

SECTION 11

## IMMORALITY IN THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

...this was and has been no secret for thousands of years,  
 Fasting, meditation, chastity of thought, word, and deed....  
 government of the animal passions and impulses....have been  
 published as the means since the days of Plato and Iamblichus in  
 the West, and since the far earlier times of our Indian Rishis.  
 Mahatma Letters, p. 283

“The undefiled Lanoo (disciple, chela) need fear no danger;  
 he who keeps himself not in purity (who is not chaste) will receive  
 no help from the ‘deva eye’”  
 Secret Commentary quoted in the Secret Doctrine, II. p. 295

...the practice of moral and physical purity, and of certain  
 austerities, develops the vital power of self-illumination.  
 Isis Unveiled, I. p. 18

At periodic intervals from the first revelation of trouble in 1906 right up to the present day, there have been certain dark periods in the life of the Theosophical Society connected with the moral character of Mr. C. W. Leadbeater and later with that of some of his protégés in the society and especially the Liberal Catholic Church. They pertain to his sex teachings to boys – there are other sinister inferences. He stands self convicted of onanism, teaching practices that are universally condemned. Nor can he take refuge in the statement that he has learned them from his “occult” sources. Writing to Mrs. Besant on June 30<sup>th</sup>, 1906, from Harrogate he said:

My opinion in the matter, which so many think so wrong, was formed long before Theosophical days, and before I know anything about all these inner matters. I did not even originate it, for it came to me first through ecclesiastical channels. (Italics ours)  
 From Exhibits in the Narayaniah vs. Mrs. Besant Case  
 Madras High Court, March and April, 1913

This was reiterated in another letter to Mrs. Besant, dated September 11<sup>th</sup>, 1906, from Harrogate complaining of her changed attitude toward him:

So I do not quite understand the reason of the sudden change. Nor do I quite see why you write as though I were still persistently teaching these doctrines, though I have repeatedly said that I am willing to defer to your opinion. You know I never for a moment suggested that the Masters dictated or approved of such teaching. (Italics ours)  
 Another exhibit as above

Similar statements are made before the Committee called by Colonel Olcott on Wednesday, May 16<sup>th</sup>., 1906, representing the English, American and French Sections of the Theosophical Society:

Leadbeater: .....you are probably not aware that one at least of the great Church organizations for young men deals with the matter in the same manner.

Mead: Do you deliberately say this?

Leadbeater: Yes.

Mead and Burnett: What is its name?

Leadbeater: I am not free to give this. I heard of the matter first through it. (Italics ours)

Mead: Mr. Leadbeater states that there is an organization of the Church of England which teaches self abuse!

Olcott: Is it a seminary for young priests or a school?

Leadbeater: It is not in a school but I must not give definite indications.

.....

Mead: This last statement of Mr. Leadbeater's is one of the most extraordinary things I have ever heard. It is incredible that there is an organization of the Church of England which teaches masturbation as a preventative against unchastity. I ask what is the name of this organization.

Leadbeater: I certainly should not tell.

.....

Leadbeater: I decline to prove it in any manner.

(From First Section, verbatim stenographic report of the Proceedings)

Is Mr. Leadbeater a man from whom genuine spiritual teachings can come? Again judgment is

left to each individual for himself. Incidentally, the barest presentation of the case involves people intimately connected with his life and of them, too, must every person form his own opinion. The documents quoted from tell their own story:

1906

Mrs. Dennis, writing to Mrs. Besant from Chicago, January 25<sup>th</sup>., 1906 – Mr. Leadbeater having left the United States in 1905 – says in part:

I have suddenly learned the cause of the \_\_\_\_\_ boy's bitter hatred and contempt for Mr. Leadbeater, of which I spoke to you in London and which cause he had at that time refused to reveal. It is not, as I had supposed, a childish and personal grievance, but as you will see from the charges and evidence formulated below, was the result of morally criminal acts on the part of Mr. Leadbeater himself. Before he was allowed to go to \_\_\_\_\_ with Mr. Leadbeater, Mr. Leadbeater had told the parents of this boy that his first effort in training boys was a frank talk on the sex question with careful instruction to them of the necessity for an absolutely pure and virgin life. He stated that he liked to gain their confidence while they were very young and before they had erred through ignorance. He wished to inform them before even a first offense, which he said was fatal, so absolute must be their virginity. This was the understanding between Mr. Leadbeater and the boy's parents in arranging

for his travels with him, and in connection with which the following charges are made against Mr. Leadbeater:

The Charges

First, that he is teaching young boys given into his care habits of self abuse and demoralizing personal practices.

Second, that he does this with deliberate intent, and under the guise of occult training or with the promise of the increase of physical manhood.

Third, that he has demanded, at least in one case, promises of the utmost secrecy.

The testimony given by the mother of one boy

“He was nearly fourteen years of age when the occurrence took place while traveling with Mr. Leadbeater; and on his return he met my enquiries as to the cause of the hatred which had obviously grown up between himself and Mr. L. with the statement: ‘Mother, I shall never tell you, but if you knew what I know, and had heard and seen the things I have seen and heard, you would not wonder.’ Later rebukes for his antagonism again brought out the words: ‘Mother, you do not know all’. This attitude of secrecy was maintained for several years with an increased contempt shown at every mention of Mr. L.’s name. A few months ago rumours reached me of charges of immoral sexual practices by Mr. L. with boys having been made in India and the same having been suspected in England. When he was again questioned he testified that Mr. L. had taught him to practice self-abuse. When asked what reasons he gave for teaching him such practices he said ‘Mr. L. told me that it would make me grow strong and manly.’ Asked his reasons for concealing these facts so long from his parents, he said ‘He made me promise not to tell.’”

The testimony given by the mother of the second boy

The mother of the second boy noticed with sorrow and regret that the relations between Mr. L. and her son had become strained and that some change, the cause of which she did not understand, had been the result of a short visit which he had made to Mr. L. when fourteen years of age. After this visit she noticed that the tone of his letters to Mr. L. was changed and that he never answered Mr. L.’s letters to him without repeated reminders from her of his neglect, whereas, before the visit, frequent, intimate and affectionate letters passed between them. When the mother questioned him with regard to his loss of kindly feeling for Mr. L. the boy always replied: “Mother, I cannot tell you.” Before his visit to Mr. L. it would have been his greatest joy to travel with him and help as \_\_\_\_\_ did; but after his visit, when asked: “Would you like to travel with him?” he replied firmly: “No, I never would.” After learning of the charges made against Mr. L. the mother again questioned the boy. With great reluctance he admitted the facts of Mr. L.’s immoral conduct and in reply to the question: “When did it happen?” he said: “The first night I visited him, when we slept together.” When asked what excuse Mr. L. gave for such conduct, the boy’s words were: “Mother, I think that was the worst part of the whole thing. Somehow he made me believe it was Theosophical.”

