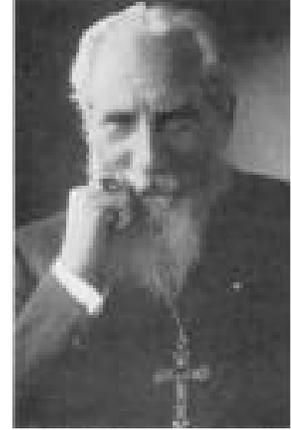


THE SCIENTIFIC TEMPERAMENT IN C. W. LEADBEATER

By C. Jinarajadasa

One of the very pronounced traits in C. W. Leadbeater's character was his natural scientific temperament. Of chemistry, physics, botany, and zoology he possessed only such knowledge as the average educated person has. But he was very well informed in one department of science, and this was astronomy. In his days as a curate he had a four-inch telescope (which he brought to Adyar in 1884), and he was well read in the general non-mathematical literature of astronomy.

The scientific temperament means a careful training of the mind to observe facts "as they are," again and again and again, before constructing any theories about them. But to observe facts rightly requires a preliminary training of the senses to report correctly; and this is for some a difficult process, though others can acquire it, especially if they happen to be influenced by a really scientific observer and inspiring teacher. Bishop Leadbeater made a special point of trying to "see" a fact as accurately and dispassionately as possible; he had an innate reverence for a fact, that is, for the "thing-as-it-is," which characterizes the scientist.



C. W. Leadbeater



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Of this I had proofs innumerable in the course of the forty-five years when I watched his methods of work closely. In his ordinary writing, he was not a "loose" writer; he would take an infinity of trouble to be as accurate as he could in any statement. In his library he had as a "working apparatus" the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (earlier it was *Chambers*), then Nelson's loose leaf *Encyclopedia*, and then Dent's; in addition, all sorts of reference works on dates, personalities, etc.; maps ancient and modern; and a large number of dictionaries. His library is full of works on the histories and customs of peoples.

This cautious scientific temperament was carried on into his work when he developed powers of clairvoyance. Again and again, when he was clairvoyantly observing something, and describing what he saw, as, for instance, in *Occult Chemistry*, I the recorder would quickly come to some conclusion and say, "Well, that means so-and-so." His invariable reply was to the effect: "Hold on; we can't say that yet; we haven't examined enough instances." I

will not enlarge on this theme of his scientific temperament which tried to be loyal to the "thing-as-it-is," and desired to let it reveal itself, before he gave his judgment upon it; and then only cautiously. He avoided being dogmatic, and nearly always would say or write: "On the whole," "for the most part," "in the instances so far observed," and so on.

He guarded himself from coming to swift conclusions. In this he was the opposite of Dr. Besant who, with her swift intuitions, would grasp at a truth far ahead of him. But she might often find it difficult to justify her conclusions, not having arrived at the truth from all the facts necessary; while, when Bishop Leadbeater stated a truth, he could "back it up" by the relevant facts. These two workers illustrated two methods of technique in seeking truth.

It is because Bishop Leadbeater was such a careful observer and such a cautious judge that his works on clairvoyance have a remarkable lucidity in exposition. He certainly is not vague as he writes of the invisible worlds. It is this scientific temperament of his which is refreshing in the vast volume of literature on the occult. Whether we care to believe him or not, at least he is clear in his exposition, and he seems to be describing things which are *objective* to him, so to say "before him" (as my pen with which I write this is before my eyes), and not like many clairvoyants who merely describe what they apparently see "inside their heads," which they feel they "see," because of mental pictures created by the brain.

The scientific processes of observation, judgment and statement are certainly not to be discarded when one enters the realms of Occultism. This truth was forcefully exemplified by Bishop Leadbeater in his long life of devoted labor for Theosophy.
