

## CWL Speaks

C.W. Leadbeater's Correspondence  
concerning the 1906 Crisis in  
the Theosophical Society



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concerning the 1906 Crisis in the  
Theosophical Society

Compiled by Pedro Oliveira

Foreword by Robert Ellwood

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[www.cwlworld.info](http://www.cwlworld.info)

Chelaship is an educational as well as probationary stage and the chela alone can determine whether it shall end in adeptship or failure. Chelas from a mistaken idea of our system too often watch and wait for orders, wasting precious time which should be taken up with personal effort.

Our cause needs missionaries, devotees, agents, even martyrs perhaps. But it cannot demand of any man to make himself either. So now choose and grasp your own destiny, and may our Lord's the Tathagata's memory aid you to decide for the best.

K.H.

(From a letter received by C.W. Leadbeater in Liphook, near Bramshott parish, on 31 October 1884.)

Since your intuition led you in the right direction and made you understand that it was my desire you should go to Adyar immediately – I may say more. The sooner you go the better. Do not lose one day more than you can help. Sail on the 5th if possible. Join Upasika at Alexandria. Let no one know you are going and may the blessing of our Lord, and my poor blessing shield you from every evil in your new life. Greeting to you my new chela.

K. H.

Show my notes to no one.

(Letter received by C.W. Leadbeater during the early hours of 1st November 1884, in London, through the agency of Madame Blavatsky.)



# Contents

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Foreword .....	vii
Introduction: C. W. Leadbeater: the 'Received Tradition'...	1
Chapter 1: Early Correspondence with Helen I. Dennis and Others .....	19
Chapter 2: Charges against Leadbeater: American Section's Executive Committee .....	34
Chapter 3: Besant and Leadbeater reply to the Charges	
Chapter 4: Correspondence between Besant, Leadbeater and others, first half of 1906 .....	64
Chapter 5: Advisory Board Meeting, London, May, 1906 ...	103
Chapter 6: The "Cipher Letter" .....	138
Chapter 7: Correspondence between Besant, Leadbeater and others, second half of 1906 .....	147
Chapter 8: Adyar Events of Early 1907 .....	178
Chapter 9: Aftermath: Return to Adyar and the Discovery of Krishnamurti .....	242
Appendix 1 C. W. Leadbeater at Bramshott Parish .....	303
Appendix 2 Krishnaji and CWL .....	309
Appendix 3 C. W. Leadbeater: A Comprehensive Bibliography .....	320



# Foreword

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By Robert Ellwood

This fine account by Pedro Oliveira of the 1906 crisis in the Theosophical Society, in which the prominent Theosophist Charles Webster Leadbeater was accused of sexual teaching and perhaps practice deemed unacceptable by the Society's leadership, is important not only for its contribution to Theosophical history, but also because it represents one response to a time of rapid change in the life of the world, above all in social and psychological attitudes. Good historical writing is not just the narrative of a certain slice of time, often a narrow slice. It also offers a window into an era and its people, for no one lives entirely apart from his or her times, whether in sympathy with its trends or in reaction against them.

In most ways Theosophy in the first decade of the twentieth century was in sympathy with the trends. This was a period often called the Progressive era, when movements toward peace, feminism (including votes for women), the rights of workers, concern for animals (and vegetarianism), together with broad-mindedness toward the varied religions and cultures of the world (many of them then under imperial domination) were in the air. Many Theosophists were in the forefront of these causes, and the Society itself, with its leadership by women as well as men (rarely seen in the conventional religions of the day), and its regard for world religions as repositories of the ancient wisdom, embodied them. The writings of Theosophists, beginning with H.P. Blavatsky, were moreover among the first to incorporate versions of Darwinian evolution into a spiritual worldview.

However, in one area, sexuality, Theosophical thought remained firmly rooted in traditional values even in the era of bloomers and then flappers. Indeed, for some Theosophists, values went the other way: there were those, including married couples, who observed strict celibacy and considered sexual abstinence the

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royal road to the higher life. C.W. Leadbeater himself, in *The Masters and the Path*, quotes from H. P. Blavatsky (herself drawing here from Eastern sources) to the effect that among the first rules of a *chela* or disciple was ‘Absolute mental and physical purity.’ The Victorian meaning of such “purity” would have been well understood; it was spelled out in a later rule to mean avoidance even of touching another living being, human or animal. This mentality no doubt had some roots in the rigid morality of the Victorian middle class, out of which demographic Theosophy had strong representation, and in certain medical opinions of the times, but owed even more in the literature of Eastern asceticism which Theosophists received enthusiastically. To its credit Theosophy did much to introduce Eastern spirituality to the rest of the world, but such strictures were not always suitable in a society without the traditions and monastic establishments of their homelands.

One exception to Theosophical ‘purity’: the same C.W. Leadbeater was accused in 1906 of teaching masturbation to boys and perhaps himself practising homosexuality, or even as was later whispered the black arts of sex magic, like his notorious contemporary Aleister Crowley. In the present book Pedro Oliveira makes clear that, in respect to these charges, Leadbeater was often assumed guilty before he could be proven innocent, and that none of the charges were in fact proven then or later in a way that could have satisfied a court of law. And in fact, in this particular respect, CWL may have been more attuned to the trends than he have recognized.

In the same year, 1906, over in Vienna Sigmund Freud turned fifty, and was becoming more and more widely known for his much-debated psychoanalytic theories. In the previous year, 1905, Freud had first published *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, which work, expanded and reprinted over the years, presented many of the basic concepts of Freudian psychology. The ‘Three Essays’ – ‘Sexual Aberrations’, ‘Infantile Sexuality’, and ‘Transformations of Puberty’ – explain that a basic energy, sometimes called ‘libido’, grounded in biology itself and becoming the sexual

drive in its culminating adult form, seeks expression in all stages of life from infancy on up, though in different ways appropriate to different life-stages, like water shunted through various pipes and channels. This drive, because of the other requisites of life and culture, must often screen itself and indeed may be the potent but unconscious inner motivation for why we want what we want and do what we do.

In 1906 Freud received the full blast of criticism for this treatise, even as did Leadbeater at the same time for his alleged views. Fellow psychologists attacked the innovative doctor basically for obscenity as it was then understood, calling their colleague variously a 'dirty-minded pansensualist', a 'Viennese libertine', the perverted writer of 'pornographic stories' masquerading as scientific papers, and the psychoanalytic method 'mental masturbation'. But Freud did not stop in his analytic research and writing, or in slowly gathering disciples like, at the time, C.G. Jung, though the world was then mostly against him. In the same mode, Leadbeater continued his clairvoyance and writing despite temporary exile.

Freud was, of course, to prevail in a very important sense. While his research methods and specific ideas remain highly controversial, his impact on popular culture can hardly be gainsaid. Countless persons who have not read a word of the master's actual writing talk confidently of the ego, projection, the Oedipus complex (or father and mother issues), unconscious desires, being in denial, and of course Freudian slips. What this street-level Freudianism really seems to be saying is that regardless of theory we now experientially recognize that on some plane other than the conscious reasoning mind, we have roads to travel, tasks to accomplish, and desires to deal with whether we can put them into words or not, and these excursions are really important, indeed have to do with who we are. All this is because, as Freud emphasized by talking about the mind as a medical man rather than a philosopher or even a theologian, our hidden but potent passions are definitely bodily at source as is also mind, and not contenders in a spirit or mind warring against the flesh dualism. Both mind

and body are interacting and necessary components of one being. (In its way Theosophy says the same thing by affirming that, in the manifested universe, spirit and matter are always together, the proverbial two sides of the same coin.)

It remains to be said that, in a parallel way, Leadbeater also won. He was and remains controversial too. But he kept on doing what he believed he was called by the Masters to do, through his gift of clairvoyance, and after his re-acceptance into the Society became one of its most popular teachers. I find that for many Theosophists, including myself, a book of CWL's (often *The Masters and the Path*) was the first substantial Theosophical work they read. Leadbeater had a remarkable gift for making the concepts of this old/new worldview plausible through his knack for language and easy-to-understand illustrations, while at the same time the author kept the wonder of the many-layered Theosophical universe, and its provocative difference from the secular outlook, attractively before the reader as well.

So far as sexuality and Theosophy are concerned, George Arundale, who became International President of the Society the year of Leadbeater's death, 1934, was able to write in 'The Glory of Sex', a 1940 article: 'The urge of sex, as we call it, though it has been so degraded everywhere, means in fact the Creative Spirit of God. . . There is no doubt that the sex urge is the nearest force we have to that Godliness which is essentially ours. . . To draw near to our essential Godliness or to create like a God, or to do both, that is the purpose, the objective of the sexual urge.'

To be sure, Theosophy has always emphasized, and still does, that sexuality is meant to be exercised only within a committed one-to-one relationship. Like every other aspect of life, our sexual lives call down discipline as well as glory. But the meaning of what there transpires is now expanded to include wonder as well as asceticism, the change perhaps influenced at least indirectly by the cultural Freudianism widespread by 1940. A slice of how we got from one perspective to another is the burden of *CWL Speaks*, and it is highly recommended, for it is also the story of its times.

Dr Robert Ellwood is the author of over twenty-five books, ranging from textbooks in religious studies (including *Many Peoples, Many Faiths*, a popular world religion textbook) to books of religious history (*The Fifties Spiritual Marketplace*, *The Sixties Spiritual Awakening*, and *Islands of the Dawn*, among others) to inspirational books written from a theosophical perspective (*Finding the Quiet Mind*, *The Pilgrim Self*, *Theosophy: A Modern Expression of the Wisdom of the Ages*, *The Cross and the Grail*, *Finding Deep Joy*, *Frodo's Quest*). He was a professor of world religions at the University of Southern California for thirty years, from 1967 until his retirement in 1997.



## Introduction: C. W. Leadbeater – the ‘Received Tradition’

One of the most sacred principles in the American criminal justice system – holding that a defendant is innocent until proven guilty. In other words, the prosecution must prove, beyond a reasonable doubt, each essential element of the crime charged.

Definition from *Nolo's  
Plain-English Law Dictionary*

The French include in their French Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizens of 1789 stating that ‘every man is presumed innocent until declared guilty’. ... Roman law, canon law, the *jus commune*: from these sources spring that great Anglo-Saxon principle: A person is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

(‘Innocent Until Proven Guilty: The Origins of a Legal Maxim’, Kenneth Pennington, The Catholic University of America, Columbus School of Law, 2003)

The foundational legal principle quoted above, although universally recognized and formally adopted, did not apply to Charles Webster Leadbeater (CWL) in his lifetime. At different times in his life serious accusations were made against him, mostly involving allegedly immoral (and reportedly criminal) behaviour towards boys. His accusers were so thoroughly convinced that he was guilty that they communicated this conviction to many others within the Theosophical Society and to the press. And yet, in spite of almost a lifelong campaign of denunciation and defamation he was never

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## CWL Speaks

charged or prosecuted. But he was ‘proven’ guilty by his accusers and such ‘proof’ became an integral part of almost every biographical rendering of his life.

In one of her letters about him to Laura Mead, wife of G. R. S. Mead, Helen I. Dennis, who led the charges against him in her letter to Annie Besant of January 1906, declared that she became aware in 1905 that charges of immoral behaviour against CWL were repeatedly made against him ‘for at least fifteen years’ in India and Europe. However, she did not mention the evidences of such charges. The period of time indicated by Mrs Dennis goes as far back as 1890 when Madame Blavatsky was still alive. Judging by the latter’s communications to him at that time, which were friendly and encouraging, for a period of almost seven years, she had not detected any deviant behaviour in the young clergyman she brought to Adyar in 1884.

One of the central pieces of evidence against CWL, which was not sent to Annie Besant in January 1906, but which was circulated widely later on, was the so-called ‘Cipher Letter’ which was sent to one of the boys with whom he was associated. The letter includes elements of a psychic experience described by a clairvoyant vision, advice on the regular practice of masturbation, plus an expression at the end that was construed to be both obscene and indicative of an immoral connection between CWL and the boy. In this book the reader will find ample commentary by CWL on the ‘Cipher Letter’, which he denies having written, plus statements by Mrs Besant who had seen the original document which was later destroyed by Mrs Elizabeth Chidester, one of the co-signatories of the charges Mrs Dennis sent to Annie Besant in early 1906. A copy of the ‘Cipher Letter’ was given to lawyers for G. Narianiah, J. Krishnamurti’s father, during his custody case against Annie Besant in 1913 in Madras. It is reported that G. Narianiah’s lawyers opted not to produce it in court. However, a number of books, articles, websites, Internet discussion lists, blogs, and essays currently available maintain that the ‘Cipher Letter’ was written by C.W.

Leadbeater. According to these sources, this so-called study in evidence, guided by the 'received tradition' about CWL, has been transformed into oracular validity.

The 'received tradition' about Charles Webster Leadbeater (CWL), which begins in 1906 in the United States, portrays him as a 'tantric', 'black magician', who made it of his business to sexually abuse boys in his care. Later on, this view was expanded to supposedly connect him with the Ordo Templi Orientis, under Aleister Crowley, with allegations that he had learned sexual magic from Crowley's organization. These allegations were never proven nor substantiated. None of his many books or more than a thousand articles, written over several decades, advocates any such theories or practices. The 'received tradition' about CWL was supported by many of those who were and are sympathetic to the leadership of William Q. Judge within the Theosophical Movement, both in the USA and England as well as other countries. Adherents to this tradition still portray CWL as one of the main corruptors of Theosophy as taught by H. P. Blavatsky. In spite of this portrayal, his books are among the most popular in Theosophical literature and have led tens of thousands, in many countries around the world during the past one hundred years, into an introductory study of Theosophy.

CWL was certainly one of the most visible Theosophists of his age, with the exception of Annie Besant, and as such he could have been charged and prosecuted had the charges been based on solid evidence. He was part of a court case in India which, among other things, dealt with an allegation, by the boy's father, that CWL had sodomized the young J. Krishnamurti. At the court hearing, and after the evidence was presented and cross-examination conducted, the allegation was dismissed by Justice Bakewell. CWL was also the subject of two thorough and professional police investigations in Australia in 1917 and 1922, the first of which was instigated by a loyal follower of Katherine Tingley, who ran a vicious and ubiquitous publicity campaign against him and Annie Besant in the United States and in other countries. The first one did not find any

## CWL Speaks

evidence against him and the second concluded that there was not sufficient evidence to ‘obtain conviction on any charge’. The allegation (of indecent assault) in the second investigation came from the son of the man who had waged a bitter, defamatory and relentless national and international campaign against CWL, Thomas H. Martyn.

As we shall see in this book, the ‘received tradition’ is at variance with the real man as well as with many testimonies about his life and his work.

### *Who was Charles Webster Leadbeater?*

Charles Webster Leadbeater was born in Stockport, Cheshire, England, on 16 February 1854, to Charles and Emma Leadbeater. This date of birth was given in the English census of 1861, 1871 and 1881. After his mother died, in May 1882, his date of birth was given as 17 February 1847, which appeared in the 1891 census. This was also the date he used in his passport. His reason for using a different date of birth is not known, although research about it continues. He passed away on 1 March 1934 in Perth, Western Australia.

Leadbeater was ordained a priest in the Church of England on 21 December 1879 and took up residence in the village of Liphook, Hampshire, with his mother. At Church he organised several activities for young people. He was also interested in psychic phenomena and conducted his own investigations in the Scottish Highlands. He joined the Theosophical Society in 1883 in London, and travelled with H. P. Blavatsky to India in 1884 after having received the following letter from one of her Adept-Teachers, Mahatma K.H.:

Last spring – March the 3rd – you wrote a letter to me and entrusted it to “Ernest”. Tho’ the paper itself never reached me – nor was it ever likely to, considering the nature of the messenger – its contents have. I did not answer it at the time, but sent you a warning through Upasika.

## Pedro Oliveira

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In that message of yours it was said that, since reading Esot. Bud: and Isis your “one great wish has been to place yourself under me as a chela, that you may learn more of the truth.” “I understand from Mr. S.” you went on “that it would be almost impossible to become a chela without going out to India”. You hoped to be able to do that in a few years, tho’ for the present ties of gratitude bind you to remain in this country. Etc.

I now answer the above and your other questions.

[1] It is not necessary that one should be in India during the seven years of probation. A chela can pass them anywhere.

[2] To accept any man as a chela does not depend on my personal will. It can only be the result of one’s personal merit and exertions in that direction. Force any one of the “Masters” you may happen to choose; do good works in his name and for the love of mankind; be pure and resolute in the path of righteousness [as laid out in our rules]; be honest and unselfish; forget your Self but to remember the good of other people – and you will have forced that “Master” to accept you.

So much for candidates during the periods of the undisturbed progress of your Society. There is something more to be done, however, when theosophy, the Cause of Truth, is, as at the present moment on its stand for life or death before the tribunal of public opinion – that most flippantly cruel, prejudiced and unjust of all tribunals. There is also the collective karma of the caste you belong to – to be considered. It is undeniable that the cause you have at heart is now suffering owing to the dark intrigues, the base conspiracy of the Christian clergy and missionaries against the Society. They will stop before nothing to ruin the reputation of the Founders. Are you willing to atone for their sins? Then go to Adyar for a few months. “The ties of gratitude” will not be severed, nor even become weakened for an absence of a few months if the step be explained plausibly to your relative. He who would shorten the years of probation has to make sacrifices for theosophy. Pushed by malevolent hands to the very edge of a precipice, the Society needs every man and woman strong in the cause of truth. It is by doing noble actions and not by only determining that they shall be done that the fruits of the meritorious

## CWL Speaks

actions are reaped. Like the “true man” of Carlyle who is not to be seduced by ease – “difficulty, abnegation, martyrdom, death are the allurements that act” during the hours of trial on the heart of a true chela.

You ask me – “what rules I must observe during this time of probation, and how soon I might venture to hope that it could begin”. I answer: you have the making of your own future, in your own hands as shown above, and every day you may be weaving its woof. If I were to demand that you should do one thing or the other, instead of simply advising, I would be responsible for every effect that might flow from the step and you acquire but a secondary merit. Think, and you will see that this is true. So cast the lot yourself into the lap of Justice, never fearing but that its response will be absolutely true. Chelaship is an educational as well as probationary stage and the chela alone can determine whether it shall end in adeptship or failure. Chelas from a mistaken idea of our system too often watch and wait for orders, wasting precious time which should be taken up with personal effort. Our cause needs missionaries, devotees, agents, even martyrs perhaps. But it cannot demand of any man to make himself either. So now choose and grasp your own destiny, and may our Lord’s the Tathagata’s memory aid you to decide for the best.

K.H.

(Source: *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom*, First Series, Edited by C. Jinarajadasa, letter #7)

After his arrival in India he helped Col. Henry S. Olcott in his work for Buddhist education in Ceylon, now Sri Lanka. He helped Col. Olcott to found many Buddhist schools in that country and wrote a Buddhist Catechism. While at the Headquarters of the Theosophical Society at Adyar, Madras, in India, CWL was taught some meditation exercises by one of Madame Blavatsky’s spiritual Teachers, who had accepted him as a Chela (disciple), in 1884. The

## Pedro Oliveira

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exercises helped him to develop the faculty of clairvoyance. He returned to England in 1889.

While he was in Ceylon, Madame Blavatsky wrote him a letter from Elberfeld, Germany, dated 23rd June 1886, in which she makes two references to CWL as a chela (disciple) of Master K.H. When he opened the envelope containing HPB's letter he saw the following message, written in blue pencil across the writing of the last page:

Take courage. I am pleased with you. Keep your own counsel, and believe in your better intuitions. The little man has failed and will reap his reward. Silence meanwhile.

K.H.

The letter can be seen here: [http://www.cwlworld.info/HPB\\_CWL.pdf](http://www.cwlworld.info/HPB_CWL.pdf)

Madame Blavatsky settled in London in 1887, where she concluded the writing of her magnum opus, *The Secret Doctrine*, published in 1888. Archibald Keightley and Bertram Keightley were pivotal in the editorial preparations for that epoch-making book.

G.R.S. Mead was personal secretary to HPB and a scholar in his own right. His writings focused on Platonism, Neo-Platonism, the Ancient Mysteries and, above all, Gnosticism. Both Bertram Keightley and G.R.S. Mead were closely associated to HPB.

Bertram Keightley reviewed C.W. Leadbeater's book *The Astral Plane* and G.R.S. Mead reviewed CWL's *The Devachanic Plane*. Both were published in *Lucifer*, the journal founded by HPB in London in 1887: Bertram Keightley's review of *The Astral Plane* was published in the May 1895 issue and G.R.S. Mead's review of *The Devachanic Plane* appeared in the November 1896 issue of the same journal. They can be seen at [www.cwlworld.info](http://www.cwlworld.info).

The value of these two reviews lies in the fact that each writer assessed CWL's books on their own merits, free from the bias of the 'received tradition' about him, and of the so-called 'Neo-Theosophy' ideology, a term created by F.T. Brooks and later on appropriated by 'Blavatskyan' fundamentalists in the early part of

## CWL Speaks

the twentieth-century, who insisted – and still insist – that books by Annie Besant and C.W. Leadbeater are not Theosophy.

Both reviewers sincerely welcomed CWL's contribution to the investigation of subtler planes of existence and commended his efforts that enriched the wide horizon of Theosophical research, which cannot be limited by any book, by any author or by any formulation of its core principles. As HPB wisely said, 'Orthodoxy in Theosophy is a thing neither possible nor desirable.'

In 1891, the year in which she died, Madame Blavatsky presented CWL with a copy of her book *The Key to Theosophy*, in which she wrote the following dedication:

'To my old and well-beloved friend Charles Leadbeater  
From his fraternally  
H. P. Blavatsky.

London 1891.'

He went on to write a number of books, some of which became classics in their fields like *The Chakras*, *Thought-Forms* (with Annie Besant), *Man Visible and Invisible* and *The Masters and the Path*, among many others.

From 1900 to 1905 he was a popular international lecturer for the TS, concentrating his visits on the United States. While in that country he was approached by some mothers with their concerns about sexual difficulties faced by their sons. One of them was Helen I. Dennis. On the other hand, some American families wanted their sons to accompany him on his travels, to be trained in Theosophical work by him. In 1906 he was charged by the leadership of the American Section of the TS with teaching self-abuse (masturbation) to some boys under his care. Following an inquiry in London, on 16 May 1906, presided over Col. Olcott, he voluntarily resigned his membership of the Society. A crisis would then ensue lasting for more than two years, centred mostly in the United States and England.

For many, the episodes of 1906 sealed his image as an immoral man, although he was never charged or prosecuted in any country. Many TS members, in different countries, vigorously defended him. CWL, however, never defended himself from the accusations. After one hundred and ten years, all his relevant correspondence regarding that crisis is gathered together in this book. For the first time, his full thoughts and views about those events are presented to the public. Here, CWL speaks.

Included in this book are three appendices, one with a description of his work as a Curate at the parish of Bramshott, Hampshire, another with a timeline of the relationship between CWL and J. Krishnamurti, and the last one with a comprehensive bibliography of C.W. Leadbeater's works, including the translations of his works into many languages other than English. Also included are personal letters from Helen Dennis and her associates in which different aspects of the crisis are discussed. We include additionally several statements associated with the succession of Col. Henry Steel Olcott as President of the Theosophical Society as they are intrinsically linked with the Leadbeater case.

### *Masturbation – a Historical Overview*

Central to the crisis involving C.W. Leadbeater in 1906 is the practice of masturbation. We therefore present below comments from various sources which provide a brief historical overview of the subject, including one held within the Buddhist tradition.

Eighteenth-century doctors also had almost no interest in the Christian taxonomy of sexual sin. They certainly understood masturbation as “unnatural” but only in the sense that a physiological process had more dire effects if carried out under unnatural rather than natural circumstances: “Too great a quantity of semen being lost in the natural course produces direful effects; but they are still more dreadful when the same quantity has been dissipated in an unnatural way.” (p. 191)

One of the great doctors of the Enlightenment believed that masturbation was “much the more to be dreaded” than smallpox. And he ought to know: Tissot, who made the comparison, was an expert on

## CWL Speaks

both. Something was so terrifyingly unnatural about sex alone that in the early twentieth-century, long after the foundations of eighteenth century medicine had crumbled, otherwise reasonable people still regarded masturbation as “the most inevitable and most fatal peril of all.” (p. 210)

*(Solitary Sex – A Cultural History of Masturbation by Thomas W. Laqueur, Zone Books, New York, 2003)*

Masturbation, “the besetting trials of our boys”, was a singularly appealing subject of study for American medicine because, once shown to be pathogenic, it laid open the possibility that all sexual behavior differing from orthodox morality was also disease-causing and strongly suggested that all deviations from acceptable sexual practice were psychic perversions of the natural sexual function.

Sexual norms have become scientific truths, and deviations from propriety diseases. Nowhere is this translation from vice to disease more palpable than in the observed effects of masturbation on the two sexes. The consequences of masturbation had for males and females were, clinicians found, significantly different; but what they had in common was the socially unacceptable – hence “diseased” – nature of the resultant behavior.

Since masturbation was conceived of as seriously harmful to the body and mind and as the exciting cause of a series of far more severe psychological disorders, it is understandable that psychological and medical practitioners were prepared to employ radical methods of treatment if they were found necessary to avoid such dire consequences. The history of the treatment of masturbation is testament to the atrocities which men, otherwise of good will, are prepared to perpetrate in the name of saving damned souls.

Although belief in the notion that masturbation would eventuate in severe psychological disorder was still espoused by a few medical authorities on into the 1930s and after, it had, for all practical purposes, been abandoned by most of the medical profession. True, it lingered in the cautionary literature published for the laity by religionists and moral purifiers, but among the psychiatric profession the theory that masturbation was psychologically harmful continued

## Pedro Oliveira

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on only in the much adulterated form that its excessive practice contributed to or was symptomatic of certain sexual neuroses. Yet, as the historian Ronald Walters points out, old myths die hard; a survey taken in 1959 of future doctors graduating from medical schools in the Philadelphia area revealed that almost half of those questioned still held that masturbation was a common cause of insanity.

*(Medicine and the Crimination of Sin: "Self-Abuse" in 19th Century America, Ronald Hamowy, Department of History, University of Alberta, Journal of Libertarian Studies, Vol. 1, No. 3, pp. 229-270, Pergamon Press, 1977.)*

Masturbation corresponds essentially to infantile sexual activity and to its subsequent retention at a more mature age. We derive the neuroses from a conflict between a person's sexual urges and his other (ego) trends. ... Masturbation is not anything ultimate – whether somatically or psychologically – it is not a real 'agent', but merely the name of certain activities. ... And do not forget that masturbation is not to be equated with sexual activity in general: it is sexual activity subjected to certain limiting conditions.

*(Sigmund Freud, 'Contributions to a Discussion on Masturbation' (1912), Sigmund Freud Collected Works)*

Masturbation is an aspect of childhood sexuality that parents find hard to respond to comfortably and appropriately. Part of the difficulty may be the need to acknowledge that children are sexual beings. The misunderstandings and secrecy about masturbation add to parent and child discomfort.

By definition, masturbation is self-stimulation of the genitals. It is done by both boys and girls and is normal behavior. Just how common is masturbation during the various stages of childhood? Up to the age of five or six years, masturbation is quite common. Young children are very curious about their bodies and find masturbation pleasurable and comforting. Youngsters also are curious about the differences between girls and boys, and thus in the preschool and kindergarten years they may occasionally explore each other's body, including their genitals.

## CWL Speaks

From age six on, the incidence of masturbation in public tends to subside, largely because children's social awareness increases and social mores assume greater importance. Masturbation in private will continue to some extent and remains normal. When pubertal development begins—accompanied by an increase of sexual hormones, thoughts, and curiosity—body awareness and sexual tensions rise. Masturbation is a regular part of normal adolescence. Most young teenagers discover that masturbation is sexually pleasing and recognize that self-stimulation is an expression of their own developing sexuality.

Although the myths surrounding masturbation have been scientifically dispelled, they still persist. A child who masturbates is not oversexed, promiscuous, or sexually deviant. Nor will he go blind or insane, grow pimples or warts, or become sterile. Nevertheless, many cultures still actively discourage masturbation, partly because of the general moral constraints often placed on sexual behavior.

(Source: [healthychildren.org](http://healthychildren.org), American Academy of Pediatrics, accessed 24 August 2017)

The *Vinaya* is the regulatory framework for the *sangha* or monastic community of Buddhism based on the canonical texts called the *Vinaya Pitaka*. (Wikipedia)

According to a story, the monk Seyyasaka was depressed, a state inconsistent with the Middle Way. Udāyin, perceiving that he was 'disenchanted', recommended that the former may eat, sleep and bathe as he wished and if passion (*rāga*) assailed him he can 'emit impure material employing his hand'. Seyyasaka's condition improved. His colleagues rejected Udāyin's advice. Did Seyyasaka use the same hand as received the offerings of the faithful? The Buddha pronounced the rule: 'intentional emission of semen is a matter entailing a formal meeting of the *samgha*.' So we find in the *Pātimokkha samghādisesa* no.1. The words 'emission' and 'intention' are keys to the offence. If

## Pedro Oliveira

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an offender is caught, or confesses, the offence requires a meeting of the *samgha*, possibly a gruesome experience. Fellow monks will interrogate him. The *samgha* may sentence him to probation, to return to post-ordination status, and to other penances. Udāyin underwent the same another time.

(J. Duncan M. Derrett, 'Buddhist Casuistry: The Ultimate in Purity – A Study in the *Vinaya*', *Brahmavidya* – The Adyar Library Bulletin, 2003)

### *Acknowledgments*

It was Mrs. Radha Burnier, International President of the Theosophical Society (1980-2013), who encouraged me in 2004 to pursue research for a future biography of CWL. While I was still working most of the time and attending Theosophical meetings, as well as touring, both within Australia as well as overseas, the biography project had to be postponed but not abandoned.

The idea of starting a modest website to put on record aspects of the life and work of Charles Webster Leadbeater was suggested to me in 2006. After participating in discussions in online lists on Theosophy and the history of the Theosophical Society for a couple of years, I became aware that anyone presenting a positive view of CWL's contribution would eventually attract both ridicule and trolling in some form or another.

The domain name [cwlworld.info](http://cwlworld.info) was acquired in 2006 and the contents of the website were then researched and written. New material is still being added to it from time to time. The site went live on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2007, coinciding with the Tibetan New Year at that time. I am grateful to Dr John Algeo, Professor Emeritus of the University of Georgia, USA, and former International Vice-President of the Theosophical Society and former National President of the American Section of the Society, for his encouragement and suggestions for the incipient website. From very small beginnings it ended up catching the attention of an ever wider number of users and today it has attracted the attention of search engines for 'Charles Webster Leadbeater'.

## CWL Speaks

Eventually I realized that a full biography would demand an amount of time and effort which were not available to me at that time. I therefore decided to gather together material which I had collected over the years and work on a text about CWL's correspondence concerning the 1906 crisis in the TS. That crisis generated accusatory patterns that would follow him at different times of his life.

I am sincerely grateful to the following institutions and individuals: the TS Archives at Adyar, Chennai, India, with which I have been associated since 1989, and from which I obtained copies of the correspondence between CWL and Mrs Besant, and others, concerning the crisis. Thanks are also due to the Adyar Library and Research Centre in Chennai, India, from where the comprehensive bibliography of CWL was obtained; to the Theosophical Society in America's Archives in Wheaton, Illinois, USA, for kindly making available the letters from CWL to Fritz Kunz and others relating to the period under consideration; to the Campbell Theosophical Research Library and Archives in Sydney, for its unique collection of Theosophical periodicals of different persuasions; to the staff at the University of Chicago Library for supplying a number of documents from the Helen I. Dennis Collection; to the Archives of the Krishnamurti Foundation in Ojai, California; to Mr L. Panditharathna, Personal Assistant to the Principal, Ananda College in 2007, Colombo, Sri Lanka, for providing a relevant account of the role played by Mr. Leadbeater in the promotion of Buddhist education in Sri Lanka and especially through Ananda College, of which he was the first Principal.

As time permits, copies of relevant documents which are included in this book will be uploaded onto the CWL World website – [www.cwlworld.info](http://www.cwlworld.info).

I am grateful for conversations with the following individuals: Mrs. Radha Burnier, who conveyed to me her understanding that although CWL did not understand the changes that took place in J. Krishnamurti's outlook after 1925, the latter maintained his view of

## Pedro Oliveira

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CWL's integrity until the end of his life; the late Miss R. Padmini, from the Adyar Library and Research Centre in Chennai, India, who shared her recollections of CWL, who encouraged her as a young girl with her studies; the late Rev. Matt van Thiel, from Auckland, New Zealand, who as a young man was CWL's driver at The Manor in Mosman, Sydney, during several years in the 1920s and who shared with me some of his memories of that fascinating time of his life; the late Herre and Marie van der Veen, from Taormina, Ojai, California, who showed me their photo albums of their time at The Manor, reminiscing about Bishop Leadbeater officiating at their marriage and how the young people at The Manor loved him. I am also grateful for the unique privilege of briefly corresponding with Mrs Paulo Mango, née Hamerster, who lived at The Manor in Mosman, Sydney at a young age and who was involved in ceremonial activities there under the guidance of Bishop Leadbeater.

Mr John Brian Parry, who was a resident at The Manor in the 1950s, shared with me his conversations with two contemporaries of CWL in Sydney: the Revd. Henry Aldag, who came as a young boy, from Mexico, with his mother Consuelo Aldag to reside at The Manor in the second half of the 1920s, and Mr Frederick Houstone, who was for many years the Treasurer of the Australian Section of the TS. Both Revd. Aldag and Mr Houstone gave to Mr Parry their testimony about CWL's integrity.

I am thankful to Dr Robert Ellwood for going through the manuscript and for writing the Foreword, and for Dr Pablo Sender for reviewing the manuscript. I place on record my appreciation to The Rt. Rev. Ian Hooker who contributed to the understanding of Bishop Leadbeater's work through his M.A. thesis at the University of Sydney on 'The Foundations of the Liberal Catholic Church'. I am also grateful to The Rt. Rev. Ricardo Lindemann for sharing his discovery of the ship manifest at the Public Archives at Salvador, Bahia, Brazil, reporting the 1858 arrival in Bahia of Charles Leadbeater, his wife and son.

## CWL Speaks

Last but not least, I am genuinely thankful to Neeta Agrawal for her thoughtful artwork for the cover design and in the blurb, and also for her patience.

From 1974 onwards, when I became interested in Theosophical literature while living in Brazil, I became aware of the far-reaching influence of books by Besant and Leadbeater. I had seen them even in small bookshops within bus terminals in remote areas of the country. It was in 1978 – the year I joined the Theosophical Society – when the Portuguese edition of Mary Lutyens’ *Krishnamurti – The Years of Awakening*<sup>1</sup> was published, that I became aware of the accusations against him. And it was in 1989, while attending the School of the Wisdom at Adyar, Madras, India, that I had the opportunity of reading the book by Dr Gregory Tillett, *The Elder Brother – A Biography of Charles Webster Leadbeater*<sup>2</sup>, which is regarded by many as the definitive biography of C. W. Leadbeater. Challenging as it was, the reading of that book caused me to study and research further about his life and work. The result is this book.

It was once inferred that I could not write such a book due to my association with the Theosophical Society and The Liberal Catholic Church. The verdict for such inference lies, as always, with the reader.

*Compiler*

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<sup>1</sup> John Murray, London, 1975

<sup>2</sup> Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1982, recently reprinted.

## Chapter 1

### Early Correspondence with Helen I. Dennis and Others

After his return to England from Ceylon, at the end of 1889, C. W. Leadbeater became one of the popular speakers for the Theosophical Society, visiting many Lodges in the United Kingdom. During the period from 1900 to 1905 he also lectured extensively in the United States. As a result of his talks many people joined the TS and came into contact with the teachings of Theosophy. In 1903, for a period of six months, he delivered a course of lectures in the US.

From *The Theosophist* Supplement, March 1903:  
List of Mr. Leadbeater's American Lectures

The following is a list of the subjects of Mr. Leadbeater's six months course of free lectures now being delivered in Chicago. Some of these have already been published in *The Theosophist*, and others are to follow.

Man and His Bodies  
The Necessity for Reincarnation  
Karma – The Law of Cause and Effect  
Life After Death – Purgatory  
Life After Death – The Heaven World  
The Nature of Theosophical Proof  
The Rationale of Telepathy & Mind Cure  
Invisible Helpers  
Clairvoyance – What it is  
do. – In Space  
do. – In Time  
do. – How it is Developed  
Theosophy & Christianity

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## CWL Speaks

Ancient and Modern Buddhism  
Theosophy and Spiritualism  
The Rationale of Apparitions  
Dreams  
The Rationale of Mesmerism  
Magic, White and Black  
The Use and Abuse of Psychic Powers  
The Ancient Mysteries  
Vegetarianism and Occultism  
The Birth and Growth of the Soul  
How to Build Character  
Theosophy in Every-day Life  
The Future that Awaits Us

This was the notice published in *The Theosophic Messenger*, organ of the Theosophical Society in America, August 1900:

Students of Theosophy throughout the United States are rejoicing over the fact that Mr. C. W. Leadbeater is to visit the country during the coming fall. While but few of the American Theosophists have met Mr. Leadbeater face to face, all feel for him a deep regard because of their acquaintance with his writings.

Born in 1846, he became a member of the T. S. when thirty-six years of age, and two years later accompanied Madame Blavatsky to India. During five years he worked for the Society in India, Burmah and Ceylon; and since his return to Europe, he has continued his labors for the same cause without interruption. Of the value of that work it is unnecessary to speak to any Theosophic student who has heard Mr. Leadbeater lecture or read his published works. All Theosophists are, or should be, familiar with the mass of priceless information embodied in such works as "The Astral Plane" and "The Devachanic Plane," the first of which appeared as a "Transaction of the London Lodge," the latter as a series of articles in *Lucifer*, ere being issued in book-form. His "Christian Creed" is a remarkable book, which throws much light on the sadly misunderstood teachings of the Christ. "Dreams," "Invisible Helpers,"

## Pedro Oliveira

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and “Clairvoyance” have proved of great value to students along the line of our third object. His articles in the *Theosophic Review* on “Ancient Peru” and “Ancient Chaldea” have been eagerly read, and his lucid answers to questions in the *Vahan* have aided students over many a difficulty.

From *The Theosophic Messenger*, October 1901, we read:

Mr. Leadbeater’s Report of American Situation at London Convention

Combining reports received in letters from several who were present at the London Convention, with regard to Mr. Leadbeater’s speech on the American situation, we have very interesting reading. One correspondent, who, by the way, was not an American, said that though the speech was short—not longer than twenty minutes—it was one of the finest moments of the convention proceedings, such were the noble feelings playing through it showing high appreciation of the American Theosophist. Sketching in broad outlines the future evolution of the great American Race, he pointed out the present virtues and shortcomings in so fair and kindly manner that it is good for us to take heed and to be encouraged.

He expressed himself as full of hope for the future of Theosophy in America. He told of four points very favorable for work here.

1. Americans are supersensitive and responsive and full of enthusiasm and energy.

2. The intellectual, scientific and psychic will blend and harmonize faster than in England, and a new form of intelligence will be the result. (He was, however, of the opinion that the true American—the American spoken of by H. P. B.—had yet to be born, but would arrive within the next hundred years).

3. The Episcopal Church in America exercises no lordship or special privilege over the people. It is simply one amid a variety of other sects. As a result no one loses caste or is ostracized by his family when he becomes a Theosophist.

4. The friendliness of the press. The newspapers and periodicals will print whatever you choose to give them concerning yourself or the teachings.

## CWL Speaks

The points unfavorable to Americans are:

1. The readiness to take up every psychic fad that appears, and a dangerous tendency to sacrifice calm, scientific investigation to phenomena, which in places amounts to lunacy or monomania for all things psychic.

2. The abundant use of slang encountered everywhere, making for different vernaculars. The very loose way in which the Americans use the Queen's English causes them to lose sight of the scientific accuracy of words and robs words of much their true and original meaning.

The kindly affection of the speaker for Americans showed forth a message of great significance and noble aspiration. The main theme of his speech ran on the necessity for Theosophists to realize themselves in harmony with members of all sections other than their own, and the duty of the older members to assist the younger workers in the field. This he applied to the relations of the European and American Sections, and recommended that individual correspondence between members of the different Sections would be a very useful thing. Out of this might grow strong personal friendships, which would help in the great work of drawing the countries together.

No doubt there are many members on our side of the Atlantic who would be glad to join in this plan of clasping hands across the sea. The National Committee would be glad to be given the opportunity to put such into communication with foreign members, if they will send in their names and addresses.

The following was published in *The Theosophic Messenger*, March 1903:

### Mr. Leadbeater's Work in Chicago

Mr. Leadbeater's work in Chicago, which is now finished, covered a period of six months and has been productive of splendid results. Each Sunday evening his public lectures drew large and intelligent audiences, many people having come regularly each week, regardless of weather conditions, which many times

## Pedro Oliveira

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were extremely severe. It simply shows the hold this Theosophic teaching has taken on the public mind, and also shows us what our duty is in keeping up this interest. Ideas must have broadened under the influence of these lectures. It could not be otherwise. They can never again think quite as they did, and many, doubtless, will be drawn to this higher, better and broader life. It remains for us to keep up this interest and to try and make our Sunday evening lectures interesting and instructive to the public and not confine ourselves altogether to study classes and lectures for members only. In this way shall we spread abroad these splendid Theosophical truths which have done so much for us. And we also hope that the many new members who have joined our ranks will prove earnest enough to realize the great privilege of having come in touch with these truths, both old and new, and that they will not drift away—perhaps to lose sight of the goal for this life, or it may be for many lives to come. We can all prove how much we have profited by Mr. Leadbeater's lectures by not letting our interest and our energies subside after the magnetism of his presence is withdrawn.

In September 1905 Col. Olcott acknowledged in a letter CWL's work as a speaker for the TS:

Adyar, Madras, 17th September, 1905.

C. W. Leadbeater Esq.,  
C/o Theosophical Society  
42 Margaret St., SYDNEY

My dear Charles,

Accept my best thanks for your excellent article and the covering letter of August 19th. After consultation with the printers I find that we can get in very nicely the diagram and even the green wave-line without too much expense. It will be reduced so as to make it a two-page folding leaf. Of course you have noticed how much I have used of your American lectures in the current and last volumes of the Theosophist. It is because you have the happy talent of conveying very distinctly and succinctly your views: in fact, between your enti-

## CWL Speaks

ty and myself and in strict confidence, I may say that the “C.W.L.” personality is about the best writer that we have in the Society, besides being a most fascinating chap. I think it more or less of an outrage that you should give a mere look-in at Adyar of a few days after so prolonged an absence. Although you have not answered my question as to the occupancy of your old octagon room, I am sure that you would prefer it so have arranged to house the officers of the Indian Section elsewhere. I wonder if you would be willing to supply me with a series of chapters from your new book for monthly publication: it might not be a bad idea to get so much of it in type in advance (as I do the O.D.L. [*Old Diary Leaves*]) thus leaving you no trouble when bringing out the book except to put the chapters in order and send them in to the printer. I should like very much if you would give three or four lectures during the Convention – say afternoons or evenings so as not to interfere with Annie’s morning lectures. If you consent to this please let me know by return of post so that I may make timely announcements. I call your special attention to an article in the October *Theosophist* entitled “The Awful Karma of Russia”, and will take it as a great favour if you will tell me what can you discover astrally about the lady member in question: she strikes me as being one of the finest characters that I have met. If you can help her on the higher or lower plane, i.e. with spiritual protection, or gifts of money from our colleagues to take her and her children out of that seething social hell please do it.

My dear Charles, you have certainly done splendid work for the movement wherever you have been: I rub my eyes to be sure that it is not a dream and that the fellow who is doing so much is the very same who made me swear so awfully at Adyar and Colombo because of his curate-like limitations. Lord! How I did swear at you – not being the seventh son of a seventh son, hence not a prophet.

I suppose that we shall meet at the Paris Congress in May. Wouldn’t you like to manage it so that we could go together and spend a fortnight or so at the delightful country place with those dear Schuurmans? It would be a jolly rest for both of us. If you can possibly manage it, do leave Australia in time to give me a full week before Convention.

Pedro Oliveira

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Yours affectionately,  
H. S. Olcott

What seems to be little known is the fact that CWL, apart from his work as a speaker, was in private correspondence with Helen Dennis, the then Corresponding Secretary of the Esoteric School in the US, during his several tours of that country. They discussed a number of subjects, but also her serious concern regarding the influence of a certain boy on her son Robyn (Robert Dennis). The tone of the following letter shows that Mrs. Dennis had approached him regarding sensitive matters:

Seattle, Wash., Dec. 29, 1900.

Dear Mrs Dennis:

I have received the enclosed letter from Mrs. Davis, and as it is entirely upon the business of which you wrote to me I am sending it for you to see, but please destroy it carefully as soon as you have read it, as I should not like it to fall into any other hands. I have written consoling her, and pointing out that although certainly a mistake was made, and although much mischief might have resulted, yet, so far, nothing serious has occurred. Mr. Warrington writes to me promising absolute secrecy as far as he is concerned, and I am quite sure that he will keep his word. I shall watch very carefully and I have no fear whatever as to success, so that I think that we may congratulate ourselves that very little harm has been done.

With all good wishes from both of us, I remain,

Ever yours most grateful

C. W. Leadbeater

In his letter to Helen Dennis, written from La Jolla, California, dated February 21<sup>st</sup> 1901, CWL writes:

‘It is true that Robert’s week with his friends at Los Angeles was lost time so far as we were concerned but he seems to have enjoyed it. The week at Coronado was also practically wasted, as he was never with us, but always ranging about the crowd. Here I think we must do somewhat better because we shall be necessari-

## CWL Speaks

ly much more together. He has greatly enjoyed making a fire and cooking peas and making coffee for our evening meal – and he did it very well, too! But he is still inclined to resent any suggestion as to alteration of conduct as “always nagging at him”, poor boy! Still I have great hopes as to the results of our quiet fortnight here, though possibly he will not think it so lively as the great hotel.’

In his next letter to Helen Dennis, still from La Jolla, dated March 6<sup>th</sup> 1901, CWL provides an inkling into the ferocious campaign waged by Katherine Tingley, leader of the organization ‘Universal Brotherhood and Theosophical Society’ and successor to William Q. Judge, against him and against Annie Besant:

I enclose herewith some news papers (sic) cuttings which will amuse and possibly interest you. They show how considerably Mrs. Tingley controls the press here, and can get long notices of all her proceedings inserted almost daily. It is said however that she pays highly for this privilege. She is intensely disgusted at our prolonged stay in the neighbourhood, and our own people are proportionately strengthened and elated – which is one reason why I consented to stay! If anyone wishes to know why we are pausing so long at this point, it might be explained that because of the power and virulence of the opposition here, our own members need special encouragement and help.