Extracts from the London Committee verbatim report, May 16<sup>th</sup>., 1906.

Leadbeater: ..... Remember that both I and Mrs. Besant answered under that confidence and we should not expect that our answers were going to be laid before a whole Section and before the whole world.....Of course, I am aware that the opinion of the majority is against that course. They would regard things I look on as worse as much less objectionable. The only point in my mind is that I should assure you that there was no evil intent. I was simply

offering a solution of a serious difficulty. It is not the common solution but to my mind it is far better than the common solution, but I do not expect that you should agree with me. The point is that the Society wishes to clear itself from all connection with that view. The Society is correct in taking that ground if that is the opinion of its representatives.....You any hold any views of the course which I took, but our own idea is to prevent the Society from being injured.

.....  
Leadbeater: The interlineations in writing giving a statement by the mother as to interval is untrue. The original interval was a week, and then it lengthened to ten days and then a fortnight and so on.

.....  
Leadbeater: I want to call up quite clearly the exact incidents. I scarcely recollect. There was advice but there might be a certain amount of indicative action. That might be possible.

.....  
Thomas: You admit giving the advice to more than two boys.

Leadbeater: You are to take it that the same advice was given to several  
 ..... (Italics ours)

Keightley: I should like Mr. Leadbeater to tell us whether in following this course he did so with Mrs. Besant's knowledge and consent before these charges were sent to India. He states in his letter that he has no secrets from Mr. Besant and he has been in intimate relations with her. I should like him to tell us at what date Mrs. Besant was made aware and whether at that time she did not express disapproval.

.....  
 (Miss Ward quoted Mrs. Besant's statement of disapproval)

.....  
Burnett: The inference remains that he does not tell all of his methods to Mrs. Besant.

Olcott: Since he did not want the boys to tell their mothers he would I should think, shrink from telling Mrs. Besant.

..... (After Mr. Leadbeater withdrew from the room)

Miss Ward: .....I would like to say that we should remember that he is not sane on these matters and that he has for a number of years given his whole life to the movement and that a large number of people owe him help. I think if we can keep the resignation in we should.

Keightley: We have a greater duty upon us that we owe to the individual.- - the duty to the movement. We stand here in the position of trustees representing the interests of the movement throughout the world. We have to face the world.....

Mead: May I put in a word on behalf of the mothers of these boys: This is the most terrible thing. We have some of the best women in the Society broken-hearted about this. What do we do to defend them?

.....  
Bernard: If the measure is not strong enough it will not do. Mrs. Besant said he would not do it any more but he has not given such a promise. He even said it was hardly right for him to give explanations. If my colleagues heard what I have heard they would demand his expulsion.

Thomas: I wish I could accept his resignation but I cannot.

Olcott: A cable has just been received which makes the case worse than before.

Thomas: I think he tried to tell the truth but there is no expression of regret and he holds still that the practice is a good one.

Sinnett: It seems to me that our remarks are based on the idea that there is something behind. We ought to act only what is before us.

Thomas: I cannot accept the statement that he did this in good faith. I think the whole of the evidence show that if it was not a case of direct

vice, it was a case of gratifying his own prurient ideas.

.....

Burnett: I should like to say why I am here and support the expulsion. We are not here to persecute Mr. Leadbeater. We are here to preserve the good name of the Theosophical Society before the world. And while some of us may have opinions that would differ because of our intimate relations with him, belief in his personal integrity has no bearing on the present situation. We know how the world regards the matter. It is not supported by any doctor; therefore, we must get out of our mind any idea of personality. I have no feeling against the man who sat here today and uttered the most infamous things (Italics ours) I have ever listened to, but I say that if we do not expel this man, the world will rise up against the Society. ....

(Mr. Leadbeater was called in and the resolution accepting his resignation was read to him by the President)

Mead: Do you mean to continue this course of teaching?

Leadbeater: Seeing there is so much feeling in the matter by people whose views I respect, I do not. (Italics ours)

Extracts from Exhibits available later and to which Col. Olcott referred when he said a cable had been received making the case worse than before.

From a letter Mr. Leadbeater wrote to one of the boys, part of which was in cipher:

PRIVATE

My own darling boy, there is no need for you to write anything in cipher, for no one but I ever sees your letters. But it is better for me to write in cipher about some of the most important matters.....

Turning to other matters, I am glad to hear of the rapid growth and the strength of the results. Twice a week is permissible, but you will soon discover what brings the best effect (The occurs the following passage in cipher, the boy's translation of it being given). The meaning of the sign is urethra. Spontaneous manifestations are undesirable and should be discouraged. If it comes without help, he needs rubbing more often, but not too often or he will not come well. Does that happen when you are asleep? Tell me fully. Glad sensation is so pleasant. (Italics ours)  
Thousand kisses darling.

From a letter of the boy's mother:

Mr. L. gave to this boy a teaching admittedly dangerous, and, at the same time, prevented the counsel and the guidance of his parents in so critical a matter by impressing the boy strongly with secrecy

Mr. L. either considered the parents unfit counselors or else he feared their disapproval. In either case it was an assumption of privilege. For no matter which view he held, the parents are Karmically responsible for the child, and such teaching so contrary to their sense of right would have been possibly permissible only after having consulted them and received their consent..... for in this, you will observe Mr. L. expresses himself as "glad the sensation is pleasant", showing that he approves of the sensuous part of the practice.

This surely was teaching the boy to throw pleasurable consciousness into the practice.....

A.B. said to me in '97 "never make the mistake of doing evil that good may come."

Now it appears to me that this act is far more evil in its effects than

what we call lust, for it warps the nature and annuls any possible good that might result.....

It is an inexplicable feature in this case, that the boy was taught this method while away from his home.

