suggested that Leadbeater may have been referring to
"the fire of sensation" when he spoke of the "it" that
"needs rubbing more often" in Leadbeater's notorious Cypher
Letter. With regard to the Oneida papers, Brooks recalled
the important distinction they drew between sexuality for
procreation and "amative sensuality, or erethism", "between
controlled amative enjoyment and deliberate
seed-projection". Leadbeater, according to Brooks, was
developing some sort of "God-Pan-Cult" on the basis of the
works of Machen and the theories of the Oneida Community.

was, for a year or two, a member of the Hermetic Order of
the Golden Dawn, which had links with the TS. Machen was
especially interested in witchcraft and alchemy, and in the
means whereby the mind could go beyond the limitations of
the ordinary world. He equated evil with "a transcendent
effort to surpass the ordinary bounds" [114], and personally
pursued a path, possibly involving the use of mescaline, of
consciousness expansion. Colquhoun suggests this may also
have involved some "psycho-sexual technique", and argues
that Machen was a member of a Golden Dawn-associated western
tantra group. [115] While it seems likely that Leadbeater
would have enjoyed Machen's novels, since they contained the
mixture of mystery, imagination, horror and the occult to
which he was especially attracted in literature, there is no
evidence that he based any of his teachings on them.
The Oneida Community was a utopian community in New York State from around 1848 to 1881; it was notable for practicing both economic and sexual communism. The founder, John Humphrey Noyes (1811-1886), who declared that he was free from sin, developed a complex religio-socio-economic system which found practical expression in the community at Oneida Reserve. Noyes also developed a complex theory of sexuality, arguing that celibacy was unhealthy, and an affront to God. But, unlike Leadbeater, Noyes believed that ejaculation was debilitating and to be avoided. Discharge of semen should be avoided, even in sexual intercourse, by proper exercise of will. [116] On the basis of Noyes' teachings, it seems unlikely to Leadbeater was influenced by him.

The final solution to the mysteries of the life of Charles Webster Leadbeater awaits a clairvoyant who can penetrate the veil cast over his biography. He created for himself and for others an inner world, the reality of which he didn't, and they don't, question. The world he saw and described with such detail and appearance of scientific precision is the reality for them. However other psychics may have seen through a glass darkly, he, and probably he alone, he said, beheld face to face, protected from error and distortion. Leadbeater was a myth-maker, not in the
popular sense of **myth** as the opposite of **truth** but in the anthropological sense of myth as a symbolic representation of the inner reality, meaning-giving and identity-providing.

Leadbeater's vision-world was so much derived from his personality, his culture, his rigid and unvarying view of the cosmos, that, given a knowledge of his own life, one cannot argue for its objectivity, however much he or his disciples may rationalize and explain it. This is not to say he was either a deliberate liar, as some have claimed, or an unconscious fraud, as yet others argue. Rather, he was a visionary as others have been visionaries before him. He explored the innermost reaches of consciousness as best he could, bringing back from his explorations visions as he believed he had seen them and interpreted them. In this, he was like Emmanuel Swedenborg with whom he deserves comparison.

The author of a psychological study of Swedenborg began his work with this question:

Is it possible for a man to discover too much, so much that others will be puzzled by his works, put them aside, and suspect he is mad? Yes, it is possible; though perhaps very rare. [117]
And he described his study as "an account of a man who journeyed too far and found too much", in exploring "all the worlds beyond this one [which] are mirrored in the mind". The same might be said of Leadbeater. Both Leadbeater and Swedenborg went beyond fantasy and imaginative fiction into a dimension in which their individual realities assumed objectivity for others. [118] Thus it became a myth, an integrated cosmic picture, providing meaning and identity for those who accept it, and becoming for them the reality transcending questions of history or science or "fact".

Unlike Swedenborg, Leadbeater became something of a myth-maker in the anthropological sense, even something of a "trickster". An anthropological study of the man and his work would bring out elements comparable to eccentric religious figures in other cultures, figures who break the normal boundaries of morality and truth in the pursuit of a higher reality. It is the sort of character Meyrink described in his novel *Meister Leonhard* (1916):

[Dr Schrepfer] ate fire, swallowed swords, turned water into wine, thrust daggers through his cheek and tongue without-drawing blood, healed possessed people, charmed away injuries, invoked spirits, bewitched men and cattle. Daily Leonhard realised that the man was a fraud who could neither read
nor write yet performed wonders. Everything the trickster said and did had a double aspect: he cheated men and at the same time helped them; he lied and his speech concealed the highest truth; he spoke the truth and the lie sneered forth. He fantasised carelessly and his words came true. [119]

Leadbeater's visionary picture of man in the universe presented an integrated and harmonious system, a kingdom of the inner consciousness, almost a spiritualizing of the fiction of mystery and romance he so much enjoyed. His synthesis of vision, knowledge and his own personality created - albeit unconsciously - a vivid theosophy-theology. His inflexible Victorian character could not allow him to appreciate its subjective origins.

In the boredom of a quiet country parish, in a religion possessed of little occultism, he discovered the exotic, exciting realms of spiritualism and Theosophy. From the "mysterious beginnings" of his childhood to exploration on the astral plane, from Brazil with its boyhood adventures to Shamballa and the Occult Hierarchy, the vivid image-making power of his mind merged vision with imagination, perception with pre-conception, to create a myth that survived when he journeyed from this world into that myth.