He also writes about Robyn’s situation:

I seem to see for the first time a real opportunity of progress with our dear boy. Now that we are reduced to primitive conditions of life, and are necessarily much alone together, the strange resistance is breaking down and he is really trying to be what we all wish. Of course the attempts are clumsy as yet, and there are frequent failures but he is trying, and that is a most encouraging advance on his previous “don’t care, and won’t do anything” atti-

## Pedro Oliveira

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tude. How long it will last I cannot tell, but I must give it every chance and every encouragement in my power. I had a serious talk with him the other night, when for the first time he spoke quite openly about himself and the influence of the dark powers upon him. He told me how something within “which could express itself very well – much better than he could”, would constantly urge him to resist anything that Basil [Hodgson-Smith] or I suggested, telling him that to yield to our wishes would be a defeat for him, a loss of power, and so on. He said that once or twice he had struggled against it, but it never was any use, because it always won the day. I told him how serious this matters was, and how I thought it ought to be met and circumvented, and since then I have often watched the effort been made. He is at least trying now to be on our side as against the mighty Kâmic elemental which they have fostered so sedulously, and that is half the battle, in spite of constant failures.

At the end of his American tour that year, CWL wrote the following letter to Robert Dennis from New York, on June 22<sup>nd</sup> 1901, on the letterhead of the American Section of The Theosophical Society, which was located at 26 Van Buren Street, Room 426, New York:

My dear Robert,

My first letter in America was written to you, and now my last one shall be to you also. It must be a very hurried one, I fear, as we have to be on board our steamer by noon, and I have many things to do first. All the time I have been thinking how delightful it would have been if you were coming with us, as you would have been if things had gone differently on that Californian expedition. But I suppose it will be all right somehow. Meantime I do very much want you, dear boy, to make up your mind once and for all that you will not lose any more chances, but will work away really hard with your mother, so that when I return there will be an enormous improvement to chronicle. As you grow older, you will of course see more clearly what the work is, and what your own real interests are, so that you will be less likely to sacrifice the opportunity of a lifetime for a little temporary

## CWL Speaks

gratification. If you will make real efforts to become what your mother and Mrs. Davis wish you to be, there is still a noble future before you, though of course it will not be so easy this time as it would have been if you had come with me now. Never mind, it is no use our grieving over what is past; we must only make up our minds to do better in the future. Remember that I shall always love you and often be thinking of you, and if you can only learn to be entirely unselfish we may do well yet. I shall write to you now and then, and I hope you will sometimes write to me. Perhaps, too, affairs may shape themselves so that you could come over on a visit next spring, and then return to America when I come back in the following autumn. All heartiest good wishes and much love from us both to you and to Don [Donald Dennis, Robert's younger brother].

I am ever

Your loving friend

C. W. Leadbeater

During his 1903 tour of the US and Canada, CWL wrote to Helen Dennis from Victoria, British Columbia, on September 16<sup>th</sup> 1903, informing her of another boy whose parents had asked for him to join CWL's group in their travels:

It is curious to be going once more to San Francisco, where last time Robert was with us. And, stranger still, for part of the same journey I shall have with me another Theosophical boy, a member of our Lotus Lodge, Douglas William Lawrence Pettit, of whom I think I showed you a photograph. His parents also are anxious that he should have the opportunity of hearing many Theosophical lectures, and learning to be useful along our lines. At present moment he is typewriting vigorously opposite to me, helping to get off a number of cards before our steamer starts. So far he has been very gentle and really wishful to do everything he can; but of course one only gradually comes to know how far they will persevere in well-doing! He is a very nice fellow, yet it somehow makes me rather

## Pedro Oliveira

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sad to be taking in charge some one else than our first American boy. This, however, was in no way of my seeking, but was all arranged for me, so I suppose it is all for the best. I have just received the forty-eight missing pages of the proof from Regan, and shall look them over on the steamer. With all kindest regards to you and Mr. Dennis, and much love to Robert and Don.

On October 12<sup>th</sup> 1903, writing from San Francisco, California, CWL gave additional information to Helen Dennis about the boy Douglas Pettit:

I enclose a very good portrait of Douglas Pettit, who is at present typewriting vigorously at some copying work. It seems a curious freak of destiny which brought us together in California, the scene of the other experiment. It is early yet to speak, but I have considerable hopes, since so far he is not only willing but very eager to do as much work as possible, and seems to think of almost nothing else. I incline to believe that the enthusiasm will last, because he has already made himself one of us in precisely the way which Robert never would do, although I was always trying to bring about that condition of affairs. The parents are very kind and friendly about it, and apparently willing to lend him to us almost indefinitely. From what the father told me, he appears to have a very good record in school-work [sic], being at the age of thirteen in a class where most of the others are seventeen and eighteen. He holds already apparently a certificate which qualifies him as a junior teacher, whatever that may amount to.

Writing again to Mrs Helen Dennis on 22<sup>nd</sup> October, 1903, CWL informs her that 'Our new boy Douglas still goes on very well, and I hope his enthusiasm for work and his earnest desire to be useful may continue. To do him justice, there seems every prospect that they will, for they have remained unabated through the trial of a month, and he is full of plans for the future. He already typewrites very well and rapidly, and is learning shorthand in order

## CWL Speaks

to be able to relieve Basil of some of the letters.’ In the same letter he thanks Mr and Mrs Dennis for seeing one of his books through the press. He also gives her information about his extensive lecture tour.

Douglas Pettit’s parents, Frederick and Emmeline Pettit, had such a degree of appreciation for CWL’s Theosophical education of their son Douglas that they formally made him a future guardian of the boy in their Last Will and Testament. Mr Pettit’s Will is reproduced below, and his wife’s Emmeline’s being written in the same terms. CWL’s middle name, Webster, was wrongly put as William:

THIS IS THE LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT of me Frederick William Pettit, of the City of Nelson, in the Province of British Columbia, in the Dominion of Canada, Advertising Manager.

I give, devise and bequeath all the estate, real and personal wheresoever situate, and all the monies and securities, to which I shall be entitled at the time of my decease to my wife EMMELINE PETTIT AND I appoint my said wife my sole executrix and to make such disposition of my estate as she may in her absolute discretion deem advisable.

Should my wife EMMELINE PETTIT predecease me, I give, devise and bequeath all the estate, real and personal wheresoever situate, and all the monies and securities to which I shall be entitled at the time of my demise to CHARLES WILLIAM LEADBEATER of 3 Langham Place, West in the City of London, England, Gentleman absolutely and I nominate constitute and appoint the said Charles William Leadbeater my sole executor and guardian of my son Douglas William Lawrence Pettit until he shall have attained the age of twenty-one years giving to him to make such disposition of my estate as he may in his absolute discretion deem advisable.

## Pedro Oliveira

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And lastly I declare as my last wish that having a strong aversion to earth burial, my body be cremated.

And I revoke all other wills and testamentary writings whatsoever.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF I the said Frederick William Pettit, the testator, have to this my will set my hand and seal this tenth day of November one thousand nine hundred and three.

SIGNED, SEALED, PUBLISHED AND DECLARED by the said testator, in the presence of us, present at the same time, who, at his request, in his presence and in the presence of each other have subscribed our names.

A facsimile of the original document can be seen at:

<http://www.cwlworld.info/html/archives.html>

According to Shirley Nicholson, who was one of his pupils, and former senior editor of Quest Books, USA, Fritz Kunz, who features a great deal in the correspondence of CWL, was a pioneer in the movement that allies spiritual philosophy with modern science. In the 1940s and 1950s he was actively teaching prestigious scientists about Theosophy and Indian philosophy, especially as they relate to field theory in physics. At the same time, he taught Theosophists about field theory and modern physics as they coincide with the principles of Theosophy. He founded The Foundation for Integrative Education in the United States, which sought to break down rigid departmental borders and promote an integrated view of many disciplines with underpinnings of a philosophy drawn from Theosophy. He published a journal, *Main Currents in Modern Thought*, with articles by well-known scientists and by himself that added to this integrated view. Many of the ideas that Kunz promoted so long ago have become well-known in scientific circles. He was forward looking in his insight that aspects of modern science could support Theosophy and Eastern ideas.

1904 saw CWL travelling through the US again, and on October 25<sup>th</sup> 1904 he wrote a letter to Fritz Kunz from Cleveland, Ohio, with whose family CWL was associated since 1902. The letter al-

## CWL Speaks

ludes to the difficulties of a personal nature that were besetting another boy, named George Nevers:

I enclose two more [letters] from Douglas, and one really private one from George. At first I did not feel sure that even you ought to see this, yet I wanted you to know about it, because it shows George in a better light than we generally see him. Do not let any one else see it, and destroy it as soon as you have read it, for I feel it as a sort of confidence from him, and I should not show it to anyone but you. I am so glad you remembered something of one of our astral experiences; go ahead and remember many more, and tell me all about them, so that I may verify or correct them for you. At least one of those boys you really ought to recollect clearly, for he loves you very much.

In a letter to Fritz Kunz, dated October 20<sup>th</sup>, 1904, CWL recommends to Fritz a story about a man and a boy which was published in an old issue of *Harper's Magazine*. While the passage attests to his well-known misogynistic attitudes, it also reveals an uplifting view of the relationship between a man a boy, something which would disappoint his critics. He writes:

Have posted you an old Christmas number of Harper's Magazine, for the sake of a story in it which I want you to read. It is called "The Man and the Boy", and is interesting from two points of view – first as a first-class ghost-story, and secondly as touching tale of true and perfect love without the introduction of the usually inevitable woman! Two stories in this one magazine have for their theme the fact that love can overcome death, but the other is a stupid thing called "A Bridal Pair", full of the usual nonsense, and ending badly as well. But the story of the boy is a gem, and I want to share it with you: it would be worth your while to cut it out and keep it.

## Pedro Oliveira

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In another letter to Fritz Kunz, dated October 21<sup>st</sup>, 1904, he discusses communications among the boys under his care as well as privacy with Fritz:

I always felt specially drawn to it [Freeport] from my very first visit, and now of course we have the happiest associations with it, and can never forget it. I can only wish we were there now. It may however be worthwhile to exchange postcards with the boys, even if we use others than those of Freeport – not for the sake of the cards so much, as for the sake of the kindly feeling and the constant remembrance. Our boys will have to work together in the future, and it is important that they should know each other, and if possible love each other, even now. ... I may sometimes send you letters of interest in this way, but naturally it would not be well to mention to anybody that you had seen them. Remember that your own letters to me are absolutely safe for no one but I ever sees them, so that you may mention the most private matters with perfect security.

## Chapter 2

### Charges against Leadbeater:

#### American Section's Executive Committee

Towards the end of February 1906, Annie Besant, then resident in Benares, India, received a letter from Helen I. Dennis, dated 25th January 1906. The letter was co-signed by the following persons: Alexander Fullerton, General Secretary of the American Section of the TS; Frank F. Knothe, Assistant General Secretary; Elizabeth M. Chidester, Assistant Corresponding Secretary, E.S., and E.W. Dennis, Mrs Dennis' husband.

The letter presented the following charges against C.W. Leadbeater and demanded an inquiry about them: 1) 'That he is teaching young boys into his care, habits of self-abuse [masturbation] and demoralizing personal practices.' 2) 'That he does this with deliberate intent and under the guise of occult training or with the promise of the increase of physical manhood.' 3) 'That he has demanded, at least in one case, promises of the utmost secrecy.' The letter also enclosed testimonies of the mothers of two boys and branded Leadbeater's conduct as 'criminal'. Although Helen Dennis' letter to Annie Besant did not mention the names of the boys or their parents, and presents the (unsigned) boys' testimonies through their mothers, later it became known that the boys in question were Robert Dennis, Helen Dennis' son, Douglas Pettit, George Nevers and Howard Maguire, who was the recipient of the 'Cipher Letter'. Although Dennis and her co-signatories 'pledged each other to the utmost secrecy and circumspection so that no hint of it shall escape them', it soon became known that the charges had been widely circulated among Lodges and members in the American Section, reaching newspapers in early June 1906.

Chicago, January 25<sup>th</sup>, 1906.

Dear Mrs Besant:

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## Pedro Oliveira

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I have suddenly learned the cause of ----- 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. L. he 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 young and before they had erred through ignorance. He wishes to inform them before even a first offence 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 travelling with Mr. Leadbeater, and on his return home, he met my enquiries as to the cause of the hatred which has obviously grown up between himself and Mr. L., with the statement, “Mother, I shall never tell you, but if you knew what I know, had heard what I heard and seen the things the things that I have seen and heard, you would not wonder.” Later rebukes for his antagonism again brought 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

## CWL Speaks

having been suspected in England. When he was again questioned, he testified that Mr. L. had taught him how to practice self-abuse. When asked what reasons he gave for teaching such practices he said "Mr. Leadbeater told me that it would make me grow strong and manly." Asked his reason for concealing these facts so long from his parents he said "He made me promise not to tell."

### THE TESTIMONY OF THE MOTHER OF THE SECOND BOY

The mother of the second boy noticed with sorrow and regret that the relations between Mr. Leadbeater 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 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 him as Basil [Hodgson-Smith] 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 very 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." He could not however give her fully the line of Mr. L.'s sophistical reasoning about it. From the first the boy so plainly showed Mr. L. his aversion to such practices that Mr. L. made no further advances or allusions to the matter and he very plaintively said to his mother in telling her of the fact, "After that, mother, he acted as though he did not like me any more, and I was glad to come here." While Mr. L. exacted no actual pledge of secrecy from this second boy, the boy said that it was evident that he took it as a matter of course that he would never mention it.

## Pedro Oliveira

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Only after searching questions by the parents of these boys, was the foregoing evidence given, they having persisted in maintaining secrecy [sic] as long as possible. At the present time neither of these boys knows of the other's experiences, nor is aware that the other has told his story. There is therefore no possibility of collusion as they live some distance apart and practically never see each other.

This constitutes the substance of the charges and the evidence which I went to New York to submit to the officials who sign this statement with me. They agree that the charges are so grave, the evidence so direct and substantial, the possible consequences to the movement so calamitous, that immediate consideration, searching investigation and prompt action are demanded. Together we decided that in justice to the cause which has associated us, to Mr. Leadbeater and to you, we could do no less than place this whole matter before you, asking you to advise us what action you will take. We therefore await your reply, and scarcely need to say that we will do everything in our power to protect the good name of the T.S. and to keep this matter from the public not merely to screen an individual but to protect a cause. To this end, those who know have pledged each other to the utmost secrecy [sic] and circumspection so that no hint of it shall escape them.

A copy of this letter and statement is sent to Mr. L., registered in the same mail with this. You will also receive by registered book post, a copy of "The Adams Cable Codex" on the fly leaf [sic] of which is written my cable address. This is the code which I use.

With deep regret over the necessity of sending you this statement, I assure you that I hope to stand by you in your effort for wise action all along the line.

Faithfully

(Signed) Helen I. Dennis

I subscribe.

(Signed) E.W. Dennis

The undersigned, having heard the statement of Mrs. Dennis respecting investigation into the alleged facts concerning Mr. Leadbeater, are emphatically of opinion that justice to Mr. L., as well as to the American Section and the whole Theosophical Society, requires from Mrs. Besant as Head of the E.S.T. a most thorough enquiry. And they no less emphatically concur with Mrs. Dennis in

## CWL Speaks

her opinion that, the gravity of the case demands that such inquiry should be carried out with all possible promptness and Mrs. Besant's decision be made known to them.

(Signed) Alexander Fullerton Gen'l. Sec. Am. Section T.S.

“ Frank F. Knothe Ass. “ “ “ “

“ Helen I. Dennis Corr. “ “ “ E.S.

“ Elizabeth M. Chidester Ass. “ “ “

## Chapter 3

### Besant and Leadbeater Reply to the Charges

In a letter to John Coats, dated June 18th, 1966, Fritz Kunz recalls what transpired at the Headquarters of the TS in Benares, India, when Helen Dennis' letter arrived in the mail:

Basil [Hodgson-Smith], CWL and I were AB's [Annie Besant] guests in Benares when the first letters came from USA in 1906. I remember it as if it were yesterday. We were all working in our top coats, for Benares in winter can be cold! The moment he read the first one, CWL swept all the mail together and marched into AB's study and was there a long time, while they read the letters. She came over to see Basil, who was coming down with a temperature. He tried to get her to understand the unspeakable crudity and pettiness of some of the people accusing CWL, but the very nobility of her character made it difficult to communicate. At that time she had been only very briefly in USA. For what reason I don't know, but she would not come to England to face George Mead and Co. Later she made handsome amends to CWL. This is all too complex for letters.

This was Annie Besant's reply to Helen Dennis:

Shanti Kunja  
Benares City,  
Feb. 26, 06.

My dear Mrs. Dennis:

Your letter causes me some grief and anxiety, and I think I shall serve you, Mr. Leadbeater, and the Society best by perfect plainness of speech.

Mr. Leadbeater is very intimately known to you, and you have had definite experiences in connexion [sic] with him on super-physical planes; you know something of his relations there, and the impossibility of the existence of such relations with deliberate

## CWL Speaks

wrong doing. All this must not be forgotten in the midst of the terrible trial to which you are subjected.

I know him better than you can do, and am absolutely certain of his good faith and pure intent, though I disagree with the advice he has, in rare cases given to boys approaching manhood.

All who have had much experience with boys know that as puberty approaches, they stand in great peril; new and upsetting impulses come to them, and very large numbers of boys ruin their health for life at that age from sheer innocence, and suffer all their lives hopelessly. Some are ruined by self-abuse, some by seeking immoral women. Also, even when they resist these, they are tormented by sexual thoughts, which poison the whole nature. Most boys are left to struggle through this period as best they may; they learn about sex from other boys, or from servants, or bad men, are ashamed to seek help from parents or teachers.

Some think no one should speak to them beforehand. Others think it wiser to speak to them frankly, warn them of the dangers and tell them to ask for help if necessary.

Personally I think the latter course the right one. A boy should learn first of sex from his mother, father, or teacher.

Then comes the question, what advice should be given, when sex-thoughts torment him. Many doctors advise commerce with loose women; this I believe ruinous. Others, knowing that nature gives relief under these conditions, when they become severe, by involuntary emission, advise that rather than let the mind be full of unclean images for a long period, when the torment becomes great, the whole thing should be put an end to by provoking nature's remedy, and that this rarely necessary, is the safest way out of the trouble, and does less harm than any other. This I learn is Mr. Leadbeater's view – a rare hastening of the period of discharge that nature would later cause. I do not agree with it. I think it might cause a very evil habit, and though this evil habit is lamentably common, I would close the door on it by prohibition, and await the natural involuntary relief. I can, however, understand that a good man might with many precautions, look on this as the least of many evils. Personally, I believe the right way is careful

diet, plenty of exercise, occupation and amusement, and a rising of the boy's pride and self-respect against yielding. Mr. Leadbeater would do all this, but as a last resort, the other. While we may dissent from this, it is very different from the charge of teaching boys self-abuse, pre-supposing foul intent instead of pure. He says he has in three or four cases given this advice, believing that it would save the boys from worse peril.

\_\_\_\_\_’s case is different. The boy had fallen into bad hands, and Mr. Leadbeater’s help was invoked. He explained the way of diet, etc. mentioned above, and also the last resort; the boy elected to try the former. Since Mr. Leadbeater left America the boy wrote saying that he could not bear the strain, and Mr. Leadbeater explained the other way, to be used only under great stress. As the boy’s letter was written since Mr. Leadbeater left the States, his account, as given now, is obviously false.

Mr. Leadbeater says, that when a clergyman, he found that some young men in danger of ruin, were saved by this advice and gradually obtained complete self-control.

I have explained to him my reasons for disagreeing with him, though I know that his motives were pure and good, and he has agreed with me not again to give such advice. He offered at once if I thought it better, to retire from active work, rather than that the Society should suffer through him. Believing as I do in his perfect honesty of purpose, and knowing him to be pure of intent – though mistaken in his advice – I am against the retirement. All of us make mistakes at times, and where the mistake is honest, and will be avoided in future, it should not carry with it dissociation from T.S. and E.S. work.

Most profoundly do I hope that you will see the matter as I see it, and recognize in the light of your knowledge of Mr. Leadbeater, the impossibility of the dark charges made. I fully understand the horrible shock, but I know that all who approach the path have to face these searching ordeals, and hold on through all. As one who has passed through many such trials, I say to you, have courage, be steadfast. Even if you blame Mr. Leadbeater, do not let that reflect on Theosophy or lessen your devotion to it, since his view on a most difficult question is his own, and not Theoso-

## CWL Speaks

phy's. Nor must you forget the immense services he has rendered, and the thousands he has helped.

He has written to Mr. Fullerton, and I think you should read the letter, as should the other signatories, and your husband. It is not just to condemn a man unheard, on the statement of two boys, one of whom has not spoken frankly, as is shown by his dating his objection from a supposed occurrence at \_\_\_\_\_, whereas he wrote to Mr. Leadbeater for help long afterwards. Your husband is an upright and honourable man, and it would be to him a matter of life-long regret if he condemned unheard a friend and afterwards found he had condemned unjustly.

With constant affection,

Yours always,

(Signed) Annie Besant.

This was the letter addressed to Alexander Fullerton by CWL:

Shanti Kunja, Benares, Ind.

February 27th, 1906.

My dear Fullerton:

I have received the document signed by you, Knothe, Mrs. Dennis and Mrs. Chidester. Fortunately it arrived while I was staying with Mrs. Besant, and I at once took it to her room and discussed it with her, as my copy came before hers. She concurs with me in thinking it best for me to answer it by explaining to you the principle underlying my action, and then commenting upon the particular cases adduced. I hoped that my friends in America knew me well not to attribute an immoral motive to anything that I do; but since this is apparently not yet so, I must write with entire frankness about some subjects which are not usually discussed at the present day.

The business of discovering and training specially hopeful younger members and preparing them for Theosophical work has been put into my charge. Possibly the fact that I have been associated with the training of young men and boys all my life (originally of course on Christian lines) is one reason for this, because of the expe-

## Pedro Oliveira

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rience which it has given me. As a result of that experience, I know that the whole question of sex feeling is the principal difficulty in the path for both boys and girls, and that very much harm is done by the prevalent habit of ignoring the subject and fearing to speak of it to young people. The first information about it should come from parents or friends, not from servants or bad companions. Therefore I always speak of it quite frankly and naturally to those whom I am trying to help, when they become sufficiently familiar with me to make it possible. The methods of dealing with the difficulty are two. A certain type of boy can be carried through his youth absolutely virgin, and can pass through the stages of puberty without being troubled at all by sensual emotions; but such boys are few. The majority pass through a stage when their minds are much filled with such matters, and consequently surround themselves with huge masses of most undesirable thought-forms which perpetually re-act upon them and keep them in a condition of emotional ferment. These thoughts are the vehicles of appalling mischief since through them disembodied entities can and constantly do act upon the child.

The conventional idea that such thoughts do not much matter so long as they do not issue in overt acts is not only untrue; it is absolutely the reverse of the truth. I have seen literally hundreds of cases of this horrible condition, and have traced the effects which it produces in after-life.

In this country of India, the much-abused custom of early marriage prevents all difficulty on this score. Much of this trouble is due to the perfectly natural pressure of certain physical accumulations, and as the boy grows older this increasing pressure drives him into associations with loose women or sometimes into unnatural crimes. Now all this may be avoided by periodically relieving that pressure, and experience has shown that if the boy provokes at stated intervals a discharge which produces that relief, he can comparatively easily rid his mind of such thoughts in the interim, and in that way escape all the more serious consequences. I know this is not the conventional view, but it is quite true for all that, and there is no comparison between the harm done in the two cases even at the time – quite apart from the fact that the latter plan avoids the danger of entanglement with women or bad boys later on. You may remember how

## CWL Speaks

St. Paul remarked that while it was best of all to remain celibate in the rare cases where that was possible, for the rest it was distinctly better to marry than to burn with lust. Brought down to the level of the boy, that is precisely what I mean; and although I know that many people do not agree with the view, I am at a loss to understand how anyone can consider it criminal – especially when it is remembered that it is based upon the clearly visible results of the two lines of action. A doctor might advise against it principally on the ground that the habit of occasional relief might degenerate into unrestrained self-abuse; but this danger can be readily avoided by full explanation, and it must be remembered that the average doctor cannot see the horrible astral effects of perpetual desire. Having thus explained the general position, let me turn to the particular cases cited.

As to the first boy mentioned. You know that on coming to America for the first time I looked forward to seeing him, having heard of him as possibly hopeful. I succeed in gaining his affection to some extent, but an unfortunate interference from without (of which his mother knows) brought a disturbing influence to bear from which he has never recovered. To that, and not in the least to this other alleged cause, I attributed the coolness which he showed later. As to the specific charge, if you enquire the boy himself will tell you that one experiment, and one only, was tried at -----, and during the six months of my later stay in ----- no reference was made to the subject, nor did he ask my advice in any way regarding it, though I had told him in ----- that I was always at his disposal if he required information. I did mention to him that physical growth is frequently promoted by the setting in motion of those currents, but that they needed regulation. I did certainly also tell him that this was not a matter to be talked about. I was thinking chiefly of his boy's friends for I know that the possession of a fragment of what he considers forbidden knowledge is a great temptation to the average boy; I think you will find if you ask him that I specifically cautioned him against talking of such matters to his friend next door. But if I could have foreseen that this trouble would arise, and that the affair would be taken in this way, I assure you that I should have no hesitation in speaking then and there to his mother. His testimony seems fairly

## Pedro Oliveira

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accurate, but he has utterly misunderstood the whole spirit of the thing – which shows, of course, that I made a mistake in taking that line with him; I regret the mistake, but I utterly repudiate the idea of any sort of criminal intent. If the experiment had turned out differently, and the matter had gone any further, I should have given him practically the explanation which I have written above.

The case of the second boy is very different. I invited him to stay with me at \_\_\_\_\_ because his mother was troubled about the influence obtained over him by Z; and thought that a temporary removal from it would be beneficial. In conversation with him on the night of which he speaks, he told me of the relations with regard to sexual matters into which he had entered with Z; we talked it all over with apparent openness on his part, and he voluntarily promised to drop the whole affair, and try to lead the life of an ascetic in these matters. I need hardly say that but for this present enquiry I should have observed perfect secrecy with regard to his relations with Z, as I regard boys' confessions as sacred; but under these painful circumstances it seems best to hold back nothing. I spoke to Z of the affair (as I think I told you at the \_\_\_\_\_ time) when I met Z in \_\_\_\_\_, and induced him to promise to abstain from such relations with the second boy so that the latter might have a fair opportunity to try to keep his resolution. I doubted however, whether the second boy would find himself able to lead the life which he had chosen; so I told him if he found serious difficulty he might always consult me by letter. Some months afterwards he did this, explaining that he found it impossible at present to follow out his original intention, and asking for advice. I replied that in that case it would in my judgment be best to discharge the accumulation at stated intervals, gradually lengthening these, but with the proviso that there must be absolutely no thought of these matters between times. I have not heard from him since on the subject. What was “in some way Theosophical” about it was of course the consideration of the evil results of constant emotional unrest. In this case it will be observed that I was not the first to introduce these ideas to the boy, as he will surely testify if asked; and the advice which I have given was what seemed to me best to meet the case. It is not true that I in any way lost interest in the second boy and if he imagines that that was so he mistakes;

## CWL Speaks

I believe that my descriptive letters to him have been fairly regular, although it is now some little time since I have heard from him in reply. After the time at \_\_\_\_\_ I received several most affectionate letters from him, so it is untrue that a change in his attitude dated from that period.

I write this to you as the first signatory of the document; how much of it you can repeat to the ladies concerned is for you to decide. I have shown it to Mrs. Besant, as I shall do any other correspondence that may ensue, for I have no secrets from her. I am very sorry indeed that this trouble has arisen, and that any act of mine, however well-intentioned, should have been the cause of it. I can only trust that when my friends have read this perfectly frank statement, they will at least acquit me of the criminality which their letters seems to suggest, even though they may still think me guilty of an error of judgment.

\_\_\_\_\_ announces his intention of returning unopened any letter from me which seems scarcely fair, as I believe even a criminal is usually allowed to state his own case. But since he prefers to close all communication with me, it is not for me to ask him to reconsider his decision. If he later becomes willing to allow correspondence with his family to be resumed, I am always ready on my side, for nothing will change my affectionate feelings towards all its members. Yours ever most cordially,

(Signed) C. W. Leadbeater

P.S. I see that there is one point in Mrs. Dennis' letter on which I have not commented – her reference to a conversation on the necessity of purity for aspirants to occult development, and to the fact that (for a certain stage of it) one life without even a single lapse is required. It is of course obvious that the lapse mentioned meant connection with a woman or criminal relations with a man, and did not at all include such relief of pressure as is suggested in the body of my letter; but since there has been so much misunderstanding it is better for me say this in my own words, so please paste this slip at the foot of my letter on the subject.

## Chapter 4

### Correspondence between Besant, Leadbeater and Others, First Half of 1906

The following letter from Fritz Kunz's sister reveals that the signatories to the January letter to Mrs Besant had broken their pledge of secrecy even before Mrs Besant's reply had reached them:

42 West Street  
Freeport, Illinois  
March 9<sup>th</sup> 1906

My dear Mr. Leadbeater,

By this time you have received the letter containing the charges made against you and tho' we believe them to be both false and ridiculous, I am much troubled about Douglas Baldwin. Under the circumstances, do you not think it would be better to leave him in America? If I attempt to bring him with me and your accusers discover it, it will raise a terrible storm. The very fact that you are so anxious to have Douglas' movements kept secret will add to your guilt in the eyes of your enemies. I expect to see Mr. Fullerton before I sail and he will of course know that Douglas is with me.

I realize that it is too late for you to answer this by letter but if you wish Douglas to remain in America the one word "Remain" will be sufficient. If I do not hear from you I will know it is your wish that I bring him with me. I shall leave Freeport on the 11<sup>th</sup> of April.

With love to Fritz and my kindest regards to yourself and Basil, I am, sincerely yours

Alma Kunz

42 West Street  
Freeport, Illinois  
April 5<sup>th</sup>, 1906

My dear Mr. Leadbeater,

## CWL Speaks

From present indication it seems that Douglas will not accompany me. There has been a lot of wild telegraphing about the country.

Mr. Fullerton must be in his dotage to send such messages as have already gone over the wires. I have taken upon myself to reprimand him. Even if you were a villain of the "deepest dye" there is no earthly reason for telling the public about it.

As you may suppose the whole wretched business has upset us. I have refrained from mentioning to Fritz as I do not know whether you have told him or not and it would only trouble him to think you were so meanly attacked.

We have asked Mrs. Baldwin to let us have Douglas and we will try to take care of him as you would desire, until such a time comes when you are cleared and you may take him yourself.

It is needless to tell you that our loving sympathy is all with you and if we could, we would aid you in every way but we are quite powerless, save in that we have expressed utter disbelief in the charges.

With kindest regards to yourself and Basil and my dear love to Fritz,

I am, loyally yours,

Alma Kunz

Aware that the signatories of the letter to Mrs Besant were circulating the charges against CWL to a number of members of the American Section, C. Jinarajadasa issued the following Circular letter:

### MR. JINARAJADASA'S CIRCULAR

April 18, 1906.

Dear Dr Van Hook,

On the 9th of this month I received a letter from a correspondent mentioning the charge against Mr. Leadbeater. As this was the first intimation I had of a matter which I since gathered has been discussed by many persons in this country, I was utterly surprised. The

## Pedro Oliveira

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charge according to the letter received was as follows: that Mr. L. had been charged and proved guilty of the crime that ostracises a man, sodomy or sexual intercourse with a male person. On the 14th of this month, I went up from Holyoke, Mass. to New York to see Mr. Fullerton, who was good enough to tell me what he had heard. Perhaps my remarks on these charges may be of interest to you, hence I write what follows.

First as to the charge of sodomy. From all the information that has so far come to my knowledge, and I think that 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, nor anything that to a clear-sighted man would seem even to justify such a charge. I gather that this accusation against Mr. L. has been made in other countries.

I know as a matter of fact that 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 twelve, and before I knew Mr. L. But soon after my acquaintance with him, I understood why the charge was made. He was specially kind to some boys there and helped them in all ways. My brother, that died some years ago, was one of these boys. In fact, he knew Mr. L. before I did, and helped him, enthusiastically tramping from village to village with him on Sundays, teaching at the Buddhist Sunday School started by Mr. L. Mr. L. halped [sic] my brother and another lad, and later myself, that he was attached to in several ways, helping them in their school-work, doing all that could be done by an elder friend to help the younger. But the Singhalese people were then deeply suspicious of his work and of the work of the T.S., and slanders and insinuations against all the leaders of the Theosophical movement, Madame Blavatsky, Col. Olcott and others, were not uncommon, coming from all those opposed to the work of the Society, Buddhist priests and laymen and Christian missionaries. Above all it seemed difficult for the Singhalese to imagine that a man innocently and out of pure affection do so much for a boy as Mr. L. did for some boys. Thus they had to postulate an ulterior motive, and they did. Knowing my own people and their inborn suspicion, I have often bitterly had to regret that there was some truth after all in the saying of Bishop Heber about Ceylon,

## CWL Speaks

perhaps the most beautiful island of the East that “every prospect pleases and only man is vile”.

I have known Mr. L. for nineteen years; during eleven 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 heard from the slightest thing to raise even a suspicion in my mind of this charge of sodomy [sic]. When it is hinted that there are charges of a frightful nature against a man, we jump at one conclusion and think of this charge. I gather that some think that Mr. L. is a “sexual pervert”. Witness for instance his liking for boys, as though there can be no rational explanation for that. Witness too his irritability. How this can easily come about I know. Those that have to travel about and lecture, as he did, meeting new people, thrown into constantly new surroundings and magnetisms, that constant need to adapt oneself to new circumstances every week almost; but Mr. L. did about ten times the work I do. Night and day he was at it. That the man might have a body that could weary he forgot, and others too. The result was obvious to me when I saw him after several years in Sept. 1904: the utter weariness of the body, the over-work and nervous fag that seemed then normal with him. There are other reasons, then, for irritability than sexual perversion.

Mr. L.’s antipathy for womankind too is being brought in to buttress this charge, but when charges are made we have all facts that harmonise with them, and forget the other facts; as in this instance, Mr. L. admiration and regard for certain ladies, his never failing courtesy to them. Such women as have seen this side of the man will know that his antipathy to women might have a far more likely explanation than any sexual perversion.

But there is a truer charge, – that Mr. L. taught some boys masturbation or self-abuse. Mr. L. admits it, but deserves to be heard on the matter. Briefly summed up, this is what he says:

In the generality of boys there are few whose constitution is such that they have no strong desire to gratify the sexual instinct; they reach manhood and marry, and the husband is as virgin as the wife.

## Pedro Oliveira

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But there are many boys who are so built that sexual passions arise early, very largely for purely physiological reasons. What advice is to be given to them? To a boy of this passionate nature, to inculcate virginity is to tell him of a course of conduct which, much as his higher nature might direct, is impossible for lack of an overmastering will. The world's general solution is illicit intercourse with women. This is not considered a crime, and many a doctor advises it under the circumstances. Mr. L.'s opinion is that this is not justifiable. He holds that when a boy is full of these thoughts, he is surrounding himself with undesirable influences that act and react on him. No doctor thinks of this element. Let the boy, according to Mr. L., under these circumstances, ease his physical nature through what is called self-abuse, and so make it possible to free himself from the thoughts. Advising safeguards and precautions, with the idea that the boy might pass through a critical period with the least harm to himself, Mr. L. admits that he has so advised certain boys.

That Mr. L. goes contrary to the world's opinion of this practice, he knows. But Mr. L. believes he is as a physician who might administer poison in some cases with the purpose of effecting a cure. That the world will condemn Mr. L. for his advice is obvious. But can we at all impartially examine his action?

We have certain ideas in which we are brought up in this world, and one, certainly a strange one, is our 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 solution to many a youth under difficult circumstances. 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 which 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.

Then there is Mr. L.'s advice. Equally I feel that this is not the solution. What the true solution is, I don't know. Some day humanity will no doubt discover it. Certainly it is not the solution offered by Mr. L. I should never offer it as even the shadow of one. But that he

## CWL Speaks

has conscientiously thought it the lesser evil, and that the advice he has given is from a pure motive, I fully believe. That he goes contrary to the world's opinion, I clearly see; but I say that it does not therefore follow that he is not sincere, nor that he is a "sexual pervert" with a coarse astral body, as one correspondent suggests. Mistaken in it I think he is fully, and I doubt not that he is willing to bear the consequences of his mistakes. Guilty of an immoral or perverted intent, I firmly believe that he is not. As to the more serious charge of sodomy, I say I have not seen or heard the slightest thing to justify such an accusation, much as many a little fact can easily be twisted to support it.

Mrs. Besant, who has been fully informed of the facts by Mr. L. himself and by others, is of this opinion I express. She dissents absolutely from Mr. L.'s views. But she is fully convinced that though mistaken he has been thoroughly sincere throughout, and has never had for a moment any immoral intent at all.

I remain,

Yours sincerely,

C. Jinarajadasa.

The following was Helen Dennis' reply to CJ's circular:

Form No. 25

Dear Associate:

We infer that you have received a copy of a circular of April 18<sup>th</sup> sent out by Mr. Jinarajadasa, claiming that charges of sodomy were being preferred against Mr. Leadbeater.

Whatever rumours of hysterical purport might have reached his ears we cannot say although the rumour is unfounded. The facts are that the officers of the T. S. and E. S. are charging Mr. Leadbeater with teaching masturbation to boys, and Mr. Jinarajadasa was called to New York on April 14<sup>th</sup> by Mr. Fullerton to be given a statement of the truth, which was due him as a field worker. He was shown the official letter of charges which contained not one hint of the charge of sodomy, the charge being instead that of teaching masturbation as given above.

## Pedro Oliveira

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In the face of the knowledge of the true nature of the charges, and four days after he had learned the truth, he sent out on April 18<sup>th</sup> the letter above referred to which he claims that charges of sodomy were preferred, and in which he states that he went to New York to see Mr. Fullerton “who was good enough to tell me what he had heard,” thereby implying that sodomy [was] part of the official charge. This is a false statement, and gives circulation to a story which places the officials in a false position. They hold a letter from Mr. Leadbeater himself which admits the truth of the charges preferred, and in which he defends his theory of masturbation.

If you wish to learn all the facts of the case before reaching your conclusions and taking a definite stand in the matter, you could obtain the truth by writing to any E. S. or T. S. official.

Sincerely yours,  
Helen I. Dennis

Albert Powell Warrington (1866-1939) joined the Theosophical Society in 1896 and studied by correspondence under Mr. Alexander Fullerton, who was then the American General Secretary. He would later on serve the Society as General Secretary of the American Section and eventually became its international Vice-President.

In a note to C. Jinarajadasa about the above mentioned circular, A. P. Warrington states:

Tell these people that in the official document it is definitely stated that an investigation was inaugurated by the mothers because of rumours coming from India, Ceylon and England. In the testimony of boy 2, also, these words appear: “He reluctantly admitted the facts of Mr. L.’s immoral conduct” ... “When we first slept together”. Also L. proposed to Z that he should “adopt a youth of about 11 years of age, a child of delicate health and of a highly sensitive and affectionate nature”. The official letter also to the London Lodge refers to the said rumours. The inference of sodomy was therefore conspicuous. Doesn’t Mr L. explains rather than defend his teaching?

## CWL Speaks

Joy Dixon, in her book *The Divine Feminine* (The John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore and London, 2001), devotes a chapter to the Leadbeater case in which she maintains that sodomy had a central role in it, in spite of the clear denials of two of CWL's main accusers, who formulated the charges against him, namely, Alexander Fullerton and Helen Dennis. Dixon writes:

At the Advisory Board [London, May 1906] Colonel Olcott initially denied that Leadbeater's motives were at issue. "There is no feeling on the part of those present," he stated, "that you did not have the feeling in your mind when you gave the advice. I think that everybody here knows you [and] will think your motive was the one you gave." [W.H.] Thomas, however, argued that "the whole of the evidence shows that if it was not a case of direct vice it was a case of gratifying his own prurient ideas." The case therefore shifted from a consideration of "direct vice" to an exploration of the relationship between actions and the subjective states behind those actions. Leadbeater's state of mind—and, by extension, his whole personality—was subjected to searching inquiry. Even when unspoken, the accusation of sodomy was the referent against which Leadbeater's actions were judged. (p. 104)

In a letter written by Mrs. Addie Tuttle to Mrs. Holbrook, two members of the American Section, the former says:

'I received another document giving rebuttal of counter charges made by Mr. Leadbeater.

The principal one I can partly prove false by some letters of Mr. Leadbeater to me concerning one whom they call Z. But to do so I must practically dig a grave for a boy who is weak and ill any way and bury him in it. I know their Z not in the physical though. I have been trying to help him, for his case is pitiful (I have never met him to speak to him though). I know he has erred, but I do not believe him vile and I would – if I knew how – cover him, as I believe Mr. Leadbeater tried to do – and fell into trouble for it. The boy will nev-

## Pedro Oliveira

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er live through the thing, he is ill with consumption, and I *can't* help to hand him over to the wolves.'

Mrs Tuttle adds:

Other points in the letter: Mrs. Dennis is entirely under the sway of her husband. In sending documents North, she has shielded her own boy's name and given in full Douglas Pettit's name and address.

Alexander Fullerton joined the TS in 1887 and worked for it steadily for more than twenty years. He had been at one time office assistant to William Q. Judge and was elected General Secretary of the American Section of the TS with Headquarters at Adyar in 1895.

C. Jinarajadasa writes to Mr. Fullerton:

(U. S. A) May 1, 1906.

Dear Mr. Fullerton,

I have received your two letters. A separate letter deals with the tour expenses, etc. What follows is due to the fact that I value highly your opinion as a private individual. We have been quite frank in our various talks on all sorts of matters, and hence I desire to elucidate to you one or two points. I do not do this by way of argument or discussion, but merely by way of explanation.

You think that I am not quite straightforward in not frankly denouncing the deception of parents by Mr. Leadbeater. I do not uphold his action, but I cannot call it wilful deception. When a man is strongly possessed with one idea on a question, is so to say a monomaniac on the subject, he may do a good many things that might appear wilful deception when it is merely the inevitable result following naturally from self-deception. Deception involves a motive to deceive, and I do not hold that Mr. Leadbeater ever had that. I see the facts in the matter from this light, you see them differently. I shall never believe that in this matter you will be wilfully unjust, and I am sure you will not think that because of my convictions I am wilfully blind to the truth.

With reference to the second point, in your letter, as to my seeing no objection to L. remaining in the T.S., I have already made it clear to you that I hold it is expedient he should not be an accredited lec-

## CWL Speaks

turer of the Society. We as all organisations have a perfect right to say to him, "We shall not call on you to lecture to the world on our behalf". But if we go further and say that because he holds certain ideas that we believe to be wrong, therefore he must cease to be a member, we shall be laying down a precedent that will cripple the broad basis of our organisation, and in the course of time make it a church with a creed. Such a precedent, moreover, will make it almost impossible for many to do what they can for Theosophy.

We must try to distinguish between what is injurious and what is immoral. People usually do not distinguish them specially with reference to this sex problem, for each naturally has his own reasons for morals. Think, for instance, of your own opinion of illicit intercourse, that there is no moral evil attached to it as long as no third party is injured thereby. I admire you for holding such a clear and daring opinion, with which I disagree, and I am sure the majority of the T.S. with me. But I hold that that is your own private opinion; you do not put it forward as Theosophy's, but because you hold that opinion and may have expressed it, though not as taught by Theosophy, I see no reason why you cannot remain a member of the T. S. Many of those that put up their hands in horror at Mr. L.'s ideas will do the same with regard to your reasoned conclusion. If I say that your opinion is Theosophy's, then that is another matter, and we have a right to ask you to resign.

Think also of what I have heard about H.P.B. when the Col. was bothered by all sorts of sexual desires, and he asked her opinion as to what he could do, and she replied, "You might as well go and do it as (sic) think about it all the time". Of course such an opinion cannot claim the mantle of Theosophy for its justification, even though H.P.B. uttered it. That was her own personal opinion; she may have even thought it quite consonant with 'occultism'. But if for that opinion and advice of hers, we had declared that she was unfit to be a member of the T.S., who then is fit?

Establish such a precedent, even upon this grave question, even though the majority of us in the T.S. now hold that we ought not to countenance in our organisation these options of Mr. L. which he has not publicly taught as Theosophy, then within a generation others

## Pedro Oliveira

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who may differ from the majority on less important points will be branded as not Theosophists. It is not because I hold a brief for Mr. Leadbeater that I think he should not be turned out of the T.S., it is because I look ahead and see what such unwise and precipitate action will do to hamper our future usefulness in the world.

I thank you for your warning that my actions may readily make people lose faith in my honesty and integrity. I know that; it will be the old, old cry of ‘supressio veri and suggestio falsi’; and the point is that people differ as to what is true and what is false. Something that I hold not to be true and so make no mention of, another will say is ‘suggestio falsi’; and when I try to make one issue that I think is more vital than another specially clear, then to this other person I am guilty of ‘suppresio veri’. You know the words “To thine own self be true”, etc. Well, that is what I am trying to do, and I know you will give me credit for that.

One other word on this matter. I am very glad that I wrote that letter of mine; for more and more it is becoming evident to me that the graver charge is afloat in the air, as perhaps having some justification after all. I know the official charges make no mention of that, but my letter will help some people to free themselves from being influenced by hints and innuendos of this graver charge; they will be able to judge Mr. L. more justly. Already people who have received Mrs. Denis’ circular to the E. S. want to know from me what it is about. Believing as I do, it would have been unbearable to be silent.

Much as I regret for the sake of the present Theosophical work my resignation, yet for the sake of the greater Work for which we are all fitting ourselves, I am glad I did resign.

Your attitude to Mr. Burnett’s offensive remarks about me I saw during our interview. Of one thing you may be certain: you will always have my warm thanks for your ever courteous treatment of me, and more than that there will always be in me a sincere regard and attachment to you personally, even though we may differ.

I only wish, in all this business that has affected you so much, that I could do something to make you feel that whatever has happened and will happen, not an atom of Mr. Leadbeater’s affection for you will vanish; and you have in him ever a warm affectionate

## CWL Speaks

friend, to whom you must never hesitate to turn if you believe that he can give you help.

I remain,

Ever yours sincerely, C. Jinarajadasa

Helen Dennis, the official who led the charges against C. W. Leadbeater in January 1906, declared in a private communication to ES members in the United States, a portion of which is reproduced below, that she had learned in 1905 ‘that for at least fifteen years charges of immoral practices were repeatedly made against him in Europe and Asia, and we took steps to disprove or prove them’. She did not mention the source of such charges nor the nature of the ‘steps’ which were taken by her to disprove or prove them. In other words, we do not know the motive that led her to act in this direction. And yet, as shown in this book, years earlier she had approached CWL regarding sexual difficulties faced by her own son, Robert. One of the first known letters from CWL to her in this regard is dated February 21<sup>st</sup>, 1901.