There was ample opportunity for Mr. L. to have consulted the boy's father about this when in our city but he did not.

From Jinarajadasa's Circular of April 16, 1906:

From all the information that has so far come to my knowledge, and I think that I am now acquainted with practically all that there is, I have not the slightest hesitation in saying that there is not the faintest particle of proof of the charge (sodomy), nor anything that to a clear-sighted man would seem even to justify such a charge. I gather that his accusation against Mr. Leadbeater has been made in other countries.

I know that, as a matter of fact, this insinuation was made by some people in Ceylon, while he was in that country between 1885-89. I heard of it when I was a boy of 12, and before I knew Mr. Leadbeater. But soon after my acquaintance with him, I understood why the charge was made. He was especially kind to some boys there and helped them always....

....I have known Mr. Leadbeater for 19 years, during 11 of these I lived with him. Many a year, when his means were little, we have lived and worked together in one little room. I saw him night and day these years, and I think I can honestly say that there was no act or thought of his that was hidden from me. During all these years of intimacy I never saw or hear from him the slightest thing to raise even a suspicion in my mind of this charge of... (sodomy) ....I gather that some think that Mr. Leadbeater is "a sexual pervert". Witness, for instance, his liking every boy, as though there can be no rational explanation for that. Secondly, his irritability. How this can easily come about, I know. Those who have to travel about and lecture, as he did, meeting new people, thrown constantly into new surroundings and magnetism, that constant need to adapt oneself to new circumstances every week almost.....

But there is a truer charge that Mr. Leadbeater taught some boys.. (onanism). Mr. Leadbeater admits it, but he deserves to be herd on the matter.....

We have certain ideas in which we are brought up in this world and one, certainly a strange one, is, condoning illicit intercourse. We know that men are not angels, and so no one insists that a man shall not have intercourse with a woman before marriage. We little think of the woman, except to condemn her, and in certain countries, to punish her. Our disapprobation of the social evil is so slight that certainly to offer it is the only possible remedy to many a youth under a difficult circumstance. Let a man sin in this way. It matters little. Yet that this solution is an outrage on womanhood and humanity, and is not the solution that we seek, I know in my inmost being, even though I have accepted it and followed it in those times when desire forces were too strong for my mastery. (Italics ours)

Then there is Mr. Leadbeater's advice that this is not the solution. What the solution is I don't know. Some day, no doubt, humanity will discover it. Certainly it is not the solution offered by Mr. Leadbeater. I should never offer it as even the shadow of one. (Italics ours) (Exhibit Narayaniah case)

Mrs. Besant writing from Simla, June 9<sup>th</sup>, 1906 (with permission to use publicly should the need arise): says in part:

This was the first time I had heard of such a method a meeting the sexual difficulty, let alone of Mr. Leadbeater's recommendation of it. I had always regarded self-abuse as one of the lowest forms of vice, a thing universally

reprobated by decent people. To me it was not arguable. But I have since heard that it is sometimes practiced and recommended by ascetics, otherwise god men, for the sake of preserving chastity- - as though self-abuse did not destroy chastity as much as prostitution, and in an even more degrading way!" (Italics ours)

Mrs. Besant to Mrs. Dennis, May 10<sup>th</sup>., 1906:

You asked me what you are to think of my position. This, I know Mr. Leadbeater to be a disciple of Master K.H. I have constantly met him out of the body and seen him with the Master and trusted their work. I know that if he were evil minded this could not be. I cannot therefore join in hounding him out of the T.S. in which he has been one of our best workers.....I should save trouble by deserting Mr. L. but I do not see that to be my duty."

(Exhibit Narayaniah case)

From Mr. Leadbeater to Mrs. Besant, June 30<sup>th</sup>., 1906:

You speak of defending the advice I gave; but you cannot defend it because you don't agree with it, as you have said clearly from the first, therefore the clamour of the American Executive against you is silly. (Italics ours)

(Exhibit Narayaniah case)

From Mr. Leadbeater to Mrs. Besant, September 11<sup>th</sup>., 1906:

You know I never for a moment suggested that the Masters dictated or approved such teaching. I should myself simply infer that They left me to make my own discoveries, and presumably therefore did not consider that this one thing out-weighs everything else, as you apparently do now, though you as certainly did not think so when we were together at Benares. Both matrimony and prostitution must obviously be worse, because in each case they involve action upon radically wrong, is it not more probable that in spite of that defect, they were willing to use what was good in me, than that both of us and several other people have been consistently and successfully deluded for many years, especially when you consider how much good came out of the delusion. If we are to suppose the whole transaction carried out by Dark Powers at the cost of infinite trouble, you do not see that the balance of result of that transaction is enormously against them? I suppose it is useless to write, because you have felt a certain line to be your duty and you naturally therefore see everything from that point of view; but at least do not let yourself be persuaded to think that I am still carrying on that line of teaching in spite of you; I yielded my opinion to yours at once, but it does not seem to have made any difference. All through the affair, I have guided my self as far as possible by what I thought you would wish. (Italics ours)

(Exhibit Narayaniah Case)

At the time of this turmoil Mrs. Besant sent a letter to the Corresponding Secretary of the Esoteric Section in America which, with her consent, was later issued as a printed circular. An extract reads:

Mr. Leadbeater appeared before the Council of the British Section, representatives from the French and American Sections being present and voting. Col. Olcott in the chair. He denied none of the charges, but, in answer to

questions, very much strengthened them, for he alleged that he had actually handled the boys himself, and that he had thus dealt with boys before puberty 'as a prophylactic'. So that the advice supposed to be given to rescue a boy, as a last resort, in the grip of sexual passion, became advice putting foul ideas into the minds of boys innocent of all sex impulses, and the long intervals, the rare relief, became twenty-four hours in length, a daily habit. It was conceivable that the advice as supposed to have been given, had been given with pure intent, and the presumption was so, in a teacher of Theosophical morality; anything else seemed incredible. But such advice as was given in fact, such dealing with boys before sex passion had awakened, could only be given with pure intent if the giver were, on this point, insane. Such local insanity, such perversion of the sex-instinct too forcibly restrained, is not unknown to members of the medical profession. The records of a celibate priesthood and of unwise asceticism are only too full of such cases, and their victims on all other points good, are on the sex question practically insane.

Let me place here on record my opinion that such teaching as this given to men, let alone to innocent boys, is worthy of the sternest reprobation. It distorts and perverts the sex impulse, implanted in man for the preservation of the race; it degrades the ideas of marriage, fatherhood and motherhood, humanity's most sacred ideals; it befouls the imagination, pollutes the emotions and undermines the health. Worst of all that it should be taught under the name of the Divine Wisdom, being essentially 'earthly, sensual, devilish'. (With the exception of the first two words, italics ours)

And a few weeks later, writing to the American Section from Benares City, she said in part:

Any proposal to reinstate Mr. Leadbeater in the membership of the T. S. would be ruinous to the Society. It would be indignantly repudiated here and in Europe and I am sure in Australia and New Zealand, if the facts were known. If such a proposal were carried in America – I do not believe it possible – I should move on the T. S. Council, the supreme authority, that the application of membership should be rejected. But I am sure Mr. Leadbeater would not apply.

But in The Theosophist, February, 1908, following a certain telegram, to which reference will be

Made presently, was published the following from Mr. Leadbeater:

You ask me to write a formal letter which you can show, if necessary, to say what is my present position in regard to the advice which I gave some time ago to certain boys. I need hardly say that I adhere to the promise I gave you in February of last year (1906) that I would not repeat that advice as I defer to your opinion that it is dangerous. I recognize as fully as you do that if would be so, if promiscuously given and I had never dreamt of so giving it.

After a move by the Council of the Blavatsky Lodge in 1907 to reinstate Mr. Leadbeater which caused Mrs. Besant to send the following telegram:

If publicly repudiates teaching two years after repudiation on large majority representative of the whole Society would reinstate not otherwise,

the President completely changed her mind. Nor was it then deemed necessary to wait

“two years”. She addressed a letter to the members of the Theosophical Society in which she now said:

Much has been made of a “cipher letter”. The use of cipher arose from an old story in the Theosophist, repeated by Mr. Leadbeater to a few lads; they as boys will, took up the cipher with enthusiasm and it was subsequently sometimes used in correspondence with the boys who had been present when the story was told. In a type-written note on a fragment of paper undated and unsigned, relating to an astral experience a few words in cipher occur on the incriminated advice. Then follows a sentence, unconnected with the context, on which a foul construction has been placed. That the boy did not so read it is proved by a letter of his to Mr. Leadbeater – not sent, but shown me by his mother – in which he expressed his puzzlement as to what it meant as he well might. There is something very suspicious about the use of this letter. It was carefully kept away from Mr. Leadbeater (Mrs. Besant however had a copy!), though widely circulated against the wish of the father and mother, and when a copy was lately sent him by a friend, he did not recognize it in its present form, and stated emphatically that he had never used the phrase with regard to any sexual act. It may go with the Coulomb and Pigott letters.

Mrs. Chidester, Assistant Corresponding Secretary of the American E. S., replied to this, enclosing a photograph of the cipher letter, which was typewritten and unsigned, but written on the stationary Mr. Leadbeater habitually used and interlined in his own handwriting:

First, as to the Cipher-letter being forgery.

When on September 28, 1907, you were shown the original Cipher-letter, you did not in any way or manner question its genuineness nor did you attempt any explanation or defense of it. Nor do I understand that Mr. Leadbeater has ever denied writing it.

Furthermore you virtually authenticate it in the first part of the paragraph dealing with it on pages 10 and 11 of your letter.....

Before even the two years she had stipulated had elapsed she inserted the following in the Theosophist for January, 1909, concerning the readmission of Mr. Leadbeater to the Theosophical Society in 1908:

The General Council of the Theosophical Society has declared by a majority composed of 13 General Secretaries, its 4 official members and 4 our of the additional members – 21 in all – that “there is no reason why Mr. C. W. Leadbeater should not return, if he wishes to his place in the Society which he has in the past served so well.”

In the Theosophist for March, 1909, she wrote:

I am not in a position to tell our readers what will be done by those who disapprove of the action of the General Council of the Theosophical Society in opening the door to the return of my highly-valued colleague, Mr. C. W.

Leadbeater. The more liberal minded of the, who are willing to live and let live, will probably take advantage of the new rule (Rule 31) which permits a dissentient minority to organize itself independently outside the National Societies and to attach itself only to Headquarters. Thus it will publicly show its disapproval of the liberty affirmed by the President and General Council; but at the same time will not seek to coerce the great majority of members.

1912

Just as the 1906 trouble arose out of incidents in preceding years so did the 1912 which resulted in Mr. Jiddu Narayaniah's suit to recover possession of his two sons, J. Krishnamurti (whose portrait in the latter half of 1925 appeared in newspapers in practically every country of the world as "The Coming Christ") and J. Nityananda. He desired to set aside the guardianship of Mrs. Besant which placed them in propinquity to Mr. Leadbeater and had recourse to law in the hope of achieving his object.

He wrote to Mrs. Besant on January 6<sup>th</sup>., 1912, from Adyar:

Respected and Dear Mother,

In continuation of my conversation with you in Benares on the 31<sup>st</sup> ultimo, just before my departure to this place, I respectfully beg to inform you that after deep consideration, I have come to the following conclusion on the facts here mentioned and I earnestly hope and trust that you will give your best consideration and render me the relief I seek.....

What I personally witnessed I have brought to your notice on several occasions, and I told you in no doubtful terms that Mr. Leadbeater has the lowest kind of sexual appetite, and that he has his own ways of gratifying it. What the other person has seen was, I am told, also brought to your notice, by some at least of those to whom the person had spoken. I therefore requested you on many an occasion to separate my boys from him. You were kind enough to comply with my requests, but only half and half still giving room to Mr. Leadbeater to continue his dirty practices.

On the last occasion, namely when I spoke to you in Benares, you plainly told me that you could not separate the boys from that man.

My own impression is that Mr. Leadbeater is a thoroughly undesirable character to be in charge of my boys, not even to temporarily associate with them.

I therefore finally request you to bring about a complete and final separation of my boys from that man and assure me in writing that you will not permit him to influence in any manner either by day or night my boys and that you will never allow that man even to meet my boys, even occasionally, or to carry on any sort of correspondence with my boys, so that the boys may not come under his influence to the least extent. If you fail to comply with my request, I regret that I shall have recourse to law to find my remedy, and I very respectfully submit that this is no threat of mine.....