We present below excerpts of Mrs Dennis’ letters dealing with the Leadbeater case:

May, 1906.

We have abundant proof that Mr. Leadbeater is teaching a theory and practice of masturbation to the youths entrusted to his care, and it is because Mrs. Besant practically condones the offence, and is against Mr. Leadbeater’s retirement from E.S. and public work, that we are forced to take issue with her as the Head of the School. We cannot stand silent under the continuance of Mr. Leadbeater’s methods and practices, as to do so, would give them our tacit endorsement and moral support. We feel compelled to use any necessary means to put an end to his power of making sex perverts of our most promising boys, and also to put an end to his power of jeopardizing the Theosophical Movement, the teachings and principles of which are directly opposed to such practices.

## Pedro Oliveira

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We learned in the autumn of 1905 that for at least fifteen years charges of immoral practices were repeatedly made against him in Europe and Asia, and we took steps to disprove or prove them. To our grief and amazement, we found that he had taught boys habits of self-abuse, and the evidence was submitted to Mr. Leadbeater himself and to Mrs. Besant.

Mr. Leadbeater wrote in reply an admission of the charges and endeavored to justify his practice. Mrs. Besant, while disagreeing with his theory of masturbation, to our complete consternation, wishes to condone the offence and gives him her official support. We have therefore laid the matter before the General Secretary and the Executive Committee of the American Section who are sending a personal commissioner to Europe to lay the matter before Officials there.

Chicago, May 3rd, 1906.

We have done our utmost to prevent publicity of this matter, and consult only officials and parents, and been defeated at every turn. First came the February 1906 "Theosophist" with an article signed by H.S.O. on the "Mendacity of Hypnotic Subjects", claiming that these rumors were "slanders" [Laura Mead in a letter points out to Mrs Dennis that the article that upset Col. Olcott had been written by G. N. Chakravarti, and does not include any mention of CWL, *Compiler*]. It seems that a petition had gone up to Mrs. Besant by so many in India, asking for the retirement of Mr. Leadbeater [such petition has never been produced, *Compiler*] because of these practices and the Magazine article indicates her reply. We hoped that when our proofs from America reached her, she would reverse her decision. However, we were disappointed and in March we received Mr. Leadbeater's letter admitting the charges, and Mrs. Besant's letter urging that we condone the offense. In February he deceived her and his associates by calling the rumors in India "slanders", and in March he was forced by our letter of charges and proof to admit the truth. What can we think? Then we learned that these rumors were and had been current in Europe for years—that some of the

## CWL Speaks

best members there are even now trying as we are to repudiate these theories of his from the tenets of the T.S. Our travelling American E.S. members have come home with many facts and in great distress of mind about what to do – and we have done our best to quiet them and urge all to await the action of the officials in Europe who are now trying to solve the problem. But the worst thing that has happened to spread publicity is that one of our field workers learned of these rumors and sent a circular letter to a score of people stating that we were accusing Mr. L. with charges of sodomy. This circular has been shown and is being shown to many F.T.S. and letters are coming in to all E.S. officials as the result. The field worker was Mr. Jinarajadasa, Mr. L. friend and pupil. His letter was supposed to be a letter of defence of Mr. L. against charges of sodomy – which we have not made, as you will see by the letter of charges of January 25<sup>th</sup>, 1906.

May 14<sup>th</sup>, 1906

(To Laura Mead)

Then too, as X [CWL] has been a sex-pervert since the old church days, who can believe that he has been given training by any Master of the White Lodge, when decent sex purity is the prerequisite? We cannot dodge the following issue: Is X [CWL] deluded or an impostor in his claims of connection with a Master, or are the Masters less than we supposed and do take in to their companionship sex-perverts if they are useful (?) (the gods forbid the word) and in spite of our public teachings and literature to the contrary on this sex question?

Mrs Dennis was probably unaware of the letters received by CWL from Mahatma K.H. In one of them the Mahatma addresses CWL thus:

Since your intuition led you in the right direction and made you understand that it was my desire you should go to Adyar immediately – I may say more. The sooner you go the

Pedro Oliveira

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better. Do not lose one day more than you can help. Sail on the 5th if possible. Join Upasika at Alexandria. Let no one know you are going and may the blessing of our Lord, and my poor blessing shield you from every evil in your new life.

Greeting to you my new chela.

K. H.

Show my notes to no one.

(Source: *Letters of the Masters of the Wisdom*, First Series, letter #8)

It is also important, in this regard, to mention what the process of Chelaship entails, from the point of view of the Mahatmas:

...we — leave it to our menials — the *dugpas* at our service, by giving them *carte blanche* for the time being, and with the sole object of drawing out the whole *inner* nature of the chela, most of the nooks and corners of which, would remain dark and concealed for ever, were not an opportunity afforded to test each of these corners in turn. Whether the chela wins or loses the prize — depends solely of himself.

(*Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett*, 1993 chronological edition)

Shanti Kunja,  
Benares,  
10th May, 1906.

Dear Mrs. Dennis,

I am very much grieved to read your letter.

You ask me what you are to think as to 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 with Their work. I know that if he were evil-

## CWL Speaks

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.

Further, I know how much terrible evil exists among young men and the desperate straits in which they find themselves. To deal with these evils falls to the lot of many a clergyman, parents and teachers, and I cannot bear unlimited condemnation of the attempt to deal with them.

Trials come from time to time; e.g., the Coulomb attack on H.P.B. Doubtlessly from the worldly point of view I should save trouble by deserting Mr. Leadbeater, but I do not see that to be my duty.

Sincerely yours,  
Annie Besant

Naples, 11th May,  
1906.

My dear Annie,

I have your note of April 19th, forwarded from Genoa. I have to-day [sic] a telegram from the Colonel as follows:

“American commissioner bringing official charges meets British Section Executive Committee in London, May 16th your presence urgently desired answer Harrogate. H. S. Olcott, President.”

I suppose this is the “call to London” to which your telegram referred, and so I suppose that I must go, although I do not at all like the prospect, nor do I in any way acknowledge the jurisdiction of the court; but I think I shall be obeying your wish in going. I wish you were yourself to be present physically on the occasion.

The Colonel has cancelled my entire programme. Charles Blech advises me as a friend to consider well all the possibilities before going to England, so I suppose he fears that there may be legal arrest and prosecution; it seems as though they were vin-

## Pedro Oliveira

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dictive enough even for that! Raja has spoken very strongly to the Americans, and has sent a letter (denying that the grosser form of the charge can be true) to some of the principal men there. Mrs. Holbrook and Mrs. Tuttle write assuring me of devotion and friendship.

I presume the Colonel will either expel me or request me to resign; the latter I am very willing to do, as you know, to avoid causing any trouble in the Society. I think I might still do the work in Burmah [sic], but as a Buddhist, not as a Theosophist. What is your opinion of this? If it all gets into the newspapers, I shall be unable to do even that. I want much to see you and talk things over; where and when can we meet? Benares may not be desirable, if the minds of our brothers there are poisoned against me. Let me hear fully from you; address Harrogate until further notice. With very much love from us all. I am ever,

Yours most affectionately,

C. W. Leadbeater

10, E. Parade, Harrogate,  
England, 17<sup>th</sup> May, 1906.

My dear Annie,

I telegraphed you yesterday in brief the Report of the meeting of the British Committee. I talked over the matter with the Colonel before the members of the Committee arrived, and he strongly counselled me to put a written resignation in his hands before the meeting commenced, so that he could use it at the right time. He dictated to me the form which he suggested it should take, expressly mentioning that I resigned in order to relieve the Society from the possibility of any embarrassment. I doubted somewhat whether you would approve, because you advised against resignation in the first place; but circumstances have changed so much since then, and the vindictiveness of the American persecution has shown itself so clearly, that I hope you would agree that as matters stand now, it was the best course.

Burnett, sent over as commissioner, formally presented the charges before a full meeting of the British Executive Commit-

## CWL Speaks

tee; a considerable mass of additional matter was included beyond that which was sent to us at Benares; also copies of your letter to Mrs. Dennis and of mine to Mr. Fullerton – both of which were distinctly private and would not have been used in this way by anyone possessing even the rudiments of honour or decency. Many of the Committee seemed friendly towards me, and the Colonel especially so, but Mead showed bitter hostility, and Bertram, though silent for the most part, asked one very nasty question obviously intended to implicate you in the matter. I appealed to the Chairman as to whether such a question was permissible, and the opinion of the majority clearly was that it was not, so I left it unanswered. After two hours of discussion and cross-examination, and then an hour and a half of stormy debate at which I was not present, the Committee recommended the Colonel to accept the resignation, which I had previously placed in his hands; he formally did so, and so the matter stands at present.

This being so, to what work should I now apply myself? It is, of course, obvious that I cannot, at any rate for a considerable time, do anything in the way of public lecturing. I think that Burma might perhaps still be possible; or is there any other piece of work in India which I could undertake? I could not take the Headmastership of a school, because of the want of a University Degree, but I might nevertheless be of use in giving English lessons at some such school or something of that sort. I want a quiet time in which to do some writing, but naturally I should prefer to spend that time in the tropics rather than in England. As far as I know at present, Basil and Fritz will continue to be with me and to act as secretaries just as they have been doing, though during this time the former at any rate will be preparing for his University course with my assistance, as we arranged in India. So if there is any work I can do, please let me know of it. Please continue to write to this address, as I shall stay here or in this neighborhood until I hear from you.

I met Martyn in Rome, and told him of the accusation. I found that he had already received a letter from Dennis giving it in

wildly exaggerated form, but had simply put the letter in his pocket and kept silence. It is possible, by the way, that I might find an opportunity to be useful in Australia or New Zealand. Martyn seemed to feel a little difficulty with regard to the circulation of the last Eastern School notice. He asked whether it would not be wiser to send it only to those whom you might choose for the Inner School, as if it were sent to members obviously unfit for admission, it could only rouse in them a sense of jealousy and wounded pride. He instanced such old members as Mrs. Crozier and Paldcoe, both good people in their way, yet always involved in quarrels with others, so that to admit them would be to foredoom the experiment to failure. Mrs. Wilhelmina Hunt is another case in point. He thought that it would make the work much easier if no one knew of the existence of the Inner School except those whom you choose as eligible for it. Considering the condition of affairs in Australia, there does seem reason in this; and Martyn is so eminently a man of common sense that I always feel disposed to allow great weight to any suggestion which he ventures to make. His earnest desire was that you should yourself personally select members for the Inner School when you visit Australia; would it be possible to allow the majority of Australian members to wait then? Martyn himself and John are, I think, fully worthy of immediate admission, and I think that I should feel sure of three others in Australia, but hardly more than that. Martyn also mentioned that you had at one time told him that to save time he might receive his Eastern School papers for distribution direct from you, but that up to the present that promise has not come into effect, as everything still reached him via London, and thereby much time was lost. He further says that in sending out such papers Mrs. Mead fails to give any instructions as to how they are to be used, and that in this way he is sometimes left in doubt as to exactly what you wish.

Technically, my resignation from the Theosophical Society removes me from the Eastern School also, so that I ought not to speak at or even attend any Eastern School meetings. Of course if some of the same people, meeting not as an Eastern School group but merely as friends, should invite me to meet them and should

## CWL Speaks

ask me questions, I know of no reason why in that unofficial capacity I should not reply to them. The Colonel saw clearly that if I had declined to resign and had thereby forced the Committee into advising that I be expelled, there would certainly have been a split in the ranks of the Society – a catastrophe which you will agree that we must avoid at all costs. Please let me know what is going on, for down here I shall have but little opportunity of hearing. I need hardly say that though not officially a member, I am as utterly at your service and the Colonel's as ever. With very much love from us both, I am ever,

Yours most affectionately,

C. W. Leadbeater.

The following was the letter from G.R.S. Mead to Helen Dennis. As it was a private communication, Mead did not have any inhibition in expressing his deep bitterness regarding Annie Besant's leadership and approach to theosophical work:

5.29.06 London

You are indeed smitten heavily. That last bit of beastliness is unutterably foul. But I don't think we have got to the bottom of it yet; I believe you will get still further evidence. In fact, I have held from the beginning that he has gone to all possible lengths. He is insane; it is one of the very worst cases of sexual inversion on record. So much for the man. He is past praying for on this plane. But what is to my mind worse is the revelation of the supineness of our folk. Can you believe it? ----- is still helping the Satyr in the bosom of his family. In trying to put a little backbone into his flabbily carcass – bus his is like a bit of chewed string.

And now lets us look at the brighter side of things. For 10 years the T.S. has had a spiritual and intellectual life largely crushed by the blind adulation of and servile submission to psychism. --- has during that period wielded an absolute autocracy and exercised it to the full. This has been all wrong; has never been intended and has no sanction from higher sources. But so infatuate have been the faithful, so fanatical, so blind, that they

## Pedro Oliveira

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have turned on each and every one who dared to breathe a word against the transcendancy [sic] of these psychic tyrants that they have exalted to the highest reason.

Nothing short of a cataclysm, nothing short of an earthquake could possibly break this state of affairs; even now the fanatics are resisting against the rule of justice, common sense straightforwardness honesty and elementary virtues without which the T.S. is a danger to society and not a rallying ground of righteousness.

In our hearts therefore we ought to rejoice and sing hymns of praise, that the day of freedom has dawned; that our shackles are struck off, that reason and evidence and moderation and humility can have their voices heard at last. The repression that has been going on is abominable.

AB's ukases to the E.S. have been false in history, partisan in intuition and without any sanction from higher sources. One has had to stand by and see these things circulated and the blind and credulous imitative swallowed it all as direct from the Great Ones. There was nothing to do but stand aside. For upwards of three years I have stood aside and done absolutely nothing in the E.S.

That miserable time is over. The autocracy of AB is at an end. I for one refuse to go on without a council which can be a court of appeal and prevent the alteration of the whole School every 6 months to suit her whims and partisan ends.

It's little enough to ask for in the present ghastly circumstances which prove so conclusively her incompetency.

The fanatics doubtless would kill me if they could and if they knew I was meditating anything of this kind, but I not only am meditating it, but I am absolutely determined to carry it through. The old regime is rotten and wrong: no Master ever gave AB the right to tyrannize over her fellows as she has done. She is not fit to have autocratic power; indeed no one is fit to have it. It's all wrong!

Mr Mead's unprecedented attack on Annie Besant seems to ignore important developments while Madame Blavatsky was still

## CWL Speaks

alive. We reproduce below some of her decisions and statements regarding Mrs. Besant:

“Esoteric Section. [T.S. Seal]

H. P. Blavatsky

E.S.

O R D E R

“I hereby appoint in the name of the MASTER, Annie Besant Chief Secretary of the Inner Group of the Esoteric Section & Recorder of the Teachings.

H.P.B. ∴

“To Annie Besant, C.S. of the I.G. of the E.S. & R. of the T.  
“April 1, 1891.

“Read and Recorded April 11/91. William Q. Judge, Sec. U.S.”

[Source: *H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*, volume 12]

The abbreviation C.S. of the I.G. of the E.S. & R. of the T. stands for Chief Secretary of the Inner Group of the Esoteric Section and Recorder of the Teachings.

In a letter to William Q. Judge, on March 27, 1891, Madame Blavatsky stated:

UNSELFISHNESS AND ALTRUISM is Annie Besant’s name, but with me and for me she is Heliodore, a name given to her by a Master, and that I use with her, it has a *deep Meaning*. It is only a few months she studies occultism with me in the *innermost* group of the E.S., and yet she has passed far beyond all others. She is not psychic nor spiritual in the least - all intellect, and yet she hears Master’s voice when alone, sees His Light, and recognizes his voice from that of D—. Judge, *she is a most wonderful woman*, my right hand, my successor, when I will be forced to leave you, my sole hope in England, as you are my sole hope in America.

[See *Theosophical History*, July-October 1991]

## Pedro Oliveira

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The following reproduction of part of a letter from Laura Mead, G.R.S. Mead's wife, to Helen Dennis presents evidence that the Leadbeater case was not only about CWL. It was also about Annie Besant's leadership. Laura Mead's letter is another bitter attack on Mrs Besant, portraying her virtually as a failure in her present life and unworthy to exercise leadership in the movement. We reproduce some passages of the letter, dated May 29<sup>th</sup> 1906:

Yes, I do say to you, and I repeat it, do not resign for I see in this tempest a great clearing of the air. The autocracy and reign of despotism are finished and Mrs. Besant will be put in her true position, if she will take it, that of an older student, who has been a link, and will continue to be a link with the Masters so long, and so long only, as she acts honestly by the other students. ... Unless we can get a good sound basis for future work both my husband and I are prepared to break up the E.S. but we do not intend to be hasty, there is plenty of time and when this affair has soaked into members a little they will modify their attitude of themselves, but if you too hastily kick people when they are down more harm is done. This is occultism, this is all a great lesson and a great opportunity if it is grasped. It is by the supine folly and blind fanaticism of the members that both A.B. and C.W.L. have been put in positions that neither were fitted to hold. ... CWL drops out so I need not think of him. But knowing his utter untrustworthiness and want of truth in ordinary life, and having always suspected his immorality I cannot hesitate in saying that many of his claims are without foundation. Also I do not think the Masters are likely to take into "companionship" sex perverts. But we must remember that one of the reproaches against the Christ was that he consorted with publicans and sinners. So that while we can be quite sure that any Masters worth thinking of, condemn any such conduct as C.W.L. we can still understand that they in their great purity and wider wisdom will also help him if and when possible. ... She [Annie Besant] is at a very crucial moment in her inner life and I hope and pray she will pull through. But I think it quite on the cards that she may go under for this life. She wants all the love in thought we can send her.

## CWL Speaks

The subsequent career of Annie Besant, both as President of the Theosophical Society as well as a leader of the Indian renaissance in the first two decades of the twentieth century, show that she did not 'go under for this life' but went on to become an admired and respected trailblazer who brought inspiration and a sense of purpose to many thousands around the world.

In a letter to Mr and Mrs Dennis from Paris, dated May 31<sup>st</sup> 1906, Robert A. Burnett says:

My dear friends

Your letter of May 16<sup>th</sup> is before me written and mailed before the cable of like date that I sent from London had been transmitted to you by Mr. Fullerton; I trust that it brought a feeling of peace, in that this "God forsaken idiot" (Miss Ward's coinage) was stopped from further depredations; as you are the chief instruments in the hands of karma that have brought this about, the greater the obligation we are all under to you. Your letter brings a copy of one to you from Raja and it is to speak of that chiefly that I am now writing. Last evening it was my privilege to dine with the Bernards in company with Mr. Keightley and Miss Weeks. I mentioned the fact that C. Jinarajadasa was undertaking to cajole you; they nearly all exclaimed at the same instant "he has met his master there" and so I judge also; yet desire to say, do not be disturbed by everything he may do; all the leaders on this side endorse your decision in the matter of withholding those papers, or rather that printed Circular of Mrs. Besant's and as Mr. Bernard says, Leadbeater wont (sic) be warned by the T.S. hence his pupils like C.J. and Basil are going to put him into the hands of criminal prosecution, by bringing attention to these acts, in their attempt to defend him. The debt must be paid and as L. has not yet seen his error, a most terrible experience awaits him. Your duty and mine is to be pure channels and it is no less his. You may be pleased to learn that there is a strong possibility of Mr. Bertram Keightley being in attendance at our convention if held

## Pedro Oliveira

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on or about the 23<sup>rd</sup> of Sept. if you think well of it, I am sure he would be glad of an expression, to that effect; he seems to me, to be the man that can do us more good than any other I have met; his 25 years of the closest association with the affairs of the Society and his high standing in every way, made him desirable; he is my choice of those I have met so far. Mr. Chakravarti is coming and expected here by the 12<sup>th</sup> of June to visit Mr. Keightley and the children, and until he has learned fully of Mr. Chakravarti's plans Mr. Keightley cannot promise fully that he will come to America – as he may have to go to India. It might be well to mention the probability of his visit to our prominent workers, as those who know him, might choose to urge it.

Please show this to my wife, as I may not write her by this mail. The children at Bernards are charming. The girl asked (after our first meeting) if she would be allowed to see me again; at our second meeting she sat on my knee and sang for me in four languages: is this not compensation many fold what little I may have done? Am to go specially to pass Saturday afternoon with Mrs. Bernard.

Sincerely and Fraternaly,  
R. A. Burnett

Simla, June 13th.

Cable from Annie Besant to Mrs. Dennis.

“Seen evidence. Defence impossible. Sending repudiation.”

June 21<sup>st</sup>

Cablegram from C. Jinarajadasa to A.B.

“Besant, Benares. Does your cable Dennis mean endorsement action School officers pressing expulsion. Do you repudiate X [CWL] altogether or only advice? Has large body friends America believing firmly sincerity purity motives. Newspapers published affair June sixth. Please cable fully. Will reimburse. Jinarajadasa, Chicago.”

Srinagar, June.

Cable from Annie Besant to C. Jinarajadasa

## CWL Speaks

“Consider officials action unwise. Approve resignation. Re-  
pudiated teaching and actions. Think him glamourous.”

Next is a less known letter from Douglas Pettit to his father, Fred, a copy of which was supplied by the latter to C. Jinarajadasa:

Tacoma Athletic Club.  
Tacoma, Washington  
June 8, 1906.

My dear Fred,

I have your letter of the 5<sup>th</sup> and also mother's with various enclosures to answer. Nothing arrived from you to day [sic]. You say that I am taking a wrong attitude, but I think there that you make a mistake yourself. You know yourself how hard it is for one to explain his views in writing, and I would rather say noting than give a wrong idea. I cannot begin at the beginning, and go through the whole thing, and explain every thing — it would simply take pages and then probably at the end of it you would need a lot of other explanations to show the reason for such things. If you could manage to come down for a little while or if mother or Yarco comes down I could explain a good deal to the latter although not all. But if only you were here, I could tell you all and explain matters thoroughly. I also have some things to show you where you did a great wrong, but that has no place in a letter. Fortunately Mr L's explanation and warning have gone a long way in saving me from running into harm and I feel my great gratitude to him increasing more and more.

I take Raja's view myself and I think — in fact I know — that a wrong attitude has been taken, and it seems to me fair play has not been allowed at all. With regard to the end of this first paragraph the quotation was from only a part of a note, and we do not know what the former portion of it was. It is hard to explain these things in a letter, but any questions that you like to ask I will do my best to answer them.

It was a great pity to have sent this to the press, and it looks as if it would get into the papers. I am sorry that I cannot explain the

Pedro Oliveira

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thing in this letter, much as I would like to but ask any questions, and I will try my best to answer them fully.

Can you not manage to come down, because I could then explain all your doubts, and set you right. I do not think that the instructions have much to do with the attacks, because, as I told you, they were to be continued only for a very short time. Do not call them a habit, because they were never intended to be anything of the kind. The motive which instigated them, I know was of the purest. It will be best for you to send all letters care of the Athletic Club, because I am going to have a room there very soon. I am afraid my letter will be disappointing, but remember I shall be glad to answer any questions.

With very much love to you both,

I am ever

Your affectionate son,

Douglas

10 East Parade, Harrogate,  
England, June 12, 1906.

My dear Annie,

Your letters of May 17th and 24th have been forwarded to me together.

Your resignation is absolutely unthinkable, it will not do to desert a ship because some of its crew mistake their line of action under difficult conditions. My own resignation was because there must not be even a possibility that the Society may be credited with an opinion from which the majority of its members dissent. I quite agree that the action in America has been not only precipitate, but insane. I think Fullerton now begins to doubt somewhat, for he tries to justify that precipitation by complaining that Raja was writing to certain friends in my favour, and that so he was forced to abandon his wish for secrecy. Dates however show this claim to be inaccurate; your reply to Mrs. Dennis' letter was dated February 26th and could not therefore reach her before almost the end of March, whereas those letters from Miss Kunz which I sent you were dated March 9th and 15th respectively; the fact is that the matter was known to many, and Fullerton was tele-

## CWL Speaks

graphing and writing about it considerably before our answers were received. Even if this were not so, it would seem ridiculous that the Committee of a Section should feel itself forced into suicidal action by anything that Raja could say or do. The truth seems to be that they all lost their heads, and so were hurried into a serious mistake – perhaps impelled by those who are always ready to take advantage of our errors. I am enclosing a copy of a letter which I recently wrote to Fullerton, pointing out what I think should have been done; but it is useless to assail his triple-armoured prejudices when once he has made up his mind. As to the E.S. this is your province, and I dare not even attempt to advise, but I feel strongly that though the action of these people seems to me insane, cruel and ungrateful, they have yet persuaded themselves somehow that it is their duty, even their painful duty, so that their error is one of judgment, not of intention; and I have made too many mistakes in judgment myself to feel in the least angry with them.

When I attended the meeting of the British Committee I saw for the first time the additional evidence, or what is called the rebuttal. I presume that both that and the Report of the Committee Meeting has reached you long before this. Douglas Pettit was their third boy; it is true that he has had epileptic seizures and is at present undergoing treatment which is curing them; but they have no right to try to connect this with me. During the twelve months that he was with me he was perfectly well, and would have remained so if he had stayed with me. The boy, who had previously engaged in undesirable practice was George Nevers. The other points I answered in a previous letter.

You suggest my living at Cambridge or Oxford until Basil takes his degree. I also had thought of this, but our best friends in London are strongly of opinion that if I stay in England the enemies of the Society will make some endeavour to set the law in motion against me. While I cannot see how such a charge could be sustained, it is unfortunately true that if it were publicly made the harm to the Society would be the same whether it succeeded or failed, so I am taking their advice and waiting quietly in pra-

## Pedro Oliveira

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laya for a while. As to the future, I should like your advice. For the moment I am living comfortably and inexpensively in retirement, and I can continue to do so until matters settle down a little, so that we can see what is wise. If there is still work that I can do, work not openly Theosophical, so that the eager Mead and Keightley cannot follow me with their persecutions, I shall be glad to do it – if it be in India, so much the better, of course. Is there any possibility of Rangoon, considering that Chakravarti and Dhammapala influence? Also if it brings me in enough to live upon, it will be well; for I suppose that the income from royalties will drop almost to zero. While I am quiet here I shall probably do some more writing, though I must wait some time before I can publish, unless I can do so under a nom de plume. But in any case there is no harm in resting quietly here for a few months, if you have no suggestion which requires immediate action.

With very much love from us both,

Yours affectionately,

C. W. Leadbeater

P. S. I have had remarkably good letters from Keagey and Mrs. Courtwright. They seem to have had some intuition which guided them nearer to the truth than most people.

The letter below, written by William Frederick Pettit, Douglas' father, is important as it presents the viewpoint and attitude of one of the parents whose son was caught up in the scandal. Pettit, surprisingly, while eager to find out the truth about what happened to his son, unleashes a strong criticism of Alexander Fullerton and at the other officers who charged CWL with immoral practices and maintains that the whole process was being conducted in a way that was unfair to the accused. He also complains about the exposure of his family while the other families were sheltered from scrutiny.

## CWL Speaks

621 Jervis St.  
Vancouver, B.C.  
June 16, 1906.

Mr Alexander Fullerton,  
General Secretary American Section TS  
New York.

Dear Mr Fullerton,

Your letter of June 9<sup>th</sup> is before me. So far as we are concerned, the X. [CWL, *Compiler*] matter resolves itself into two parts: The first deals with the question of the manner of handling it as it relates to us as factors in the case, if not members, but on this point you may wish to split hairs about our dues not being paid, and perhaps it may be ruled that we were out of the Society.

The second deals with the charges brought against C.W.L. and while the British Executive has seen fit to practically expel him, I, for one, have no intention of accepting his decision as a basis for judging the matter at issue for the very good reason that as so much has been accepted on mere hearsay evidence – mere gossip – it is quite possible that other matters of a far more vital nature have been accepted on much about the same authority. I shall therefore reserve judgment until I have the evidence that Douglas is about to give coupled with such explanations I may receive from other sources.

Looking at this question at long range and perhaps more judgment than seems to have been displayed in the East, it proves to me four things:

1. That you and “your superiors” have demonstrated yourselves as absolutely incompetent (cruelly so, I think) to handle so enormous a case as this one against X. has shown itself to be, for you are charging this man with the blackest crime it is possible for a human being to commit — and you do this with a light-heartedness that is appalling.

2. That either you or “your superiors” have been guilty of a shameful breach of confidence in disclosing the contents of certain communications of X. and AB.

3. That as you admit (and Mrs Dennis the same) that you have been guided in our case by absolute irresponsible statements regarding our attitude towards a matter of which we were absolutely ignorant — mere gossip in fact emanating in Toronto (we can put our hands on the member at short notice) carried by another member we know well to Chicago and there embellished as we find it when the cry was started.

4. That in the wild desire to maintain your position towards X. you and “your superiors” lost all balance and were carried away on currents without a tittle of calm judgment essential, nay vital, in common fairness to one accused of the blackest of crimes.

Let it be understood that I am not dealing in this letter with the merits of the case against X. That I shall take up in another communication. What I want to know now is this: from whom did you hear this story that we were aware of all this X. matter? Will you give the name and ask the member where he or she got the information from and trace this thing to its source. I haven't a doubt where it will land you. It is a very strange thing that X. should have mentioned about “my family”, when, as a matter of fact from the time he left this city, in Sept. three years ago, I have not had more than six or eight letters from him, and inasmuch as this question was never dreamed of, how could he write about us in that strain? I should immensely like to see that letter. If Mr L. ever wrote to you that he “had talked with us about his prescription for boy” and “that we approved of it”, it is an infamous lie. Nothing has ever been said to us by anyone.

Who told you “months ago that Mrs Pettit had stated that she knew of some prescription given by [sic] P. (Douglas) by Mr L., that she did not understand its precise nature, but that it was practiced by P. in the bath, and that she had entire confidence in any teaching Mr L. might give and was perfectly willing for P. to follow it.”

The member who told you so is an absolute liar. Neither myself nor Mrs Pettit would have countenanced for one minute such a practice, and had we known of it, we would certainly have raised the question with Mr L. at once.

## CWL Speaks

We are entitled to know who gave you this information, for it is infamous gossip – vile – slanderous – one can hardly find epithets strong enough to characterize such conduct. And yet you and your superiors swallow all this on mere hearsay.

It is rather late in the day to be amazed; it was your place to find out if the statements were true before you proceeded in the mad fashion that has characterized the late proceedings against X. One might hunt far and wide for a case where a tribunal sat and judged a man very largely on to say the least untrustworthy evidence.

You say: “The circular did not mention P. or any particular boy or give any clue to identity.”

Who are these boys who have been ruined? I demand to know where they are, where they live, in order that I may communicate with their parents to find out if all this that has been said about them is true. And inasmuch as Douglas is probably the most conspicuous one, how comes it that no inquiries were ever made of him, for his evidence had some value.

In the following paragraph you give the American Section away somewhat by saying that the circular was issued because Mr C. Jinarajadasa was circulating through the Section what was not a correct account and striving to create a faction. I have before me your letter of May 24 to C.J., also a copy of his letter to you under date May 28. They neither of them tend to make your position very clear, and rather confirm what otherwise I might have thought hastily penned, when I wrote that you and the sedition were burning to win the day “at all costs”, and to do this it was considered wiser to leave the Pettit’s (sic) alone.

Now, Mr Fullerton, you seem rather elated over the idea that this matter has at last gone to the press — as if it reflected lustre on the T.S. to have had presumably within its fold another Oscar Wilde of whom it has purged itself as soon as he was discovered. Do you really imagine that the world will applaud this as being anything wonderful? I should feel inclined to say that the T.S. is not much of a proposition if it breeds these kind of individuals.

In your communication of May 24 to C.J., you say:

## Pedro Oliveira

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“I have had a letter from the great man, most kind and generous and affectionate”, and after explaining that it was the intention of the Committee to have X. resign and give out the following to the press:

“It is understood that Mr L. intends to devote himself to literature in retirement.”

“This would take the edge off the resignation”, say you, and you wind up in this fashion:

“You are entirely right, I am confident in saying that the Master will not cast the great man off. I believe this as emphatically as you do. But I think you err in supposing either that They disfavour that action taken by the Executive Committee, or that They have failed to give distinct approval thereto.”

And this is the man who 8 days previous to the writing of this letter was practically expelled as being immoral, vile, double dealing, deceitful and a liar, and against whom it has been stated, in fact in your circular insinuated, that there is a sodomy charge preferred in both Europe and India. Perhaps you will rise to explain your position in this matter. It is up to you and every member who took part in the recent howl against C.W.L.

A copy of this letter is to be sent to the Secretary of the British Executive. Whether I find personally that C.W.L. has wronged my son and has deserved what has been meted out to him or whether I decide otherwise, will not alter the absolute necessity in the cause of Justice that the disgraceful methods adopted on this side to foment an antagonism against Mr L. shall be made known, and I do not hesitate to say that, in my opinion, a severe censure should be passed on the American Section by the British Executive Committee in view of the really startling revelations that will come to them through this communication.

So far as the decision of the British Executive is concerned, personally I am of the opinion that no woman should have sat on so momentous an issue. I do not admit the possibility of any woman approaching a case of this kind, fraught with such tremendous issues, nor of her ability to bring that fine poise to bear on a decision of this nature.

## CWL Speaks

As I have said, I am not attempting to whitewash X. If there is anyone in the wide world who should be “boiling over with righteous indignation”, It should be I, — the father of one of the ruined boys. Thanks however to the Theosophical teaching, I am able to approach the matter with calm and some poise — strangely absent I am sorry to say — in the many whom I had hitherto regarded as members of light and leading of this Society.

Yours very truly  
Wm. Pettit.

10, East Parade, Harrogate,  
England  
27th June, 1906.

Dear Mr. Pettit,

I did answer at the time the letters you wrote to me with regard to Douglas' illness, though apparently my reply did not reach you, perhaps because at that period we were both of us constantly moving about. It seems to me entirely unwarranted to attribute that illness in anyway to the method which I suggested, for during the whole time that he was with me he was perfectly well, and he himself mentioned in writing to me that quite a different cause had been assigned for the fits by those who were trying to cure him. However, to be entirely on the safe side, as soon as I heard of the illness I myself recommended the discontinuance of the practice in a private letter to Douglas, which seems to have been stolen by a servant from the waste paper basket or an old coat, and circulated quite freely. So you need have no anxiety on Douglas' account with regard to this practice since he has discontinued it now for a long time; but he himself can tell you about this. I am not, of course, in any way responsible for the scandalous gossip that has been disseminated by the Committee of the American Section, and I quite agree with you that you have every right to feel aggrieved at the disgraceful use that they have made of information alleged to have been obtained from your family.

Pedro Oliveira

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On receipt of the complaint from Mr. Fullerton, last February, I explained the whole matter to him in a strictly private letter, which he has in the most dishonourable manner allowed to be widely circulated in America; so probably you may have seen it. Summarised very briefly, it amounts to this: long ago as a clergyman and even before that as a lay-worker, it was forced upon my notice that the greatest difficulty for boys and young men is the sexual problem, and that one who wishes to help them must be prepared with advice on the subject. Where absolute virginity is possible, that is best; but in the large number of cases where it is not possible, it seems to me that carefully regulated periodic discharge is preferable to the uncontrolled self-abuse which is so sadly common among boys, and infinitely preferable to the doctor's remedy of prostitution. There is also the very great advantage that by this method the matter is put upon a natural commonsense basis, all ideas of prurient mystery are avoided, and thus we prevented the formation of the vast masses of undesirable thought-forms which so often surround young fellows. This opinion may be right or wrong, but at any rate it seems plain; yet the American Committee so grossly misconstrued it as to leave me no alternative but immediate resignation. With that resignation the tumult ought to cease, since its avowed object was to attain that end; but apparently it still continues. How the affair concerns the rest of the members, exalted into a momentous question, I fail to see. I am sorry that the trouble should have arisen, but I must disclaim all responsibility for any harm that may come to the Society from the foolish and malicious promulgation of matters not intended for publicity.

I am glad to hear that Douglas is so much better, and I hope that he may have no return of the attacks which have troubled him. With kind regards to Mrs. Pettit, I am,

Yours sincerely,

C. W. Leadbeater.

In the next letter, CWL replies to a letter from Annie Besant which lets him know that a change in attitude had taken place in her as a result of new evidence she had received in Benares, possi-

## CWL Speaks

bly including the minutes of the Advisory Board meeting in London and, perhaps, a copy of the 'Cipher Letter' from the American officials:

10 E. Parade, Harrogate, June 30, 06

My dear Annie,

Your letter of the 7th has just reached me, and I will try to answer it as clearly as possible. I do not know what you have heard, but evidently some exaggerated or distorted story. I held back nothing consciously when we spoke at Benares – why should I from you, whom I always so fully trusted? Besides, you are perfectly able to see all for yourself, so I could not conceal anything even if I would. I could ask no better statement of my case, if it had to be stated, than that which you yourself suggested in one of your recent letters. But, dear, you are now bringing in all sorts of occult and complicated reasons which for me have not existed. My opinion in the matter, which so many think so wrong, was formed long before Theosophical days, and before I knew anything about all these inner matters. I did not even originate it; for it came to me first through ecclesiastical channels, though I should be breaking an old promise if I said more than that, save that also there were none but the highest intentions. It was put somewhat in this way:

There is a natural function in man, not in itself shameful (unless indulged in at another's expense) any more than eating or drinking; but like them capable, if misused and uncontrolled, of leading to all kinds of excesses and sins. The Church would say that the very few, the great saints (as we should say, those who practised celibacy in past lives), can altogether repress this and rise above it, just as a very few have been able in ecstasy or trance to pass long periods without food; and certainly where that is possible, it is the highest course of all. But for the majority, this function also will have its way, the accumulation takes place, and discharges itself at intervals, usually a fortnight or so, but in some

cases much oftener, the mind in the latter part of each interval being constantly oppressed by the matter.

The idea was to take it in hand before the age when it grew so strong as to be practically uncontrollable, and to set up the habit of the regular but smaller artificial discharge, with no thoughts at all in between. This, it was said (and I think truly enough), would prevent the boy from turning his attention to the other sex, save him from any temptation later towards prostitution, and bring him to the time of his marriage (if he was to marry) without previous contact with any other woman. (Prostitution was always held up to us as the summit of wickedness, because of its effect upon women, its degradation of another to minister to lust). I have known cases in which precisely that result was attained, though I think the suggestion was intended chiefly for those who were expected to adopt a celibate life as priests or monks. The interval usually suggested was a week, though in some cases half that period was allowed for a time; the recommendation was always to lengthen the interval so far as was compatible with the avoidance of thought or desire upon the subject. Of course you will understand that this sexual side of life was not made prominent, but was taken only as one point amidst a large number of directions for the regulation of life.

I knew this to have worked well with many in Christian days, to have saved many boys from the constant and uncontrolled self-abuse which is so very much more common among boys of fourteen than anyone who has not had the opportunity of enquiry can possibly imagine, and from the looseness of life which almost invariably follows a few years later; and when I learn from Theosophy so much wider a view of life, there seemed little to alter these considerations. The power to see the horrible thoughts which so frequently cluster round children of both sexes, and to sense even more fully than before the wide spread of evil among the young, were, if anything, additional arguments in favour of definite regulation. So when boys came specially under my care, I mentioned this matter to them among others, always trying to avoid any sort of false shame, and to make the whole thing appear as natural and simple as possible, though of course

## CWL Speaks

not a matter to be spoken of to others. If you read any of my notes to the boys referring to this (I am told some of them have been pilfered and circulated), you will find me asking carefully for exact particulars, and cautioning them on no account to shorten the period prescribed, whatever that may have been for it naturally varied in different cases, a week being the most usual. The regularity is the preliminary step; it makes the whole thing a matter of custom instead of an irregular yielding to an emotion, and also makes easy the habit of keeping the thoughts entirely away from it until the prescribed moment.

Pardon me for going into these distasteful details, but I do not wish to leave anything unexplained. I thought I had conveyed all these in my letter to Fullerton (please look at it again and see) and in our conversation at Benares; but now at least it is surely clear. It appears to me that the arguments hold good, that probably on the whole this is the least dangerous way of dealing with a very difficult problem; but as I told you at Benares, I am entirely willing to defer to your judgment, and since so many good and sensible friends besides yourself are decidedly against my view, I am ready to yield my opinion and refrain from mentioning it in the future, so you will not hear any more of it.

Now that I have tried to make everything as plain as I can, may I in my turn seek for a little light as to what is happening? You know the American officials wanted to case me out lest they should be supposed to be identified with this opinion which they abhor; well, practically, that has been done, I have resigned and all connection has been severed. What more do they want? They apparently blame you for affording me sympathy and countenance, and they talk as though you were resisting my expulsion, even though I am already outside it! Do they wish to interfere with our private friendship? One would suppose so, since that is all that is left, though indeed that to me means everything, and I care little for the outer form of association, pleasant though that was while it lasted. Assuredly, I am sorry to leave the Society to which I have loyally devoted twenty-three years of service. Yet I know that I am inside the same as ever and that if any friends will

## Pedro Oliveira

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not let me do the work of the Masters in one direction, They will find means to employ me in some other.

I cannot now hold any office in the Theosophical Society or the Eastern School, but if in a private capacity I can help you in any way (as, for example, by answering questions from those who are still friendly to me), you know how glad I shall be.

You speak of defending the advice I gave; but you cannot defend it, because you do not agree with it, as you have clearly said from the first; therefore the clamour of the American Executive against you is silly. All that you can say (when you think it necessary) is that you know my intention in giving such advice to be good; but it is not a matter of great importance whether other people recognise that fact or not, for surely it matters little what opinion they hold of me. "To our own Master we stand or fall"; and He understands.

I wish very much that we could have been together on the physical plane to meet all these "charges"; so many people seem to be anxious to create misunderstanding between us; and their poisonous work is easier when we are thus far apart. Yet they shall not succeed. With very much love, I am as ever,

Yours most affectionately,

C. W. Leadbeater.

## Chapter 5

### Advisory Board Meeting, London, May 1906

We now come to the consideration of a document that, for many, ascertains the culpability of C.W. Leadbeater of the charges formulated against him by Mrs Helen Dennis and the Executive Committee of the American Section of the TS, in January 1906. As the crisis deepened and the controversy became widely known within the Society, Col. Olcott decided to convene a meeting of an 'Advisory Board' in London, on 16 May 1906, consisting of himself, the British Section's Executive Committee, a representative of the French Section, Pierre Bernard, and the official representative of the American Section, Robert A. Burnett, who was bringing with him the official documents containing the charges against CWL. In a telegram to him, Col. Olcott requested CWL to be in attendance.

Letters from that very month treated CWL as a 'defendant' and the meeting itself as a 'trial'. The letters from R.A. Burnett and G.R.S. Mead, from May 1906, which are included in this book, give an indication of their attitude towards the 'defendant'. Mead wrote to Helen Dennis: 'He is insane; it is one of the very worst cases of sexual inversion on record. So much for the man. He is past praying for on this plane.' Robert Burnett wrote to Helen Dennis and her husband: 'I trust that it [his letter to them] brought a feeling of peace, in that this "God forsaken idiot" (Miss Ward's coinage) was stopped from further depredations'; 'every boy that has come in contact with this moral leper is tainted with suspicion'. He also wrote to them: 'Mr. Bernard says, Leadbeater wont [sic] be warned by the T.S. hence his pupils like C.J. [C. Jinarajadasa] and Basil [Hodgson-Smith] are going to put him into the hands of criminal prosecution, by bringing attention to these acts, in their attempt to defend him.' Burnett also wrote: '...but if it will be of any help to assure you that by your work the most brazen wretch I ever met

has been brought from under cover; you have done more for the world than can be estimated.’

It is interesting to note that, six years later, when a graver charge was formally brought against him – that of sodomizing the young J. Krishnamurti – during the custody case of G. Narianiah, Krishnamurti’s father, against Annie Besant, which was filed in October 1912 – the charges of 1906 were revived and put before the court as evidence, including the minutes of the Advisory Board meeting in London. Not surprisingly, G.R.S. Mead who strongly pressed for CWL’s expulsion at that meeting, and Archibald M. Glass, who acted as the Secretary and wrote its minutes, made a statutory declaration, on 11<sup>th</sup> December 1912, about the authenticity of the Official Report of the meeting, with the obvious intent of making that document available as evidence for the court case in Madras. Mead had resigned from the TS in early 1909.

Since the court case of 1912 was the only time in his life where he could formally address the accusations against him in a court of law, and since the plaintiff’s lawyers had used in that trial the accusations levelled against CWL in 1906, it seems relevant to present some excerpts from the transcripts from the Madras court case, prefaced by a statement by one of his fierce critics, Arthur Nethercot, about his conduct in court:

The stage was thus set for the production of the culprit who had been dogged by scandalous tales and accusations wherever he had gone in the world for over a quarter of a century, but who had never been convicted of any wrong-doing, though the crime which was imputed to him and Krishnamurti was legally punishable by deportation for a period of thirteen years to life. Although Ramaswami Aiyar told me in 1956 that Leadbeater was evasive, shifty, and cloudy in his responses, whereas Annie Besant was honest, direct, and concrete, the actual records of the trial seem to show exactly the opposite. Leadbeater was concise, simple, and confident. In his replies to the cross-examination of both Mrs Besant and Ramaswami Aiyar he dealt with seeming integrity with his relations with the boys and their bathing practices. Never did he touch or “handle” the boys “indecently.” Only once did

## CWL Speaks

Aiyar's reiterated needling provoke him to an angry and emotional response. The prosecutor's ironical and facetious references to his claims of occult experiences made no dent in his imperturbability. He answered all the probing questions about his sexual teachings by maintaining his continuous conviction as to their rightness, though he no longer put them into practice. It was a purely physiological matter, not occult at all. Aiyar was unable to shake him. (Arthur H. Nethercot, *The Last Four Lives of Annie Besant*, Rupert Hart-Davis, Soho Square, London, 1963, p. 191)

Mr Leadbeater absolutely denied that he had handled or touched the sons of the plaintiff in an indecent manner. The question might be put to him fifty times and he would say it was the most infamous lie that he had ever heard. (Evidence given by CWL at the court case Besant vs. Narayaniah, Madras, 4<sup>th</sup> April 1913)

When the plaintiff asked Sir Subramania Aiyar as to the legal effect of the guardianship letter (Ex. A.) he was advised that if he executed it he would have waived his right as father and would not be able to revoke it at will and the Court would consider what was best for the interests of the children, and it seems to me that this opinion induced the plaintiff to search for something which would influence the Court in revoking the agreement and has caused the revival of the charges made against Mr. Leadbeater in 1906 and has in fact coloured all the evidence in this case. (Judgement by Justice J. H. Bakewell, 18 April 1913, on the above-mentioned court case)

At the settlement of issues I enquired what charges the defendant desired to make against the plaintiff, and the 9<sup>th</sup> issue as to the fitness of the plaintiff was intentionally limited to the plaintiff's knowledge of the facts in the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> issues. I have found that the alleged acts were not committed. Since I have found that the alleged acts were not committed, there is no allegation against the fitness of the plaintiff to be the guardian of his

## Pedro Oliveira

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children. He has, in my opinion, attempted to strengthen his case with lies, but that cannot be said to render him unfit.