.....  
 Even this sacrifice I am resolved to make in order that I may save those children from what I am convinced would be their ruin, if they continue to remain in that man's hands, already a well-known old offender.

May the Lords of Compassion make you have compassion on me.

(This and all succeeding quotations in the 1912 sections from exhibits and evidence in the case at the Madras High Court, March, 1913)

Mrs. Besant prepared a written reply to Mr. Narayaniah's plaint when he filed suit for possession in which she attempted to obscure the point at issue by making allegations against The Hindu newspaper and certain people who, she asserted, were behind the suit.

Mr. Justice Bakewell ruled "The whole of paragraph 29 is scandalous", and passed an Order, part of which runs:

Her (Mrs. Besant's) written statement cannot by any stretch of language be described as pleadings. It is verbose, prolix, argumentative and irrelevant, and in one of the paragraphs at least, namely paragraph 29, it is highly scandalous, and consists largely of evidence.....The plaint (on behalf of Mr. Narayaniah) is also prolix and contains many matters of evidence but the statements in the defendant's written statement are not caused by its bad pleadings. The written statement is ordered to be struck out, since it is impossible to separate the objectionable part from the necessary assertions. The defendant is ordered to pay the plaintiff's taxed costs of this application occasioned by the filing of this written statement.

Counsel for Mr. Narayaniah filed certain letters from Mr. Leadbeater to Mrs. Besant which indicate that the trouble began as far back as April, 1910. Incidentally, certain sentences in this correspondence may be noted:

Undated but after April 24, 1910: I mentioned to you yesterday that the Master had spoken very kindly and encouragingly about the recent disturbances here, but I had not time to tell you what He said and I should like you to know it exactly as soon as possible, lest by chance you should not have remembered it in full....

Dec. 24, 1909: I am directed to see that the boys do not again enter their old house, and I fear I may have difficulty with that father, since his mind moves very slowly. Can you impress it upon him? .... I wonder whether the Master anticipates trouble with him about that ceremony, for He again referred to it last night.....The Master plainly intimated that this was the last time they would be permitted to take part in anything of this sort, and this only as a concession to "The weaker brethren". I think it would be a blessing if the father could be kept away over the date of the ceremony, January 7.... Could you not send him to inspect a branch in Kashmir or some other distant province? I am rather nervous about the function.

Jan 3, 1910: Krishna has written you his idea of the ceremony, which began the New Year for us, but he does not remember (for he probably did not see) that the Lord Maitreya Himself looked in and the Star once more gleamed over

us at the critical moment. More and more I see the importance of every step in this affair, and my sense of responsibility grows day by day. Of this last development I have told Mrs. Russak, Mrs. Van Hook, Ruspoli and Clarke, the people whom Krishna himself chose. I do not know whether it would be well that the whole Sunday morning should know but if so, I think it would be better for you tell them, on your return.

Jan. 6<sup>th</sup>, 1910:....The grouping, which you describe accurately, represents one state of the proceedings, and it is the time that the Lord Maitreya solemnly gave him into our charge on behalf of the Brotherhood.

(Italics throughout ours)

In the recorded evidence Mr. Narayaniah says in part:

In December the boys slept in Mrs. Besant's room, while she was at Benares, but they took their meals with their father, as usual. Witness went to Benares for the Convention in December, 1909 (sent away in accordance with Mr. Leadbeater's request? - - Compilers), and returned to Adyar in January, 1910, and he did not know what took place at the "initiation" further than that Mr. Leadbeater and the elder boy were closed up in a room. He thought it was Mrs. Besant's room. Mrs. Besant returned to Adyar in 1910, and then she put a draft form of guardianship into his hands and asked him to go through it and sign it. He kept it for some days and she asked him about the document, and he said that he was not prepared to sign it. Some time after that Sir Subramnia Iyer came to him and asked what the difficulty was regarding the document and he said that he did not like to sign such a document. Then Mrs. Besant went to him, and asked whether he believed in "the Masters"? He said "Yes". "Don't you believe that I am in communication with the Masters? You take me to be your spiritual teacher. I know you won't give me any difficulties, but difficulties may arise, after your death, with your relations. So I want that letter." He inserted in the draft that Mrs. Besant should be guardian after his life time". Mrs. Besant objected to his stating "after my lifetime" and wanted him to constitute her as guardian immediately.

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| <p>It was stated in the letter that she alone should be the guardian of the boys and he did not give power to transfer the guardianship. The last clause "<u>I do not give you power to transfer the guardianship</u>" <u>was written by him.</u> (Italics</p> | <p>: Of. Also Mr. N.'s letter : Yet Mrs. Besant can<br/>: of <u>March 6, 1910</u> when : actually say in the<br/>: he says in part: : Watch Tower Notes.<br/>: As my desire is that : The Theosophist, <u>Jan.</u><br/>: you and you alone should: <u>1922.</u><br/>: be their guardian, I do : And thus on December<br/>: not give your power to : 5, 1921, the chapter<br/>: transfer the guardian- : closed which began on<br/>: ship I give you, to any : January 11, 1910, when<br/>: other but to myself, in : <u>the charge of guarding</u><br/>: case you find any neces- : <u>and of training was</u><br/>: sity to do so. If you hap : <u>given to my brother C.</u><br/>: -pen to pass away from : W. Leadbeater and my-<br/>: your present body before : self.<br/>I do, the guardianship : (Italics ours)<br/>.. should naturally revert :<br/>to me...(or) persons :<br/>appointed by me for that :<br/>purpose in my will.</p> |
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Lakshman, servant of Mrs. Besant, is recorded as saying in cross-examination:

The boy (Krishnamurti) had a separate bath room, but that day he was bathing in Mr. Leadbeater's bath room, and witness

was surprised to find them together there, and naked. It is considered a sinful act for Hindus to bathe completely naked, and through shame he did not call Mr. Leadbeater but he went away.

From Mrs. Besant's evidence:

In February, 1910, the plaintiff told her that he had seen Nitya shivering on the verandah outside Mr. Leadbeater's room, and that the boy had said that Krishna was inside and that plaintiff had then seen something nasty..... Mr. Leadbeater's room, and that the boy had said that Krishna was inside and that plaintiff had then seen something nasty..... It is absolutely false that she is aware of any evil practices of Mr. Leadbeater.

(Italics ours)

In reply to Plaintiff's counsel:

I never explained to him (the father) that giving over the boys meant that they ought not to marry. I think he did understand it. If I had thought it was necessary to explain to him, I would have done it. As Initiates no sexual activity is possible. If what is said had happened, it is impossible that the boy should be as he is. He could not have it. If he could have had it, he never would have consented to it. All sexual impulse lay behind.

Mr. Justice Bakewell, in summing up, said in part:

Mr. Leadbeater admitted in his evidence that he has held, and even now holds, opinions which I need only describe as certainly immoral and such as to unfit him to be the tutor of boys, and taken in conjunction with his professed power to detect the approach of impure thoughts, render him a highly dangerous associate for children..... (I am of opinion for the reasons I have given that it is necessary in the interests of the children and for their future protection that they should be declared wards of Court and I declare accordingly. I also direct the defendant to hand over the custody of the two boys, Krishnamurti and Nityananda, to the plaintiff on or before the 26<sup>th</sup> of May, 1913. With regard to the costs of the case, this trial has been unduly protracted and considerable expense has been caused by the charges which were made by the plaintiff and I find not to have been proved. I therefore direct him to pay the costs of the suit and the defendant's including the costs of the several commissions and all costs expressly reserved.

April, 18, 1913

#### 1921-22

Yet once more in the third cycle of trouble that began in 1921 and has continued practically without remission to the present day, the conflict was the outcome of hidden actions, with sinister appearances, happening again and again in the preceding years until their cumulative effect could not be ignored. As in 1906, so in 1912 and again in 1921. Let the extracts from the original documents tell their own story to those who seek truth and truth alone.

Incidentally, it is interesting to note here that when Mr. Leadbeater met Mr. T. H. Martyn in Rome in 1906, the latter's attitude was summed up thus: "I found that

had already received a letter from Dennis giving it (the accusation) in a wildly exaggerated form but had simply put it in his pocket and kept silence”, when Mr. Leadbeater’s judgment was, apropos of another matter in the same letter: “Martyn is so eminently a man of common sense that I always feel disposed to allow great weight to any suggestion which he venture to make. (Letter from Mr. Leadbeater to Mrs. Besant, date May 17<sup>th</sup>., 1906, which was an exhibit in the Narayaniah case – Italics ours)

Also, it was a matter of common knowledge in the Theosophical Society that up to 1921 both Mr. Leadbeater and Mrs. Besant vouched for the fact that Mr. Martyn says of “initiations” .....In July, 1917, five of us were told that we had taken various initiations. No one remembered in the morning - - some had hardly slept at all feeling rather excited.”) But judgment changed as did his position in the “occult hierarchy” when Mr. Martyn became the accuser. The following are all extracts (Italics ours) from his letter to Mrs. Besant, date May 20<sup>th</sup>., 1921:

- 1906: Police proceedings against the latter (Mr. Leadbeater) were seriously threatened. On of his boys in desperate trouble urged me to try and prevent them being proceeded with and admitting that the only evidence he could give confirmed Leadbeater’s immoral practices..... I went away to Africa soon after and on returning I tried to forget what this confession involved, to explain it away; and succeeded.
- 1914: ...Leadbeater came to live with us in Sydney. I took him at his own valuation and yours, regarding him as an Arhat.
- 1917: ...I went to America. Young Van Hook was in New York. He talked freely of C.W.L.’s immorality and about faking the “lives” of people....Now, here is the evidence of two Leadbeater boys (my 1906 experience - - I can give you the name if you want it - - and young Van Hook) both subsequent (Mr. Martyn’s italics) to the 1906 inquiry and subsequent both to the confessions of all the American boys and to C.W.L.’s admissions at the enquiry of 1906. I have put these pieces of evidence together and add to them the compromising facts of life in my house (I am only touching the fringe of this in this letter) and find staring me in the face the conclusion that Leadbeater is a sex pervert, his mania taking a particular form which I have - - though only lately - - discovered, is a form well-known and quite common in the annals of sex criminology. There are some I know who think C.W.L. may have brought over old sex weaknesses and still be chosen by the Masters to do certain work for them. I have found comfort in the possibility up to the time of my last interview with you in London.

1919: .. my visit to London. A week before you sent for me and gave me your message in October, 1919, I called on Mrs. St. John. She was in great trouble because the police were taking action (so she told me) against four L.C.C. priests, Wedgwood, King, Farrer and Clark. She wanted me to warn Wedgwood in Australia and did not know how to without incriminating herself by compounding a felony. Farrer she told me she had got out of the country and she was sure the police would not find him (Italics Mr. Martyn's). King had decided to remain in London and see it out as Farrer was out of the way, etc.

Of course, while in London I heard about charges of sodomy with boys being made against Wedgwood ( by Major Adams and others) and reports about him had also reached me from Sydney but what Mrs. St. John told me came as a complete surprise. A week later Graham Pole sent me word to say you wished to see me urgently and I called. You then told me that you wished to communicate with Wedgwood in Sydney but by so doing directly you would be compounding a felony and you gave me the message for Raja that Wedgwood must leave the E.S. and T.S. etc. I happened to think of ... (a)... talk you had given on a previous Sunday about black magic and sexual excess and asked if you were referring to Wedgwood's case....you said yes, that Krishna, who was very intuitive at times had in a comment suggested the explanation. Now, you will see that this went much further than implying Wedgwood had compromised himself - - a good man might do that and be innocent of evil. It meant to me that on your own evidence and that of Krishna, Wedgwood was guilty of sex depravity. Then there cropped up the matter of Wedgwood's initiation. You told me he was not an initiate. I could not be surprised at that naturally, if the other was true, how could he be?

...In America after leaving you certain people came to me and told me they had heard that the truth about Wedgwood was coming out at last and explained that he had in London admitted his trouble to one of them (or both, I am not sure); that great efforts were made to help him overcome it; that things went on well for a time, but that later on he dropped back again into his evil ways. I can give you names if you want them. When I reached Sydney Raja accepted the message with evident reluctance.... And I soon saw that the breakdown of Wedgwood involved to him nothing short of the collapse of Leadbeater as an Arhat: of the divine authority of the L. C. Church; and of all reliance on the genuineness of reported initiations, discipleships, etc....he just became the politician pure and simple scheming to maintain what to me was - - on the evidence available - - a falsehood; he showed no desire at all to find the truth and follow it (Italics Mr. Martyn's). I may have been a little unfair in this conclusion because I afterwards found that Raja is an echo of C.W.L. and that he takes his occultism directly from what the latter says without question.