(From Justice Bakewell's judgement, 15th day of April, 1913)

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. (Justice Bakewell's statement in the same judgement)

This "opinion" [of Justice Bakewell] has been widely quoted generally without any rider that it was not a judgement based on any evidence, but upon Mr Leadbeater's own opinions on sex problems.

(Josephine Ransom, *A Short History of the Theosophical Society*)

Before we present the full text of the minutes of the Advisory Board meeting it is necessary to point out that at no time was the draft of those minutes, which became a template for many future accusations against him, sent to Mr Leadbeater. He attended the meeting voluntarily after receiving the communication from Col. Olcott in a telegram; he submitted his resignation from the Theosophical Society before the meeting, and at the suggestion of the President-Founder; and he answered the questions put to him, but notably he was not given an opportunity to go through the stenographic copy of his statements before the Minutes were distributed.

During the 1922 police inquiry in Sydney, when similar accusations were levelled against him, and again all the documents of the 1906 case were presented to the police by his accusers, the boys then residing at The Manor centre, in Mosman, where CWL lived, attended the police department, gave their statements and were later allowed to go through their statements, make corrections if necessary and sign them. That common courtesy was denied to C.W. Leadbeater in 1906.

## CWL Speaks

Another important point, which was brought out by Mr Sinnett during that London meeting, was that while CWL was subjected to a relentless, and sometimes prosecutorial cross-examination, no cross-examination of the boys who accused him of immorality was available at any time. Annie Besant also drew attention to this point in some of her statements about the Leadbeater case.

Report of Meeting Called by Colonel Olcott  
to Discuss Certain Charges against C. W. Leadbeater  
Grosvenor Hotel, Buckingham Palace Road, S.W., London  
On Wednesday, May 16, 1906, at 5 p.m.

*Present:* Col. H. S. Olcott, Mr. Burnett as representative of the Executive Committee of the American Section, Mr. P. E. Bernard as representative of the Executive Committee of the French Section, and the members of the Executive Committee of the British Section, namely, Mr. Sinnett, Dr. Nunn, Mr. Mead, Mrs. Stead, Miss Ward, Miss Spink, Mrs. Hooper, Mr. Glass, Mr. Keightley and Mr. Thomas.

Mr. Leadbeater was also in attendance and present at the first part of the meeting. Col. Olcott took the chair and asked Mr. Glass to act as Secretary to the meeting.

*Col. Olcott:* I have called you together to act as an advisory board in the matter before us. The matter is to listen to charges against Mr. Leadbeater of having systematically taught boys the practice of self-abuse. You have read the documents. Among them is a partial confession of Mr. Leadbeater, and rebutting evidence. The Executive Committee of the American Section would have expelled the accused but he is not a member of their Section. They therefore appealed to the President Founder to help them and sent a representative of the section. The accused being a member of the London Lodge of the British Section, and holding the office of Presidential Delegate, and the Appeal being made by the Executive Committee of a Section it acquires an importance which prevents me from leaving the matter in its ordinary course to a Lodge. I have therefore asked the Executive Committee of the British Section to assist me. The French Congress Committee have cancelled

## Pedro Oliveira

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Mr. Leadbeater's invitation to act as Vice-President of the Congress. I have asked them to send a delegate to be present. So that we may avoid the least appearance of unfair play I have asked Mr. Leadbeater to attend the meeting. I will call upon the American and French delegates to read their credentials.

Mr. Burnett then read the following:

“Extract from Minutes of the Executive Committee, American Section, T. S. held in N.Y.C. on April 13, 1906.”

“Resolved that the Commissioner appointed by the Executive Committee of the American Section, T. S. in the C. W. Leadbeater case be and hereby is instructed, authorised and empowered as follows:

First: That he go to Europe forthwith, taking with him documents containing charges and evidence against C. W. Leadbeater and personally lay them before the President-Founder and the Lodge or Lodges of the T. S. of which the accused is a member, and ask that they be acted upon immediately; said Commissioner giving all the assistance in his power to bring the matter to a speedy and final issue.

Second: That he shall also place in the hands of the General Secretary of the British Section T. S. a copy of the said charges and evidence with accompanying documents for his information asking his aid and that of the President-Founder in bringing the matter to an early and satisfactory conclusion without unnecessary publicity, so that the good name and well-being of the T. S. movement and of the T. S. may thereby be safeguarded as far as possible.

Third: That the said Commissioner shall report progress by cable and letter from time to time to the General Secretary, and on the termination of his mission shall submit to the Executive Committee a full and final report in writing of same.

It is understood and agreed that there is nothing in the foregoing instructions to the Commissioner that will in any way interfere with his using his best judgment when, after consultation with the President-Founder, a somewhat different method of procedure should be decided upon.”

(Sd.) ALEXANDER FULLERTON,  
*Gen. Secy.*

## CWL Speaks

Col. Olcott translated the following Resolutions of the Executive Committee of the French Section.

“To Dr. Th. Pascal—copy of the official report of the Meeting of the French Committee held in Paris on the 13th May.

(Sd.) PIERRE E. BERNARD,  
*Asst. Gen. Secy.*

(1) Le Conseil d'Administration estime que, si le Dr. Pascal, Secrétaire Generale de la Section, recoit du Colonel Olcott l'invitation officielle d'envoyer un representant de la Section Francaise au comite forme envue d'examiner l'affaire C.W.L. it ya d'envoyer ce delegue (Adopte a l'unanimite).

(2) Le ou les delegues envoyes auront carte blanche. (Adopte par 5 voix sur, 6, le Comt Courmes d'étant abstanu).

(3) Sont designes comme delegues, conjointement:— Le Dr. Pascal, Secrétaire Genl. M. Pierre Bernard, Sec. Gi. Adj. (Adopte a l'unanimite.)

*Olcott:* Of course you know that the executive power is vested in me. You are here to advise me and to hear what Mr. Leadbeater has to say, and to act according to your judgment after hearing him. A resolution should be passed calling upon me to do so, and I should follow that if there was nothing in my mind against it.

(The charges having been already in the hands of the Committee were taken as read).

*Thomas:* Have the copies been compared with the originals?

*Burnett:* They have.

*Thomas:* Have you the official documents?

*Olcott:* They are documents of the American Section, and we have the representative of the Section here and he certifies that they are exact copies.

*Burnett:* The originals are in the American Section. I have seen all the original papers and certify that these are exact copies.

(Mr. Leadbeater was then called upon to say what he wished.)

*Leadbeater:* I have already said that in my letter to Mr. Fullerton. I should also add that I regarded that letter as addressed to friends. I did not look upon it as a defence against an attack. I took the trouble to give a detailed explanation because I thought I was giving it to friends. I

## Pedro Oliveira

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should also say that the original document signed by four of the leading members contained a solemn pledge that they would take the greatest care that this would not become known and that they would not allow even a hint to escape. 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. So far as I am concerned what I said is exactly all I can say, except that if I were to elaborate, I could bring more reasons for the action. 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. Therefore I took the course which was taken by other members. I placed my resignation in the hands of the President-Founder, not with any idea of confessing to evil intent but simply to relieve the Society from any supposed complicity. You may hold any views of the course which I took, but our one idea is to prevent the Society from being injured. As to what comes to me, that is a minor matter; my own adhesion to all the Society means is the same in any case and whether a member or not my own beliefs will remain the same, only if my resignation be accepted that shuts me out from a certain kind of Theosophical work.

Since this has come forward it would be undesirable that I should appear before the public. Therefore it seems to me that there is little more I can say. I have only just now seen anything at all of the documents except that first letter. There have been other supposed rebuttals and other documents which I had only seen today, and while there are a number of points I should challenge as inaccurate, yet all those are minor points and do not affect the great question. It is simply that there are points of so-called rebuttal which are untrue and others so distorted that they do not represent the facts of the case, but these do not affect the central point. They could only be adduced to show I had not spoken the

## CWL Speaks

truth which is not so. I cling to what I have said to Mr. Fullerton. If wished I can discuss all the points.

*Olcott:* What do you desire?

*Mead:* I think it is only right and proper that Mr. Leadbeater should face it.

*Miss Ward:* Are we not here to judge upon the documents before us? It does not seem necessary to go into anything further.

*Thomas:* The rebuttal evidence has to do with points in the original. It is important it should be dealt with.

*Mr. Leadbeater:* With regard to Mr. Mead, I have come across no question regarding motive.

*Burnett:* That is true. Mr. Leadbeater has made a statement that his resignation is in the hands of the President-Founder.

*Olcott:* That is so; I have it.

*Burnett:* It would seem to me that the main question is this, that we ought to have Mr. Leadbeater's resignation read before anything else is done.

Miss Ward seconded and this was resolved. The following letter of resignation was read:

“London, May 16th, 1906.

The President-Founder  
of the Theosophical Society.

Dear Colonel Olcott,

In view of recent events, and in order to save the Society from any embarrassments, I beg to place in your hands my resignation of membership.

Yours as ever,

(Sd.) C. W. Leadbeater.”

*Burnett:* I would like to ask, Mr. President. There is nothing in that resignation which shows the nature of the charges or the cause of resignation, and it is a question which every member will ask. Mr. Leadbeater is not an ordinary member of the T. S. He has toured the world in the

## Pedro Oliveira

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interests of Theosophy and we have to meet the questions of the world, the questions of our own members, as to why this resignation. If we go into quibbling as to the exact wording of statements of fact we might go on without settling anything. If Mr. Leadbeater admits the charges to be true that settles the matter in my mind.

*Olcott:* Mr. Leadbeater, you admit that it was your practice to teach certain things?

*Thomas:* I should like to know if Mr. Leadbeater definitely admits the accuracy of the copy of his own letter to Mr. Fullerton and the original letter to Mrs. Besant.

*Leadbeater:* To the best of my knowledge and belief. I have somewhere the draft which I drew up of the letter I sent. I am not in a position to certify but I believe it to be a true copy.

*Thomas:* While I wish to fall in with the wishes of the American representative there are one or two most important points in the rebuttal evidence and it is most important, that we should be made clear on the matter.

*Leadbeater:* I can deal with it shortly. (The Chairman put it to the meeting that Mr. Leadbeater should deal with it. Agreed) I find paper No. 3, called a rebuttal, begins by speaking of a counter charge. I did not make one; I am simply speaking of certain facts, and they speak of a certain "Z." That statement in the first para is in direct contradiction to what the boy told me, and seeing he told it to me at the time with a wealth of detail it is difficult to say that he was inventing. I am inclined to think that these boys have been catechised—they speak of having to press them—and my idea is that they have got more than was there. In the case of the first sentence, that disagrees with the detailed statement made to me by the boy, in speaking to me of a good deal that did happen between himself and this young man. So that there he has misrepresented matters. The same thing applies to the fourth para. marked "2nd." Of course, that is merely setting statements of the same boy against one another. I may tell you that if I had had any idea that my letter to Mr. Fullerton was to go before other people I should not have mentioned "Z." I have enough of the old priestly idea of confession to keep back that.

Para 3, "A conversation, etc." That is practically speaking quite true. I told the mother that she had nothing more to fear. I had promises from

## CWL Speaks

“Z” and the boy and I thought the boy might help the young man. That is true but does not show my statement was untrue.

At the bottom of the page a quotation from Mrs. Besant’s letter, “That is not true, etc.” It is true that in that particular case I may not have done so. I have no recollection of this but had done it in many cases.

On top of the next page. “The interview mentioned in Mr. Leadbeater’s letter to Mr. Fullerton as taking place at Convention time between Mr. Leadbeater and “Z” was strictly private.” Of course it was. I can only reassert that I did mention the matter to Mr. Fullerton. Mr. Fullerton may have forgotten. It may be that all that I meant was not fully understood because the conventions prevent people speaking freely on such matters. I remember quite clearly having said to him “I think it will be all right.” The young man afterwards turned out to be not very worthy in other ways besides this. I had spoken to the young man at Mr. Fullerton’s request.

The third paragraph speaks of the proposed adoption of another boy. It was not I who had proposed the adoption. It was discussed at the Convention of 1904 and had been mentioned to me before by Mr. Fullerton. I think Mrs. Denis will corroborate this. I spoke to “Z” and asked him various questions. He gave me various promises as to what he would do. It is a mistake to say that I proposed the adoption, but finding the thing in train it was no business of mine to set myself against it.

At the bottom of the page the boy is made to say, “at last you know why I hate him so.” I do not know anything of this; I saw no signs of anything more than indifference. The letter was the first intimation to me of the hatred.

Then you come to the third boy. There is part of the letter which I wrote to him, and you will see that the advice given is along the lines I have been telling you and that should be evidence that the reason I gave for speaking is the correct one. It is a matter of curiosity of course, but I was going to ask how that document was obtained as it was torn up and thrown away.

*Burnett:* It was found intact in a discarded garment – in the pocket.

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

## Pedro Oliveira

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*Mead:* What does the word “still” mean in that letter? “Still, there may be this much reason in what he says, that while you are not quite well we should spend no force that can be avoided.” Is he to begin again when he is well?

*Leadbeater:* If he finds any accumulation he should relieve.

*Mead:* Return to the beginning of the rebuttal evidence. In paragraph No. 2, with reference to the young man “Z”. The boy says “Well, this was the reason; he did not try to do this same thing, but he talked about these matters in a way I did not like and his friendship became distasteful to me.” Can you throw any further light on that sentence?

*Leadbeater:* I have already said what that was in the account given to me. It went much further than it is said here.

*Mead:* What does “do” mean? You suggest in the case of “Z” that it was sodomy.

*Leadbeater:* I do not do that.

*Mead:* The boy did not do this same thing. In your case he states that it was done.

*Miss Ward:* I think we need not here go into these further details.

*Olcott:* We should not keep in anything, but have frank disclosure. You are not sitting judicially, but to advise me what to do.

*Thomas:* Mr. Mead’s question is a most important one. It involves whether Mr. Leadbeater simply gave advice or something different.

*Leadbeater:* It was not in any way something different in the sense of Mr. Mead.

*Thomas:* I don’t mean that.

*Leadbeater:* I don’t quite know what you mean.

*Mead:* It is quite clear. When boys practice self-abuse they do it on themselves. This sentence suggests something done by you. That is the meaning of the words. I ask for an explanation of this, or if you simply deny.

*Leadbeater:* I deny anything in the way that is apparently suggested but certainly not that that suggestion was made. I am not denying that in the least.

*Mrs. Stead:* I wish to say that though there are women present that ought to be no restraint to the free discussion.

## CWL Speaks

*Olcott:* I am extremely repugnant to have this discussion, but we must treat this thing as a physiological question.

*Thomas:* I am not quite satisfied with the answer. Should like to know definitely whether it was simply in the nature of advice or whether there was any action.

*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.

*Mead:* The boy suggests in the most distinct way that the difference between “Z” and you was that in the case of “Z” he spoke of these things, and in your case something was done to him.

*Leadbeater:* Nothing was done to him. You can’t be suggesting what seems to be the obvious suggestion.

*Mead:* You say the boy lies?

*Leadbeater:* He has misrepresented. I don’t like to accuse people of lies, but a construction has been put upon it which is not right.

*Thomas:* Your reply as to scarcely recollecting suggests that there were so many cases. I would like to know whether in any case—I am not suggesting sodomy—there was definite action.

*Leadbeater:* You mean touch? That might have taken place.

*Mead:* The third page in the letter to Mrs Besant: With great reluctance he admitted the facts of Mr. Leadbeater’s immoral conduct, and in reply to the question ‘when did it happen?’ he said: “The very first night I visited him when we slept together.” Why is it that on so many occasions when boys go to Mr. Leadbeater they sleep with him?

*Leadbeater:* That depends on the accommodation.

*Bernard:* That does not explain sharing baths.

*Olcott:* I was told by a lady in a recent case that there were two rooms prepared but both of them slept in one bed.

*Leadbeater:* What was the point of Mr. Bernard’s question? We have sometimes shared the bath. I suppose you understand that I have never thought of this sort of thing. I never thought of suspicion.

*Thomas:* One paragraph of the rebuttal evidence page 2, paragraph 2. You did not deal with the case of the two boys to be left in the care of “Z” and in connection with that although you do not admit the

## Pedro Oliveira

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accuracy of the boy's statement you admit that some serious things had taken place.

*Leadbeater:* I have not direct evidence.

*Thomas:* You inferred you believed it.

*Leadbeater:* I do not say I believe it, but what the boy said to me seemed undesirable. As to leaving the boys in charge, "Z" was greatly interested in boys and the question was could I turn over the care of them to any other person? This was one suggestion. I had had a talk with him and he had given me certain promises which were broken afterwards but I had no reason to think this.

*Thomas:* In your own statement you say the boy told you of sexual matters he had entered into with "Z". What do you mean?

*Leadbeater:* Do you want me to tell you exactly what the boy said?

*Thomas:* You have mentioned it to Mr. Fullerton.

*Leadbeater:* I did not go into detail.

*Thomas:* Despite this, did you think he was a man with whom boys might be safely left?

*Leadbeater:* Yes. When he had made promises.

*Thomas:* Surely as a man you would know the extreme difficulty of keeping promises when temptation was placed in his way.

*Leadbeater:* I know it is difficult, but Mr. Fullerton and I did what we could.

*Thomas:* But Mr. Fullerton would not know the confession.

*Leadbeater:* No, I spoke generally to Mr. Fullerton.

*Olcott:* Then you were really recommending that the boy should be confided to a man of this sort?

*Leadbeater:* I never recommended. I found that in the air when I came to Chicago.

*Thomas:* You approved of it?

*Leadbeater:* This is a different matter. The boy is not in evidence. His conditions at home were very undesirable and his mother was willing that he should be adopted by someone. Mrs. Dennis had written to me and I think also to Mr. Fullerton before the Convention. I would have been willing to adopt the boy myself but that was impossible. I think the care

## CWL Speaks

of “Z” who was fond of him would have been better than the life he was leading at home.

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

*Leadbeater:* You are to take it that the same advice was given to several.

*Olcott:* How many? Twenty altogether?

*Leadbeater:* No, not so many.

*Thomas:* According to the letter of Mrs. Besant you say three or four times.

*Burnett:* Never mind that. You are introducing something not in the charges.

*Sinnett:* You should have some proposal to discuss.

*Mead:* The second charge reads: “That he does this with deliberate intent and under the guise of occult training or with the promise of the increase of physical manhood”. The evidence of these boys says nothing about applying to him for help. I want to ask whether this advice was given on appeal or not.

*Leadbeater:* Sometimes without, sometimes with. I advised it at times as a prophylactic.

*Miss Ward:* I suppose from what you saw on the other planes?

*Leadbeater:* From what I saw would arise.

*Olcott:* That is not within our discussion.

*Burnett:* It seems to me what we may infer from Mr. Leadbeater’s answers that he is casting a reflection on the veracity of the boys and on their breaking faith with him. I would like to say that the boys did not break faith with him until they were caught.

*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 Mrs. 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.

*Leadbeater:* Is this a right question?

## Pedro Oliveira

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*Miss Ward:* I do not think that this question is right. We are asked to give our opinion on certain charges and we have Mr. Leadbeater's reply. The representative of the American Section asks us to expel him or whether we are going on with this matter.

*Keightley:* I appeal to the President to rule formally on the matter.

*Olcott:* Mrs. Besant has been brought into the case, and we have a letter from her to Mrs. Dennis. It seems to me that it is a matter of serious consideration whether Mr. Leadbeater did these things with a good motive and has as he says no secrets from Mrs. Besant and this might have some weight in dealing with the matter.

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

*Keightley:* I am asking the date of Mrs. Besant's knowledge, I think a straight answer to my question is the only possible reply.

*Thomas:* I do not think it should be put but having been put I think Mr. Leadbeater might well answer it.

*Leadbeater:* If the President thinks this is right. (Miss Spink and Mr. Sinnett did not think the question should be put.)

*Sinnett:* I think that Mrs. Besant should not have been brought into the matter. No one but the governing body should have heard of it.

*Mead:* I agree with Mr. Sinnett but the other procedure has been adopted.

*Miss Spink:* I do not think that that is a question of motive.

*Mead:* I agree with Mr. Keightley's point of view but it is a question I should not press. It does affect the question of motive, because if the motive was good there would not have been concealment.

*Olcott:* Since Mrs. Besant has repudiated the theory of Mr. Leadbeater, would it not be presumed that she had not been made acquainted with it? Is it not a matter we can judge for ourselves?

(Several members expressed approval of this).

*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.

*Burnett:* I would like to ask Mr. Leadbeater in view of the fact that he is *compos mentis* why he did not inform the fathers, before he took any

## CWL Speaks

of these boys, what his practices were, that the father might have had the opportunity of consulting with the mother. It has been said to me by every mother, and mothers not in these charges, that if they had known he had taught these practices he would never have had the boys.

*Leadbeater:* I don't understand all this talk about concealment. If asked about the thing I should not have hesitated in speaking.

*Burnett:* The talk is because all the world condemns it but Mr. Leadbeater, so far as my knowledge is concerned.

*Leadbeater:* Your knowledge does not go very far.

*Burnett:* There is no treatise on physiology which supports this. I asked your friend Dr. ... in Chicago, if he had ever seen it advised. He had never advised it and had never known it to be advised. You are flying in the face of the whole world, and why then did you not tell the boys' parents?

*Leadbeater:* I wish I had. But one does not talk of these things. I told every parent it was my practice to speak freely about sexual matters. I was asked by one of the parents to tell the boy about such things because he was not pure enough himself.

*Burnett:* True, but he did not know it was to teach the boys self-abuse.

*Olcott:* Mr. Bernard, on behalf of the French Committee have you anything to say?

*Bernard:* Since Mr. Leadbeater was teaching these boys to help them in case of need, considering that men may be in the same difficulty, has he ever taught this to any grown-up men? Has he taught the same thing in the same personal way to grown-up men as to children?

*Leadbeater:* I believe that at least on two occasions in my life I have given that advice to young men as better than the one generally adopted.

*Olcott:* Since you came into the Society?

*Leadbeater:* I think not, but one case might have been. You are probably not aware that one at least of the great Church organisations for young men deals with the matter in the same manner.

*Mead:* Do you deliberately say this?

*Leadbeater:* Yes.

## Pedro Oliveira

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*Mead & Burnett:* What is its name?

*Leadbeater:* I am not free to give this. I heard of the matter first through it.

*Mead:* Mr. Leadbeater states then that there is an organisation 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.

*Olcott:* Is it found in the Catholic Church?

*Leadbeater:* I expect so.

*Olcott:* I know that in Italy Garibaldi found many terrible things.

*Mead:* This last statement of Mr. Leadbeater is one of the most extraordinary things I have ever heard. It is incredible to me that there is an organisation of the Church of England which teaches masturbation as a preventive against unchastity. I ask, what is the name of this organisation?

*Leadbeater:* I certainly should not tell.

*Mead:* I understand that it is an organisation pledged to secrecy and I take it that Mr. Leadbeater received his first information from this organisation.

*Leadbeater:* I suppose it would have been better if I had not mentioned it.

*Mead:* I absolutely refuse to believe that this is so.

*Leadbeater:* I decline to prove it in any manner.

*Sinnett:* What shape do you want the advice to take, Mr. President?

*Olcott:* The form of a Resolution.

*Mead:* Has Mr. Leadbeater anything further to say?

*Leadbeater:* I don't know that I have more to say than I said in the beginning. I see, of course, that you disagree entirely with the method. I don't object to that, but I repudiate anything further. I have tried to tell the whole thing as freely as I could.

*Olcott:* I think that there is no feeling on the part of those present that you did not have the feeling in your mind when you gave the advice. I

## CWL Speaks

think that everybody here knows, you will think, your motive was the one you gave.

*Leadbeater:* I ought to say that of course I did not contemplate involving the Society in this doctrine or that. The Society has no connection with our belief.

*Olcott:* Of course not unless some one [sic] should believe in house-breaking as a good art.

*Mead:* I want to ask whether the questions and answers are complete. Then Mr. Leadbeater should withdraw and leave us to deliberate. (Mr. Leadbeater withdrew and the Committee adjourned for about a quarter of an hour.)

The Committee resumed its sitting without the presence of Mr. Leadbeater.

*Mead:* I propose that Mr. Leadbeater be expelled from the Society.

*Keightley:* I second this.

*Sinnott:* I move as an amendment that his resignation be accepted in the form given.

*Miss Ward:* I second that.

*Olcott:* He wants to modify it. (The Chairman read the resignation again.)

*Sinnott:* I should simply say "I place in your hands my resignation," or "in view of private circumstances, etc."

*Mead:* I should like to point out that we are trying to uphold the honour of the Theosophical Society. Such a document will probably have to be printed in the public press before long and it is not sufficient to guard us. Why this man had gone out of the Society will have to be known among the members. It will be in the hands of anyone and it will be spread abroad.

*Thomas:* We ought to face this matter in a proper way. If we simply accept this resignation we shall have to answer to our members. I think accepting the resignation is not sufficient condemnation of the practice. For the sake of the Society it would be better to take the bolder course.

## Pedro Oliveira

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The Chairman then read an Executive notice he had drafted for publication in the "Theosophist" intimating that in consequence of charges of teaching boys self-abuse having been made and admitted, Mr. Leadbeater was no longer a member of the Society. The notice was alternative as to resignation or expulsion, waiting the advice of the Committee and the final decision of the President.

*Sinnett:* I should be sorry to see that published. It would be the end of the Theosophical Society.

*Miss Ward:* Is there not a third course that the resignation be received with some condition attached to it?

*Burnett:* The matter did not take official form but what would be satisfactory to the American Executive would be that the resignation should be accepted because of charges of teaching self-abuse. If we accept his resignation it must include that statement. He admits the charges and therefore it would seem to us necessary.

*Mead:* You see you have had to get that out of Mr. Leadbeater. When the thing gets known it will be the greatest shock the Theosophical Society has had. We cannot lie about it. It has gone all over the place already, I don't mean to say that the Colonel should publish the announcement at once.

*Glass:* Is there anything which makes it necessary to publish the Executive notice.

*Miss Spink:* I think with Mr. Mead it is better to take the straight course rather than to work to keep it in.

*Miss Ward:* Does it mean publishing it in the journals?

*Mead:* Send the Executive notice to the General Secretaries. If you say a single word of Mr. Leadbeater not being in the Society the whole thing will go out. Your Resolution should be clear.

*Sinnett:* It is better that the thing should go out in the quieter way than in an official way. The thing ought to have been kept more secret than it is.

*Burnett:* It was made known by the boy Raja.

*Mead:* It is out now.

*Sinnett:* I do not stick to the form of the resignation. I should like to have some reference in terms of "private conditions." If he modifies these terms in any way which you approve you could take the resignation.

## CWL Speaks

*Olcott:* If you will give me a memorandum I will take it to him and ask him to modify it.

*Sinnott:* Take my amendment. Simply accept his resignation.

*Mead:* There is nothing in accepting this resignation which shows that the whole matter has been proved against him.

*Miss Ward:* I did not speak in the favour of amendment but only seconded it. But 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 than 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. The thing must come out. The stand we take must be clear and definite: I do not think that we should be doing our duty by any Resolution, should it not convey to the public our feeling in the way it ought to be conveyed. It is not with any personal feeling I speak but we should be doing wrong to the Society by accepting a resignation which simply means withdrawing from the Society. I still think our proper course is that the man who stands to the world as a teacher of Theosophy and couples that teaching with teaching of this sort should be expelled, even if we all believe it is dictated by a diseased brain.

*Sinnott:* If his resignation is accepted he ceases to be a member. I would announce his resignation. The papers are not so keenly interested as to enter into the matter. We are clear from all responsibility as soon as we accept his resignation.

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

*Sinnott:* We cannot 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.

## Pedro Oliveira

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

*Thomas:* I think he has 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 on what is before us.

*Thomas:* I cannot accept the statement that he did this in good faith. I think the whole of the evidence shows that if it was not a case of direct vice it was a case of gratifying his own prurient ideas.

*Sinnett:* If we act on this idea we ought to have the text of these boys' cross-examination. We have not the means of going into that. I want to act on the papers as they stand.

*Mead:* I should call for the reading of the notes where Mr. Leadbeater admitted actual deeds.

*Keightley:* I believe the explanation is sexual mania. There are cases closely analogous and it makes it the more necessary that the decision should be one which would absolutely clear the Society. I do not feel I should be discharging my duty to the Society if I consented to the resignation as it stands. The public will rise up and condemn the Society as a hotbed of vice.

*Mead:* It is not proposed that the Executive notice is to be put on record in public. Mr. Sinnett's idea is that you should publish at once that Mr. Leadbeater is no longer a member.

*Sinnett:* I should decline to tell the cause.

*Thomas:* Mr. Sinnett does not know quite what Mr. Leadbeater is to many of the members. Mr. Leadbeater is too much of a family name in the North to keep things in.

*Olcott:* I think we have said enough.

*Burnett:* I should like to say why I am here and support the expulsion. We are not here to persecute 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 this matter. It is not supported by any doctor; therefore, we must get out of our minds any idea of personality. I have no feeling against the man who sat here today

## CWL Speaks

and uttered the most infamous things I have ever listened to, but I say that if we do not expel this man the world will rise up against the Society.

(The amendment was put and the Committee divided equally upon it, six voting for and six against it.)

*Sinnett:* In taking these votes the parliamentary method is the proper one to be acted upon. The Resolution should be “That these words stand as part of the question.” The Chairman is bound to give his casting vote as to whether the words stand as part of the question.

(After some slight discussion on this point, the original Resolution as to expulsion was put and the Committee divided equally upon it, six for and six against.)

*Miss Ward:* Cannot we accept the resignation with some definite statement which would meet the objection? It surely can be made clear that we condemn the action or teaching.

(The President then read his proposed Executive notice again.)

*Sinnett:* If this is to be a public document, the definite statement of the reason is undesirable.

*Dr. Nunn:* We might alter that.

*Burnett:* I suggest that we should accept the statement as drawn up by the President-Founder and that he should strike off from the paper the word “resignation” and let the word “expulsion” stand.

*Olcott:* There are many things to be said for and against the course. We may adopt one fact that it is impossible to suppress the publication of this case. The question is, how are we going to minimise?

*Miss Ward:* How shall we stand with regard to our own members, some of whom will take action in defence of Mr. Leadbeater? Shall we not run less risk of disunion in the Society if we allow it to be resignation, and therefore give no opportunity to arise of disuniting the Society?

*Olcott:* I had that same thing in the case of Judge and I wrote the notice which wiped out the American Section when I was in Spain. I am never afraid of taking bold action. I should say, let the Press do what it pleases.

*Miss Ward:* May we not learn wisdom from the past troubles?

*Burnett:* We may have learnt wisdom enough from the past acts. In America the action of the Colonel left 15 per cent of the members of the Section and how the 15 per cent is 85 per cent and 85 per cent is 15 per

## Pedro Oliveira

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cent. So it is the principle of right always. We want to be able to face the world when we leave this room. It is for us to advise the President-Founder as to what we consider the right thing. We can, I think, go before the people of America, and the question will be asked and we can say why he is no longer a member: "Because when his practices were found out and confessed to, we expelled him from the Society."

*Sinnett:* "We took action which led to his withdrawal from the Society" covers the ground.

*Keightley:* (To the President) How would your notice read if it said resignation instead of expulsion?

(The President again read his notice with the word "Resignation".)

*Sinnett:* This would not be in accord with the facts. He resigns because something has come up.

*Keightley:* I am willing to meet this view so far as to substitute in the notice the form of permitting him to tender his resignation.

*Mead:* That is not correct. His resignation is here.

*Keightley:* Then I stick to the other point.

*Burnett:* If we do not expel him we shall have to meet the matter at every convention. I am willing to consider everything which can be considered but we must go out of here with a clean record and say that we will have no association with any man who advocates such things.

*Olcott:* Would the Committee be willing to hold an adjourned meeting tomorrow morning?

*Mead:* I think we should decide now.

*Sinnett:* We are divided and the responsibility rests with the President.

*Olcott:* If you consider it will be parliamentary for me, I will act.

*Sinnett:* I do not think the thing has been done in the right way. It should have been brought before the Colonel and he could then bring it before the Executive Council.

*Olcott:* That is what has been done.

*Mead:* I should say that we are regarded as divided, the term resignation or expulsion should remain in your hands. The question is what further statement has to be made and how it is to be made. I am most strongly of opinion that we must have a Resolution and give you our sup-

## CWL Speaks

port. It is not fair to Colonel Olcott to leave him in doubt on this matter. Our Resolution should be clear and we should resolve that this be put on record in our archives and that a copy of it should be sent to every one of the General Secretaries of the Section to use at their discretion. Then the question is, are we going to publish anything now? If you say that Mr. Leadbeater has resigned, the thing will have to be explained.

*Miss Ward:* I suggest that we accept his resignation and put on record a Resolution condemning the practice.

*Mead:* The facts have to go on record and also the position of the meeting.

*Sinnott:* I think the promulgation of any indecent phrases is most objectionable. I would not use any term like self-abuse or its equivalent.

*Mead:* I don't advise you to publish anything. I am asking for something which can be published if necessary. I don't ask that the Resolution or Mr. Leadbeater's resignation should be published now.

*Burnett:* We must allow this thing to filter through the minds of the people and get them used to it and then there will not be a furore.

*Sinnott:* I am sure that we shall never agree. I object to put on record in any way which involves publication of any phrases such as self-abuse. I protest against any document going out with such terms.

*Olcott:* Does the Committee approve of the tentative draft I have in my hand? I put "Executive notices" in the "Theosophist." It is my custom to publish everything.

*Miss Ward:* I don't think that any Church which might expel would publish the expulsion.

*Sinnott:* I protest against any possibility of publication.

*Burnett:* I agree that we do not publish until necessary but we must keep faith with our members. This is a question which comes up, we have a family that, should we countenance anything of this, would leave and publish the fact of their leaving.

*Miss Ward:* I think something could be drafted or I would accept the Executive notice with the resignation in, if it would be for the archives of the Society and not for immediate publication.

## Pedro Oliveira

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*Burnett:* If you mean by the archives that the members could see them.

Mr. Thomas suggested a fresh form of Resolution: "Charges involving moral obliquity having been made and substantiated against Mr. Leadbeater, resolved that he be expelled from the Theosophical Society."

*Miss Ward:* I should not object to it being put on record that in our opinion his actions are inconsistent with the professions of this Society and that he has accordingly resigned.

*Sinnett:* I will try to go a little step further and add to acceptance of the resignation, "Mr. Leadbeater has anticipated the request of the governing body by resigning."

*Mead:* In consequence of what?

*Sinnett:* That is a thing to be worded with care.

Dr. Nunn suggested a further Resolution, and Mr. Sinnett after some conversation, drafted the following:

"That having considered certain charges against Mr. Leadbeater and having listened to his explanations this Committee recommends the acceptance by the President-Founder of his resignation already offered in anticipation of the Committee's decision."

*Mead:* Is this for publication?

*Sinnett:* I think it might be published in the "Theosophist."

*Mead:* I want to know when that is done what we are going to do? We have met together and listened to certain things and a report of these doings will have to be made. We cannot suppress what has been done in this meeting.

*Sinnett:* I should be guided by circumstances.

*Mead:* The circumstances are that we are left to do what we like.

*Sinnett:* It cannot be otherwise.

*Olcott:* I am opposed to all paltering and when there is a crisis I believe in going forward boldly and meeting it. My view is that we cannot keep this back and all the publicity we can have is nothing to the reputation of having kept it back.

## CWL Speaks

*Burnett:* I do not ask that this should be published, but it should appear on the record.

*Thomas:* I would appeal to the Colonel not to publish it now. The matter involves others besides Mr. Leadbeater. It is the boys who must be considered.

*Keightley:* Unless in some public manner the Society is informed that Mr. Leadbeater is no longer a member, he will be visiting Branches and giving lectures and picking up boys, as he had done in the past. I cannot leave this room satisfied until I know that no member can be taken unawares. We cannot allow there to be any doubt that Mr. Leadbeater has ceased to be a member of the Society.

*Olcott:* There was the case of Madame Blavatsky's second marriage and I deliberated a long time about the publication of it and finally concluded that the best thing was to tell the whole truth and I told the truth and it never did any harm, but it killed some malicious attacks. My idea would be to publish an Executive notice.

*Mead:* I would agree to Mr. Sinnett's proposal, but I don't think it terminates our business.

Mr. Sinnett's Resolution accepting the resignation already offered was seconded by Dr. Nunn and agreed to unanimously.

*Mead:* I propose that a record of all that has taken place be placed in the archives of the Society, (seconded by Mr. Thomas and carried unanimously).

Mr. Leadbeater was then called in, and the Resolution accepting his resignation was read to him by the President.

*Olcott* :—(To Mr. Leadbeater). There is a desire to avoid publicity. It will have to be printed in the "Theosophist."

*Leadbeater:* May I make a little suggestion? You will understand that I am not thinking about myself but about the Society. Suppose I make an announcement. Many people will write to me and to other members and it will be as well that we have some stereotyped form of reply.

*Olcott:* How would you suggest doing it?

*Leadbeater:* I was going to ask your advice—perhaps saying over my signature that I had resigned and that the resignation was accepted—I don't know how to put it, but I don't want to have a fuss about it.

## Pedro Oliveira

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*Olcott:* Write down your idea on paper.

*Sinnett:* I don't think it would help the matter.

*Mead:* There is no explanation except telling the facts.

*Olcott:* A man of your prominence cannot drop out without notice. It is a terrible case.

*Leadbeater:* Would nothing I put forward make things less difficult?

*Sinnett:* The less said the better.

*Olcott:* I should like to ask Mr. Leadbeater if he thinks I have acted impartially?

*Leadbeater:* Absolutely. If we should consider later I can do anything, let me know.

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

*Leadbeater:* Seeing there is such a feeling on the matter by people whose views I respect, I do not.

*Thomas:* I suggest that the notice go without any letter from Mr. Leadbeater, unless it is first submitted to the Committee.

The meeting was then brought to a conclusion.

After the meeting, Colonel Olcott issued the following notice:

### EXECUTIVE NOTICE

Theosophical Society,  
President's Office,  
Paris, May 17<sup>th</sup>, 1906.

Serious charges having been preferred against Mr. C. W. Leadbeater, by the Executive Committee of the American Section T.S., the President Founder called a meeting on the 16<sup>th</sup> of May, at London, of an Advisory Board consisting of the whole Executive Committee of the British Section and delegates from the American and French Sections, to counsel with him as to the best course to take.

After careful consideration of the charges, and the hearing of Mr. Leadbeater's explanations, the following resolution was adopted.

"That having considered certain charges brought against C. W. Leadbeater and having listened to his explanations, the Committee unan-

## CWL Speaks

imously recommends the acceptance by the President Founder of his resignation already offered in anticipation of the Committee's decision."

The membership of Mr. Leadbeater in the Theosophical Society having thus ceased, his appointment as presidential delegate is hereby cancelled.

(Signed) H. S. Olcott, P.T.S.

We include below three letters written by Robert Burnett, the official representative of the American Section at the meeting, to Helen Dennis. The first one was written almost immediately after the Advisory Board meeting was over. Some discrepancies are shown between what he mentions as having taking place and the minutes which were later on published by Herbert Burrows. Of particular interest is the absence in Burnett's first letter of any mention of the controversial passage regarding 'indicative action' and 'touch' in the minutes, which both Bertram Keightley and Herbert Burrows qualified, later on, as 'indecent assault'.

One of the extraordinary features of the minutes of that meeting is that following CWL's so-called 'admission' of such alleged 'assault' none of those present at the meeting pursued the matter further, but went on to discuss other aspects of the charges against him. As at least half of those present clearly wanted him expelled from the TS and pursued that line very aggressively, including G.R.S. Mead, Bertram Keightley, Robert Burnett and W. Thomas, it is almost inexplicable that any of these would miss such an opportunity to confirm that such 'assault' had indeed happened and to take measures to hand him over to the proper authorities. However, the 'received tradition' about him has consistently used that document to maintain that he committed a crime.

During the trial at the Madras High Court in 1912, which was a custody battle between G. Narayaniah and Annie Besant for the guardianship of Krishnamurti and Nityananda, CWL was called as a witness and was therefore under oath. The lawyers for Narayaniah had presented as evidence all the documents from the 1906 case

## Pedro Oliveira

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against him. During that questioning CWL explained what he meant by 'indicative action':

He had treated the matter [masturbation] as an absolutely physiological problem. His opinions had not changed on this subject, but, out of deference to the wishes of Mrs. Besant, he had not repeated the advice since 1906. Mr. Leadbeter [sic] then spoke of a certain operation that was to have been performed by Jews, and said that he had contrived to dispense with it by "indicative action." Witness here wrote on paper certain particulars and handed the paper to the Counsel for the plaintiff. Witness said he was not a doctor, but he had come to certain conclusions by common sense. He had given such advice to boys and to young men. He had copied this advice from an organization of the Church of England.

(Evidence given by CWL at the court case *Besant vs. Narayaniah*, Madras, 4<sup>th</sup> April 1912, *Mrs Besant and the Alcyone Case* by "Veritas")

Considering that Robert Burnett was one of the most vocal participants at the Advisory Board meeting, having declared before arriving in England that 'Leadbeater should be shot', it is nothing but surprising that he did not mention that point in his letter to Helen Dennis.

London, May 16, 1906  
Grosvenor Hotel

At the above address and time was held probably one of the momentous meetings that shall be long remembered by the T.S. and those of its members forced to a conviction of duty to be done, even though it meant the taking of a leader to account for a most terrible practice.

The session began at 5 p.m. and lasted until after 9 in formal session, with a brief recess at about 7.30. The Pres-Founder had called for this meeting the British Executive Com., the French and American Executive Coms. being represented by one member of each. The British Sec. being the home of the accused he was before the highest body of his Section and it had passed in 1904 a

## CWL Speaks

by-law that made expulsion by them of a member possible. This however was not required as the Pres-F. considered the matter one that he could properly deal with; as it came to him in proper form from the American Sec. and this gathering was in the nature of an advisory board. Soon after it was called to order a motion was passed to the effect that C. W. Leadbeater be brought into the room. He was made acquainted with the nature of the meeting. The Pres. then called for the American repr. Credentials, after the reading of which the charges were called for. After they were produced it was decided that inasmuch as all those present were familiar with them by reading in private, a public reading should not be made, to this L. agreed and said that he had read them but was not familiar with all of the details.

Questions were asked, such as did you teach this practice to men as well; answer: yes; did you first speak to boys or did they come to you; answer: both. This and many of a like nature, when L. turned questioner. How was this letter of which you have a copy obtained? He was not replied to at once and insolently formed a reply for himself – “did you pick it out of the garbage and put all the little pieces together”? He was then informed of the method of procurement and he grinned a reply with a few guttural sounds. He then asked: “How did you obtain all this, seems to me there must have been a great pressure brot [sic] to bear on the boys”? Answer, after quite a pause, “no”, “the teaching spoke”. On being asked why he did not inform the parents of these methods, answer: why, we don’t talk about these things, but if I had thought this was going to be, I certainly would. Do you intend to keep up this practice? Answer: Oh! Perhaps not, as it seems to be wholly misunderstood. Questioned as to why he practiced a method not taught by physiologists in any form, answer: it is taught by certain schools, and gave us to understand in the orders of the Church of England; he was closely pressed on this point and evaded answer by saying that to tell he would violate promises.

Pedro Oliveira

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Mr. E. W. Dennis

The foregoing is for your information in a brief way, until you can have a copy of the minutes.

Paris

May 19<sup>th</sup>, 06

Mr and Mrs Dennis

Dear Friends,

The sacrifice you made has borne fruit, and I am sure none of us can ever know how much [sic] you suffered, but if it will be of any help to assure you that by your work the most brazen wretch I ever met has been brought from under cover; you have done more for the world than can be estimated. I expect to sail on or about the 23<sup>rd</sup> of June from Antwerp which should bring me to New York about the 2<sup>nd</sup> of July. I should like to be home at that time if not before; our daughter is to accompany me. Meantime I am having the Minutes of the meeting held in London on the 16<sup>th</sup> inst. written up by Mr Glass; it is going to be a slow job he has much to do and it is impossible to push him to any great degree. However, I have enlisted Miss Ward and Miss Spink in the matter, the latter is his business associate in T.S. office and with the former authorised to meet the expense involved, it will come soon as they can manage it. The story of the battle I will in part write to you but not so fully to anyone else; hence you may show it, or tell it, to whom you please. Everyone has treated me kindly in England and I feel deeply grateful. There is much that I need to counsel with you about in the interest of the Society; ending with this month or first of June several of the English will be over here and take part in the Convention.

Today I got the New York Herald of this date and am getting back to a normal state of existence.

I also find that I was tired to a degree of which I had no conception, it brings before me a little of the necessary knowledge of what you and others have undergone in this horrible affair.

Sincerely, R.A. Burnet

## CWL Speaks

Paris  
May 26th 1906

Mr. and Mrs. Dennis

I have before me Mrs. D. letter of the 11<sup>th</sup> inst. enclosing the Circular that you have recently issued to the E.S. Both have been read with much interest, especially do I endorse you views, the views concerning the boys and their devoted mothers, as having made possible the stopping of this man's dreadful career. Miss Ward is writing to Mrs. Besant concerning X. Spoke of him as "a God-forsaken idiot". An effort was made by me to get back the copies loaned to the different members of the British Section and this in great part was accomplished, but Mr. Keightley needed a copy for India. Sinnett insisted on his and in one way or another they were scattered among the officials. As to their being of a nature that would implicate the boys that may be true in a sense and only so, as every boy that has come in contact with this moral leper is tainted with suspicion, but who is there that would entertain a thought of injuring any one of these? On the contrary the world will rise in their defense, if they resist the temptation placed within their reach. The Meads are sending out copies of the Charges, that they are having made (by Mrs. Currie when I was there) so it might be well to write her of the thought. On a sheet of paper herewith are names of those who have seen a copy but may not all of them now. I also stated that all who were privileged to see this evidence were to guard the names of all connected with it, as it was our purpose that the names of boys should not be known. I will offer your Circular as a basis for reply.

I trust that no clerical errors entered into my cable of the 16<sup>th</sup> inst. and that it brot [sic] relief to you; of course the work is only begun in the Society and unless we get our members to understand the question prior to the Annual Convention, it may be troublesome. Mr. Warrington in a letter to Col. O. asks this question: Is Masturbation wrong per se, or is it in the abuse of it? I asked the Col. what is answer to the inquiry was, he said: "I don't know never tried it." [sic] I am glad my wife sees you occasional-

## Pedro Oliveira

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ly and that she is well and seemingly happy. Shall I say that at the invitation of all concerned, that, I have met, am staying for the Congress. Many people enquire for Mrs. Dennis; I tender them your best wishes and in return receive many for you. Wife writes me dear Knothe is confined to bed. I send deep sympathy to him and his devoted wife with the hope that he may not have a painful time. Shall write in reply to your next, which I am expecting would be written soon after the 16<sup>th</sup> May. Say to Rob that I am taking snapshots in my mind of automobiles and to Don of the beautiful things built to commemorate the names of great Men.