Then followed that cable to you from Raja explaining what your statement - that Wedgwood was not an initiate - involved. He made no reference in the message to the immorality - - that was apparently unimportant and you replied accepting Leadbeater's statement about the initiation as decisive and cancelled your instructions....

Cables: Sydney Dec. 17<sup>th</sup>, 1919, to Besant, Adyar.

"Martyn reports you said Wedgwood not initiate. Leadbeater asserts you were present at initiation. Am most anxious members sake there should be no fundamental divergence between you and him on such important occult matter since at same time...and....took second...and...first. Do you mean that since you have no recollection you cannot assert Wedgwood initiate but do not wish to be quoted as saying that he is positively uninitiated."

Dec. 22, Bombay.

"Brother's statement enough accept fact, cancel message sent."

Before Raja's cable was sent I had interviewed Leadbeater alone. He wanted to hear all he could. I told him about the evidence thrust on me in America about Wedgwood having confessed and he said "Well, we had better get rid of him then". I have often since remembered this incident. If Leadbeater knew Wedgwood to be innocent because (Italics Mr. Martyn's) he was an initiate why should he have said that?

...Like many of the older members I have known how you and others for quite a long time regarded Chakravarti as a Master in the flesh and later had to repudiate him when certain facts indicated the mistake.... the incident has a bearing in the case of Leadbeater.

How insidiously, by the way, this form of sex teaching may be spread in the desire to safeguard reputations, is shown in an article in Theosophy in Australia, February, 1922, entitled "The Sex Question".

This question has received a certain amount of prominence recently among our members, and certain practices have been more or less freely discussed. There have been at various times among educationalists different suggestions made as to the best course to be adopted in the case of those under-going special training, with a view to combating or neutralizing so much of the natural physical instinct as would interfere with the progress of the pupil along that line. It is not my intention to attempt a review of the methods suggested, but it may well be borne in mind that competent authorities are of divided opinions, and where they differ, we of the rank and file may well refrain from dogmatism. (Italics ours)

Who are the only "educationalists" advocating such a course? And who, the "competent authorities"?

Reginald Farrer, a priest of the Liberal Catholic Church, wrote to Mrs. Besant and two others as follows:

"It is with infinite regret that I tender you my resignation from the Co-Masonic Order. I am impelled to this extreme decision because I am no longer worthy to be considered of good report.

"The imputation against myself as well as against Wedgwood. King and Clark in Mr. Martyn's letter is but too true. Yet, I would have you believe that I was led astray by those whom I considered to be my superiors both morally and spiritually. I was not strong enough to control my own lower nature, and gave way to a practice that I am now heartily ashamed of. Reparation for the stain that I have brought upon the Order I cannot make and I have come to the mournful conclusion that it is incumbent on me to ask you to strike my name from the Roll of Co-Masonry.

"My reason for writing this letter is to unburden my conscience. I can no longer carry this weight on my shoulders, especially as it reflects so much discredit on the different orders of which we are members.

"Wedgwood absolutely declines to give up the mal-practice, and for the sake of those who are in the different Orders and for those who will join if the good name is untarnished I must make this confession.

"Again, Acuna, who is also addicted to this vice has actually stood sponsor for one of his "friends" who was initiated into Emulation Lodge recently.

"The foregoing declaration is made without any feeling of malice whatever, but in a sincere endeavor to make known the facts in the hope that in some small way, and at a late hour, I may serve the cause of Truth."

The preceding document, known as “The Farrer Confession”, soon became public property, more or less, in London at least. Not so, the following confirmation dated June 23, 1922, of such practices among some priests of the Liberal Catholic Church as well as corroboration of Mrs. Besant’s statements to Mr. Martyn which she asserted later he “grossly exaggerated”.

“I, RUPERT GAUNTLETT, of 9 Talbot Mansions, Museum Street, W.C. 1, make the following statement on Oath, and do so for the purpose of contributing to the clearing up of the scandals which are now so seriously wrecking the harmony of our Society. The statement is therefore, made entirely without malice, and solely for the above mentioned purpose.

“When Mrs. Besant was in England during 1919 I had an interview with her at her flat in Robert Street, and the subject of Mr. Farrer’s confession of Sexual Malpractices was brought up. Mrs. Besant asked me what was my position in the Liberal Catholic Church and what were my intentions in regard to this confession. I stated that though I had no knowledge of the truth or otherwise of the charges which Mr. Farrer had brought against other persons. I was at the same time so reluctant to be associated with persons against whom such charges could be made that I was seriously considering my resignation from the Church. Mrs. Besant then asked me not to take this action as the time she said, might come when it would be essential for some one to take action for the cleaning of the Church from such scandals and in that case I should be the person to do so. I asked her whether there as any real ground for Mr. Farrer’s statement in so far as it incriminated others, and Mrs. Besant then said that she had no doubt as to its truth, and that in any case, within her personal knowledge, Mr. Wedgwood’s behavior when at Adyar was such that she refused ever to have him there again. On this assurance I consented to remain in the Church, for the specific purpose of taking my present action when the time should be ripe, and before doing so I wrote to Mrs. Besant in March that I was now acting in accordance with her instructions.

“On March 22d last I saw Mr. Wedgwood in London, and had a serious conversation with him on this subject. As Senior Bishop of the Church he told me that he wished to resign, and that he wished his resignation to take effect from after March 23d, on which date he had certain duties to perform which could not be postponed.

“I asked him most seriously to reconsider his resignation, as coming at such a time it could only be considered as implying his guilt of the charge made against him, and I asked whether it would not be better to bring a libel action against Mr. Farrer and so, for the sake of our various interest, clear his character. He told me he would not do this and that I was to accept his resignation, and on this I did so, but at the same time stated most clearly that I could only do so on the distinct understanding that guilt was implied by his resolution. He was unshaken in his purpose, and I then accepted his resignation.....”