Sincerely and Fraternaly

R. A. Burnett

May 26 –

The Colonel has just told me that he has received a copy of the minutes taken at meeting of 16<sup>th</sup> (I have not as yet) and in case you have not, Mr. Fullerton certainly has, these were to be got out at my expense and a copy to go to you (if could be spared) but all the Gen. Sec.s were to have one.

In a statement about the Leadbeater case and the Advisory Board meeting in London, A.P. Warrington, a leading member in the United States and also a lawyer, said:

It has been said that Mr. Leadbeater was tried; that moral wrongs were proved, and after confessing them he was condemned and forced to resign from the T.S. This is all utterly false! There could be no trial save in a court of justice, upon a definite indictment, with counsel representing both sides, where witnesses could be compelled to attend and be examined, and where the accused could be confronted by his accusers and subject them to cross-examination.

In a letter to Upendranath Basu, General Secretary of the Indian Section at that time, dated 10<sup>th</sup> September 1906, S. Subramanian, a judge of the Madras High Court and a dedicated Theosophist, stated:

## CWL Speaks

This letter is already long and I do not wish to say more about the "Executive Notice" matter than that there is very serious misconception about what Mr Leadbeater admitted or was thought to admit at the inquiry in London, as shown in the stenographic notes of the proceedings, of which I have a copy here. I find it impossible to see in it any admission, direct or virtual, on his part, of the felony you refer to. As I read it, he emphatically denies it, and when the matter was about to be brought to a point, the member of the Board who was questioning him disavowed any intention of suggesting such a charge against him.

I am afraid that in this matter people have allowed themselves to be unduly influenced by a desire to please the outside public, and that that desire has led them into action which, in calmer moments, there will be ground to regret.

I feel absolutely satisfied that what has been done under the said impulse is more calculated to lower the T.S. in the estimation of an ordinary man, than would have been the case had Mr Leadbeater's resignation simply been accepted and the fact simply mentioned in the Theosophical journals.

## Chapter 6

### The 'Cipher Letter'

(Based on the article with the same title posted on [www.cwlworld.info](http://www.cwlworld.info).)

In her reply to Helen Dennis, Annie Besant stated that she did not agree with CWL's advice to boys on sexual matters but defended his good faith and pure intent. Her view, however, would change dramatically, due to a statement to the effect that he had advised to the boys concerned a daily use of the practice [masturbation], which CWL emphatically denied. She considered that CWL had fallen from the path of Occultism. It was only after the visit by the two Mahatmas to Col. Olcott's deathbed at Adyar, in January 1907, that her view would change. During that visit Olcott asked one of the Masters: 'Is it then true that Mrs. Besant and Mr. Leadbeater did work together on the Higher Planes, under your guidance and instruction?' To which Mahatma M. replied: 'Most emphatically yes!' This visit was witnessed by Marie Russak, an American member residing at Adyar, and Rina, Col. Olcott's nurse, and was recorded in his Diaries. CWL's opponents considered the 'Adyar manifestations' a psychically-engendered illusion, and one of them blamed him for them, although he was in Italy at that time.

It is interesting to note that the Cipher Letter, allegedly written by CWL to one of the boys, was not part of the correspondence sent to Mrs. Besant in January 1906 by Helen Dennis and others in the American Section. It was sent to them, upon request, sometime in May 1906, by the mother of the boy to whom the Cipher Letter was written. It is also well known that the President-Founder of the TS, Col. Olcott, had called for an Advisory Board meeting in London on 16<sup>th</sup> May 1906 to consider the charges against CWL, to be held at the Grosvenor Hotel, which included Mr Burnett as a representative of the American Section, as shown in the preceding chapter.

## CWL Speaks

In her letter of May 1906 to the Investigating Committee of the American Section, the mother of the boy to whom the Cipher Letter had been written mentions that ‘our only desire is that a full, fair setting forth of all points in the matter be made. We have the deepest appreciation of Mr L’s kindness to the boy and ourselves in many ways, and whatever may come from us, we wish to avoid any semblance of pre-judging. What conclusions I have arrived at are based on the facts at hand.’ She also protested saying that ‘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 receiving their consent.’ Then she added an interesting piece of information:

Our son left the slip of paper on the floor, from which the enclosed cipher note is copied. I also found another on the floor some time after finding the above mentioned cipher. That note was written in Mr L’s hand and asked our son to keep a record of days when “experiments” were made, but this is now mislaid. It was not of so dangerous a nature as the enclosed: for in this as you will observe, Mr L .... expresses himself as “glad sensation is pleasant” showing that he approves of the sensuous part of the practice.

The other note, referred to above, although mislaid in 1906, mysteriously reappeared in 1908, during the aggressive campaign to prevent CWL from rejoining the TS. The text of the Cipher Letter is reproduced below.

### 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; can you always read it easily? Can you describe any of

the forms in rose-colour which you have seen entering your room? Are they human beings or nature spirits? The throwing of water is unusual in such a case, though I have had it done to me at a spiritualistic séance. Were you actually wet when you awoke, or was it only in sleep that you felt the water? Either is possible, but they would represent different types of phenomena. All these preliminary experiences are interesting, and I wish we were nearer together to talk about them.

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 meaning of the sign [Circle with dot in center] is osaisu. Spontaneous manifestations are undesirable, and should be discouraged. Eg ou dinat xeuiou iamq, ia oaaet socceoh nisa iguao. Cou oiu uii iguao, is ia xemm oiu dina xamm. Eiat uiuu iuqqao xiao zio usa utmaa; tell me fully. Hmue taotuueio et ti qmautuou. Uiiotuoo lettat eusmeoh. (The following is the boy's translation of the paragraph written in cipher - beginning with the \*) The meaning of the sign [Circle with dot in center] 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. Thousand kisses darling.

In a letter of CWL to Fritz Kunz, 28<sup>th</sup> November 1912, the former shares his recollections about the so-called 'Cipher Letter':

I wrote to you at some length last week, and there is nothing fresh with which I need trouble you, except that I have received a letter from Mrs. Russak in which she mentions an opinion of yours that old Fullerton wrote the celebrated cipher letter. I find it exceedingly difficult to believe that the old man could possibly have done such a thing; in fact, I really do not believe it; but I should like to know on what evidence you formed that belief – if it really is yours. I have long given up thinking about that cipher letter or any of that stuff; but it was at the time a good deal of a

## CWL Speaks

mystery. I believe that I recognise some of the earlier part of it referring to psychic visions; and even some of the second part embodies advice such as I might have given. But the expression of which old Fullerton made so much is one which I am quite certain I never used in the sense attributed to it, though it is not impossible that it might have occurred in the earlier part of the letter in reference to sensations when leaving the body. Also the closing phrase of the letter is not the kind of thing which I should write, though I know that old Fullerton once used it to Douglas. On the other hand, I am not aware that Fullerton knew the boy to whom it is supposed to have been written; not am I certain that he was acquainted with the cipher, though that proves nothing, inasmuch as it had been published in The Theosophist and in Lucifer. The whole thing is a mystery, and I do not care to inquire into it; but this suggestion of yours may mean that you are in possession of some information of which I have not yet heard. Only for that reason do I refer to that unsavoury chapter of the past at all.

In another letter to Fritz Kunz from Adyar, February 6<sup>th</sup> 1913, CWL shares his view regarding the ‘Cipher Letter’. The President mentioned below is Annie Besant, who was elected as the second President of the TS in 1907 after the passing of Col. Olcott in February of that year:

As to the horrible cipher letter, I think that have already told you all that I know of the matter. I certainly did not write the thing in the form in which it at present appears, and I equally certainly never used the phrases attributed to me in the sense which is there put upon them. I have never seen the original, but I did see a written copy made by Monsieur Charles Blech from one that was shown to him by (I think) Mrs. Russak. So far as I remember the document it was divided into two parts, the first part referring to some psychic experiences, and the second to sexual difficulties. The first part corresponds with a sort of half-

recollection that I have of a story of psychic experiences told to me by Howard Maguire; and my impression is that I did write to him very much what the first part of the 'cipher letter' contains. The second half contains such advice as I think I might have given, though I do not definitely remember giving it; but the closing phrases are not in the least my style, and, as I have already said, I am quite sure that I did not use them in the sense now attributed to them, though I may, for anything that I know, have employed the phrase about 'sensation' with regard to some psychic experience; though of that also I have no actual recollection. I have always been given to understand that the letter was supposed to be addressed to Howard; but perhaps I assumed that because I knew that it was to him that I had written in connection with the psychic experience. I think, however, that I remember hearing at the time something about the attitude taken in regard to it by his father and mother; and altogether I have very little doubt that he was the recipient. If so, that finally disposes of the idea that Fullerton could have written it, for I do not think that he knew the boy. Nor can I conceive of any reason why he should have written it even if he had known him, and the advice on psychical matters is not such as he would be likely to give. I am not casting any doubt on the value of the psychic impressions either of your sister or of Mrs. Tuttle; but from what I know about such things I should think it not impossible that the eager use which Fullerton made of the document might be quite sufficient to guide their intuitions towards him and make them regard him as its author. I cannot believe that he had anything to do with it; but if you find evidence suggesting that, I think the simplest plan would be to ask him directly, for I believe that now he would tell us the truth on such a matter. The President told me long ago that the alleged original document had been shown to her; that it was typewritten, without address, date or signature; but that one short word, which had apparently been omitted in typing, was inserted in handwriting that looked like mine. I also heard at the time that Chidester, when it was shown to him, identified the paper as some which (I think) he had given to me, and expressed the opinion that the typing was like that of my Blickensderfer. I have really never

## CWL Speaks

troubled to form much of a theory for myself; but I know that two possibilities occurred to me at the time: (1) that the document might be an absolute forgery, inserted phenomenally in one of my letters as it passed through the post (this hypothesis, of course, requires the presence of people of the black magician type); (2) that a document really written by me might have been found as stated, and skillfully copied with a transposition of some sentences (and possibly the insertion of others) so as to give to them an entirely different meaning from that which they really bore. The President also told me that she had seen an answer, written by the boy to me (but never posted) in which he asked the meaning of that remarkable phrase about ‘sensation’. All this, I think, makes it almost absolutely certain that the letter was received by Howard, and that he took it as a genuine document; though if it was, as alleged, picked up on the floor of his bedroom, and afterwards shown to him, I presume that he could not be certain that it had not in the meantime been recopied or changed in some way.

Below is Annie Besant’s statement in her ‘Letter to the Members of the Theosophical Society’, in November 1908, regarding the ‘Cipher Letter’:

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 typewritten 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 to me by his mother – in which he expresses his puzzlement as to what it meant, as he well might. There is something very suspicious

## Pedro Oliveira

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about the use of this letter. It was carefully kept away from Mr. Leadbeater, though widely circulated against the wish of the father and the mother, and when a copy was lately sent to 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.

[Emma and Alexis Coulomb were workers at the headquarters of the TS at Adyar who participated in a conspiracy with Christian missionaries in Madras against Madame Blavatsky in 1884. Richard Pigott was a journalist for *The Times* in London in the 1880s, well known for the ‘Pigott forgeries’ against Charles Stewart Parnell. *Compiler*]

The attitude of Helen Dennis to Annie Besant in this crisis is worth mentioning as it reveals not only a pattern of animosity but also a sense of deep bitterness and a personal attack that seemed to have continued to the end of her life. In a letter to Fritz Kunz, dated August 27<sup>th</sup> 1906, from Harrogate, England, CWL writes:

Mrs. Howard of Chicago writes me that Mrs. Dennis “called her to her house and argued like a lawyer, taking up point after point to convince her that Mrs. Besant was unfit longer to remain Outer Head”! The points were – 1. Mrs. Besant had grown proud, arrogant and dictatorial. 2. Had shown her utter unfitness by defending her colleague. 3. Is not a pupil of the Masters (!!)

4. Had fallen and has steadily fallen for the past five years.
5. Is drunk with power.
6. Is in the hands of black magicians.
7. Is trying to lead us all into Catholicism.

Now this represents most abominable treachery, and shows to what depths these misguided people are descending. I don’t care what they say about me, but if they begin this kind of thing they will get into trouble. I never heard before of a school which proposed to elect its headmaster!

The University of Chicago Library holds the Helen I. Dennis Collection, which includes her handwritten reminiscences of the 1906 events. In a note written in May 1940, what Helen Dennis

## CWL Speaks

writes corroborates her views expressed in CWL's letter above mentioned:

What a terrible mess she [Annie Besant] made of the T.S., providing slogan after slogan which ignorant fools repeated ad nauseam after her. As a crowning insult to the Society, she left to their votes the decision as to whether or not she was fit to be the President of the TS and what is worse, whether or not C W Leadbeater as a self-pronounced sex pervert who defended his theory was worthy of membership in the T.S., and infinitely worse to be put on the pedestal of a spiritual teacher and leader. She vacated her honour and duty of the defense of true Theosophy, and left it to the votes and ignorance of blind devotees, and left the Adyar T.S. forever tainted with upholding one of the worst forms of Black Occultism known – a purely Tantrika practice to develop psychic vision.

However, the constitutional and democratic institution of a vote by the members world wide to elect the President of the Theosophical Society, conducted in May 1907 and presided over by A. P. Sinnett as Acting President, following the death of Col. Olcott in February 1907, the figures of which are shown below (from Josephine Ransom's *A Short History of the Theosophical Society*), exposes the unreasonableness of Mrs Dennis' view:

On 28 June [1907], Mr. Sinnett advised Mrs. Besant that the returns showed an overwhelming vote in her favour. America 1319 for, 679 against; Britain 1181 for, 258 against; the rest of the world 7072 for, 152 against; total voting strength at the end of 1906, 12,984. The vote recorded in the United States was taken by the officials as a vote of censure upon themselves, and they resigned.

It is said that the Cipher Letter is not among the Helen Dennis' Collection at the University Chicago Library, and that it may have been destroyed. One certainly wonders why such a central

## Pedro Oliveira

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accusatory piece against CWL would not have been preserved. In a number of biographical references about C.W. Leadbeater, including Wikipedia, the Cipher Letter is still presented as having been written by him in spite of the clear evidence to the contrary.

Judging by the last sentence in Arthur Nethercot's passage below, he was one of those who regarded the 'Cipher Letter' as having indeed been written by CWL while admitting that his advice today would not necessarily cause the alarm it did at the time it was given:

Was C. W. Leadbeater a "sex pervert," as his many enemies both within and without the Theosophical Society regarded him, or a misunderstood, maligned, pure-hearted martyr, as his many friends—chiefly within the Society—called him? There is a mass of contradictory testimony on both sides, but it is fairly safe to say that if the situation had arisen three or four decades later than it did, after the liberation of conceptions of sexual practices and sexual morality had occurred, there would have been far fewer cries of shocked outrage and probably little more than a few raised eyebrows. At least it must be admitted even by Leadbeater's enemies that he stuck doggedly and apparently sincerely to his theories and principles, and that he never admitted any shame or even embarrassment over his conduct. On the other hand, there is some evidence that he derived a kind of vicarious pleasure from his associations with and his instruction of his boys.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Nethercot, Arthur H., *The Last Four Lives of Annie Besant*, Rupert Hart-Davis, London, 1963, p. 93.

CWL Speaks

## Chapter 7

### Correspondence between Besant, Leadbeater and Others, Second Half of 1906

As we shall see, this phase of the correspondence marks a noticeable change in Annie Besant's public attitude towards C.W. Leadbeater. It reflected a deepening of the crisis which would last for another one and half years.

10, East Parade,  
Harrogate,  
England  
July 25<sup>th</sup> 1906

My dear Fritz,

I suppose you heard something before leaving England of a message from Mrs. Besant to the E.S. about my resignation. I have not seen it, but it is to the general effect that I am such an impure person as the evidence seems to show, I cannot have been really connected with the Masters, and on the hundreds of occasions on which she has seen me in their presence she must have been deceived by black magicians – which of course is nonsense. But unfortunately some members, reading this, begin to doubt whether after all the Masters really exist; and we have no right to leave them, through our fault, in any uncertainty about that. Therefore I have written a comment upon her circular, and have asked her to send it to every one who has received the original document. I hope she will see her way of doing this, as of course we do not know exactly to whom her circular went. If she feels she cannot distribute it I shall do so myself, but it would have more effect coming through her. I do not know if her circular went to America also, but in case it did I want you to have a copy of my comment, which I herewith enclose. I should be glad if you would send copies of it on my behalf to Mrs. Tuttle and Mrs. Holbrook, telling them that it is only for their private comfort and not to be made public, as I would rather give Mrs. Besant the

## Pedro Oliveira

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chance of issuing it. You can when necessary bear testimony to the faithful as to how often I have spoken to you or in your presence of these matters, how you know of instances in which my memory of events connected with the Masters has been corroborated by others in different parts of the world besides Mrs. Besant, so that if she thinks herself hallucinated she will have to suppose the same for scores of others, including Madame Blavatsky. Of course the suggestion of glamour in this case is ridiculous – except on the good old theory that all manifestation is a delusion, in which case nothing matters.

Write to Mrs. Edwin Swift Balch at Towanda; we ought to keep in touch with her, even though she has resigned from the Society in disgust at its action. Let me know how matters are going, and what you yourself are doing; with so much experience of secretarial work you ought to be able to help Raja! With kindest regards to the family, and very much love to yourself,

I am ever

Yours most affectionately,

C.W. Leadbeater

I suppose I ought to feel flattered at the recent course of events. See how exactly it is described by the Flemish mystic, Ruysbroeck, who wrote in the 14<sup>th</sup> century about those who enter the Path: “Sometimes these unhappy ones are deprived of the good things of earth, of their friends and relations, and are deserted by all creatures, their holiness is mistrusted and despised, they put a base construction on all the works of their life, and they are rejected and disdained by all those who surround them; and sometimes they are afflicted with divers diseases.”

According to his letter Douglas Baldwin ought to be with you, so I enclose his letter; if he is not, please forward.

In her ES Circular reproduced below, Annie Besant shows a radical change in attitude towards CWL. Though her private letters continued to be affable and cordial, in this document she proclaims him a ‘fallen’ person on the path of Occultism. Her reason for do-

## CWL Speaks

ing so may be related to the fact that she received a copy of the minutes of the Advisory Board meeting in London, but also a copy of the 'Cipher Letter' from the American officials. This was, without any shadow of doubt, the most vulnerable point for CWL during the whole process. His enemies could have used Mrs Besant's Circular as documentary evidence to press formal charges against him, which did not happen.

E.S.T. – Private

Benares City,

July 27<sup>th</sup>, 1906

My dear friends and fellow-workers,

You will naturally look to me for some explanation of the charges which have led to the resignation of Mr Leadbeater, and it is right that you should know the facts.

In February last I received a letter accusing Mr Leadbeater of having taught the practice of self-abuse to two boys in America. Mr Leadbeater was on the point of leaving Benares; I asked him what he could have said or done to give rise to such an idea; he said that, in a few cases, where the boys' minds were full of sexual ideas, he had advised them to provoke the natural relief, and so free themselves from the corrupting ideas in the mind, and that he thought this was better than seeking loose women. I said that I thought such advice was dangerous and wrong, and was likely only to lead the boys to a habit physically and morally ruinous. I wrote to America that the advice given in a few cases was very mischievous, that Mr Leadbeater had promised not to give such advice in future, and that I thought, under these circumstances, that no further action should be taken.

Unhappily, the evidence available in America by no means bore out Mr Leadbeater's statement to me of the case. He had given this advice not in rare cases, but in several; not to boys suffering in the grip of sexual passion, but to innocent boys before puberty; not to check excitement, but to provoke it; not as a rare expedient, but as a weekly, and even daily practice. The effect in one case, at least, had been to bring on epileptic trouble. Under these circumstances, the American accusers pressed for Mr Leadbeater's resignation, it being obvious that the teaching of unnatural and physically ruinous practices, destructive of morality even legally punishable – the boys being below the age of consent – was not compatible with the position of a Theosophical teacher and representative. They consequently drew up a case, and sent it by special messenger to England, to Colonel Olcott; the President called together an Advisory Board in London, called Mr Leadbeater to appear before it, and went into the evidence. Mr Leadbeater practically admitted all that was charged, defending his teaching, which he said he had learned while a clergyman of the Church of England; he had, before the meeting, placed his resignation in the hands of Colonel Olcott, to be used, if he thought fit, in the interest of the Society. The Board accepted the resignation, and Mr Leadbeater's membership in the Society ceased.

Such is a brief history of this most lamentable case.

I have been asked my opinion on the teaching, and for some explanation of its being given by a man regarded as one of the leaders of the Theosophical Society.

My opinion on the teaching is clear. I regard such teaching, given to men, let alone to innocent boys, as 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. Taught by a man of the world, it would be indefensible; taught under the name of the Divine Wisdom, it is intolerable.

## CWL Speaks

“How has such teaching been given by a leader in our movement, and one indubitably possessed of powers not possessed by the majority?”

The possession of powers to see and act on the astral plane does not, as has been said over and over again – by Mr Leadbeater himself as by others – carry with it any guarantee of spiritual grandeur or moral insight. In fact, excitement and misuse of the sexual organs is one way of stimulating astral powers, and is largely used in some schools of pseudo-occultism. But Mr Leadbeater is so obviously convinced of the property of the practice recommended, that he must either be regarded as, on this point, insane, or as a victim of that glamour which is the deadliest weapon of the Dark Powers against those who seek to hasten their evolution by treading the dangerous path of occultism. It is this glamour which, I believe, is enwrapping him.

Only the uttermost purity and truth give to the Brothers of the Shadow no platform from which they can work, and which of us, disciples or aspirants, are to be found perfect purity and truth? Not in myself, I know, though I strive after them, but have not yet reached them. A trace of self-seeking, of pride, of desire to be thought greater than one is, and the material for their working is provided. I know that Mr Leadbeater did not believe this. So much the greater his danger. Their last triumph is to throw the climber off his guard by the delusion that they do not exist. And no astral powers protect against this, but rather facilitate the deception. I know this because I have had and still have, to face them, and speak with a bitter experience of their power. Because I have been deceived and freed myself after a while from the deception, and been deceived again and again, fought myself free, and so on repeatedly. And I am prepared to be again deceived, whether or not fatally for this life, who shall say? Until a man has transcended all illusion, is a Jivanmukta, he is not safe. These are combats which are little spoken of, lest they should bewilder and discourage the aspirant, whose time is not yet come. Some of you

## Pedro Oliveira

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will remember that I hinted at them, in the E.S. Convention meeting at Adyar, in 1903.

Such glamour has, I think, befallen our brother, whether in the way of making evil seem good – adharma seem dharma – or by a deception similar to that under which our brother Judge fell, of simulating even a Master, and teaching black methods instead of white, through a Form too revered, perchance, to be closely examined.

“But how could you, Mrs Besant, be deceived, and regard Mr Leadbeater as a trusted colleague, when he was teaching boys such evil ways?” By just such a glamour as deceived him, in my case blinding the insight, as in his the moral sense. Some fault in my own nature must have served as material, and from this the web is woven that blinds. As I have often said, I am not beyond the possibility of making mistakes, even serious mistakes, as in this. My higher psychic powers work fairly well, so that I am able to find out many of the deeper truths and facts, useful to myself and other students. But my astral psychic powers work very irregularly, are sometimes available, sometimes not. A Master is practically omniscient for this world; a humble disciple like myself is not, and the more fully this is understood the better. Thus shall good come of evil.

Some may say: “If you can be deceived, we cannot accept you as teacher”. By all means. I do not wish that any should accept me in consequence of the exaggerated view of my powers, and I am thankful for anything that puts me before you in the proper light, as a humble disciple, eager to serve, but liable at all times to error. I cannot promise you to make no more mistakes; I can only promise to confess them, when I know them to be such. Those who demand an infallible teacher must qualify themselves to meet the Masters face to face; there only can the infallible Teachers be found; such Teachers are not unattainable, but the pupil must fit himself to enter Their sphere.

## CWL Speaks

Needless to speak of my sorrow for the loss of one with whom I have worked for so many years, with never a jar or a cloud, and with whom I can now work no more.

I have had in Mr Leadbeater a friend, always helpful, always loyal, always kind and considerate, always prompt to sympathize and encourage. My life is the sadder and the poorer for his loss. But the T.S. and the E.S. must stand clear from teaching that pollutes and degrades, and it is right that Mr. Leadbeater is no longer with us.

A last word. Let none blame the Masters for the errors and follies of us, Their would-be servants. They see us as we shall be, not only as we are, and guide matters with a larger vision for a fuller good to each. They allow Their children to slip, to suffer, to learn by the slips and sufferings, so that they may become men, able to stand and to see. They know how little things matter in the long life of the man, and treat them as the follies which we will outgrow. Not Theirs the blame of the blunders, but ours, only ours. If They interfered too soon, They would rob us of our lesson, keep us purblind, and dwarf our growth. They work with the Divine Law, which teaches by experience. In the long run, Their patience means our greatness, and They can afford to wait for the strong men. What is the failure of one life?

Judge has fallen on this perilous path of occultism. Leadbeater has fallen on it; very likely I too shall fall; but we shall all come back, and work again. If the day of my fall should come, I ask those who love me not to shrink from condemning my fault, not to attenuate it, nor say that black is white. But rather let them lighten my heavy karma, as I am trying to lighten that of my friend and brother, by saying that black is black, by proclaiming the unshaken purity of the ideal, and by declaring that the fall of an individual leaves unshattered their trust in the Masters of Purity and Compassion. On that rock we rest.

Your faithful servant,      ANNIE BESANT

Pedro Oliveira

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10, East Parade, Harrogate, England,  
8<sup>th</sup> August, 1906.

Dear Mr. Pettit,

Yours of July 18<sup>th</sup> to hand. Sorry you felt yourself neglected at Toronto; it was quite unintentional on my part, I assure you. I remember it was a very busy time with us, and I suppose that my mind was entirely occupied with my work as usual, and that I was not thinking of personalities.

I remember receiving a letter from you in which you said that Douglas' Toronto doctor differed vehemently from the method which I had prescribed, but that my method would be followed. I inferred from that that the whole thing had been explained, but evidently I was wrong in doing so. Fullerton's statement, however, that I wrote describing an interview with you on the subject is entirely inaccurate. I dislike much the tone of his letter, for it seems to be trying to worm out 'evidence', and yet he is evidently not prepared to accept it unless it supports his abominable suspicions. His suggestions of co-habitation are simply disgraceful, and while I should advise Douglas to give him an indignant denial as to that, I should also suggest that Douglas might tell him to mind his own business and not endeavour to pry into other people's private affairs.

I have seen nothing to support the theory of obsession, nor are there, so far as I know, any undesirable astral entities connected with Douglas. It is quite certain that he never had any fit while with us. If any sign of anything of that nature had shown itself, I should have sent him home at once, for it would be quite impossible to take upon tour a person subject to such an affliction.

When I said that my opinion might be right or wrong, I meant simply that this is one of the possible ways of dealing with the sex question, but that opinions may reasonably differ as to whether it is best. There is no wrong involved in the sense of sin; it is a question of expediency, of a choice of evils perhaps. My opinion inclines, on the whole, in favour of the

## CWL Speaks

system I advised; Mrs. Besant's opinion goes the other way, and she is one to whose decision I attach very great weight.

With kind regards, I remain,

Yours very sincerely,

C. W. Leadbeater.

5759 Washington Avenue Chicago, Ill.

To the Members of the E. S.

I have been requested by Mr. C. W. Leadbeater to forward to you the following statement. You will greatly oblige by communicating its contents to such of your fellow-members as may be glad to know of them.

Yours faithfully,

C. Jinarajadasa

July 27, 1906

“Dear Friends,

You have heard the message of the Head of the School (dated June 9<sup>th</sup>) with reference to the events which led to my resignation from the Theosophical Society. I do not wish for a moment to place myself in opposition to Mrs. Besant; I love and revere her more than you do, because I have had the opportunity of knowing more of her than you can as yet know; and I am quite sure that she feels herself justified in what she has said. But I think I owe it to those who, partly because of my evidence, have accepted certain great truths to make to them this emphatic asseveration, to make it upon my honour as a gentleman and with all the force of which I am capable. I assert that I have unquestionably stood with Mrs. Besant more than once in the Highest Presence which exists on this earth; that the testimony which I have repeatedly given to the existence of the great Masters of Wisdom in true testimony; that if I myself exist, and if you to whom I have spoken exist, then on exactly the same evidence I know that They exist also, for I have seen some of Them daily for many years past, precisely as I have seen some of you; and I further assert that this

## Pedro Oliveira

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same daily communication still continues now, and has never ceased since its commencement.

I know something of the power of glamour, having made a study of the subject; but if that theory is to be invoked to explain away the daily, consistent, reasonable experience of more than twenty years, verified frequently by the simultaneous experience of others in different parts of the world, life becomes a meaningless farce. Let there be no shadow of mistake or of doubt as to this transcendent fact of the existence of the Masters.

If you hold fast with certainty to that sublime truth, what you think of me personally is a very minor matter. But I may perhaps be allowed to say that (knowing more about myself than any of my critics can know) I cannot feel myself to be in the ordinary meaning of the words impure or sensual, though I most fully recognize that we are all of us impure as compared with Their stainless glory.

I know better than any of you can how an imperfect instrument I have been and am in Their hands; but They know, and I think some of you know, that I have no other interest in life than Their work. For this incarnation I bid you farewell, in the certain knowledge that in other lives we shall meet and work together again; and I give you my heartiest good wishes for unswerving and rapid progress on the Path which leads us all to the feet of the Lords of Compassion and Wisdom.

C. W. LEADBEATER”

Shanti Kunja, Benares City,  
August 9, 1906.

Dear Mrs. Davis,

I have heard nothing from Mr Jinarajadasa since I telegraphed him that I considered officials' action unwise; i.e. 'in pressing expulsion'. I have not seen the circular you sent. I do not see that my cable helps him. He has been able to use my name because my name is unwisely used as identified with Mr. Leadbeater's by friends who should have known me better, and so a number of people who felt I could not have really condoned what was al-

## CWL Speaks

leged have been casting about to find reason to justify the action ascribed to me.

I do not know how I can stop Raja's use of my name, much as I disapprove of it. I sent by last mail to Mr. Fullerton a paper which I asked him to use if he thought it right, saying that the officials had stood for the right and minor matters of procedure should be ignored. In sending my letter to Mrs. Dennis, I asked her to work on for a year till this was over, so as to prevent use being made of disunion. This seems all I can do; you can, if you think it would be of any use, say that I should consider it a disgrace and a disaster if Mr. Fullerton were not re-elected Secretary. I feel it very awkward to interfere in the official work of another Section; but, as my name is being unfairly used, perhaps it may be well to use it on the right side. And you may say, if you think it wise, that I shall certainly not visit the American Section if it dismisses Mr. Fullerton.

You are on the spot, and I am not; so use anything I have said here or do not use it, as it seems to you best. Anything else I can do, I am ready to do.

Yours ever,

Annie Besant

P.S. Any proposal to reinstate Mr. Leadbeater in the membership of the T.S. would [sic] ruinous to the Society. It would be indignantly repudiated here and in Europe, and I am sure in Australia and N.Z. 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 for membership should be rejected. But I am sure Mr. Leadbeater would not apply.

Ye Olde Grasshopper Hotel,  
St. Helier's, Jersey, etc.

August 10, 1906.

My dear Annie,

I wrote to you a few days ago, but I have just received your letter of July 14<sup>th</sup>, and hasten to congratulate you most heartily

on the two happy events therein described. The signed portrait of the King is a grand acquisition, and ought soon to become a very highly magnetised centre of loyalty and noble feeling, capable of affecting for good generations of Indian boys. The Emperor has done a wiser thing than perhaps he knows; and it was nice of the Princess to remember, but I thought she would. Then the satisfactory arrangement for the Kashmir College is another great victory and cannot but be specially pleasing to the Master K. H. who still loves His beautiful native land. I am indeed glad of these two brilliant gleams of light, for in other directions our sky is dark enough.

Letters continue to pour in from America. I suppose you can hardly realise what a crushing blow your E.S. message has been to those who up to that point had come nobly through the test, and still held loyally to both of us and to our Masters. You know they were quietly preparing to resist in the name of charity and commonsense the passing at the Convention of September 16<sup>th</sup> of those Resolutions which Fullerton ordered them to support, in his abominable "confidential circular" (which he sent even to unattached members!), and I think the majority would have declined to endorse the persecution; but now they quote your name in its support, and our faithful friends are utterly paralysed; while, I am told, that the most savagely spiteful of the persecutors actually danced with unholy glee on reading the message. And it is too late now to undo that effect. After this I am a convert to your theory of the minute and detailed interference of malicious Powers in the minor events of life, for it must have been a really ingenious demon who engendered that such a blow should fall at such a time.

The same hand has, probably, been interfering with our posts, for even to this day I have never received a copy of that message from you, and of course I know that you would not have so written about me without sending one to me. I have sometimes half-cherished a wild hope that the thing may be a ghastly forgery, and not yours at all, because it seems so very unlike you. How happy I should be if that could be so! For, you see, I really do not care what all those other people think, who have so little op-

## CWL Speaks

portunity to know; but when you also misunderstand me – but suppose the thing would not be perfect.

But I don't quite understand. You have been in daily contact for years with my astral and mental bodies, and you know they are not impure or sensual in the ordinary meaning of those words. And there are other higher things too. You doubted the Highest once, you remember, not unnaturally; but He summoned us again, and said at leave-taking: 'You will not think again that I am only a dream; will you?' Can you have doubted again? Remember He spoke other words also, and we discussed the whole interview on the physical plane at the time.

There was no faintest possibility of mistake. You know that all that was so, and that it could not have been if my intentions not been good; you know better than I that that life is the grand reality, and that this is only a pale world of shadows in comparison with its glorious light. If anything in this seems out of harmony with the certain truth as we know it in that, it is this which is false, this which is distorted, never that. And you knew all this when we were together at Benares, and nothing fresh has since occurred, whatever falsehoods may have told you. I held back nothing consciously from you then; you must know that also. Details may have been mentioned since which did not occur to me then; but if they had occurred to us, they would have been mentioned. I have always been perfectly frank with you, and I clearly understood your attitude then that you disapproved of advice and consequent action, but held my intention to be good, in which you were absolutely right. Yet your circular says I have fallen as Judge fell. Well, you must have thought of all this often, and I have no lightest thought of blame in my mind. I can bear all things but it is hard to see the suffering of the poor souls who trusted us, and now feel all the ground cut away from beneath their feet. And they naturally say, 'If there can be so much of doubt as to so large a block of testimony, how can we know of any certainty anywhere?' There are some who trust sublimely even through this hour of darkness. Raja writes, 'I am utterly sure she will realise the truth one day, and will make amends on

Pedro Oliveira

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a royal and magnificent scale'. But I don't see how even you can undo what is so efficiently done. It all comes from this disastrous separation on the physical plane. But you see these people cannot understand what a difference that makes, because they do not know that you do not always remember; and they think that we are both acting with full knowledge. I hope my 'Comment' which I sent to you a fortnight ago may help some of those poor creatures a little, but it is a bad business. But at least with absolutely unchanging and unchangeable affection through it all, I am yours as ever,

In deepest devotion,

C. W. Leadbeater

Permanent address: 10 East Parade, Harrogate,  
England

August 14<sup>th</sup> 1906

My dear Fritz,

I am still unfortunately without my typewriter, so you will have to endure a manuscript letter. It is a first rate idea that you should write to Basil, and he forward the letters to me, because then you will not have to write the same thing twice. I am very glad that you are strong and well after all the strain of the tour around the world. As to your plans for the future, it seems to me a mistake to give up the idea of the English University degree, if one may be allowed to put it plainly, you are altogether too good to let yourself sink into the ordinary worldly money-making life. But of course on this point you must take the advice of your father and sister. Anyhow, keep in touch with us and write often.

I do not agree with Raja's sudden collapse but he must do as he thinks best. If it rested with us to bring the matter up at the Convention we might well let it alone, but Fullerton in his abominable circular asks the Convention to support resolutions ratifying his insane and wicked action; so the question must arise and surely no unprejudiced person will take his side. I shall be much disappointed in "the land of the free" if it does not justify its name by condemning persecution and declining to be bullied:

## CWL Speaks

and my hope is that every one on our side will be at the Convention, and will vote straight. They cannot reinstate me as a member, whatever they vote; but they can change all the committee except poor old Fullerton and they ought to do so. Mrs. Besant's opinion is a mistake, but it applies only to the original question, not to the action of the committee, to which she objects as much as we do. It seems from what you say that Mr. Little joins the persecutors for which I am sorry; he ought to know me better. Remember the original question is not now at issue; that chapter closed with my resignation; what is left is the conduct of the committee, which it insists that the Convention shall ratify: and if it does it proves that opinion is not free in the Society, which is a serious position to take.

I am interested in what you say about Howard for I have never received one word from him since all this began and I do not know how he stands so far as the physical plane is concerned. I thought he was probably their "fourth boy", who certainly declines to commit himself to anything; but I also thought he must be the boy to whom the alleged cipher-letter was written, because so far as I know only those who were at Newton knew the cipher. Yet that does not square with his saying that he "told the old hens nothing"; can they have stolen the letter from him, he having previously boasted of and explained the cipher? Of course with their usual unfairness they have never let me see that letter or a copy of it, and have left me to guess to what boy it was addressed.

As to myself, I am living very quietly, and happily enough, except that naturally I miss my beloved Secretaries at every turn. You see during that long tour we grew so much to be one family that it is difficult and painful to readjust oneself to utter loneliness. Whenever I see an interesting ruin or a beautiful bit of landscape my instinctive thought is "I must bring Basil and Fritz to see that": and I have to make a distinct effort to bring myself to realize that the possibility of my having that pleasure is infinitesimal! Naturally also I think often of the tour for every article about me reminds me of it. Just think! The suit I am wearing we bought at Adyar, my shoes at Brisbane (soled in India) my socks

## Pedro Oliveira

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are from Newton Highlands, my shirt from Whiteaway Laidlaw at Rangoon, my spectacles from Buffalo, my watch from “five grateful American Theosophists” (everyone of whom has since forgotten his gratitude), my hat from Launceston, Tasmania, my black alpaca coat from Vancouver, my back brush from Ridge-wood, New Jersey, my giant pencil from the Hunts piano at Melbourne, my big lens from Mrs. Balch, my spring-balance from Chicago, my little cushion also from Chicago, with a cover made for it by Mrs. Pettit; my umbrella had a new handle put to it at Seattle and I am constantly wearing a cap that has seen all the oceans of the world. There is a pocket-book from Harrogate, and a little sword-toothpick that you made for me out of sandalwood. Can you wonder that my thoughts go back into that vivid past? Still I must also say that every day a thought of relief comes over me “no lecture tonight”; and I should gladly try to do something at “The Hidden Side” [*The Hidden Side of Things*] if it were not for the masses of letters. But it is not easy to work all alone. I am sure the quiet time has done me good in certain ways; you remember how nervous I became towards the end of the time, easily irritated by trifles; I have absolutely not felt impatient for months for there are no trains or post to catch, and nothing matters anymore! The peace is delightful, but it is a wrench to be separated like this; it is only half a life without my dearest friends, but it is a tranquil half! And what would happen if I met with an accident or fell ill, is a matter I resolutely put aside. It is a useful interlude, and if will only allow me to write those two books [*The Hidden Side of Things* and *The Inner Life*] I shall be thankful for it. Mrs. Besant has made a suggestion as to my going to Japan and working there; I shall find out more about it. But I think, so far as I can see, you may take it that I shall not make any big move for some months.

You see I am only suffering under a gross misconstruction of motive, just as Madame Blavatsky and Mrs. Besant have done. Colonel Olcott himself drew up for me at my request the form of resignation, stating that I withdrew “in order to save the Society from embarrassment”. I wrote afterwards asking him to include that form in his Executive Notice, but I suppose it was too late.

## CWL Speaks

Well, here is a regular chatty letter, just as though we had been talking. All good go with you. With kindest regards to the family and very much love to yourself

I am ever

Yours most affectionately,

C. W. Leadbeater

10, East Parade,  
Harrogate,  
England  
August 22<sup>nd</sup> 1906

My dear Fritz,

I was very glad to have your letter of the 7<sup>th</sup>. You see I have not yet my typewriter, but I think I must have it soon, for my correspondence shows no signs of the diminution which I expected. As to the future nothing is settled yet, nor will be for some time to come. Mrs. Besant suggests the possibility of work in Japan, but naturally before taking it up I shall want to know all particulars. If anything should come of it, would you be inclined to try it for a year or two with me? You see Basil is a fixture until about 1911. Of course you understand that it is the merest hypothesis, for I do not in the least know whether anything will come of it. For the moment I want to keep quiet and get those two books written, and that will take a long time now I have to cope with everything singlehanded.

Thank you for sending those copies to Mrs. Tuttle and Mrs. Holbrook. I do not know that I have any more typewriting that needs doing in America just now, but I fancy that Raja would often be glad of help that kind, and help given to him is given to me, you know. One of the most annoying results of all this foolishness is the upsetting of the lecturing work which he was doing so well. I hope earnestly that some arrangement may be made whereby he can be reinstated in it. Perhaps you could induce him to come and stay with you for awhile after the Convention, as I did two years ago.

Pedro Oliveira

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I do not see why there should be any shattering of ideals. You know the whole of this affair all the way through as very few others do, and you know that I at least have never done anything of which my friends need be ashamed; and as to Mrs. Besant, it is true that she has wavered, but only because in her intensity of self-sacrifice she thought, as she always does, that the most unpleasant thing to do must be the right one. I wish you were still able to see all the correspondence as it passes, as you used to.

When I mentioned corroborative evidence as to the existence of the Masters I was thinking chiefly of the correspondence. You know various people have written at different times stating that they have seen Them, and in some cases I was able to confirm the vision as accurate. I wish you were able to remember having seen Them yourself; you know one of the objects of our projected Rangoon gathering was to have been experiment in psychical development for our boys, for the Society needs some first-hand witnesses for the future. The constant pressure of work and the perpetual change of place during the tour made such effort hopeless then; but a year or two of quiet application might produce good results. We shall see what opportunities the future offers us. Meanwhile write to me when you can, and keep me informed of the progress of affairs. With very much love

I am ever

Yours most affectionately

C.W. Leadbeater

Shanti Kunja,  
Benares City  
August 23, 06

My dear Charles,

I do not know how the English law goes; it seems to me that unless some aggrieved person puts in motion, nothing can happen. It is not, I think, a thing taken up on police initiative. There is not the slightest danger from any member of the Committee, I am sure. I think a prosecution must be in the country where the offence is said to have occurred.

Just the same kind of things were said about me in the Knowl-

## CWL Speaks

ton Case as are said against you now. But H.P.B. told me that the Master said that it was the spirit shown in that – though I was mistaken in the means – which brought me to the threshold of initiation. But, as you say, this trouble comes late in this incarnation for you. Yet who can say; two or three years later, the work may open out again, or some newer line of service. Of this I feel sure that we shall work together again, though not just at once, and that our friendship will not break.

Ever, with affectionate thoughts,

Annie Besant

10, East Parade  
Harrogate,  
England  
August 27<sup>th</sup> 1906

My dear Fritz,

I think your sister should know the following:

Mrs. Howard of Chicago writes me that Mrs. Dennis “called her to her house and argued like a lawyer, taking up point after point to convince her that Mrs. Besant was unfit longer to remain the Outer Head”! The points were – 1. Mrs. Besant had grown proud, arrogant and dictatorial. 2. Had shown her utter unfitness by defending her colleague. 3. Is not a pupil of the Masters (!!)

4. Had fallen and has steadily fallen for the past five years.
5. Is drunk with power.
6. Is in the hands of black magicians.
7. Is trying to lead us all into Catholicism.

Now this represents most abominable treachery, and shows to what depths these misguided people are descending. I don’t care what they say about me, but if they begin this kind of thing they will get into trouble. I never heard before of a school which proposed to elect its headmaster!

As far as my own case is concerned, I think that in whatever has to be said, strong emphasis should be laid upon the fact that Mrs. Dennis’s assertion in her circular that for years I lived “a double life” is simply malicious nonsense (you yourself can testify to that!) and that the statement that I deceived parents is a

Pedro Oliveira

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deliberate falsehood. I warned Mrs. Dennis herself and others that I always made a point of speaking fully and frankly on those subjects; the only objection that can be made is that I did not go into detail in describing methods, about which I of course supposed they would trust me to do what I thought best in each case. However, the most important thing is that Raja should be reinstated as lecturer. You have yourself seen Mrs. Besant, and can say whether she shows symptoms of pride, falling, Catholicism, etc. the Colonel will preside at the Convention, and will no doubt be glad (...)

Will you kindly copy out and send to Mrs. Tuttle the part between the two lines on the previous page? She ought to know it, and it will save my writing it all again. You might give it as an extract from a letter just received it from me. Mrs. Besant's letters to me continue to be most friendly, and full of the same expressions of affection as of yore, though she emphatically dissents from the advice I gave. Hunt writes very kindly, full of indignation about the ingratitude of the officials, etc. "Theosophy in Australia" declines to publish the Executive Notice. The Chicago Book Concern apparently will not sell my books, though it possesses a number which are my property of which it has given no account. It also appears from Mrs. Howard's letter that Mrs. Gaston discourages people from buying Mrs. Besant's books. The condition of affairs is really remarkable. I wish you were in a position to see all the letters, as of old. Some members are coming through the test splendidly. With kindest regards to the family, and very much love to yourself,

I am ever

Yours most affectionately

C.W. Leadbeater

10 East Parade, Harrogate,  
England  
29th August, 1906.

My dear Annie,

Your letter enclosing your circular to the E.S. reached me yesterday while I was writing to you, and my comments upon it were

## CWL Speaks

therefore made somewhat hurriedly, as I had to catch a certain post. After a night in which to think it over, it is borne in upon me that I ought perhaps to write a few words more – that if it were thinkable that our positions could be reversed, I should wish to receive from you the very fullest and frankest statement of feeling that was possible. I think I owe it to you and to the loyal friendship of so many years; but I have withheld it so far because I did not wish even to seem to complain or to criticize – because I have to the uttermost that faith in you which you have perhaps somewhat lost in me – also, I think, because I shrank from obtruding my own personality in the midst of a crisis.

As I have said before, when we discussed this matter at Benares, I did not consciously make the slightest mental reservation. I was strongly oppressed by the feeling that the whole affair was taking up much of your time and causing you much trouble, and therefore I proposed as little as possible of alteration in what you wrote to Mrs. Dennis. You may possibly remember that I did make two different suggestions, one concerning that full explanation had never been given by me to Robert Dennis and the other deprecating the emphasis you laid upon the words “in rare cases”. Upon the first you acted, but it gave you the trouble of rewriting a sheet of the letter; the second you did not notice and I did not press it, not in the least realizing then that it might later come to be a question of primary importance. But in explaining matters to you, I did not speak of rare cases, but all where absolute abstinence was obviously impossible. You dissented quite definitely from the advice I had given, but there was no slightest hint then about my having “fallen”, or being the victim of glamour.

Now, dear, I am most anxious not to hurt you in any way, and not to give you an impression of a feeling of blame which is utterly absent from my heart if I know it. But from my point of view nothing whatever has happened since, to account for the tremendous change which has come over your opinion. You have received additional evidence from America which is mostly false, which I have never had the opportunity of seeing or of going over with you; and on the strength of that your proclamation was is-

sued. You yourself put my own case for me in the aptest words when you intimated in one of your letters that I might perhaps find it necessary to publish some sort of statement in contradiction to worse rumours that were flying about; you yourself said how monstrous it was that a man's character should be taken away by unsupported and unexamined evidence given by a few boys who were being so badgered by excited relations that they hardly knew what they were saying. To that has since been added the report (which again I have not seen) of a savagely hostile committee, obviously bent upon making the worst they could of everything; and that is how the matters stand.

I need not remind you of our long work together, of the hundreds of times that we have met out of the body, and even in the presence of our Masters, and of the Lord Himself. We have a record behind us, and you know me well; was I ever an impure person? I have not changed in the least, yet you say now that I have "fallen" from the path of occultism, or rather, I suppose, that I never was really on it at all. Yet recollect how many experiences we shared, and how often it has happened that they were also corroborated by the memory of others. Have you any evidence of this "fall" beyond your own conviction that because I held certain opinions it must be so? If not, will you in justice to me look at the possibilities of the case, and consider whether it is more likely that both you and I and several others should have lived a whole life of glamour for many years (the result of that being, nevertheless, a considerable amount of good work) or that you should now for this once be misinterpreting something?

Pardon me for suggesting that there may be a mistake, but you have yourself allowed it on a far more extensive scale than this. Your theory implies that I have never seen the Masters, and that it has been an evil illusion that has sustained me by its glory and its beauty through the work and the hard struggles of twenty-three years; yet surely that illusion has led me to do work which could scarcely be supposed to be pleasing to any evil powers. My "illusion" of work under the direction of the Masters continues now as ever, and now as ever but the most elevating teaching comes to me from Them, nothing but the most perfect love and compas-

## CWL Speaks

sion. Would you have me deny Them because They have not cast me off? I will say nothing as to the knowledge that They must have had as to the advice I gave, because you would say that They also must be part of my delusion; but you can hardly think me deluded in knowing that Madame Blavatsky trusted me and worked with me though her insight must have shown her my thoughts. (I am not venturing to suggest that They do not perhaps consider that an honest error on such a point makes a man altogether bad.) I am not venturing to suggest that They or she would agree with the advice, or makes it impossible to work with him.

I am not for a moment seeking to convince you that my advice is right; I always recognized that there was much to be said on both sides, and I am quite willing to accept your strong opinion as outweighing many other considerations. But may it not be possible that a man who honestly held an opinion differing from yours may yet not be an impure or abandoned person, that Madame Blavatsky and the Great Ones behind her may have recognized a good and pure intention even in this unconventionalism, and may therefore have thought it possible to use the man in the work? But your message states that you cannot work with me, even though I abandoned that advice in deference to your wishes.

A man holding such opinion cannot remain in the Theosophical Society, but must be cast out of it, even though he change the opinion, apparently! Yet even so, it should not be falsehood that he is cast out, and we have had plenty of it both from our poor dear Fullerton and Mrs. Dennis. Your message contains that inaccurate statement about daily practice and the other about epileptic fits, and (what I felt more than all) the suggestion that I was not quite honest with you at Benares. That perhaps was good for me, for it may be that I was unwittingly a little proud of being always open and honest, so that to be doubted raised for a moment a sort of outraged feeling.

Well, the thing is done now, and with all the weight of your world-wide authority I am branded as a fallen person. Even if upon reflection you do not feel quite so sure that you were right at

## Pedro Oliveira

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that moment and wrong during all the previous years, there is no undoing such an action as that. I would not for a moment ask it, because to withdraw would, as it were, stultify you and convict you of acting hastily, which would not be good for your people. Yet if you can modify it in any way, or can contradict for me those things which are definitely untrue, it might perhaps be well – I don't know. At any rate, I thought I ought to write to you with absolute frankness, so that there should be no possibility of misunderstanding that I could avoid; if I had only been with you, there never would have been any. Ask the Master plainly whether I am abandoned and fallen, and see what is the reply. Believe me when I say that I have never blamed you; I do not wish to get back into the Society, I do not seek to be rehabilitated; but I do want to clear up the position between us if possible. I know very well how hard it is when the mind is once set in a certain groove to drag it out and judge impartially; yet I hope that you may be able to make this stupendous effort, which few in the world could make. But whatever you decide, my affection remains the same.

Yours ever in love and confidence,  
C. W. Leadbeater

In the following letter Annie Besant makes a brief reference to the so-called 'Judge Case'. William Quan Judge was one of the Founders of the Theosophical Society in New York, in November 1875. He led the movement in the United States when Madame Blavatsky and Col. Olcott left for India at the end of 1878. Some years later a controversy arose over his claimed receipt of communications from the Mahatmas. He was the Vice-President of the TS at that time. The end result of that crisis came when he declared complete autonomy from the TS with Headquarters at Adyar and formed the Theosophical Society in America, when eighty-five percent of the existing Branches followed him into to the new body. More information on Mr Judge's voluminous writings and biographical data can be obtained on the following website:

<http://www.theosophy-nw.org/theosnw/theos/wqj-selc.htm>.

## CWL Speaks

Shanti Kunja,  
Benares City  
Aug. 30, 06

My dear Charles,

We must, for the present, remain a puzzle to each other. It is hard but some good will come out of it to the work, and to us also, if we keep our friendship unshaken. I have not forgotten the interview of which you speak, and because I do not doubt it, I believe in our common future. This is just a passing cloud and does not affect the larger life.

I thought, mistakenly, that you would have a copy of the English and American letter sooner from England, where it was manifolded, than by my copying it again here. The Indian one – which has gone to Australia also – I posted as soon as I had a copy.

Do you not think that Judge meant right? I do. We none of us can do a thing, meaning to do wrong; that does not belong to our stage. We do wrong meaning to do right, as Judge thought a Master bade him forge. Very likely I shall similarly fall, and learn. You probably think I am seeing wrong right now. Dear friend, let us be patient with each other – as indeed you are to me, who seem to be wronging you – for it is in these dark hours the links are forged that nothing can break. You know how you have thought I exaggerated the difficulties of the Path, but I had seen and felt something of these illusions; you know my Master's way – it sometimes seems a hard way but it is not – of apparently leaving one in the dark and alone. One learns there. Your path has been so comparatively sunny – another way – that the night had come in its blackest. And how nobly and quietly you are taking it all.

Raja has done very well; I had a touching note from him, dear lad.

Mrs. Dennis has said many things, I know. She thinks the Inner School means a total surrender of will and conscience to me, so as an antidote sent out with my circular a letter written some time since by me on independence of judgment; it was meant to

Pedro Oliveira

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mark a contrast, but is very useful, as showing my (selected?) opinion that a man must judge for himself.

I do not press the yellow robe; it was only a suggestion, and you know the conditions of it better than I. Do not let us hurry any decision. You have literary work to do, and a year hence a book from you should be welcomed.

With unchanging love,

Always yours,

Annie Besant

10, East Parade, Harrogate, England,

11<sup>th</sup> September, 1906.

My dear Annie

I have your letter of August 11th. I am sorry you cannot see your way to sending out my little comment, but of course if you feel that attitude to be your duty, there is no more to be said. I will try to send that note to some of the people; but I do not know the addresses of large numbers, and it is inevitable that I shall fail to reach many. Also I run some risk of sending to some who have not seen your letter, which I wished to avoid. However, we must do the best we can.

What I do not yet quite understand is the complete change which seems to have come over your attitude since we discussed the matter at Benares. You had all the facts before you then, except only that you supposed the intervals to be longer, as I understand it; but you had not then adopted this theory of glamour, nor cast behind you the consistent experience of many years. And although the idea of shorter intervals might alter your opinion as to the advisability, it cannot affect the principle of the thing; that was surely the same then as now, and yourself, though disapproving the advice, spoke of it as at least better than that often given by doctors to young men. 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 have repeatedly said that I am willing to defer to your opinion.

## CWL Speaks

You know I never for a moment suggested that the Masters dictated or approved of 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 outweighs 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, became in each case they involve action upon another person; yet those seem to be differently treated, since ..... of whose actions at Adyar you once told me is still a Theosophical leader. Col. Olcott's testimony to the existence of the Masters is true, even though he has sometimes lapsed in sexual matters. It is not contended that he is perfect, or that all his teaching has always been accurate but it is unquestionable that he stands in a certain relation to the Masters, and that They are using him for work. Even supposing that opinion of mine was utterly and 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 work came out of the delusion? If we are to suppose the whole transaction carried out by Dark Powers at the cost of infinite trouble, do you 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 your at once, but it does not seem to have made any difference. All through the affair, I have guided myself as far as possible by what I thought you would wish.

Do not think from the above that I am repining or blaming you in any way; as long as your friendship remains, opinions are matters of minor importance. I trust you absolutely, knowing you will always do, and are now doing, what seems to you your duty. I think if I had been physically with you, you would have seen

Pedro Oliveira

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more fully exactly what I meant, and perhaps your decision would have been different; but in that case the trial for me would have been quite different also; so probably full advantage has been taken of the present position of affairs. In the end all will certainly be well, even if things are a little comfortless in the meantime, and at least nothing can change my affection and regard for you. So if ever I can be of use by standing by your side again, you may count upon me as already there. With very much love, I am ever,

Yours most affectionately,  
C. W. Leadbeater

10, East Parade  
Harrogate,  
England  
November 10<sup>th</sup> 1906

My dear Fritz,

Basil has forwarded to me your letter of October 16<sup>th</sup>. I am glad to hear that you are progressing comfortably with your work, though it must be agreed a contrast to the tour. My present life is a great contrast to it also, but I always have more on hand than I can do, and at this moment the accumulation of letters is about as big as it ever was! But I have just finished some other tiresome jobs, and now I am going to turn on that pile and read it, so I begin with yours.

The American Convention went about as I expected. You see in order to succeed we must have descended to the tactics of the other side, must have canvassed all the small Branches for proxies, and acted with determined vigour; and our people could hardly do that. I did hope that American love of liberty would rise in protest against the scandalously unjust treatment of Raja by the Colonel, but apparently even his expulsion has been meekly accepted! Those who attacked him used my name as though I had given their Committee a certificate of impartiality; it is false. Colonel Olcott asked me at the London meeting whether I felt that he had acted with impartiality at that meet-

## CWL Speaks

ing, and I replied that he had – which was quite true as regards all the part of it at which I was present. If he had asked me whether I thought the American Committee impartial truth would have compelled me to say that I regarded their action as stupid and malicious persecution. I believe Rajas was quite right in attributing their crazy proceedings to fear and resentment, though I do not doubt that they became so addle-headed with prejudice that to them their wickedness seemed wisdom. Mrs. Dennis still appears to be very angry with Mrs. Besant, and there may yet be some attack made on the latter, and if so we must all be ready to stand by her and to help her. I know her present attitude is inconsistent, and she mistakes in what she says about glamour, but she is trying to do her best under very difficult circumstances and we should support her as long as we honestly can.

Her private letters continue as affectionate as ever. I wish you were here on hand to see the correspondence as you used to be – then you would really understand all that is going on; but it is impossible to write it all in a letter. This wretched business has augmented my correspondence considerably; and it was big enough before, as you know. I suppose it must die down some time, and we shall get back to letters on more reasonable subjects. I have had practically no news from America since the Convention but many kind letters expressing sympathy, etc. An application came in today to translate the “Outline” [of Theosophy] into Hungarian, so some work is still going forward. You may remember how strong an instinct I had, first not leave India, and then to return thither from Egypt; it would have been much better if I had obeyed that intuition, for in that way I would have avoided that London Committee, and Mrs. Besant would never have issued that glamour circular. But what else would have happened I know not – only that Mrs. Besant and I would have been standing together. The Colonel said that would have split the Society; I don’t see why, but perhaps he is right. By the way I heard a few days ago that he was in hospital at Genova – no bones, but badly bruised. That looks as though

## Pedro Oliveira

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he had had a rough passage. I may perhaps yet go back to India, for I always “hear the East a-calling” as Kipling puts it. Keagey and Mrs. Courtright have come splendidly out of all this; have you seen their letters? We had a grand time at Adyar; I wonder how long it will be before you are there again.

The post-cards must constitute a regular memento of the tour – a kind of picture diary. I should like to go over it all again in memory with you some day; perhaps we may have an opportunity. I should just like to be working now at the Tewfik Palace Hotel at Helouan, with the desert and the pyramids before us! Or looking out over Sydney Harbour! The Martyns are to return some time next month. Martyn has been down to West Africa about some mines. Well, kindest regards to all, and very much love to yourself

Yours ever most affectionately

C.W. Leadbeater.

Shanti Kunja,  
Benares City  
Dec 13, 06

My dear Charles,

The verdict of the doctors on the Colonel is that he must succumb to the least excitement, and I do not suppose that it is possible, under the circumstances, to ward off all excitement. I leave for Adyar on the night of the 24<sup>th</sup>, and shall remain on after the Convention to arrange a number of matters.

I see no one for President except Keightley – literally no one. Sinnett, Mead, will not take it. Who else is there?

I have written Raja on the charges, and he will show you my letter. Why on earth should he not think me mistaken? Mrs. Dennis and many might be expelled for much heavier blame of me! And surely he or anyone else may think the Ex. Council in U.S.A. wrong without meriting expulsion. Mrs. Dennis, in writing to me, accused me of being swayed in my judgment by affection for you, and so on.

The T.P.S. [Theosophical Publishing Society] is a running concern, and does not need any money to be invested in it. Buy-

## CWL Speaks

ing Keightley out is difficult for he has no real monetary claim. Countess Wachtmeister gave it over to him and me, and I do not regard it as a property belonging to either of us. My books and yours are its most valuable assets.

With love as always,

Very affectionately yours

Annie Besant

## Chapter 8

### Adyar Events of Early 1907

The following are extracts from Col. Olcott's Diary for the beginning of 1907:

- Jan. 1. Mrs. Besant's Council are busy over the affairs of Hdqrs. She intends laying the Jinarajadasa case before the Council. I have a letter to her in answer to hers about the matter. It was hasty judgment. Many visits from Convention guests.
- 2nd. The Council requests the "Raja" matter to be laid before the General Secretaries, which shall be done. Library pandits must go; bills too high; expenses exceed income.
- 3rd. The Oriental Publishing Co. must separate itself from the T.S. too complicated. Had a drive with Ria. Good Byes to many Convention guests. A.B. working at all business matters.
- 4th. Health still improving. Drive. Dr. says I must be in bed two months yet. Am much troubled in mind about my successor. There seems some fault to find about everyone – some drawback. Annie seems about the only one, but am afraid of her E.S. work. The Masters must settle it.
- 5th. Was troubled about my successor and had thought to take a vote of the Sections about A.B. At 8.30 p.m. both Mahatma M. and K.H. came, and told me to appoint Annie Besant as she was the best fitted for the office. Ria and Mina were present. They said Mrs. Russak, her father and I were united – Karma – and that she was

## CWL Speaks

destined to be one of Their best instruments and workers in the future. So the matter is settled. Shall inform Sections.

- 11th. Health not so good. The Mahatmas M. and K.H. visited Col. Olcott and told him he must write C.W.L. and tell him that he made too much haste in deciding the case in London. He said it should not have been made public.
- 13th. The Blessed Ones came again and heard the letter to C.W.L. and the article. They approve, and Mahatma M. dictated some of the article. He begged us to expedite matters.

As a result of the visit by the Masters to him on 5<sup>th</sup> January 1907, Col. Olcott sent the following communication to all Sections of the Theosophical Societies around the world:

ADYAR, January 7, 1907.

To the Theosophical Society, its Officers and Members.

DEAR BRETHREN,

In the beginning of this year 1907, which my several medical attendants in Italy, on board ship, at Colombo, and here at Adyar, have almost unanimously proclaimed to be the last year of my existence in this physical body, it behoves me to put my house in order; also to place on record certain words of counsel given to me by the Masters, connected with the affairs of the office of President of the Theosophical Society. This Society, which is now operating in forty-five different countries of the world through over six hundred Branch Societies, comprises a great number of persons of different races and religions, all united together on the platform of Universal Brotherhood, so it concerns me to appoint as my successor one who will act with perfect impartiality, as regards morals, religions and politics, favouring no

## Pedro Oliveira

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one but holding the scales between all with perfect justice, as I have always tried to do. There are many in our Society who surpass me in learning, and in various other qualities, which go to make up the capable ruler, but I leave it to posterity to say whether there is one among us who has worked more zealously than myself to realise the idea of Universal Brotherhood.

The responsibility resting upon me to appoint my successor was too great, so, as in my previous times during the course of official duties connected with this Society, I trusted to Those behind the movement to give me Their advice in the matter.

Last evening, in the presence of witnesses, Mahatma M. and Mahatma K.H. appeared beside my sick-bed, visible to our physical eyes and speaking in voices audible to our physical ears. They told me to appoint Annie Besant as my successor. They said no matter whom I should appoint there would be some discontented ones, but that taking everything into consideration, They most decidedly considered her the best fitted for the office.

I therefore appoint Annie Besant to take the office of President of the Theosophical Society at my death, and I cannot but feel glad that Their decision confirms the view that I had myself already taken. I feel convinced that I can safely trust to her the administration of the duties of the office I have held for the last thirty-one years, the more so, because the Masters assured me last evening that They would overshadow her as They have me in the work.

They both approved my wish that Adyar should be kept as the Headquarters of the Theosophical Society, and official residence of the Presidents, for the time of their office, inasmuch as the property had been bought by the Founders under Their (the Masters') direct inspiration.

In case she does not find it possible to remain in the office the entire term, I beg her not to appoint a successor unless They approve of her choice.

(Signed) H. S. OLCOTT, P.F.T.S.

## CWL Speaks

In the February 1907 issue of *The Theosophist* the following statement by Col. Olcott was published, followed by a note by Annie Besant:

### A CONVERSATION WITH THE MAHATMAS

Probably on account of the possibility of my life closing at any time, the two Mahatmas who are known to be behind the Theosophical movement and the personal instructors of H. P. B. and myself, have visited me several times lately (in the presence of witnesses, being plainly visible, audible and tangible to all), with the object of giving me some final instructions about things to which They wished me to attend while I am still in the physical body. It may be that I shall live some years yet, but the critical condition of my health makes it imperative that I arrange certain matters for the sake of the Society.

It is natural enough, since I have been working under the guidance of these Masters during the last thirty-one years, that They should have some words of counsel for me, as my Teachers, in reference to Theosophical matters, and that I, as their humble servant, have questions to ask them concerning my endeavours to carry out Their will. "For the night cometh, when no man can work." Fortunately this refers only to the physical body; for as regards work in the other bodies, there is no "night," but only the earnest endeavour that must be concentrated in the work, no matter in what body we may be functioning at the time.

The interview which I am about to describe, had for its object the course I should pursue in the present crisis, brought about by the cloud resting upon one who has been one of our most respected members, and, indeed, one who has given faithful service to the Society for many years, but who, it has been recently discovered, has been giving out teachings of which we did not approve.

Some members of the Society have formed themselves into two groups. The one, with an exaggerated moral sense, believes that the Teachers of mankind cannot employ agents that are not above the weaknesses of the physical body, contact with whom would be supposed morally to taint them.

## Pedro Oliveira

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The other party (who, if we make a careful study of history, must be regarded as having some knowledge and common sense on their side) considers that these invisible Teachers, in order to reach the masses, and especially to penetrate to the very depths of human society, are forced to employ agents or messengers who possess many of the failings of mankind; but that they must also possess a high standard of ideals and spirituality, at least enough to enable them to be useful instruments for conveying the lofty precepts and high teachings, which it is incumbent upon them to give out in order to carry out the will of Those who employ them.

The principal members of the two parties were rather startled recently by the statement of Mrs. Annie Besant (made privately but now generally known) that she thought she must have been under a glamour, in supposing that she had worked with Mr. Leadbeater under the guidance and in the presence of the Mahatmas while he was giving such harmful teachings.

I wished to make my own mind easy about the matter, so I asked the Mahatmas this question: "Is it then true that Mrs. Besant and Mr. Leadbeater did work together on the higher planes, under Your guidance and instruction? Answer (Mahatma M.): "Most emphatically yes!" Question. "Was she right in thinking that because Mr. Leadbeater had been giving out certain teachings that were objectionable, he was not fit to be Your instrument, or to be in Your presence?" Answer. "No; where can you find us perfect instruments at this stage of evolution? Shall we withhold knowledge that would benefit humanity, simply because we have no perfect instruments to convey it to the world?" Question. "Then it is not true, that they were either of them mistaken or under a glamour? Answer." "Decidedly not. I wish you to state this publicly."

I can give no better examples than the Founders, to corroborate what the Mahatma said, for in spite of our manifold shortcomings and physical weaknesses, They did not hesitate to employ us as Their instruments, because They saw in us the capacity of becoming loyal true workers. As for myself, you know well what an imperfect instrument I have been, and so far as H. P. B. was concerned, you know that a Master once wrote through her hand and referred to her "unfortunate rotten old body." (See *Old Diary Leaves*, Vol. II.)

## CWL Speaks

In the principal discourses which I recently gave at the International Congress at Paris and the London and Chicago Conventions, I discussed this matter freely, for the sense of it oppressed my mind, and I felt that it would be most unwise to allow the Society to take such a stand, as seemed to me to be an extreme one, concerning ideals that were impossible to realise at our present stage of development. In my Paris address I said:

“Some years ago I wrote an article on Asceticism, in which I told about the rebuke that was administered to me at Bombay, by a Master, when, upon being asked to name the one of all the then members of the Society in India whom I thought the brightest spiritually, I named one whose devotion to the Society was great, and whose personal conduct was irreproachable; but I was told that I should have selected a certain person who, although a drunkard, was spiritually advanced within. No sensible person would say that one addicted to drunkenness or sexual excesses is more likely to be an accurate teacher or wise counsellor than one who leads a decent life; quite the contrary, but it means that now and again appears a person who, despite moral failings, can serve as a channel for high teachings. Yet the very fact of his moral taint would naturally put us on our guard, for fear that we might fall into the trap of our own credulity, and take the teachings without proper scrutiny.”

The Mahatmas wishes me to state in reference to the disturbances that have arisen because we deemed it wise to accept Mr. Leadbeater's resignation from the Society, that it was right to call an Advisory Council to discuss the matter; it was right to judge the teachings to which we objected as wrong, and it was right to accept his resignation; but it was not right that the matter should have been made so public, and that we should have done everything possible to prevent it becoming so, for his sake as well as that of the Society.

He said it should be the sacred duty of every Theosophist, if he finds a brother guilty of a wrong, to try to prevent that brother from continuing in his wrong-doing, and to protect others from being contaminated by that wrong so far as it is possible; but it is also his duty as a Theosophist to shield his brother from being held up unnecessarily to general public condemnation and ridicule.

## Pedro Oliveira

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I shall now close this article with the first direct message from the Masters Themselves sent through me to the Society as a whole.

“Let those who believe in Our existence, and that We are behind the Theosophical Movement, also that We shall continue to employ it as an agency for the uplifting of mankind, know, that we are sometimes forced to employ imperfect instruments (because of the lack of perfect ones) for Our work. Therefore cease from such turmoil and strife, and from causing such disturbance in the Unity of Brotherhood, and thus weakening its strength, but instead, work together in harmony, to be useful instruments to aid Us, instead of impeding Our work. We who are behind the Theosophical Movement, are powerless sometimes to prevent the checks and disturbances that must unavoidably arise, because of Karma of individual members; but you can aid us much by refusing to take part in such disturbances, and by living true to the highest possible ideals of Theosophy. Should any event bring forth seeming injustice, have faith in the Law that never fails to adjust matters. Cease rushing headlong into strife, or taking part in dissensions! Hold together in brotherly love since you are part of the Great Universal Self. Are you not striving against yourselves? Are not your Brother’s sins your own? Peace! Trust in Us.”

H. S. OLCOTT.

The reference to “glamour” above is to a statement made by me in a private and confidential letter, which should have been held sacred. In view of the acceptance by Mr. Leadbeater of the charges made against him—though some of them have since proved to be exaggerated—I stated that I thought my experiences with him on the higher planes must have been due to glamour, for, while still recognising him as a disciple, I thought that the things charged would have temporarily shut him out from such work. It is true that this view caused me much pain, as it discredited certain things of which I had felt sure, and shook what I had believed to be solid ground under my feet. But better this, it seemed to me, than that the Holy Ones should be insulted by our imperfections. It is with a sense of deep gratitude and relief that I learn that those experiences were not deceptive, that they were as true as for years I had believed them to be, and that

## CWL Speaks

while I was right in condemning the teachings, and also in believing that he was and is a disciple, I was wrong in thinking that the errors prevented Them from using him as one of Their instruments for good. How glad I am to have been wrong in this, and to have been set right, what words of mine may say?

And truly when one measures the depths of one's own imperfections, the shallowness of one's views, the narrowness of one's best wisdom, how can one think that another may not be a channel, though in him also imperfections mar the nature? Truly severity to one's own failings and charity to those of others, is our safety on the Path narrow as the edge of a razor. May this be the flower of wisdom gathered from the plant of pain, and may we live in the spirit breathed in the Master's words.

ANNIE BESANT.

The reactions to both statements by the President-Founder were immediate: some called the visits by the Masters to him 'apparitions', others referred to them as 'Adyar manifestations' or even 'psychic' events. A.P. Sinnett, the Vice-President of the TS at that time, also did not accept as genuine the events which took place at Adyar in January 1907.

G.R.S. Mead, the co-editor with Annie Besant of *The Theosophical Review*, the journal of the English Section of the TS, and one of the leading members in England, voiced his direct opposition at the two statements by Col. Olcott mentioned above. He included in the journal's March 1907 issue the following unanimous resolution of the Executive Committee of the British Section of the Theosophical Society:

"That the Executive Committee of the British Section cannot consider the presidential notice of January 7th as valid on the grounds —

(1) That it is illegal as being in contravention of Rule 9 of the General Rules and Regulations of the Theosophical Society,—

## Pedro Oliveira

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which gives the President-Founder the right only of nominating and not of appointing his successor.

(2) That it imposes upon the Society a blind belief in and unquestioning acceptance of the genuineness and supreme authority of a personal psychic phenomenon.

At the same time this Executive Committee declares its readiness to receive with becoming respect any nomination that their venerable President-Founder may make in accordance with the constitution and his own best judgment.”

Rule 9 of the General Constitution reads:

The President-Founder, Col. H. S. Olcott, holds the office of President for life, and has the right of nominating his successor, subject to the ratification of the Society, the vote being taken as provided for in the election of a President.”

On 21<sup>st</sup> January 1907 the President-Founder sent out a second and official notice that he ‘nominated’ Annie Besant for President and commended her to the voters. (*A Short History of the Theosophical Society*, Josephine Ransom, p. 368, TPH Adyar, 1938 edition.)

Mead also included in the same issue of *The Theosophical Review* (March 1907) another resolution of the British Executive Committee with the statement that ‘it requires more than the pronouncements of such apparitions to persuade us that true Masters are utterly indifferent to grave moral obliquity in their pupils’. It also stated: ‘The authority of psychism has for long been on trial in the Theosophical Society. Were its authority to be now accepted as supreme and unquestioned, the Society would commit intellectual and moral suicide, and condemn itself publicly to the well-deserved reproach of fatuity; for psychic tyranny spells theosophic slavery.’

Annie Besant’s response to G. R. S. Mead and to the Executive Committee of the British Section was the following open letter to the members of that Section:

FOR MEMBERS OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY ONLY.

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE ENGLISH SECTION

The issue which lies in the hands of the Theosophical Society for decision has been so confused by the action of your Executive, that I trust you will pardon me for placing the facts before you. The Executive has sent out to you a pamphlet, of which the larger part is entirely irrelevant, while in the part that is relevant there is a startling omission: the Official Notice of the President-Founder, dated January 21<sup>st</sup>, 1907, nominating me as President, and directing the General Secretaries to take the votes of their Sections, does not appear! As it is wholly incredible that this can be deliberate, it is clear that the registered letter containing it, posted in Madras on January 24<sup>th</sup>, which should have reached London by February 9<sup>th</sup>, had not been received by the General Secretary. Nor could the Executive have received, before they issued their pamphlet in March, my protest against their resolutions of February 2nd, in which that Official Notice was quoted. If either of these had been received, all that is given in the first part of the pamphlet would have been unnecessary.

The Executive took as an Official Notice the letter of information sent out on January 7th by the President—not to the General Secretaries, but “To the Theosophical Society, its Officers and Members.” It unwarrantably assumed that this colloquial document was a “presidential notice,” took a fright at the word “appoint” in lieu of “nominate,” assumed that the President wanted to override the Society and deprive it of its right to vote, declared that the President—in doing what he had done over and over again, alleging his Master’s authority for an official act\* – was imposing blind belief, etc., and wound up with its promise to receive with “becoming respect” any nomination he might make, etc.,

Meanwhile the President, unaware of the storm he had innocently caused, had desired me to draw up, had read, signed and issued the following to each General Secretary and the Recording Secretary:

*Official Notice.*

ADYAR, January 21<sup>st</sup>, 1907.

DEAR SIR AND BROTHER,

Pedro Oliveira

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As already notified to you, I have, under Rule 9, nominated as my successor Annie Besant. It now becomes your duty, under Rule 11, to submit this nomination to your Section for ratification, to communicate to this office the votes of your members, so that there may be no breach of continuity in the Presidential Office.

Yours fraternally,

H. S. OLCOTT, P.T.S.

\*See *inter alia* Executive Orders of July 21<sup>st</sup>, 1891, August 21<sup>st</sup>, 1892, September 27<sup>th</sup>, 1904. In his Twenty-first Anniversary Address, he mentions that he issued the Executive Order he quotes therein because he had received a letter phenomenally on board his steamer.

This cannot have been received on February 9<sup>th</sup>, though registered, for on February 20<sup>th</sup> the Executive asks the Acting President, Mr. Sinnett, to regularise "the state of affairs," and Mr. Sinnett, wholly ignorant of the Official Notice, which was perfectly regular, proceeded to do so. One of his phrases is curious: "the form it assumed in the first instance." But there was no other form before him. The Executive, if it had received the Official Notice, would not have sent out its Resolution of February 20<sup>th</sup>, nor would Mr. Sinnett have written his letter of February 22<sup>nd</sup>. The Executive would have bowed to the regular nomination with "becoming respect," the voting would have begun, according to the President's direction, and no "regularization" of a friendly letter would have taken the place of an already regular official document. It is evident that Mr. Sinnett did the best possible thing under confusing circumstances.

Probably, before this reaches you, the Executive will have given you notice of the President-Founder's action, as they will have had my letter, repeating the formal Notice, and it is not likely that the second copy will also have gone wrong.

As regards the irrelevant part of the pamphlet, it is for the Executive to explain to the Section why they included it with the matter of the nomination, and why they should pass a resolution rejecting it officially. Official rejection is as unconstitutional as official endorsement, and is quite as much a tyranny as the use of psychic authority. The only part which is an

## CWL Speaks

“instruction to the Society” is the command to cease from strife and work in harmony. Is this worthy of condemnation?

One cannot help asking: What is all this excitement about? If it had been as true as it is false that the Colonel used the Master’s authority to impose me on the Society, the Constitution made his action invalid, and there was no need to make a fuss about it. Even had he done so, the Society has flourished for thirty-one years under a President appointed by the Masters for life, without suffering under a “psychic tyranny.” Over and over again the President issued Executive Orders, giving his Master’s authority as his reason, and none of the present Executive protested, or prophesied any terrible consequences; why is this one so much worse than the rest, against which they never raised a finger?

The fuss made over the word “appoint” is rather childish; in the Rules of the Theosophical Society “as revised in Session of the General Council, all the Sections being represented, at Adyar, December 27<sup>th</sup>, 1890”—and surely Mr. Keightley, then General Secretary for India, and Mr. Mead, the then General Secretary for the European Section, should remember this – Par. 8, Art. 4 ran: “The President shall have the right to appoint his successor, and also to fill a vacancy in the Office of Vice-President, subject however in either case to ratification by a two-third majority vote of the Sections. And it shall be the duty of the General Secretaries of Sections to communicate to the President the decision of their respective Sections within three calendar months after receiving from him notice of the said appointment or appointments. Should the nominee or nominees fail to obtain the required two-thirds’ vote of ratification, the President shall make a new nomination.”

Yet Mr. Keightley now gravely argues that “Colonel Olcott never had power to ‘appoint’ anyone as his successor,” and goes on to say that the Colonel would never have violated the constitution by “appointing,” had he been of sound mind! Were all the General Secretaries of unsound mind in 1890?

As regards the statement made by Colonel Olcott in his information letter, that his Master had directed him to make me his successor, I affirm clearly and definitely—in the face of letter received from some loved friends, that *on this ground alone* they will vote against me—that the Colonel spoke truly and sanely, and that I was myself separately, as well

## Pedro Oliveira

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as in his presence ordered to accept the work. I would rather be rejected as my Master's nominee than succeed by disavowing that which, to my mind, carries a far higher honour than any possible election by applauding crowds. While many members do not believe in the Masters, and others deny this particular manifestation, the Theosophical Society draws its being, its life, its strength, from the Masters, and like H. P. B. and Colonel Olcott, I am Their servant, and only as Their servant do I work in the Society. I ask none to believe, but I assert my own belief. Wrench the Theosophical Society away from the Masters and it dies. Those who do not wish to have a second President, holding this belief and asserting it, should vote against me.

Some write to me complaining that my article on "The Basis of the Theosophical Society" is meant as an argument for the reinstatement of Mr. Leadbeater. So far as I know, Mr. Leadbeater does not wish to be reinstated, and he was not in my mind when I wrote; this should have been obvious, as he resigned, he was not expelled. But for some time I had been feeling the need for such an article, and I knew none else would write it. And when I knew I was to be nominated, I thought that it would not be honest to let the Society vote without knowledge of my views. The title was the title of an article for which Mr. Jinarajadasa had been expelled, and I wished to challenge similar action against myself, or to show that one member could say, unassailed, that for which another member was expelled. I even repeated one of the sentences which formed one of the charges against him. His expulsion and the events which followed it were the cause of the article. So far as Mr. Jinarajadasa was concerned, I appealed to the Colonel to annul his decision, on the ground that he had been misled as to facts; and mistaken as to procedure; when the proofs were laid before him his distress over the injustice he had unwittingly committed was great; whether or not I was justified in my appeal the Theosophical Society will know after the meeting of the General Council on April 4<sup>th</sup>; it would not be fitting for me to state here the votes received. I am alone responsible for raising this question; I saw liberty imperilled, and as one of her old soldiers I fought for her. I have nothing to regret, even if my action forfeits all American votes. More than this case, however, lies behind the article. Mr. Jinarajadasa out of the way, persecution of others began; the American Executive, threatened to cancel the Charter of any Branch employing an expelled member; the

## CWL Speaks

General Council, at my request, has declared this to be beyond its power. Individual private members were assailed; a lady of over 60 years of age, who had long worked for the Chicago Branch, was expelled from the Committee she had worked on because she did not sympathise with the spirit of the majority; and she was not the only one “purged” away, as an official lecturer calls the expelling process; thirty members of the Branch, questioned on their opinions, were threatened with expulsion on their refusal to answer the inquisition; they are private, not official, members; their case is still pending. A President of a Branch was accused by an official lecturer of various wrong-doings; his Branch resisting, accusations of commercial dishonesty were circulated, and he had to take legal means to save his credit. Mr. Pandit, a Branch Inspector from India, carrying recommendations from the highest University authorities there, from Colonel Olcott, from the General Secretary of the Indian Section, and, myself, having incurred Mr. Fullerton’s displeasure by a very proper refusal, as a foreigner, to take sides in the American quarrel, cannot now lecture for a Branch, the Secretaries writing that they dare not invite him lest they should lose their charters. I have documents proving each of the above statements, and have also the jubilant letters of triumph from the official side. To check the spirit which has brought about this state of things, my article was written, and it has already had some effect. It is the spirit that matters, and the spirit of hatred and persecution will destroy the Theosophical Society much more rapidly than the presence in it of a few bad-minded people—if such there be. I would rather stand beside the Great One who was disapproved of by polite society in Judea because he was “the friend of publicans and sinners,” than beside the Pharisee who thanked God that he was not as other men, who were sinners. I knew that the article meant my rejection as President by the American Section, and—I wrote it. How much it was needed, and how far the spirit of hatred has gone, we can see by the fact that when the notice of my nomination was read in the Chicago Branch, it was intimated that the Masters had been personated, and that I had helped in the deception. This is the party that some of my English friends are helping, friends who have declared that they owe to me the light by which they live. One service the American officials have done me; they have reprinted an article I wrote in the Judge trouble on “Brotherhood, true and false.” I cordially

## Pedro Oliveira

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endorse it today, and the passage italicised points to the action Mr. Leadbeater took.

As this question has been raised to prejudice my election, I will state here what I stated long before my nomination was thought of. I regard the practice taught by Mr. Leadbeater as deserving the sternest condemnation, but I regard him as a good man, fatally in error on one point, not as a bad man. I refuse to forget his splendid services to Theosophy, his valuable books, his unceasing labours. I refuse to let one spot, however black, obscure the sun of his great merits. As regards his readmission to the Society—I do not know that he wishes readmission—I shall continue to oppose it, as I have hitherto done, until he says publicly that the teaching is wrong, not only that he will refrain from it, as he promised to do in February, 1906, and also before the Advisory Board in London. Some time, say a couple of years, after he has definitely said this, if a large majority of the whole Society ask for his readmission, I should be in favour of it. Otherwise I should continue to oppose it. Mr. Leadbeater is my friend, but I would not injure the Theosophical Society for his sake, and he would not wish me to do so. His first impulse, when the charge was made against him to me, was to resign, to guard the Society; I asked him to see the President-Founder, lay the whole matter before him, and resign or not, as he determined. I still think that this course would have been better than that adopted by the American officials.

Another cause may lead to my rejection in the British Section. Mr. Keightley's attitude towards myself has been rendered public by Mr. Mead's quotation of a sentence in a letter of mine to his wife. I have never forgotten Mr. Keightley's early services to H. P. B., and his connection with the publication of the *Secret Doctrine*; moreover he has talents which might make him a pillar of the Society, education which might make him a light. Knowing this I have ignored the underground hostility, the inuendoes, the depreciation, the statements that I "was going down hill," "was no longer helped by the Masters," etc., etc., which for eight years have made my English work difficult and painful. When his continued ill feeling to myself rendered him unpopular, I took his part—to the displeasure of my friends. When he was not re-elected on the Blavatsky Lodge Council, I myself proposed and carried him at the next election. When his holding of the General Secretaryship of the British Section was threatened, I persuaded the opposition candidate to

## CWL Speaks

withdraw, and proposed and carried his re-election. I thus tried to show him that I recognised his rights in the movement, despite his personal opposition to myself. In the same spirit, last December, I proposed and carried him as a member of the General Council; I then urged his nomination on the Colonel as his successor, hoping that responsibility might curb his less generous side, and I thought that though he would be, as President, a serious obstacle in my work, I could put up with it for a few years more. My hope had been that by steady return of good for evil I should overcome his unfriendliness; but the karma of the past is not yet exhausted.

I do not blame Mr. Keightley, for I know that his opposition to myself springs out of his devotion to another, and that he mistakenly thinks he can lift his friend higher by degrading me. If he sought leadership openly for his friend no one could complain, but the methods he employs make a far more real “psychic tyranny” in the present than the future one dreaded by Mr. Mead. For in the case of nearly every one who has come under it, the result has been the slackening of interest in the Theosophical Society, if not actual attack on it “under present conditions”; then has come withdrawal from active work, and the change from cordial co-operation with fellow-workers, to carping criticism and harsh judgment of those outside a single charmed circle. This has long been going on in England, and has begun in France, causing dissension and ill-feeling, and, to a very small extent, in India. It is well that the secret has become open opposition.

One other thing should be gravely considered. Let us suppose that by a temporary union of generally conflicting interests, a two-thirds’ majority vote in the whole Society is not secured in my favour. The General Council will nominate another candidate. But can anyone seriously think that if I cannot secure a two-thirds’ majority, any one else now in the Society can do so? We shall have a succession of futile elections, awakening the laughter of the world.

I do not ask the Theosophical Society to vote for me, though I am compelled to stand, believing, as I do, that my Master has bidden me do so. Let each member do as he thinks best in the interests of the Society. I shall be content, whatever happens, for my real work does not depend on votes, nor on office-holding. If I am elected I shall do my best to fill that great office worthily. If I am rejected, I shall find other ways to

## Pedro Oliveira

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serve. The Theosophical Society may dismiss me from public work for it—for I shall take rejection as dismissal—if it thinks this the just reward of such poor work as I have done for it. I have naught to plead against such verdict. I shall accept it, and contentedly pray that it may put in the place it refuses to me some one less imperfect, some one more able, more devoted, with greater power of teaching and of industry, who will lead it to heights greater than those to which, under my leadership, it might have climbed.

ANNIE BESANT.

Benares City,  
March 24<sup>th</sup>, 1907.

P.S. – I will ask my friends to remember that am in India, and that many untrue statements may be circulated against me in England, without my having any chance of contradicting them. I hope that the Junior Editor of the *Theosophical Review* will not use that journal against its Senior Editor, but in these days strange things happen.

One of the points of criticism by both Bertram Keightley and G. R.S. Mead in considering the visits by the Masters to Col. Olcott in early January 1907 as ‘apparitions’, induced by psychic delusion, was the President-Founder’s state of health and mind. In the same document quoted above, Annie Besant included a statement by Col. Olcott’s doctor, M. C. Nanjunda Rao.

She writes:

‘... I refer the reader to the account of the Colonel’s presence at the Convention, as published in this magazine for January. Moreover the Colonel dictated long letters of business long after the date of the manifestations, and Mr. Fullerton, in answering one of them remarks on its mental vigour as a hopeful sign of prolonged life. His doctor says: “A circular recently published by Mr. Keightley has come into my hands which says:

‘I am bound to say that ever since last Christmas Colonel Olcott has been in no condition of mind or body, either to think clearly or to take important decisions whatever.’

## CWL Speaks

“I, M. C. Nanjunda Rao, do hereby declare to be untrue this statement or any other to the effect that Colonel Olcott’s weak condition of bodily health (owing to heart disease) has affected his mind, thus making him incapable of carrying on properly the duties of his office.

“I attended him as physician, from December 10<sup>th</sup>, 1906, until he passed away, and saw no sign of senile decay until the second week of February. After the middle of January he seldom slept, so I sometimes gave drugs to induce sleep, and during the time that the effect of the drug was upon him, his mind often wandered, but that is quite a different thing, and happens in persons of the strongest mentality when narcotics are given.

“On many occasions when visiting Colonel Olcott I discussed with him matters of importance, and found him keen in argument, and level-headed on all points. At one time in January several persons in my presence consulted him about a certain matter, not concerning the Theosophical Society, but one in which he was interested. His views differed from theirs, and even though they argued for some time, he remained obdurate and refused to coincide with their views as he considered them unwise. I state this to show that he was not easily influenced.

“It is rare to find one of Colonel Olcott’s age with faculties so well conserved. He was cheerful, witty and entertaining as always, until about ten days before his death, and I have seldom witnessed such patience, unselfishness, consideration for others: or such courage in one facing death.

“M. C. NANJUNDA RAO”

The entries in Col. Olcott’s Diary, in January 1907, indicate that although his health was very frail, his state of mind was clear and he was still making administrative decisions regarding Adyar and its departments. He always maintained that his work as President-Founder was directly associated to the Masters’ work as inner guides of the Society. He had been visited, on different occasions, by both Mahatmas M. and K.H. Would they withdraw their guid-

## Pedro Oliveira

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ance at a time when the Society was in deep turmoil and the President-Founder was about to die? Particularly when he had formulated an appeal to them: 'The Masters must settle it.' Let us revisit two occasions on which the Mahatmas paid him a visit.

During the New York days, when he and HPB lived in the 'Lamasery', the headquarters of the TS at that time, Col. Olcott described a remarkable visit:

I was quietly reading, with all my attention centered on my book. Nothing in the evening's incidents had prepared me for seeing an adept in his astral body; I had not wished for it, tried to conjure it up in my fancy, nor in the least expected it. All at once, as I read with my shoulder a little turned from the door, there came a gleam of something white in the right-hand corner of my eye; I turned my head, dropped my book in astonishment, and saw towering above me in his great stature an Oriental clad in white garments, and wearing a head-cloth or turban of amber-striped fabric, hand-embroidered in yellow floss-silk. Long raven hair hung from under his turban to the shoulders; his black beard, parted vertically on the chin in the Rajput fashion, was twisted up at the ends and carried over the ears; his eyes were alive with soul-fire; eyes which were at once benignant and piercing in glance; the eyes of a mentor and a judge, but softened by the love of a father who gazes on a son needing counsel and guidance.

(Olcott, Henry S., *Old Diary Leaves*, First Series, TPH, Madras, 1974, p. 379.)

In November 1883, Col. Olcott was visiting Lahore, then located in India. The following is his description of his unexpected visitor:

I was sleeping in my tent, the night of the 19<sup>th</sup>, when I rushed back towards external consciousness on feeling a hand laid on me. The camp being on the open plain, and beyond the protection of the Lahore Police, my first animal instinct was to protect myself from a possible religious fanatical assassin, so I clutched the stranger by the upper arms, and asked him in Hindustani who he was and what he wanted. It was all done in an instant, and I held the

## CWL Speaks

man tight, as one would who might be attacked the next moment and have to defend his life. But the next instant a kind, sweet voice said: “Do you not know me? Do you not remember me?” It was the voice of the Master K.H. A swift revulsion of feeling came over me, I relaxed my hold on his arms, joined my palms in reverential salutation, and wanted to jump out of bed to show him respect. But his hand and voice stayed me, and after a few sentences had been exchanged, he took my left hand in his, gathered the fingers of his right into the palm, and stood quiet beside my cot, from which I could see his divinely benignant face by the light of the lamp that burned on a packing-case at his back.

(*op. cit.*, Third Series, pp. 37-8)

Regarding this visit, we read in *The Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom*, First Series (Letter 41) the words of Mahatma K.H. to Col. Olcott:

I came to you not alone of my own accord and wish, but also by order of the Maha Chohan, to whose insight the future lies like an open page. At New York you demanded of M. an objective proof that his visit to you was not a maya—and he gave it; unasked, I give you the present one: tho’ I pass out of your sight this note will be to you the reminder of our conferences. I now go to young Mr. Brown to try his intuitiveness. To-morrow night when the camp is quiet and the worst of the emanations from your audience have passed away, I shall visit you again for a longer conversation, as you must be forewarned against certain things in the future. Fear not and doubt not as you have feared and doubted at supper last night: the first month of the coming year of your era will have hardly dawned when two more of the “enemies” will have passed away. Ever be vigilant, zealous and judicious; for remember that the usefulness of the Theosophical Society largely depends upon your exertions, and that our blessings follow its suffering “Founders” and all who help on their work.