(Italics ours)

In July, 1922, Mr. John Van Manen issued a pamphlet on “Our Present Trouble”, published in Calcutta on page 1 of which, this statement occurs:

..Once more our internal problems are before the world. By a late mail from America I have received a private letter asking me to furnish in writing a copy of a certain statement made to me some years ago by a boy closely connected with Mr. L., of considerable import and bearing on

the question under debate. This statement was, when made to me, placed by me before Mrs. B. in person and communicated to Mr. L. by letter. Under all the above circumstances I feel that I cannot shirk responsibility by not answering the letter addressed to me. As it is, however, likely that any answer of mine would be made public use of in one way or another I want to make it a complete and full statement of my position and views which, I feel, are not only those of several others in this matter but legitimate and reasonable.....

The scandals in Sydney, Australia, resulted in a Police Enquiry. The following is a true copy of a précis furnished to the Executive of the Sydney Lodge of the Theosophical Society, after inspection of the Report presented to the Minister of Justice, New South Wales, Italics ours:

Three adults at different times saw one particular boy (A) in Leadbeater's bed with him. On two occasions the boy was naked. This boy (A) denies that he ever slept with Leadbeater.

Another boy, however, gives evidence that (A) frequently, perhaps habitually, slept with Leadbeater, and that (A) 's bed was frequently unoccupied at night (both boys had beds on the balcony of Leadbeater's room).

One boy explains that Leadbeater encouraged him to first bathe, and then lie down on his (Leadbeater's) bed in his bathing wrapper on an afternoon preceding a T.S. meeting at night. He was to rest in order to be fresh for the meeting at night. Leadbeater lay on the bed with a book in his left hand; the boy lay on the other side. Without any words, Leadbeater with his right hand caught hold of the boy's person and proceeded to masturbate him. This boy had not arrived at the age of puberty. He explains that he had a feeling that it was not right and slipped off the bed. He avoided giving any further opportunity of the same kind, though there were other rest afternoons. No date could be fixed by the boy, but it seems probable the incident happened during the first few month of Leadbeater's residence in Sydney, 1914-1915.

Among those who volunteered evidence in favour of Leadbeater were several adults who happened to be visiting Sydney. Some of these in their evidence admit that they themselves have been addicted to the habit of masturbation. Two who make this admission are old Leadbeater boys and both are prominent T.S. officials. Two or more of the boys who gave evidence admit the same habit, and the Enquiry Officials seem satisfied that most of the boys who came before them were victims of it.

It would seem that there are quite a number of young boys who have associated with Leadbeater while he has been in Sydney, for a short time only. One of these gives evidence, and he states:

"I left the Church so abruptly for the reason that I had a feeling for some "time, but never said anything, that something was wrong. I shook it off for a "while but I still believe that there was some undue familiarity between Bishop "Leadbeater and the boys \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ and another boy named \_\_\_\_\_; "I forget his (full) name, he left the Church very suddenly."

The Police, forwarding "Alterations in Evidence" under date June 7<sup>th</sup>., 1922, state:

We beg to report in forwarding the attached alterations that all the witnesses making statements in defence of Bishop Leadbeater have

re-attended the Criminal Investigation Department with the exception of Mrs. Kollerstrom, who was instructed to return Tuesday last if she wished to review her evidence; and all of them with the exception of two (Fritz Kunz and Stephen Leigh) wanted to alter their original statements and one of them (Rein Vreede), it will be noted called the second time for the purpose of re-qualifying his original qualifications.

Mr. Jinarajadasa made extensive alterations, but appeared to uncertain of what he did say that apparently he could not trust himself to correct his statements verbally, and wrote out what he had to convey, which in our opinion does not materially alter his original statement, and even then did not write it out without making three errors.

The brothers Krishnamurti and Mityananda nearly got to loggerheads over the exact manner in which they could correct their statements. (Italics ours)

The HEAD of CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION DEPARTMENT (Chairman of the Enquiry) makes the comment to the Inspector General of Police:

I am of the opinion, however, that there are good grounds for believing him (Leadbeater) to be a sex pervert.....The suspicions generally expressed by \_\_\_\_\_ are not without foundation (Italics ours).

The INSPECTOR GENERAL OF POLICE comments:

The evidence in the possession of the Police does not appear to call for any independent action against Leadbeater at present, but sufficient is disclosed in the accompanying papers to justify his conduct being kept under observation. (Italics ours)

The CROWN SOLICITOR:

There is not much doubt that Leadbeater has in the past practiced , and probably does still advise, masturbation, but save as above, there is no evidence available.

Has Mr. Leadbeater kept his promise made to several people in 1906 and his repeated pledge to Mrs. Besant? Can his word be relied upon? Is it possible that he can be used in the slightest way by Members of the White Lodge utter in their purity?

1925

From Truth, London, issue of December 30, 1925:

Mrs. Besant's Disciples.

A few weeks ago Mrs. Besant announced at Queen's Hall the impending second advent of the Messiah and the preliminary appointment of some of his Apostles. Many readers of TRUTH will doubtless remember what was said here at the time as to the disreputable antecedents of one or two of these worthies. That they are not unfair samples of the crowd of disciples which Mrs. Besant has gathered around her may be guessed from a scandalous affair that has just occurred in Holland. A man named Kieft – a lay brother, or something of that kind – who was in charge of the acolytes, or choir boys or whatever they may be, attached to a new

Besantine church at a place called De Duinen, near Huizen, in North Holland, was tried a few weeks ago for unnatural offences with these boys. The court reserved judgment. Kieft has now been found guilty and sentenced to six months imprisonment.

Unless my memory is at fault, "De Duinen" is the residence of a Dutch lady of substantial means, who has fallen under the influence of Mrs. Besant and some of the other "Apostles" and has been a lavish benefactress of this unsavoury sect. She built, I believe, the church which figures in the story of Mr. Kieft, and no doubt it has been largely by her help that this sect of Theosophists have obtained a footing in Holland. It might be supposed that the conviction and imprisonment of Kieft would open the lady's eyes to the character of Mrs. Besant's disciples, but after the example of Mrs. Besant herself this by no means follows.

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In view of the great influence which Mrs. Besant exercises over many minds it is necessary to say plainly that she cannot be dissociated from these scandals. She cannot be ignorant of the character of men like Leadbeater and Wedgwood.....