K.H.

## Pedro Oliveira

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In another letter (26, Second Series), Mahatma M. has this to say:

It is my desire that any one, who has heard Mr L. Fox blame the “founder” Olcott, those who have listened to the cruel words of censure directed at Henry Olcott by Mr. L. Fox, should now hear too what I have to say of him.

If Henry has erred, it is because he is human, often believed in false and foolish advisers more “incompetent” than he whom they so blamed.

If he is “ignorant” of many things, so are his accusers, and because he remains still *uninitiated* the reason for which is very plain: to this day he has *preferred* the *good* of the many to *his own personal benefit*. Having given up the advantages derived from steady, serious chelaship by those who devote themselves to it, for his work for other people – *these are those who now turn against him*.

Let Mr. S. G. L. Fox know what I now say: whatever Henry Olcott’s shortcomings we are well pleased with, and *thank him*. Let it be known to *all* what I think, and now state [under] my own signature. Henry Olcott has served and followed his Master “to the last gasp with truth and loyalty”.

The Masters had indicated in their letters that Col. Olcott was not free from limitations and that he had made mistakes. But the following passage from a letter by Mahatma K.H. illustrates well their attitude towards him:

Colonel Olcott is doubtless “out of time with the feelings of English people” of both classes; but nevertheless more in time *with us* than either. Him we can trust under all circumstances, and his faithful service is pledged to us come well, come ill. My dear Brother, my voice is the echo of impartial justice. Where can we find an equal devotion? He is one who never questions, but obeys; who may make innumerable mistakes out of excessive

## CWL Speaks

zeal but never is unwilling to repair his fault even at the cost of the greatest self-humiliation; who esteems the sacrifice of comfort and even life something to be cheerfully risked whenever necessary; who will eat any food, or even go without; sleep on any bed, work in any place, fraternise with any outcast, endure any privation for the cause. . . .

*(The Mahatma Letters to A. P. Sinnett in chronological sequence, edited by Vicente Hao Chin, Jr, The Theosophical Publishing House, Metro Manila, 1993, p. 17.)*

The words of the Mahatmas speak for themselves. The link between the President-Founder and his spiritual Teachers was real, direct and enduring, until the very end. And such a link existed not as a favour on their part but because of who Col. Olcott was and his life of utter self-sacrifice for the Theosophical Society and its work. As one of the Mahatmas once remarked, ‘ingratitude is not one of our vices.’

Following the Masters’ instructions, Col. Olcott wrote the following letter to CWL:

Adyar, Jan. 12, 1907.

My dear Charles,

The Mahatmas have visited me several times lately in Their physical bodies and in the presence of witnesses. As my life seems to be drawing to its close, They have wished to discuss with me matters They desire arranged before it is too late.

They asked me to set right the dispute between you and Annie concerning the glamour question, and I enclose what They said about the matter, and which Mrs. Russak took down at the time. I am glad to know that it was no glamour, for I had already felt that she (Annie) made a mistake in saying that it was.

Concerning the other matter about the disturbance your teachings have caused, both Mahatma M. and Mahatma K.H. assured me you did well to resign; that it was right to call a Council to advise upon the matter; and that I did right in accepting your resignation; but, They said, we were wrong in

## Pedro Oliveira

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allowing the matter to be made so public, for your sake and the good of the Society. They said you should have stated in your resignation that you resigned because you had offended the standard of ideals of the majority of the members of the Society by giving out certain teachings which were considered objectionable.

Because I have always cherished for you a sincere affection, I wish to beg your pardon and to tell you before I die that I am sorry that any fault of judgment on my part should have caused you such deep sorrow and mortification; for I should certainly have tried to keep the matter quiet had I not thought it would have reflected on the Society if I did so.

I feel sure that the Blessed Ones are striving to calm the present turmoil and hold together our Society from dividing against itself, and I also feel sure that you will be called upon to help and to forget yourself for the good of the whole.

There is nothing, I think, that would tend to quell the present turmoil so much (and I should die happy if I knew you had done it) as for you to bow to the will of the Divine Ones behind the movement, and save the situation. Certainly their Wisdom is your law, as it is ours; and They have told both Annie and myself that your teaching of boys to relieve themselves is wrong. I do implore you on my deathbed to bow to Their judgment and, to make a public statement that you will; and that you will give Them and us your solemn promise to cease giving out such teaching.

It might be that if you did this, the Masters would open a path of reconciliation to the Society, and you could take up the great work which you were obliged to give up before you unwisely placed yourself in the position of being unable to defend yourself against charges that gravely offended the accepted moral standard of your country, thus bringing upon the Society you love a great blow which shook it to its foundations because you were so universally loved and respected.

Once more, my dear friend, I beg you to consider what I ask.

## CWL Speaks

With all good wishes,  
Yours sincerely,  
H. S. Olcott.

The following letter from Annie Besant contain a few annotations by CWL:

Adyar, Madras, 23-1-07.

My dear Charles,

I have had to return here in consequence of the serious relapse of the Colonel. Impossible to say at what moment he may go.

You will have heard in my last hurried letter that the Masters have been here in the old way – visible, audible, tangible – and have ordered H.S.O. to appoint me as his successor. On another occasion they came, and in answer to H.S.O.’s questions said that the calling of the Advisory Board was right, the acceptance of your resignation right; the publicity given to the matter, wrong. They further emphatically confirmed the working of you and me together in Their presence and under Their direction, and said that I had not been glamoured and was mistaken in supposing it. I cannot tell you how glad I am of this, and Master confirmed it personally to me. I have written a note to The Theosophist which will appear in February, and to The Review to appear in March. I shall also write to the E.S.

Dear friend, as They have spoken, cannot you conscientiously say that you accept Their decision, and are sorry for the mistake, and entirely withdraw the teaching? It would be a relief to hundreds.

I hope next month will see the decision in Raja’s case annulled and himself reinstated. Probably my defence of him and my article The Basis of the Theosophical Society will alienate the Americans and they will vote against my election as President (the nomination must be ratified by a two-thirds vote of the Society); but I can’t help that. It is better they should clearly know my views.

I cannot understand the American mind. Fullerton wrote to me that you were forming an E.S. and making a condition of admis-

sion that the candidates should leave the T.S. I wrote to him that I did not believe a word of it, as I knew you were trying to keeping them in the T.S.; but that if it were true you were forming a school, you had a perfect right to do it. Why should you stop helping people because he thought you were wrong? They are really quite mad. There will be a furious outburst when they hear of my action about Raja, and about the declaration of the Council that their resolution about annulling Branch Charters is void. Keightley is furious with me, but even he admits that the procedure in Raja's case was quite unjustifiable. But he wants another prosecution. I don't know what Mead will say.

The only answer to what the Masters have said is that the whole thing is a masquerade of the Dark Powers. The evidence of three witnesses is too strong to overthrow. Chakravarti and Keightley take this view. I asked the former if he really believed that the Masters would allow such a personification to a dying man, and the swinging of the T. S. on to dark lines under myself as their nominee. And he said, Yes. He will influence a certain number.

To turn to your letters of December 4<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>. Your questions on 'illusion' I need not answer now, as I was wrong. The interview with the Lord is ever too clear to be doubted, and as have not hesitated to affirm your discipleship through it all, that seemed all right; but I did think the teaching would mean a temporary exclusion from Their ashramas and that I must have been mistaken therefore in our being there. I am so glad and thankful that it was not a mistake. I am afraid I feared They would be vilified, and I wanted all the mud to fall on us.

I have already written you that I did not think you meant to mislead me at Benares. I have said that ever so many times in answer to questions, but I shall say it to the E. S. and publicly if the question arises. The change in me was due to your accepting at the Advisory Board that you advised a daily use of the practice (Absolutely untrue. I emphatically protested against the statement. C.W.L.); that you taught it before puberty as a prophylactic (A wrong construction is put upon my words. I never gave the advice till a certain symptom had already appeared. C.W.L.) This

## CWL Speaks

latter was to me so very wrong and dangerous. It was the exciting of the sex passion unnaturally and the doctors say that emission thus caused is ruinous to health, far worse than later when normal emission might be provoked. I had denied this thing as possible when alleged by others, but when it came on your own work, I was overthrown. All I had left then was the feeling that you must have meant right, but that on this point your moral sense was all wrong.

What a terribly long letter! How I wish I had you to help me bear this new burden and responsibility placed on me. Perhaps it may come later.

Meanwhile and ever,  
Affectionately yours,  
Annie Besant.

Adyar, January 31, 1907.

My dear Charles,

I enclose my defence of Raja [the article 'The Basis of the Theosophical Society', *Compiler*], as you and he will like to see it; it has gone out to the General Secretaries, with a note expressing the Colonel's agreement with it ..... I have no doubt that the judgment will be annulled, and that reinstates Raja. Any new attempt to oust him will be strenuously opposed by me. Please read my article in the February *Theosophist*.

My dear friend, Mrs. Dennis knows of our friendship because since this affair I have emphasised that unbroken friendship, in letters to her and others. I do not generally parade my friendships, but I thought it right to speak of our steady affection for each other, and our regular correspondence, to those who wanted to use me against you. I had to make it very clear that my not working with you meant only not working in public matters until you disavowed those teachings....

The points you mention as mistakes in facts, I shall rectify; I shall send a letter to the E.S. on what the Master says about the glamour – I have already stated this one point in the February Theosophist – and in that same letter I shall deal with those

## Pedro Oliveira

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points you raise. I have no papers here and cannot get them from Benares, as it would be difficult for anyone else to find what I want in that mass of papers. I do not expect the Colonel to last more than a few days, and Master has bidden me not to leave him. I asked Him if I might go to Benares and return, and He answered, "You had better stay on at present".

I certainly never dreamed of thinking that you never had any connection with the Masters. On the contrary, I speak of you as 'on the path', class you, Judge and myself together as disciples, and so on. It is this which makes Mrs. Dennis regard the letter as unsatisfactory, and made her refuse to work any more with me, as Mrs. Davis has done also. I shall very definitely say that I never intended the words to bear any such interpretation. I did think that there must have been a temporary exclusion; for this wrong idea, dear friend, forgive me. I think it has cost me as much pain as it has cost you. In any case, I had decided to write that the matter had been much exaggerated, as Pettit's letter showed that; and I was only waiting to fight Raja's battle first, as the injustice to him menaced the Society more than that to you.

I see no trace of 'self-laudation' in your little circular. You said as little as was compatible with what is your right and duty to say, that you reaffirmed your personal knowledge of Them....

I look forward, dear Charles, to our working together again, after passing through this fiery ordeal, stronger and purer and with fuller knowledge than before.

Please give my love to Raja. I shall like to see the dear fellow again. With much love to yourself,

Yours always affectionately,

Annie Besant.

*January 17th, 1907.*

I hereby state and declare that it was by command of the Mahatmas that I wrote for publication the article referring to the nomination of Mrs. Besant as my successor, and about the discussion of the "glamour" question and imperfect instruments of the Masters.

## CWL Speaks

They were approved by Mrs. Besant and it was by my order that they were mailed to the different Theosophical Publications.

H. S. OLCOTT.

ADYAR

25th day of January, 1907.

*To the Members of the Theosophical Society.*

I, H. S. Olcott, President-Founder of your Society, do hereby send you this last message, dictated to my Hon. Private Secretary this 25th day of January 1907. It is sent to you as an appeal from my deathbed, and Mrs. Besant has absolutely no knowledge of my intention.

I know that in the past there has been some confusion in your minds in regard to the exact position of Mrs. Besant and myself concerning Theosophical Society matters, upon which we did not agree, and of which I did not approve.

Since my illness I have been brought into closer touch with her than ever before, and certain doubts that I had hitherto entertained about her character and ability as a Theosophical leader have been entirely swept away. I wish to state that I have often misjudged her in the past, which I should not have done had she consulted me more often, made matters more clear, and explained her aim and object.

When she came here to the last Convention, I deputed her to act for me as President, as I was confined to my bed by a weak heart, and not allowed to attend the General Council Meetings or to arrange any matters (outside my room) that required my presence. I found that Mrs. Besant was remarkably competent to deal with all executive, as well as all other matters, and that her judgment at all times was clear and well balanced; in fact I could recognise the Power of her Master behind her constantly, and I was sure that He was keeping His promise to overshadow her. I rejoice more and more day by day that the Masters wished her to succeed me, for I feel sure that she is the only person at present so well fitted to be your President.

I ask you all in memory of me, to be loyally devoted to her as leader, because her ideals are also mine and she will work for our Society's wel-

Pedro Oliveira

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fare faithfully and honestly so long as she lives. Be devoted to her also, because I wish to ask you to help me in some measure to repay her for her constant, tender devotion and care during my last illness. I am glad that this side of her character has shown itself to me as I had not seen it before, and it has been the means of establishing a bond of loving friendship between us that can never be broken.

Good-bye to you all, my dear children, until we meet again.

Yours faithfully,

H. S. OLCOTT

In the following article, published in *The Theosophist*, February 1907, Annie Besant presents her defence of C. Jinarajadasa who had been expelled from the TS by the President-Founder for voicing the defence of CWL's integrity. Many members, however, interpreted her article as a defence of CWL and there were strong reactions to it in *The Theosophical Review*, the journal of the TS in England, particularly in its April 1907 issue. We also include some of those reactions to her article.

#### THE BASIS OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.

Recent events have caused much discussion and many searchings of heart as regards the true basis of the Theosophical Society, and it is clear that there is a division of opinion among the thoughtful members; this division is natural, for there is much to be said on the question: "Should a nucleus of Universal Brotherhood be, or not be, all-inclusive?" It may be well that members should consider what is to be said on each side, and that each should make up his mind as to the ground he occupies. Those who, on either side, airily dismiss the matter as though their own views were indisputably true, and the only one which any rational person can hold, show more prejudice than wisdom. To this question the words of the Lord Buddha may be said to apply: "You did right to doubt, for it was a doubtful matter."

The one side starts with the statement: "This is a Universal Brotherhood and is founded on a spiritual unity; spirit is inclusive all-embracing, and a Universal Brotherhood founded on the spirit can exclude none; hence no one should be expelled from the Theosophical Society." This

## CWL Speaks

argument appeals to a very large number of people, and it has a convincing ring about it. But is it as convincing as it sounds? Is it not founded on an error? The Theosophical Society is not a Universal Brotherhood, but a nucleus thereof, and a nucleus and its cell are not co-extensive. The Universal Brotherhood of humanity is not made by the Theosophical Society; a man does not enter it when he becomes a member of the T.S. nor leave it when he ceases to be a T.S. member. The Universal Brotherhood is a fact in nature, beyond our creating or our destroying; the purest saint and the vilest criminal are brothers in fact, in truth. Nor would there be any sense or object in making a “Society” which should be co-extensive with humanity. The mere fact that the Society has objects, of which the applicant for membership must approve, differentiates it from humanity at large and makes a limitation. A man who denies Universal Brotherhood cannot be a member of the T.S., but he is, and must ever remain, a human-brother. It is, then, not the *fact* of brotherhood but the *recognition* of it which entitles a man to membership in the T.S., to become part of the “nucleus,” and the further guarantee demanded from two members, that the candidate is a “fit and proper person to become a member of the Theosophical Society,” implies that the recognition is believed to be not merely a lip—but also a life—recognition. If these facts are so—and that they are so is surely undeniable—it follows that a member may be expelled if he ceases to be “a fit and proper person” to be part of the nucleus; conditions of admission imply the corresponding right to exclude when the conditions cease to exist. Admission and exclusion are correlative; one who is admitted may be excluded. The fact that a man cannot be excluded from the Universal Brotherhood of humanity goes with the fact that he cannot be admitted into it. Hence the fundamental statement put forward by those who deny all right of exclusion from the T.S. is founded on a confusion of thought, a false identification of a Society which is a nucleus, with the Universal Brotherhood within which it lives.

It may be urged that while this is so, it would be better for the Society to have a different basis, and to abandon the power of expulsion. That is arguable, though it is difficult to see how such a society could formulate its conditions of membership; it would seem that it could have no conditions and no definite membership. However that may be, such a society

## Pedro Oliveira

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would have a different basis from the actual Theosophical Society, and we are concerned with the Society as it is. Those who wish to have a society on a different basis are surely at liberty to form one, but it should be understood that it would be a new society.

The next question is: "What constitutes fitness and propriety for membership in the nucleus called the Theosophical Society?" A nucleus is a centre of vital forces, a centre from which they radiate, causing organisation and growth in the surrounding body. Through this particular nucleus play forces which spiritualise humanity, and lead it towards the realisation of Universal Brotherhood; when that is realised by every one, the use of the affirmation of Universal Brotherhood will be over, and the Society as a nucleus in that Brotherhood will cease to be; if it is to continue to live, it will have to be reincarnated with new objects.

The first, and perhaps we may find the only, fitness and propriety necessary to membership is a recognition of the Truth of Brotherhood, the wish to help it to emerge from latency into activity. The desire to help in bringing about the general realisation of Universal Brotherhood is the primary fitness and propriety which are sought. This makes a man a vehicle through which can work the forces that make for the realisation of Brotherhood. The Love-force in him makes him one through whom the Love-forces without him can play. And I think that this desire to help, evidenced by work which does help others towards the realisation of Brotherhood, is the only fitness and propriety that our Society can rightly demand.

I fully recognise and frankly confess that the acceptance of this view would occasionally keep among us members who would discredit the Society in the eyes of the ordinary man of the world, either by falling below the accepted morality of the time and place, or by rising so much above it as to be unintelligible, and therefore hated and suspected by the masses of average people. But I think that this temporary disadvantage is less than the introduction of the disintegrating forces of self-righteousness and contempt, which find their channels in the prosecution and expulsion of a member for a moral lapse. The presence in the Society of a man who falls below the accepted standard of morality in any respect can do little harm when it is generally understood that the Society seeks to raise the level of morality by right argument and by the noble examples of its best members, rather than by the infliction of penalties on its worst.

## CWL Speaks

A man may do most evil things, things that deserve and that meet with sternest moral condemnation, and yet, having the root of the matter in him, in desire and effort to help, may remain a “fit and proper person” to be a member of the T.S. If penalty is to be inflicted on wrong-doing (sic), it is difficult to draw the line between wrong-doing which is permissible and wrong-doing which is not permissible in the Society. If profligacy be penalised, at what level of profligacy must the Society begin to exclude? An occasional lapse from virtue? Fairly constant unclean living? “Sowing wild oats,” to the ruin of many a wife and maiden? Will it authorise inquisition into the private lives of its members, encourage secret accusations or only punish those who break the eleventh commandment: “Thou shall not be found out?”

A member may hold any theological opinions he pleases; he cannot be excluded for teaching everlasting torture, or the perpetual cremation of miraculously-preserved unbaptised infants, or the predestined damnation of souls presently to be created, or the small number of the saved, or the literal golden and bejewelled gates of the New Jerusalem, or the physical immortality of Mrs. Eddy or of Hiram Butler, etc., etc. All these matters are left to reason and argument, and no penalty may be inflicted on a theosophist for his religious views however bizarre or erroneous. It is rightly held that error is better combated by reason than by penalty, and although it may be said in a way that this policy of tolerance opens the door to every form of theological licentiousness, it is yet felt that this risk is a small one compared with the introduction of a principle the logical end of which is the stake or the Inquisition. Our religious liberty of opinion—irreligious license, say dogmatists—is secure.

But may we not have religious liberty and the enforcement of a common level of conduct, above which members may rise but below which they may not sink? Shall we give liberty of opinion on moral as well as on religious questions? Here some members call a halt. They would not allow a member to hold opinions leading to murder, theft, adultery, any sexual irregularity, or other evil ways. Does the Theosophical Society enforce on its members a moral code, the transgression of which is punishable with expulsion? I do not consider that the Theosophical Society has any moral code binding on its members. That such a code does not exist in fact is clear, for no written nor printed copy thereof can

## Pedro Oliveira

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be produced. Does it consist in a common consensus of opinions? though that would not be a code. If so, what are the opinions? Is polygamy moral or immoral? But many of our good members in the East are polygamists. Is polyandry moral or immoral? We have members who belong to a community where polyandry is practised. Is prostitution moral or immoral? I fear that the record of some of our members is not quite clean on this point; shall they be expelled? On matters connected with the relation of the sexes some very great Initiates have taught most peculiar and to our minds, outrageous doctrines in the past; should we expel Socrates, Plato, Moses, Vyasa? We have no code; we hold up lofty ideals, inspiring examples, and we trust to these for the compelling power to lift our members to a high moral level, but we have no code with penalties for the infringement of its provisions.

Can we take the average social opinion of any time and place for a code? *e.g.*, in the West a polygamist should be expelled, and in the East should be regarded as fit and proper for membership? “Public opinion” would then become our moral code. But would this be satisfactory? It means stagnation, not progress; it means death not life. Such a principle would exclude from our ranks the greatest martyrs of the past, the pioneers of every race and time. Is the Theosophical Society to be of those who kill the prophets in every age, and build their tombs long afterwards when the age has risen to the level of the martyred prophets? While it is easy for every age to be sure that it only kills and persecutes evil men, posterity often reverses the verdict and apotheosises those whom its ancestors branded. Never a Jew who, on the evening of the first Good Friday, congratulated himself and his friends for having purged Jewish Society by slaying a blasphemer, a deceiver of the people, and a stirrer-up of trouble, dreamed that a later society would regard the martyred evildoer as its Savior from evil. Such revenges has history, and wise men who study the lesson do not readily pick up the stones to slay.

Supposing a man oppose a triumphant majority, and seek to gather round him those who think like himself, thus undoubtedly causing “agitation” and disturbance in a Branch or Section; what should be done with him? My answer would be: “Leave him alone for a time; if he force himself on Branch meetings, or behave in a way to make the Branch rooms unusable by the majority, then he may rightly be excluded from Branch premises, and compelled to carry on his agitation outside, but he should

## CWL Speaks

not be expelled from the Society. At the most, he might be expelled from the Branch, wherein physical contact is inevitable, and where one may disturb a hundred." Every reform begins with a few, and if valuable extends till it becomes a majority. The workers against slavery in the United States were regarded as pestilent agitators, were tarred and feathered and carried outside the limits of the townships. Yet in the long run, those abused agitators abolished slavery. That which a majority brands as "causing agitation," a minority regards as the defence of a great principle. Time alone can judge, not the number of the moment. Better a temporary inconvenience than the violent stifling of opinion. If the opinion be wrong, time will destroy it. "Truth alone conquers, not falsehood." If it be right, time will crown it, and great the reward of those who saw it in its uncrowned days. "Let truth and falsehood grapple; who ever knew truth put to the worse in a fair encounter?"

H.P.B. warned us that the great danger of the Society lay in its becoming a sect. Above all other things, therefore, should we guard liberty of thought and speech, and most zealously of all when the thought and speech are antagonistic to our own. Truth is pure gold; it cannot be burned up in the fire of discussion, only the dross can be burned away. "The fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is."

The outcome of this argument evidently reiterates the view that the fitness and propriety of a man for membership in the Theosophical Society depends upon his desire to help in bringing about the general realisation of Universal Brotherhood; and if this desire be questioned in any particular case on the ground that he teaches wrong doctrines or wrong ways, and therefore is hindering, not helping, then it would be cogent to enquire whether, as a matter of fact, he *has* helped any to realise brotherhood, and the testimony that he has thus helped would be final.

I do not question the right of any Branch to exclude from its platform any person; it can choose as speakers on its platform such people only who voice the views of the majority on religion, philosophy, and ethics; this is within its right, whether its policy be wise or not. But it should not wish to exclude from all platforms of all Branches those with whom it disagrees.

## Pedro Oliveira

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I know that there are many in the Society, good people whom I respect, who will think that this article embodies a most dangerous doctrine, and who will ask: "Should not we shut out polluting influences from our families? Should we not keep the nucleus pure, so that spiritual life may play through it?" To the first question I answer: "Yes; because in the family there are children, who should be guarded, until strong enough to guard themselves; but the Theosophical Society does not consist of children, but of grown men and women, and it does not need the shelter rightly given to the young." To the second question I answer: The purer the nucleus the more will the spiritual life pour through it, but is the nucleus rendered pure by expelling one here and one there whom we may manage to convict of some evil teaching or practice? We leave within it hundreds who are guilty of other evils, and we cannot extrude every one whose absence would make the nucleus purer, until we come down to the old man who said of a community that hunted out heretics: 'There is only Jamie and me left, and I'm not so sure about Jamie.'

I earnestly believe that we best do our share of purifying the nucleus by purifying ourselves, and not by expelling our brothers; that we can prevent wrong better by holding up lofty ideals, than by separating ourselves disdainfully from those we condemn; that the Society lives by the splendour of its ideals, not by the rigidity of its lines of exclusion; that it will endure in proportion to the spirituality unfolded in its members and not according to the plaudits or censures of the world; that we strengthen it in proportion as we love and pardon, and weaken it as we condemn and ostracise. Thus believe I. I can do no other.

ANNIE BESANT

Some excerpts of the responses to Mrs. Besant's article, published in *Theosophical Review*, April 1907:

... as I have said, with many of Mrs. Besant's opinions expressed in her article, I most cordially and fully agree, quite impossible at this time of the European day to pretend that there is a universal morality of any sort or kind. It is quite impossible in the present state of our knowledge of comparative morality and of history to suppose that current English morality is the highest morality. It is quite impossible to bring down from any Theosophical Sinai new tablets of the law, and impose them on the chosen of all lands. We

## CWL Speaks

neither have nor can have any more a formulated code resting on public opinion or on revelation. And with the abandonment of these things there goes (for the time being) the abandonment of every valid claim to hang, draw and quarter for any moral breach of the abandoned moral code. So far, as I say, I agree enthusiastically, with Mrs. Besant; the more so because for all these years I and others have been wearying for her to say it.

But, perhaps because her reconversion to these liberal ideas is only recent, there is to be found in Mrs. Besant's article, cheek by jowl with these ruddy-faced truths, a number of hoary errors which in their way are quite as dangerously dogmatic (and, let me say, quite as orthodoxly "moral") as the abandoned positions. To say the truth, it is very difficult for the mind that has just got "beyond Good and Evil" to realise that there is still a Good and a Bad. Few of our modern Dionysian spirits have been able to grasp the nature of the morality that is left when the ordinary conceptions of morality are swept away. Yet, as a matter of fact, there remains after the destruction of the old conception of morality a still older conception, having its roots not in artificial distinctions between what men think right or wrong, but in real natural distinctions between what in actual practice is, and proves itself to be, right or wrong. And it is just the confusion between these two kinds of morality, between, let us say, theoretical and real morality, that Mrs. Besant as a Dionysian neophyte goes astray.

(A. R. Orage)

I am truly grateful to Mrs. Besant for having put her claim in a way which relieves me from so distasteful a task as that would be. I will answer it, as far as I am concerned, quite generally, and without the smallest hesitation. To no human being upon earth, to no Angel or Master from heaven, will I for one moment concede the claim. It is the old familiar defence raised in all times by the disciples and friends of a good man who has gone wrong, and set his feet for the first time on the downward road of Black Magic. It was urged, to weariness, in every publication of Mr. Judge's defenders; the Society has lately been bombarded with circulars

Pedro Oliveira

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from a private member to the same effect as to Mr. Leadbeater. But even when Mrs. Besant herself, in generous though mistaken defence of her friend, turns her back all upon her previous teaching, and, like Zanoni, is willing to take the Devil's gifts to aid the cause she loves, there can be but one—instant and unhesitating rejection of the unclean thing.

(Arthur A. Wells)

From *The Vahan*, April 1907:

Letter from Mrs. Annie Besant

TO THE BRANCHES OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY  
ADYAR, MADRAS

*February 6<sup>th</sup>, 1907*

DEAR BROTHERS,

I had not meant to say aught regarding my nomination to be the Head of the Theosophical Society, as the successor of our President-Founder, until your votes were given, confirming or rejecting that nomination. But it has come to my knowledge that statements are being made, throwing discredit on the manifestations of the Masters at Adyar to the President-Founder, and suggesting hallucination, fraud, and even worse things.

Under these circumstances it would be cowardice and treachery on my part to remain silent, without bearing testimony to the truth I know. When I was sitting with the President before the visible appearance of the Blessed Masters to their dying servant, to bid him me as his successor—and we were asking them to express their will in the matter, the two Masters appeared astrally, and tried to impress his mind; to me my own Master said: “You must take up this burden and carry it.”

The Colonel said: “I have my message, have you anything?” “Yes,” I said. “What is it?” “I will tell you when you have announced yours.” Then he said he would wait till the morning, and see if he received anything further. I then wrote down what had been said to me, sealed it, and locked it away. (Two days before

## CWL Speaks

the Master had told me that He would tell Colonel Olcott whom to nominate.) In the morning, the Colonel was clear that he was ordered to nominate me, but he was confused about subsidiary details. I advised him to wait till all was clear, as some of the details seemed to me to be impracticable. On the evening of that day, he asked me to sit with him again, and ask Them to speak. I refused, as I had had my answer, and I could not properly ask again, and I went downstairs. Then took place the manifestation, borne witness to by the Colonel and his two friends, as already related by him in the *Theosophist* for February. He sent for me and told me what had occurred while his friends were writing it down in another room. I then informed him of what I myself had been told. The written account exactly corroborated his spoken account, and the Master Himself confirmed it to me that same night as I sat in meditation.

When friends had mooted the question of my becoming President previously, I had said that only my own Master's command, addressed to me personally, would induce me to accept it. I told Colonel Olcott this, when he wished to nominate me before They had spoken. Now, my only duty is to obey.

It hurts me to bring Their Names into what has been made a controversy, but if I remain silent, and allow the Theosophical Society to be swung on to a wrong line, I should be false to my duty.

Let, then, every member record his vote with a full sense of his responsibility. I pledge my word of honour to the truth of what I have written, and to the fact that my old physical plane Guru, H. P. B. is here with her dying colleague and has repeatedly spoken to me. I believe that the members, in their vote, will decide the future fate of the Society, whether it shall continue to be the Servant of its true Founders, who stood behind H. P. B. and Colonel Olcott, or shall reject Them as its Masters and Guides. As Their nominee, I accept an office I have never coveted; let each member approve or reject, as he will.

Your faithful servant,

ANNIE BESANT.

Pedro Oliveira

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From *The Vahan*, March 1907:

INSTRUCTIONS FROM THE ACTING PRESIDENT

*February 21st, 1907*

*To the General Secretary, British Section*

DEAR MADAM,

In accordance with Rule 27 of Rules and Regulations for the management of the Theosophical Society, I have accepted the responsibilities falling upon me by the death of our late lamented President, Colonel Olcott. I shall, in accordance with that rule, "perform the duties of President until a successor takes office," and under the circumstances it may be inevitable that some delay will arise before the succession be determined. If Colonel Olcott's nomination of Mrs Besant had simply been made on his own responsibility, without any explanation of motives by which it was dictated, the Section could have proceeded without much waste of time to vote on the question thus submitted to them. But, far and wide, documents have been published describing the conditions under which Colonel Olcott believed himself to have been visited by the great Masters of Wisdom, who, in accordance with a belief which many of us reverentially entertain, are especially interested in the welfare of the Theosophical Society, and prompted by them to make the nomination in question.

As you will be well aware, the character of this manifestation is the subject of widely conflicting criticism. The publication of the narratives Colonel Olcott issued for the purpose, is naturally giving rise to expressions of opinion from those who believe the manifestations to have been determined by an occult influence very different indeed from that of the great Masters above referred to.

Under these circumstances it has seemed to me highly undesirable that members of the Theosophical Society all over the world should be called upon to give their votes on the basis of a representation which might lead them to believe that the intervention of the Masters had been generally recognised as authentic. Inasmuch,

## CWL Speaks

therefore, as no rule determines the period at which the Society at large shall be asked whether it will ratify the nomination of a new

President, I have held myself entitled under Rule 20, which invests me in my acting capacity with “discretionary powers in all matters not specifically provided for in these Rules,” to appoint a date for holding the election which shall give time for the general circulation of all papers relating to the recent occurrences at Madras, and I have fixed the month of May as that in which the various Sections shall carry out the election. No election before the 1st of May will be recognised by me as valid, nor will the results of any elections held later than May be taken into account when it becomes my duty to investigate the results of the vote.

As it seems desirable that votes all over the world in this matter should be taken on similar terms, I will at a very early date forward you the form I consider it desirable to use,

Yours very truly,

*(Signed)* A. P. SINNETT.

Villa Zuccaro, Taormina, Sicily,  
February 26th, 1907.

My dear Sinnett,

I have your letter of the 21st. I myself have no doubt whatever as to exactly what took place at Adyar; but surely the members have no concern with that manifestation one way or the other. The issue before them is quite simple. Col. Olcott in the exercise of the power permitted to him by the constitution has nominated Mrs. Besant as his successor. The rhetorical flourishes with which he surrounds his nomination are no business of ours; all the members have to do is to vote for or against his nomination, and I cannot conceive that any reasonable person can doubt as to which way the vote should go. I know, as no doubt you know also, that there is a small party bitterly hostile to her, and that its members have been plotting for years to get the Society into their hands. They thought that their opportunity would come when the Colonel died, and I can well understand

that they are furious now that this unexpected development has upset their scheme. I scarcely see, however, why they should be allowed to try to obscure the plain issue of the election by circulating comments on the situation, especially when we know that Mrs. Besant on her side will certainly not descend to similar electioneering tactics.

I entirely agree with you that it would have been infinitely better for us if the Colonel had acted upon the directions given to him without saying anything as to their source; but you see he seems to have thought himself specially directed to publish part at least of what was said to him, so I suppose we can hardly blame him.

It seems curious that so many of our people, who are supposed to have made some study of these matters, should think that there are only two lines along which it is possible to account for the Adyar manifestations – either the full and direct presence, of the Masters, or a masquerade by Black Magicians. For your own private information, I may mention that Madame Blavatsky herself once told me that a Master, occupied as He is always with business of world-wide importance, often sends a pupil to represent Him and even to take His form when delivering a message, “just”, she said, “as your queen sends her Commissioner to give assent to bills passed in your Parliament, yet the assent is just as legal as if the Queen herself were present”. She told me of cases in which she herself had been employed in that way. Also she spoke of others in which a Master simply projected a thought, and the thought took his shape, through the mediumship, as it were, of any devoted person present on the physical plane whose organism lent itself to such use. She also said that in such cases the form of words used, though not the spirit of the message, might be largely affected by the organism employed.

I have no doubt that there will be some trouble in America; for I see that Fullerton has just issued to all the members in that country another of his abominable circulars, in which he not only makes statements which are demonstrably false, but also disgraces himself by printing part of a private E.S. document issued by Mrs. Besant. He seems to have utterly lost all sense of honour and

## CWL Speaks

gentlemanly feeling, so that we must be prepared for any kind of unscrupulous action.

You are in error in thinking that Mrs. Besant has made no effort to verify any messages received, for she distinctly said in a letter to me that one at least of those statements has been confirmed to her directly by the Master. It was the statement as to her mistake in propounding that glamour theory; but since one part of the story is thus confirmed, it would not seem improbably that the rest may be accepted, at least in broad outline. She also told me that she had asked the Master whether she might return to Benares, and that He told her to wait for a while; and in addition she reported some conversation with Him on personal matters; so that evidently communication is clear and unhindered. I do not want to betray anything that I should not, but may go so far as to say definitely that this is not what you mean by a hoax, nor is it in any way due to any action by black magicians.

You ask about Chakravarti. I can only say that he is not attached to any of the Masters of whom we know, and that though he seems to know a good deal about occultism, he has on several occasions adopted and recommended methods that would certainly not commend themselves to the school with which we are acquainted. I think you will be safe in assuming that he is not what we should mean by 'an advanced initiate'.

Yours cordially,

C. W. Leadbeater.

From *The Vahan*, April 1907:

### THE COMING ELECTION TO THE PRESIDENCY.

MY DEAR COLLEAGUES,

It is with deep sorrow that I pen the following lines. Recent events, however, compel the public utterance of what is in the minds of many,—all old friends and sincere well-wishers both of our late President and of Mrs. Besant.

## Pedro Oliveira

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The ratification of the present “appointment” under psychic “orders” promulgated by Colonel Olcott, in the last days of his fatal illness, even when regularised into the form of a constitutional nomination by the Acting President, will be resisted by many of us (we hope by the vast majority of the Society) on the following grounds.

This election can under no circumstances be held to be a fair ratification or free choice. It will always labour under the just accusation of being illegitimately forced and of being achieved (if it be achieved) by improper pressure.

This irregular “nomination” by the late President is not according to his own normal best judgment. When last in Europe he informed myself and others categorically that he did not consider Mrs. Besant as suited by temperament for carrying out the duties of a constitutional President, and that he would not nominate her.

Mrs. Besant herself, by her unqualified endorsement of the present attempt to override constitutional procedure by the authority of psychic pronouncements, warns us that we have no guarantee, with her as President, that she will not at any moment force other similar pronouncements upon us and hold them *in terrorem* over the heads of the unknowing and timorous.

Moreover, Mrs. Besant herself is in this acting contrary to her own declared normal better judgment; for in a letter to myself from Benares, dated December 6th, 1906, referring to this question, she wrote:

“All the circumstances point to —, and that being so, he should be put in. So I shall do my best to persuade Colonel to nominate him.”

In a letter of the same date from Benares to Mrs. Mead, Mrs. Besant further wrote:

“I shall do my best to support --, and to win support for him. His attitude to myself does not count in this matter; it is the interests of the Society alone that must be considered, and if -- is to be President, he must be supported loyally. My influence will be at his service.”

On reaching Adyar, however, Mrs. Besant forgot her intention, and after several consultations with Colonel Olcott, the pronouncements of the apparitions finally won the day. Colonel Olcott consulted none of his old colleagues but herself in making this “appointment.”

Mrs. Besant is President of the Central Hindu College, Grand Inspector General for Great Britain and the Colonies of Universal Co-Masonry

## CWL Speaks

and Outer Head of the E.S.; she is moreover Editor of *The Central Hindu College Magazine* and Co-Editor of *The Theosophical Review*. In addition to these duties, not to speak of her lecturing, literary work and enormous correspondence, Mrs. Besant now proposes to undertake the Presidency of the Theosophical Society, and presumably also the editorship of *The Theosophist*.

Either of the first two responsible positions would occupy the full time of most of us, while the Outer-Headship of the E.S. requires the undivided attention of even a most highly endowed holder of that most important and intimate office.

Mrs. Besant is then already overburdened with grave responsibilities; whereas we require for the Presidency of the Theosophical Society some one who can give his entire services to discharging the onerous duties of that high post.

Again, Mrs. Besant is the absolute autocrat of the E.S., and it is highly inadvisable that this autocracy and the constitutional office of President of the Theosophical Society should be in the hands of one and the same person.

The rules of the Society with regard to the successorship to the life-presidency of Colonel Olcott are unfortunately absurdly drawn. The late President-Founder alone is given the right of nominating his successor. There is no provision for the nomination of other candidates by the General Council—as is the case when the years' Presidency comes into force.

The ratification or otherwise of the “nomination” now before us must thus be first decided. Those who desire another nomination or other nominations can make this possible only by voting against the ratification of the present one. The Acting President can then direct the General Council to put forward other nominations.

I shall, therefore, vote against the ratification of this “appointment”-“nomination,” and, I hope the vast majority of members will do likewise; for the ratification of it by a two-third's majority vote means the death of our constitution and the handing over of the Society to the mercy of an irresponsible psychic tyranny.

In repudiating the pronouncements of these apparitions in general, I reject in particular their appointment of myself (as I am informed by Mrs Russak) to the office of Vice-President.

Pedro Oliveira

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I believe with many others, that the friendship for Mrs. Besant can best be shown by safeguarding the freedom and sanity of the Theosophical Society, and it is in this spirit that I have written what I have no choice but to write.

I am, my dear colleagues,

Yours faithfully,

G. R. S. MEAD

From *The Vahan*, April 1907:

With regard to Mr. Mead's letter, "The Coming Election to the Presidency," I should like to point out that in it Mr. Mead seems to forget the history of the Theosophical Society. Both Madame Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott gloried in the fact they founded the Society, governed it, lived their lives under the guidance of such pronouncements and visions as Mr. Mead condemns, apparently *in toto*. If H. P. B. had not crossed the Atlantic in obedience to such a pronouncement to seek for her destined helper, would the Theosophical Society ever have existed? If Mrs. Besant therefore on her election were to conduct the Society in obedience to psychic pronouncements she would be only governing it according to tradition, and if a tree is to be judged by its fruits, impartial observers must admit psychic pronouncements in the past have served the Society well.

Every Section of the Theosophical Society, moreover, has its definite rules, safeguards its liberty of thought and action, rules which no President can arbitrarily change, it is surely therefore mere wilful exaggeration to assert that Mrs. Besant's possible appointment means "the death of our constitution and the handing over of the Society to the mercy of an irresponsible tyranny," and an appeal to the gallery to commiserate possible dangers to "the unknowing and timorous." I fail to see how Mrs. Besant possible election can "labour under the just accusation of being illegitimately forced and being achieved by improper pressure," when all the facts relating to the nomination have been published for consideration of members in official documents issued by the Executive Committee of all Sections. Mrs. Besant cannot justly be blamed that by such as that of slip of the pen, or from mental confusion arising probably from physical weakness, the late Colonel used the word "appoint" instead of "nominate," so exceeding his official power. I do not conceal my personal opinion that Mr. Mead is bringing illegitimate pressure to bear upon the

## CWL Speaks

members of the British Section by issuing the present paper. Granted, that the “rules of the Society with regard to the successorship to the life-presidency of Colonel Olcott are unfortunately absurdly drawn,” it seems grossly unfair to penalise Mrs. Besant for a faultily drawn constitution, Mr. Mead’s proposed remedy.

Mrs Besant is at a disadvantage from a practical point of view in a controversy such as has unfortunately been raised about the election to the Presidency, because, as is well known, she, on principle, never replies to personal attacks on herself. On this attitude on her part great advantage has been taken both in and outside the Society. I must protest against quotations from two private letters of Mrs. Besant’s being inserted in a public document. It is to my mind a breach of confidence and honour.

I cannot imagine that Mr. Mead was ignorant, when he wrote his letter, of the circumstances which induced Mrs. Besant to change her determination to support “—.” In fact, Mr. Mead shows that he was aware of those circumstances by writing “after several consultations with Colonel Olcott, the pronouncements of the apparitions finally won the day.” To write, therefore, that “Mrs. Besant forgot her intention,” is, in plain words, a misstatement of facts.

With regard to the manner in which Mr. Mead is marshalling his arguments against Mrs. Besant’s election, I must ask if he has ascertained definitely that it is Mrs. Besant’s intention to add the Presidency to her existing activities, or if he is *assuming* (a very different matter) such will be her future action. Personally, I am confident that if elected to the Presidency Mrs. Besant will discharge its duties with that thoroughness which is her characteristic.

To describe Mrs. Besant as “absolute autocrat the E.S.” is a statement, made in this case, I am afraid, to prejudice against Mrs. Besant those members of the Theosophical Society who are not members of the E.S., and who are consequently ignorant of its rules and procedure. As Mr. Mead is himself, as his allusion to it shows, a member of this body, and is free to issue the document on which I am commenting, Theosophical Society members may judge for themselves how far Mrs. Besant’s “absolute autocracy” extends over the actions of the E.S. members.

I regret exceedingly in the interests of the Theosophical Society, and above all in the interests of Mr. Mead himself, that he has initiated a poli-

Pedro Oliveira

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cy of partisanship into the coming election, so obliging others (hence this letter), if fair play is to be observed, to follow in his steps. For I also wish “to safeguard the freedom and sanity of the Theosophical Society” and as I notice that in the past neither suffered under the guiding of “an irresponsible psychic tyranny,” such as that of H. P. B. and Colonel Olcott (both autocrats with a vengeance) as depicted by our late lamented President in his “Old Diary Leaves,” I have no fears for the future of the Theosophical Society if it should come under the rule of Mrs. Besant.

ELISABETH SEVERS

From *The Vahan*, April 1907:

TO MY FELLOW MEMBERS IN THE THEOSOPHICAL  
SOCIETY.

Now that our President-Founder has passed to his rest, and wide publicity has been given in the public press to the various phenomena which have recently taken place at Adyar, the considerations of delicacy for the feelings of a dying man, and of reticence in regard to matters which many of us consider to be quite unfitted for public discussion, no longer render silence a duty. On the contrary, in view of the actual position of affairs in the Theosophical Society, a duty seems to lie upon its older and more experienced members to state their views and make clear their position in regard to these matters, for the enlightenment of those whose acquaintance with the Society is of more recent date.

As one of the oldest members now left in the Society, having worked in its ranks for twenty-four years, and as one who has for years held responsible office, first as General Secretary of the Indian Section, then as General Secretary of the British Section, and now as a member of the General Council, I feel that this duty is specially imperative upon myself. And I therefore feel bound to state my views on the present situation as simply and briefly as I can.

But first I desire to make it very plain that I do not intend to argue the case either for or against the *advisability* of selecting Mrs. Besant as President of the Theosophical Society in succession to Colonel Olcott; and still less do I propose to say anything either against her qualifications for the post or in deprecation of the claims which her immense services to the movement give her upon any position she desires to hold.

## CWL Speaks

The two questions upon which I feel it a duty to state my position are:

1. The bearing and effect upon the constitution of the Theosophical Society of what has happened at Adyar, and of Mrs. Besant's action in connection therewith, as well as the effects they are calculated to produce upon the spirit and character of our Society in the future.

2. The question of the authenticity of the various messages and communications received: *i.e.*, Do they, or do they not, emanate from such exalted Beings as Those who have been spoken of as the Masters?

As having an important bearing upon the constitutional questions involved, I am bound to say that ever since last Christmas Colonel Olcott has been in no condition of mind or body, either to think clearly, or to take any important decision whatever.

While at Adyar, I had ample evidence that he was wholly at the mercy of any suggestion coming from his immediate surroundings, and entirely incapable of arriving at any independent decision of his own.

It is most painful to have to make this statement, but its importance is obvious, and its accuracy will become more and more apparent as we proceed.

In his letter of January 7<sup>th</sup> to the Theosophical Society, its officers and members, Colonel Olcott purports to "appoint Annie Besant to take the office of President of the Theosophical Society" at his death, having just previously written that the Masters had told him "to appoint" her as his successor.

Now Colonel Olcott never had power to "appoint" anyone as his successor. The T.S. constitution only gives him the right to "nominate," subject to ratification by the members, as is clearly shown by his official notice to the General Secretaries of January 21<sup>st</sup> [sic].

All who have known Colonel Olcott, know his extreme respect for the Society's constitution, and his resolute upholding of proper procedure and strict obedience to its letter and spirit. Can anyone then believe that in sound mind, and with his judgment clear and normal, Colonel Olcott would have violated the constitution and exceeded his own powers by "appointing" a successor, when he was only entitled to "nominate" one, subject to ratification by the Society? The whole of this letter shows the same lack of that calm judgment and strict adherence to the letter and

## Pedro Oliveira

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spirit of the constitution which always characterised our late President-Founder.

Further, it seems to me quite opposed to the best interests of the Society for decisions vitally affecting its administration to be thus bolstered up by appeals to higher powers or visions of any kind. Of what use are a constitution and rules, if such unrecognised and unverifiable influences are to be brought to bear upon the minds of members?

That Colonel Olcott or Mrs. Besant should be guided by such visions, or by any form of higher illumination, may be and indeed is perfectly right and desirable for them personally; but that their experiences of such a kind should be made public with the inevitable result of *influencing the votes of members*, seems to me quite opposed not only to the letter and spirit of the Society's constitution, but to the true spirit of Theosophy itself.

These considerations receive only added force in the light of Mrs. Besant's letter of February 6th. Of what avail any process of voting, of what use the form of ratifying a nomination, if members are threatened that unless they vote for Mrs. Besant they will reject the Masters?

As a matter of fact, a number of letters have been received by the older members, regretting that the supposed "orders" from the Masters left them no choice in the matter.

This letter of Mrs. Besant's seems to me to violate our constitution both in letter and spirit, and I regret with all my heart that one whom I so highly love and honour, should have condescended to use such questionable methods, which were moreover the less needed, since it is very unlikely that any considerable body of members would have thought of opposing her election, had she said nothing of all these visions and messages, but simply left Colonel Olcott's official nomination to stand alone and carry its due weight with the Society at large.

Further, this letter of Mrs. Besant's tends to set up a dogma in the Society and to undermine the free judgment and sense of personal responsibility of its members. Its ultimate effect, if yielded to without protest, must be to make of the Society a Popedom, and to transform the most universal movement the world has seen into a dogmatic sect.

For all these reasons I regret most deeply the publication of these matters, and Mrs. Besant's action in issuing the circular just mentioned.

## CWL Speaks

Let us turn now to the examination of the authenticity of the “orders” and contents of these communications.

First let me say that I in no way question the *bona fides* of the witnesses and recipients of these phenomena, nor do I doubt that they actually believed they had the experiences described. Moreover I am as thoroughly convinced of the real existence of the Masters of Wisdom, and of the fact that They take interest in the Theosophical Society, as I am of my own existence. But I am equally convinced that the contents of these messages and “orders” do not proceed from Them and that They have had nothing whatever to do with these phenomena.

In the first place, the tone, style and character of these communications are altogether lacking in the elevation and dignity which mark the utterances of even an advanced disciple, and are entirely incompatible with the idea that they proceed from any such exalted source. It is inconceivable that a Master of Wisdom could say: “Most emphatically, yes,” and “Decidedly not. I wish you to state this publicly.” Such phrases, such language, could never have come from Their lips, or been framed in Their minds.

Secondly, these communications contain various errors of fact and statement, which undeniably exhibit a very fallible and inaccurate origin, and one very imperfectly acquainted with both the history of the Society and the details of recent events in connection with it.

Lastly, the long communication in regard to Mr. Leadbeater neither illuminates the question at issue, nor does it carry any conviction with it — both unvarying marks of any communication really proceeding from a Master of Wisdom.

It is a truism that we are all imperfect—for only Brahman is absolutely perfect—and that therefore They must work with imperfect instruments; but does it necessarily follow that They must choose for that purpose one who not only deliberately violates a moral law recognised by every nation and people, but one who has committed an offence against the criminal law of his own country? Granted that morality is relative, are the Masters of Wisdom forced to seek for instruments among the lowest strata of human morality? I cannot for one moment believe such a thing; and therefore this communication, even standing alone, would suffice to show that these visions and com-

## Pedro Oliveira

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munications cannot have even a remote connection with the Masters — that is if by “Masters of Wisdom” we mean the embodiments of the purest and loftiest ideals of perfected humanity.

Finally, this whole attempt to coerce the wills and overbear the sober judgment of members in the exercise of one of their most important duties, is totally opposed to all that has been taught, all that has been verified in experience, as to Their methods of action. From the earliest days of my connection with H. P. B. and Colonel Olcott, down to the present, the one lesson taught me over and over again is that the Masters *never* override the free-will, even of Their own pupils, and never attempt to overbear their reason and common sense.

For these reasons I absolutely reject these messages and communications, and am convinced that they are not authentic. And I most earnestly trust that my fellow members will truly exercise their own judgment and good sense, putting entirely aside these visions and “orders,” and refusing to allow themselves to be swayed either in one direction or the other by the profoundly regrettable publicity that has been given to these phenomena.

BERTRAM KEIGHTLEY.

In his refusal to accept the communications from the Masters to the dying President-Founder, Bertram Keightley stated:

It is inconceivable that a Master of Wisdom could say: “Most emphatically, yes,” and “Decidedly not. I wish you to state this publicly.” Such phrases, such language, could never have come from Their lips, or been framed in Their minds.

Although a member of many years, one wonders if Mr Keightley was not aware of the following examples of the Masters’ instructions – and language – while addressing their disciples. Quotations are from *The Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom*, edited by C. Jinarajadasa, originally published in 1919:

(Letter 8, First Series, to C. W. Leadbeater)

Since your intuition led you in the right direction and made you understand that it was *my desire* you should go to Adyar *immediately* – I may say more. The sooner you go the better. Do not lose one day more than you can help. Sail on the 5th if possible.

## CWL Speaks

Join Upasika at Alexandria. Let no one know you are going and may the blessing of our Lord, and my poor blessing shield you from every evil in your new life.

Greeting to you my new chela.

K.H.

Show my notes to no one.

(Letter 9, First Series)

I have forbidden at the Headquarters to send any letters to me.

K.H.

(Letter 13, First Series, to Mohini M. Chatterji)

I *expect you* to change your attitude—especially upon the arrival of her friends from Russia. ... I tell you, boy, cease to show such childish manners. ... I expect you will remember my instructions and—carry them out.

(Letter 50, Second Series)

Ramaswamier will don the robes of a regular Vedantin ascetic—even to the top-knot if necessary, and sent his useless clothes to Bombay. He must travel from town to town along the line to Allahabad, and preach Theosophy and Vedantism. Every one must know he is my chela, and that he has seen me in Sikkim. He must let Upasika know of his movements constantly, and finally join her at Allahabad—as also receive my orders through her. His whole aspiration and concern must be directed towards one aim—convince the world of our existence. ... Dress yourself as a pilgrim from to-day, and tell your friends you have received direct orders from me—how or in what way it is no one's business. Silence, discretion and courage. Have my blessings upon your head, my good and faithful son and chela.

M.:

(Letter 58, Second Series, abridged)

My newly accepted chela Mohini M.C. is expected to do the following.

1. He will devote all his energies to (a) prove to the unbelievers that we, the heirs of the Risis, are not dead, and that the Frs. [Founders] of the T.S. are acting in many things under our direct orders; (b) forgetting mean Self, to try and work for his country and to counteract the Xtian pernicious superstition; and (c) to break entirely with and denounce and expose those bigoted Brahmos whose Brahmoism conceals but Xtianity under its mask.

2. He must not speak to any one of my chelas by name. He must let everyone know that he has met with and knows my chelas, yet with the exception of Mr. Sinnett for reasons he is well acquainted with, he must not pronounce D.N.'s name, nor that of R.S.G.

4. My chelas must never doubt, nor suspect, nor injure our agents by foul thoughts. Our modes of action are strange and unusual and but too often liable to create suspicion. The latter is a snare and a temptation. Happy is he, whose spiritual perceptions ever whisper truth to him! Judge those directly concerned with us by that perception, not according to your worldly notions of things.

K.H.

Keightley also stated, as part of his objections to the communications received by Col. Olcott at Adyar in January 1907:

Granted that morality is relative, are the Masters of Wisdom forced to seek for instruments among the lowest strata of human morality? I cannot for one moment believe such a thing; and therefore this communication, even standing alone, would suffice to show that these visions and communications cannot have even a remote connection with the Masters — that is if by “Masters of Wisdom” we mean the embodiments of the purest and loftiest ideals of perfected humanity.

The following extracts of the letters from the Masters seem to present a different view:

(Letter 24, First Series)

## CWL Speaks

So then, you really imagined when you were allowed to call yourself my chela—that the black memories of your past offences were either hidden from my notice or that I knew and still forgave? Did you fancy that I connived at them? Foolish ...! thrice foolish! It was to help save you from your viler self, to arouse in you better aspirations; to cause the voice of your offended ‘soul’ to be heard; to give you the stimulus to make some reparation ... for these only your prayer to become my chela was granted. We are the agents of Justice, not the unfeeling lictors of a cruel god. Base as you have been, vilely as you have misused your talents...blind as you have been to the claims of gratitude, virtue and equity, you have still in you the qualities of a good man— (dormant indeed, so far!) and a useful chela.

(Letter 78, Second Series)

Remember also the following. Adulterers distil a poisonous aura which inflames every bad passion and maddens their lust. The only way to success is absolute separation: not a meeting, a sight from a distance, a word or even a letter will I permit. The moment you break either of these orders you will have ceased to be my chela. To retain an old letter, a talisman, a keepsake, especially a lock of hair—is pernicious: it becomes a smouldering spark. You are in danger if you are in the same town, or anywhere within accessible distance. You cannot trust your moral energy, for if you had had moral stamina you would have fled the house at the moment when the first lustful thought tempted your loyalty . . . Stop then away from—under any pretext.

K.H.

(Letter 28, First Series)

It must, however, be remembered that, inadequate as our ‘instruments’ may be to our full purpose, they are yet the best available, since they are but the evolution of the times.

K.H.

From *The Theosophical Review*, May 1907:

“THE BASIS OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY”

One can only rub one’s eyes with astonishment as one reads the letters and articles which appeared in the April number of the REVIEW and say “How are the mighty fallen!” Never again can the Theosophical Society decry any religious or any other body for intolerance, and a desire to persecute. Both are conspicuous in its own borders. In a Society professing no creed, no dogmas, whose watchwords are tolerance, sympathy, brotherhood, a marked display of ill-feeling and animus, intolerance, want of balance, prejudice, a most regrettable absence of the principles of fair-play and honourable dealing, an illogical jumping at conclusions, a frequent drawing of false assumptions,— these seem to me the characteristics of many of the articles and letters published, and written, I grieve to note, not only by the rank and file but by some leaders in the Society.

A serious danger, I may point out, awaits members in the extraordinary change that has come over the spirit of so many (among whom may be a future President). A danger which is not imaginary as one member has already suffered its penalty in America, and others have been threatened with expulsion from their Branch. Under Rule 35 of the Theosophical Society: “All certificates of membership derive their authority from the President, acting as Executive Officer of the General Council of the Society, and may be cancelled by the same authority”; and against this authority, even if unjustly expelled, no legal redress could be obtained. From what has happened in America this danger of expulsion for holding an unpopular opinion merely, has been shown to be real, and affords a clue as to why Mrs. Besant, with her strong sense of justice and her innate desire to help the oppressed, wrote her article “The Basis of the Theosophical Society.” Mr. Thomas allows that a member, *i.e.*, Mr. Jinarajadasa, “has recently been expelled in America on inadequate grounds. . . . There was no moral breach either publicly or privately.” He does not add, and very likely he was ignorant of the fact, that unless Mrs. Besant had taken up his case and presented a petition praying for a reconsideration of the sentence on specific grounds,

## CWL Speaks

that it was very unlikely, taking into consideration the excited state of feeling prevailing in the American Section on anything touching on the recent resignation (an excitement repeated I am sorry to note in the British Section), that Mr. Jinarajadasa's case had been reconsidered at all. Owing to the President's death the decree of expulsion has not yet been annulled, it depends very largely on who is elected President if a palpable injustice is rectified. And to Mr. Jinarajadasa membership in the Society is of paramount importance, as it has literally been his nursing mother.

From this case it appears that in the future members who do not agree with the majority or champion unpopular causes may suffer (if Mrs. Besant's help is not obtainable) unjust expulsion. In a word it appears as if liberty of thought and speech would be banished from the Society in future for fear of possible penalties. I think all members had better ponder the question of expulsion in this light, the light of facts, before deciding too hastily against the Presidency of one who shows a desire to be lenient in the matter of expulsions and forced resignations.

It is not all either who care to express themselves at the risk of being dubbed as holding immoral opinions because they advocate tolerance, or because they describe spiritual experiences are liable to be accused of being possessed by evil spirits, devices resorted to by many a priest and ecclesiastical body in the past, from the time of Jesus downwards, to stifle *unwelcome* inspiration.

Mr. Mead's attitude towards all psychic experiences is now apparently that of the priest rather than the prophet. A very curious frame of mind in one who was once H. P. B.'s Secretary (she who founded the Society and lived her life under the inspiration of such psychic experiences as her former pupil now denounces), and, as he tells us every White Lotus Day, he is still her fervent admirer. It is an attitude of mind still more curious when one remembers that Mr. Mead is also a profound admirer and interpreter to us of the Gnostic tradition in Christianity. For in the Society he seems anxious to repeat the policy of the Church who persecuted and denied the inspiration of Gnostics, and on much the same grounds, the denial of the value and veracity of *present* inspiration as compared to the value and veracity of the past.

## Pedro Oliveira

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It is impossible for Mrs. Besant to force any opinion, either in her private or possible future capacity as President, on any member. No one would ever assert such a possibility, unless they were so carried away by prejudice that they were unable to realise to what absurdities they are committing themselves. Mrs. Besant had a perfect right, as President-Elect, to explain why she accepted the nomination. One prominent member at once endeavoured to force his private opinion against Mrs. Besant's election as President upon the Society, by circularising the British Section, a step which naturally and inevitably called forth rejoinders. The future President can exercise no autocratic powers in the matter of dispensing with expulsions, there is a rule providing for this painful necessity, and the repealing of the rule would have to be carried by a majority vote of the Executive Council of the Theosophical Society. So much for the bugbear of a future Presidential autocracy.

It appears to me that, under the very peculiar circumstances, Mr. Keightley would have shown better taste if he had refrained from entering into the controversy altogether. Surely, in any case, the testimony of those who saw and heard the appearances at Adyar is of more value than those who conjecture only. His and many other of the criticisms evoked by these occurrences, which were nothing very remarkable when one reflects on the past history of the Society, and you cannot dislocate its past from its present, as so many are now trying to do, remind me of the criticism passed by a hostile public on *The Occult World*, when that remarkable book appeared. I am glad to hear that some of the Indian Branches have repudiated the right of Babu Upendranath Basu, the General Secretary for India, to speak for the Indian Section, and have passed resolutions expressing their confidence in "the honour, integrity, and sound judgment of the late Colonel Olcott and Mrs. Annie Besant," and "hail with complete satisfaction her nomination to the Presidency of the Theosophical Society."

I do not consider that Dr. Wells is justified in the deduction he draws that "the price we are asked to pay for having Mrs. Besant for our President is that Mr. Leadbeater is to be restored to his place as a recognised Teacher of the Society with his moral lapse (they are her own words) not only unrepented of but glorified as the act of one who rises so much above the accepted morality of the place and time as to be unintelligible, and, therefore, hated and suspected by the masses of the people." If Mrs.

## CWL Speaks

Besant had a recent case of resignation in her mind at all, it is much more probable that she would apply to it her alternative words, referring to “members who would discredit the Society in the eyes of the ordinary man of the world by falling below the accepted morality of the time and place.” I have no doubt the disciples of Jesus found the situation very difficult when their Teacher kept company with Publicans and Sinners, and received the repentant Magdalen as His disciple. Dr. Wells carries prejudice and obstinacy so far as to flatly refuse to believe the words of Mrs. Besant’s own telegram, which make it plain that only in the case of repentance is an offender to be restored to the Society, and his readmission backed into the bargain by a favourable vote of a large majority of members—a very just and fair course of action.

Mrs. Besant has made it quite clear in the letter headed “A Further Declaration by Mrs. Besant,” that members are to exercise their own judgment, uninfluenced by recent phenomena, in their vote for the Presidency. In the light of the present letters and articles of the April number of the REVIEW, one wonders how the words of that very plain statement will be distorted or disbelieved.

May I recommend to Mr. Scott-Elliot the study of *Old Diary Leaves*, *Incidents in the Life of Mme. Blavatsky*, and *The Occult World*. From these volumes he will see that the recent appearances at Adyar are in accordance with the past of the Society “as originally constituted,” and that if such occurrences mark the Society in his mind as “a spiritualistic sect” it cannot sink below its original level, for the record of the Society is studded with such occurrences.

If to express the opinions Mrs. Besant has put forward in her article, “The Basis of the Theosophical Society,” is to hold “utterly immoral views,” many amongst us are tainted with such immorality, for I have heard them frequently expressed by people of undoubted morality of life in the last year. It is of course, as every one is perfectly aware in the Society, quite safe to attack Mrs. Besant, either by fair or foul methods, as she on principle never replies to personal attacks on herself. In any case it will be impossible for her to reply to the attacks made upon her views before the election takes place, owing to her distance from England, and postal exigencies.

## Pedro Oliveira

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I have been endeavouring ever since I read Mrs. Scott-Elliot's letter, to ascertain how she discovered in the "Second Communication from Adyar," that the Masters are "capable of upholding vice, ... or of ordering members of the Theosophical Society to 'refrain' from doing all in their power to protect the victims of vice." Finally I concluded that either she or I was "glamoured," for this is what I read in the "Second Communication from Adyar":

"The Mahatma wished me to state . . . that it was right to judge the teachings to which we objected as wrong, and that it was right to accept his (C. W. L.'s) resignation. . . . He said it was the sacred duty of every Theosophist, if he finds a brother guilty of a wrong, to try to prevent that brother from continuing in his wrongdoing, and to protect others from being contaminated by that wrong so far as it is possible."

As for "bribing and threatening," it appears to me that, asked a plain question, They replied simply and directly.

For want of space and consideration for the claims of others further comments (their possible number is almost numberless) on the letters and articles in the April number of the REVIEW must be omitted.

ELISABETH SEVERS.

From *The Vahan*, April 1907:

AMSTERDAM,

*March 13th, 1907.*

Mr. Mead's circular of March, 1907, entitled "The Coming Election to the Presidency," in which he disputes the nomination of Annie Besant as candidate, and urges the members also to vote against it, certainly throws more light on the situation, and is the logical sequence of that which preceded it.

To arrive at the conclusions which Mr. Mead forms, we must deny the truth of the interview with the Masters, through which the nomination was established. The denial of the truth of these interviews is maintained, even after the receipt of a letter from Mrs. Besant, in which she completely corroborates the genuineness of the interviews and manifestations, on the ground of her personal observations, and stakes her word of hon-

## CWL Speaks

our for the truth of it. *This letter has been sent for publication to all the Sections of the Theosophical Society.*

And now Mr. Mead comes with an open attack on the nomination of Mrs. Besant; a personal attack which in all its force is based on the unreliability of the above-mentioned facts.

Before the interview took place, writes Mr. Mead, Colonel Olcott did not consider Mrs. Besant to be the most suitable person. She herself also did not think of herself as a candidate, which is proved by her sayings in confidential letters addressed to Mr. Mead and his wife (whether it be desirable to use private correspondence against anyone we leave to the judgment of every man).

In her open letter Mrs. Besant says: "When friends had mooted the question of my becoming President previously, I had said that only my own Master's command, addressed to me personally, would induce me to accept it."

"On reaching Adyar, however," continues Mr. Mead, "Mrs. Besant forgot her intention."

And justly so, for when she reached Adyar she herself received the command of her Master to accept the nomination and, though contrary to her own wish, she did not hesitate to take the burden upon her.

"Hallucinations and influences from a wrong quarter," say her opponents.

And here we come to an important point.

On one side we have the testimony of the late Colonel Olcott and Annie Besant, and on the other side the suppositions and conjectures of Mr. Mead.

Colonel Olcott has, in the long course of years that he ruled the Society, always been in contact with the Masters, by whose orders he, with H. P. B., founded the Society.

In different paragraphs of his *Old Diary Leaves* one finds this fact mentioned, and never has any doubt arisen as to the truth of these statements.

Mrs. Besant has through her life, works and writings proved to be in possession of first-hand knowledge about superphysical things.

In opposition to them we find Mr. Mead, a highly respectable, aye, learned man, an old member of the Society, who however has never

## Pedro Oliveira

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shown any possession of higher faculties and never was in contact with the Masters, so far as I know, and who now on his own authority wishes to impress us with the idea that both Mrs. Besant and Colonel Olcott have lost their power of discrimination and are no longer capable to distinguish between their own Master and an “apparition” or an instrument of dark powers.

And is it not rational that the Masters, who founded and guided the Society, should appear and act at an important crisis?

It is not for me to defend Mrs. Besant against the attack of Mr. Mead on her character, where he accuses her, *viz.*, “that we have no guarantee, with her as President, that she will not at any moment force other similar pronouncements upon us and hold them *in terrorem* over the heads of the unknowing and timorous,” and, at the end of his circular, that by ratifying her nomination “the Society will be handed over to the mercy of an irresponsible psychic tyranny.”

Annie Besant need not be defended.

Her whole life lies before us as an open book, that life of truth, honesty, and uprightness, on which all efforts to throw suspicion on her will rebound as on solid armour. It is useless to defend her on this point. Whoever has not been convinced of this by Mrs. Besant’s life, will certainly not be convinced by my words.

Furthermore Mr. Mead tries all through his circular to belittle Mrs. Besant. For he mentions a number of posts which Mrs. Besant occupies at this moment and argues that every one of these posts would occupy “the full time of most of us.” But is not exactly this fact that she has occupied all these posts and fulfilled all their obligations in a way far above our praise, that she is not like “most of us,” but stands far above us all, and does it not follow from this that we can safely leave it to her judgment whether she can also take upon herself the burden of Presidentship of the Society? *besides* [sic] these or *in the place* of these, for who told Mr. Mead that she will occupy all the posts mentioned in the future also? And have not all, who believe in the command of the Master, given to her to accept this post, the feeling of certainty that she will also get the strength to fulfil the obligations of the post as it should be?

Perhaps the reader may think it a little preposterous that I should write all this, but it must not be forgotten that in the Dutch Section the Theosophical life has run a quieter course than for instance in England

## CWL Speaks

and America; that also the preparations for the presidential nomination, which, according to Mr. Mead's letter, has filled for a long time both the heads and hearts of the leaders in England, has passed unnoticed in our Section; therefore an opinion of one who has the honour to stand at the head of that Section, has more claim to be unprejudiced than the opinion of one of those who had already long beforehand formed a fixed opinion as to the election of the President.

Therefore I have thought it necessary to make my voice heard in this matter, the more so, as I am fully convinced of the truth of the words with which Annie Besant ends up her letter to the members of the Society, "that the members in their vote, will decide the future fate of the Society, whether it shall continue to be the Servant of its true Founders, who stood behind H. P. B. and Colonel Olcott, or shall reject Them as its Masters and Guides."

If the nomination of Mrs. Besant be rejected, the Society will enter upon a new course, a course of intellect only; then it may perhaps flourish as so many other Societies in the world, but then it will die off spiritually, and the object for which it was founded will be lost; then all of that, for which H. P. B. and Colonel Olcott gave their life, will be undone.

It is against this that I deem it my duty to protest thus strongly.

W. B. FRICKE,

*General Secretary Dutch Section T.S.*

The results of the Presidential election were published in the August 1907 issue of *The Vahan*, in a letter from A. P. Sinnett, the Acting President, to Mrs Besant:

*July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1907.*

*To Mrs. Annie Besant,*

DEAR MADAM,

Following up my letter of the 28th, announcing the ratification of your nomination as President, I send you an account of the voting as reported to me by the General Secretaries.

*Yes.*

*No.*

Pedro Oliveira

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Indian Section	–	3,571	47
American Section	–	1,319	679
British Section	–	1,189	261
Dutch Section	–	781	1
French Section	–	600	50
German Section	–	582	20
Scandinavian Section	–	548	0
Sydney, Australia	–	539	5
Cuban Section	–	188	14
Italian Section	–	146	12
Unattached Indian votes		117	3

These figures represent a majority in your favour so largely in excess of the required two-thirds that I do not think it necessary to wait for the returns from the New Zealand Section, nor for the outstanding returns of the Australasian Section, before declaring the ratification to have been complete. No returns still to come can possibly alter its character.

I have the honour to be,

Yours very truly,

A. P. SINNETT

31 St. James Place, London, S.W.

August 6<sup>th</sup>, 1907

My dear Mr. Leadbeater,

In common with many who are your friends and love you, I seek from you some clear word as to your position with regard to the advice given by you to some few boys. I take it that you gave that advice as a doctor gives advice in cases where he sees a lad to be in danger, and that you gave it as a less evil way than that too often recommended by doctors, resort to the company of loose women; that you hoped that the removal of physical pressure would remove impure thoughts and desires surging in the boy's mind, and that you only gave the advice where that mis-

## CWL Speaks

chief was present. I understand that no such advice was given to the large majority of boys committed to your care, and that, as is proved by your letters to them, your one desire was to help them to rise into pure and noble manhood.

As you know, I think that the advice you gave was entirely mistaken, and was far more likely to degrade the boy than to help him to purity; that it removed one safeguard against temptation – the feeling that self-abuse is shameful and degrading, and hence would be likely to start him on the downward path. You promised, when this advice became known to me and I expressed my strong disapproval of it that you would not again give it. Since then the Master M. in answer to Col. Olcott's question has condemned the advice as wrong. Can you accept His judgment on it, and having in view its dangerous character, which you had overlooked, definitely repudiate it, so that no boy who may hereafter chance to hear of it may feel that it has your sanction?

Ever yours,

Annie Besant.

Weisserhirsch, Germany  
30<sup>th</sup> August, 1907.

My dear Mrs. Besant,

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 adhered to the promise which I gave to you in February last year that I would not repeat that advice, as I deferred to your opinion that it is dangerous. I recognise as fully as you do that it would be so, if promiscuously given, and I had never dreamed of so giving it. I know that the habit seizes upon many boys, just as drunkenness does upon men. In the cases in which I gave it, under the restrictions imposed, and with the supervision of constant

Pedro Oliveira

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communication, I think that there was no such danger; and you will note that the two boys (Dennis and Nevers) about whom this ill-advised disturbance has arisen, were in neither case regularly selected by me.

The advice was, of course, given only where I judged it to be advisable, and as you say there were many of my boys to whom I did not give it, because it did not seem to be necessary. The question has never been to me in the least one of what is called 'morality', but of physiology, and I was not dealing with the pruderies of modern convention, but with the realities of life. I think that the false shame with which our race surrounds this subject is responsible for most of the harm connected with it, and I should encourage a pupil to face quite frankly the problems of sex and to regard them as simply and naturally as those of digestion. I have made no public explanation or defence, despite the scandalous exaggerations, imputations and direct falsehoods which have been freely circulated by Fullerton and others; nor have I the slightest desire to be reinstated in the Society.

Yours ever,

C. W. Leadbeater

CWL Speaks

## Chapter 9

# Return to Adyar and the Discovery of Krishnamurti

The correspondence included in this chapter deals with the ongoing crisis after Annie Besant was elected President of the TS in May 1907. As the crisis showed no sign of abating she eventually asked for the National Sections of the Society to consult their members about the readmission, or not, of CWL as a member of the TS. She also requested the General Council, the Society's governing body, to vote on the matter.

In reply to a letter of Jan. 4, 08.

My dear Sinnett,

I have your letter of the 4th. The Masters do not desire the disintegration of the Society, but They intend it to do far wider and better work than it has yet done; and as a preliminary to that, They have found it necessary to apply somewhat severe tests to its members. Those who do not possess sufficient intuition to stand firm will be shaken out, but the organisation will be stronger and more homogeneous without them. You feel that a multitude of converging evidences support your view; but if it had happened that you had from the first adopted the view that I hold you would have seen all these occurrences in that light, and would have found them perfectly easy of explanation, as I do. My attitude seems bewildering to you, and of course I do not for a moment expect you to adopt it; but put yourself in my place and you will at least understand it.

Suppose that for twenty-one years you had possessed the consciousness of the higher planes, that its use was to you an absolute matter of course, that during all that time you had daily proved its reliability in a hundred different ways, and by comparison with that of many other people in different parts of the world;

and that further during all that time you had had the honour of daily intercourse with the Masters, the consciousness of touch with Them, and the possibility of instantly reaching Them being unbroken alike in sleeping and the waking state. Suppose that They had warned you long beforehand that this test was to be applied to the Society, and even for what then seemed most improbable actions on the part of certain people, suppose that through all the recent disturbances you had daily referred matters to Them, and had even begged a certain High Authority to apply an additional test to some of the people so as to give them another chance after they had blundered, and that that test was accordingly applied. Suppose that as part of these experiences you had constantly encountered Mrs. Besant in the presence of the Masters, had repeatedly heard instructions given to her which she immediately carried out, though physically on the opposite side of the world at the time – and had passed with her through experiences of the most solemn character conceivable. If all this had happened to you, as it has to me, and if it were all still part of your daily life, would you not feel justified in recognizing Mrs. Besant as the nominee of the Masters, and in giving her all the support in your power? I know that you are bound by another allegiance to regard all this as a delusion; but can you not see that under the circumstances my attitude as explicable? At least it is a great comfort that we are both sensible enough to be able to differ fundamentally in opinion without allowing that difference to affect in the slightest degree our feelings of private friendship.

I am glad that you are to preside at the next meeting of the Northern Federation; for the people up there very badly need exactly what you can so well give them – the definite assurance of the reality of super-physical phenomena. The fact that those whom they regard as their leaders have disagreed on various points has made some of them altogether skeptical as to the occult side of nature, the existence of higher planes, the possibility of clairvoyance, etc. So you can do a very good work there without touching in the least upon any of the vexed questions, which I should think would be a relief! Your attitude of commonsense conviction, and your breezy disparagement of the self-satisfied

## CWL Speaks

ignorance of the average man-in-the-street are just what is needed to bring them once more to reason.

Yours most cordially, C. W. Leadbeater.

Extract from a letter from Carl Holbrook, an American boy, to a friend who enquired if he had experienced ill health as the result of his association with C.W.L.:

Mamma showed me your letter enquiring about my health etc., and I think it is only fair for me to answer in Mr. Leadbeater's defence. Since I first met Mr. Leadbeater I have been in almost perfect health. For over five years I have participated in baseball, hockey, tennis, track sports and athletics in every form excepting football. Far from decreasing in health and vigor I am becoming stronger each year. I can run from one fourth of a mile to five miles easily at any time. I am not saying these things at all to boast, but merely to show you that I am far from being what Mr. Fullerton imagines one of C.W.L.'s boys to be. At school I am president of my class (200 members), vice-president of the Newton High School Tennis Association, captain of the 1908 Debating Team, captain of the Class Baseball Team, substitute on the regular Baseball Team, substitute on the Hockey team, and on innumerable committees. I am five ft., nine inches tall, and weigh about 145 lbs.

I guess this is about all I can tell you now about myself – I thank you ever so much for giving me an opportunity to stand up even in so small a way for Mr. Leadbeater.

Yours very truly,

(signed) Carl J. Holbrook.

Dictated

Hotel Naumachia,  
Taormina, Sicily.  
April 18, 1908.

My dear Kirby,

Very many thanks for your kind letter of the 13<sup>th</sup>. I most fully appreciate all that you say, but I do not quite agree on some points. I do not see that you can reasonably blame yourself for not fully understanding matters from the beginning. You knew nothing of me except at second hand; the falsehoods were emphatic and elaborate, and even Mrs. Besant herself was to a large extent deceived. She has repeatedly written that she never had the slightest intention of suggesting that I had deceived her at Benares, but there are undoubtedly passages in her E.S. circular which might bear that construction. As to the alleged deception of parents, it was always the parents who pressed the children upon me, and I always told them that it would be necessary to speak quite plainly about certain matters, though I did not mention the exact form of advice to be given, which indeed was different in different cases, according to what appeared to be the needs. And since you said nothing to anyone else, no harm was done by the temporary misunderstanding.

I do not feel that the Society has behaved unjustly, or that any restitution or reinstatement is due to me. I do think that Fullerton, Knothe, Moore, Burnett & Co. have behaved both foolishly and outrageously; but the Society has recognised that by dismissing them from the positions which they held. I handed in my resignation to the President (according to the very words which he himself suggested when I asked his advice) "in order to save the Society from any embarrassment in connection with recent events"; I expected him to accept that resignation, and he did so. So that I have no grievance whatever against the Society. I do not myself desire to rejoin, because it seems to me that all my writing and correspondence can be done just as well without nominal membership as with it, and since there is still much misunderstanding and prejudice it does not appear to me to be good policy to arouse all this fanatical feeling for the sake of what is after all merely a sentiment. Of course I quite recognise that the fanatical feeling ought not to exist, and that the Society would as an organization be stronger without those who feel it; but I am thinking of the effect on them and also of the discredit which must inevitably be brought upon the Society by the wider publication of all this

## CWL Speaks

deplorable nonsense. You say it is intolerable that some should think that I have to keep quiet; but first, I am not specially keeping quiet when I am all the time writing articles and books, but am on the contrary engaged in exactly that form of activity which I most prefer, for I always intensely disliked public lecturing; secondly, I do not care in the very slightest degree what any human being thinks, and I never give these opponents even a thought unless I can help them; so the position is by no means intolerable to me!

It is true that Mrs. Besant has never formally withdrawn that E.S. circular, except the remark about glamour, about which she wrote in the *Theosophist*. She spoke of issuing a circular when we were at Weisser Hirsch, but my advice was to wait, so that if there must be a further pronouncement it might be given once for all. I feel myself that it is always better to say as little as possible in affairs of this sort, and when one must speak to make one definite and dignified declaration and dismiss the subject for ever.

The other and wholly impersonal point of view is to me much more interesting – that a certain weeding-out process is necessary for the Society, and that this affair was utilized to achieve it. Some of quite our leading people had gone as far as they can go in this life, and in the future they would be hindrances instead of helps. I myself could not believe this at first, and I thought that my case as it was presented was too hard a test for them – scarcely quite fair, if one might dare to say such a thing. That was why, as you know, I made an appeal to the Mahachohan that they might have another chance. He smiled and said “Will it satisfy you if we test their loyalty to --- and then He used Mrs. Besant’s occult name. Of course I said it would, because I felt quite sure that they would all pass that triumphantly; but when the time came they nearly all failed absolutely to my great surprise.

My position is that I would much rather have everything left as it is, and nothing further said; but if it is necessary to some larger scheme that we should have further discussion of this unpleasant matter I must simply bow to the necessities of the case, though I shall take no part in anything that is done. However, I must not

Pedro Oliveira

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spend any more time over this affair; but I thought I would tell you exactly how I feel about it. With kindest regards to Mrs. Kirby

I am ever

Yours affectionately.

C. W. Leadbeater

Mrs. Minnie C. Holbrook, a TS member in the United States, was the editor of a document entitled 'Open Letters to Members of the American Section of the Theosophical Society', published in April-May 1908. They were all letters in support of CWL. She issued an Addendum on 5th May 1908, which contained an open letter from Dr Weller Van Hook, the General Secretary of that Section. Dr Van Hook believed the letter had been dictated to him by a Master. We reproduce below some of Dr Van Hook's main statements that generated very strong reactions both in America and in England, but also in India:

The introduction of this question into the thought of the Theosophical World is but the precursor of its introduction into the thought of the outer-World. Mr. Leadbeater has been the one to bear the persecution and martyrdom of its introduction. The solution of the question can only be reached by those who study it from the Theosophic standpoint, admitting the validity of our teachings in regard to thoughts and their relations to acts. Hence the service of Theosophy to the world in this respect will be of the most far-reaching consequence, extending into the remote future of the progress of Man.

No mistake was made by Mr. Leadbeater in the nature of the advice he gave his boys. No mistake was made in the way he gave it. Nor did he make any mistake in the just estimation of the consequences of any other solution of the terrible problem which was presented to him.

At the Convention of the British Section held later that year CWL's opponents, Mr Herbert Burrows in particular, would seize upon such statements by Dr Van Hook as part of their attacks on the former.

## CWL Speaks

10 East Parade, Harrogate, England,  
July 3rd, 1908.

Dear Mr. Warrington,

Your effort with Fullerton was well-meant and does you honour, even though it seems useless. The poor old man appears to be quite sincere in writing this amazing nonsense, and the fact that he can write it shows to what a pitiable condition his prejudice has reduced him. He has evidently reached a stage in which he is incapable of accepting or understanding anything which disproves his own delusion, and so he still spreads falsehoods broadcast, as he has been doing all through this affair. I imagine that it is quite useless to attempt to enlighten a man so hopelessly obstinate, so I leave it entirely to you as to whether you care to give him the facts about this new crop of (falsehoods) mistakes, but at any rate I want you to be fully in possession of them, so that you can refute his gossip in any case where it seems desirable. Unworthy as his effusion is of serious answer, I will take it up point by point, and briefly indicate where it contradicts truth.

The four persons alleged to be friends who signed the original letter to Mrs. Besant took therein a solemn and emphatic pledge of absolute secrecy, which however they had broken before it was possible for a reply from Mrs. Besant to reach them. Of this I have documentary evidence in the shape of dated letters. Was that the act of friends? He states that I had no enemies on the (British) Executive Committee. Why then did old Burnett say in England before my return that I ought to be shot? And why did he and several others show such an extraordinary virulence at the London meeting?

I did not invent the cipher used in the much discussed letter; it exists in an old number of The Theosophist and only those boys know of it who happened to be present when I related the story of which it forms a part.

Fullerton remarks that his extract from Mrs. Besant's E. S. letter was made from Greenleaf's typewritten circular; but since he well knew the original source this does not relieve him from the

criminality of breaking his E.S. pledge, though it shows Greenleaf as the hardier villain who made the first plunge.

The accusation of ‘deceptive statements to parents’ is without any shadow of foundation, as I have more than once said. Yet poor old Fullerton persists in repeating it. The remark that my ‘defence’ was not true is ridiculous. I have never admitted the necessity of any ‘defence’ whatsoever, nor have I ever recognised the right of any of these meddling people to interfere with such private instruction as I thought it well to give. I did give to Mrs. Besant at Benares an explanation of what I had advised – an explanation which was also embodied in my letter to Fullerton written at that date. This was, of course, perfectly accurate.

The Nevers case is curiously distorted in the letter under consideration; for Fullerton says that I ‘paid the expenses of the boy for hundreds of miles in order to get hold of him’. The facts are these: the boy was not one of those whom I took in hand for training at all – not one of those whom I chose as specially hopeful. But he had become attached to me in Chicago and his mother used to consult me with reference to him. She was at this time worried about a friendship which he had formed with a certain young man who frequently invited him to come and spend the night at his rooms. She wrote to me about this, and asked how this undesirable influence could best be removed without wounding the boy’s feelings. I was at that time about to visit Toronto, where I was to stay at a hotel, and it was therefore possible for me to invite a guest. I therefore asked the mother whether she would be willing that the boy should spend some weeks with me there, thinking that during that time he would most likely be, to some extent, weaned from that other friendship, especially if I explained to him fully exactly what such things really mean.

The mother replied most gratefully and effusively that there was no thing which would please her so well, but that unfortunately she had not the money for the fare and could not ask it for such a purpose from the boy’s father who was not a Theosophist and knew nothing about the circumstances. Mrs. Dennis had been in consultation with Mrs. Nevers about the undesirable friendship and was aware of my offer. Indeed, Mrs. D. was at Ridgewood

## CWL Speaks

with me when the letter from Mrs. N. arrived, and as she knew all about the case I showed it to her. She at once offered to pay the boy's fare to Toronto, but I thought it would be less embarrassing to the boy's mother if I myself made this offer, and it was settled that way. I did this not because of any special attachment to the boy for he was not one of those who had close links with me dating from previous incarnations, and I knew that his presence would to some extent spoil our party. It was done solely in the interests of the boy and as a matter of kindness to help the mother in a difficult situation, even though at the cost of some disturbance to my previous plans. The mother accepted it with much gratitude, and the money was sent. Naturally it was not for me to say anything of all this, but since the action is being used against me I explain the facts to you.

The boy's account of what took place that night is imaginative and inaccurate; but it may of course have suffered distortion in passing through many hands; for I should be sorry to believe that the boy would tell a direct falsehood. I talked to him kindly and gently as to his relations with the young man at Chicago. .... His recollection, however, is quite playing him false with regard to what passed between us. The word 'initiation' was never used, nor was there any pretense that the advice given was 'Theosophic'. I can conceive however that that idea may be a perversion of some remark that 'we who are students of the Truth must be willing to go behind ordinary conventions and must not be afraid to face the real facts of life'. I am sorry to have to say that the statement about Fritz Kunz is pure imagination; I should in no case speak to one boy of private affairs of another, and as a matter of fact I had discussed this with Fritz before that at quite another place.

Fullerton once more refers to Mrs. Besant E.S. circular, though he knows perfectly well that it was written under a misapprehension, and that she was deceived by reports which she afterwards found to be false. Although she has never directly withdrawn the Circular, her words and writing on many occasions since have

Pedro Oliveira

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shown that she no longer maintains that position. Fullerton well knows this, but chooses for his own ends to ignore it.

Again he makes a statement which is directly false when he says that the deplorable troubles in the Society are due to my actions or opinions. That this is not so is proved by the fact that I had held the same opinions during twenty-three years of work for the Society, and that no harm came from them. I absolutely repudiate any shadow of responsibility for all this silly disturbance; it arises from his own incredible folly in not keeping his solemn pledge of secrecy. Another falsehood is that I did not tell the truth to Mrs. Besant at Benares, but 'devised an explanation'. Also that I 'forced action which brought the whole case out'.

Allow me once more to repeat what I have so often said already that I have personally no desire whatever to be 'reinstated' in the Society, for I think that my correspondence and literary work can be done just as well without nominal membership as with it. If the Society insists upon my restoration as a sort of atonement I am passive – I made no resistance; but I will do nothing whatever to promote or assist such action. With regard to Mrs. Besant's pledge, she may reasonably argue that it was extorted from her by deception; for when it was given she was under a misapprehension both as to the facts of my case and as to what the Masters had said at Adyar. I had supposed that my promise was not to repeat the advice (given to her at Benares) constituted the 'repudiation' required; nothing was ever said about its being public. I do not see how the Society can legally reinstate me; perhaps I can ask the President to withdraw the Colonel's acceptance of my resignation, or it can elect me as an honorary member – say in recognition of 'Occult Chemistry' researched; but I think she said she would restore me only by the desire of a large majority of the Society; if a large majority really desires it, what need of any conditions?

I am ever,

Yours most cordially,

C. W. Leadbeater.

12<sup>th</sup> July, 1908

## CWL Speaks

My dear Sinnett,

I have your letter of the 5<sup>th</sup>. I am sorry to hear that the Convention degenerated into an undignified squabble; but what can you expect when you have such a set of savages as Mead, Burrows, Firth, Thomas, etc.? The astonishing thing to me is that you seem to blame Mrs. Besant and Dr. Van Hook for it all. To show that that is a mistake we need to ask only this one question – would you yourself, whatever Mrs. Besant or the doctor might have written, have brought up at a Convention the discussion of my affair? We know that as a gentleman you certainly would not; so we cannot acquit these other people of grave fault. I have heard nothing of their “resolution”, and have no interest in hearing of it, for what such people think is to me a matter of absolute indifference; it is just the baying of a pack of ill-conditioned curs. Their ignorance and malice is equalled only by their astounding impertinence in passing their impudent “resolution” upon my private affairs. As you well know, I resigned from their Society two years ago precisely in order to leave them no excuse for exercising their foul mouths and their prurient minds upon a matter which they could not be expected to understand, yet even though I am not a member and they have no possible concern with me, the poor things cannot refrain from ceaseless attacks upon me. However, their attitude matters little to any one but themselves so let us dismiss them to the obscurity which they merit.

What seems to me infinitely more serious is your own attitude towards Mrs. Besant. You see I know Mrs. Besant exceedingly well; I have passed through certain experiences with her which make such knowledge complete and unerring to an extent of which you have not the least idea; and by virtue of that knowledge I do assure you that you are doing her an injustice. She is not intolerant and has no ambition except to be useful. If she considers loyalty to the Masters (and therefore to her as Their undoubted representative) as an important qualification in those who have to work with her, I must say that I entirely agree with her. I think that an army is likely to be more efficient if its officers carry out with zeal and devotion the commands of its general

than if they are in a perpetual attitude of disobedience, cavil and criticism. The fact is that the Society has an opportunity now of entering upon a new era of life and a far wider field of usefulness. The Masters want an instrument that They can use – through which They can pour out spiritual force to an extent undreamed of as yet; and for that purpose the body must be harmonious and tractable. You know how for many a year Mead and his crew have constituted themselves an irreconcilable opposition – how they persistently made Mrs. Besant's life a burden to her at Avenue Road. She has borne with them with a saintly patience at which I have often marvelled; but there may come a period when for the work's sake she must take the line to which duty calls her without heed to their snarlings. If they must separate, let them separate; if they can only restrain their evil tongues from backbiting, they are quite capable of much good work along their own lines; but they are clearly not capable of forming part of such an instrument as is required for the great work of the future. They will not follow a leader, because their invulnerable self-conceit makes them feel always that they know more than the leader. Their metier in life is not to promote, but to oppose. Their desire now at this moment is not in the least to promote the spread of Theosophy, otherwise they could easily devote themselves to that; but instead of that their one wish is to oppose Mrs. Besant and to attack me, who have never condescended to take any notice of them.

I do not of course hope to change your convictions; I fear you have gone too far for that. Yet to relieve my own conscience at least I do most solemnly repeat to you that I know that you are wronging Mrs. Besant in attributing to her the motives with which you credit her – because you see, I see those motives and you are only inferring them. I am not in the least under impression that you have fallen into disgrace with our Master; we both know Him far too well for that; but I do think that there are certain points which you are not seeing quite clearly. If you will forgive me, who am your junior, for the audacity of a criticism, it seems to me that you have started with a certain preconception, and have then gone on seeing everything through that, emphasiz-

## CWL Speaks

ing such aspects of every event as seemed to support that view, until now you have come to feel that it is the only possible view. I can hardly hope that you will change it now; but if you could see that one might not unreasonably hold another view, that would be a great point gained.

You speak of the possibility of you having to lead the London Lodge away from the rest of the Society; I hope you will not do that, but I know that whatever action you take will be dictated by your judgment as to what is right and best; you need have no fear that either Mrs. Besant or I will misunderstand your motives.

I think highly of Dr. Van Hook, and I agree with every word of the two addenda which he published to Mrs. Holbrook's pamphlet. I absolutely repudiate the idea that anything which I did or said or taught needs any defence whatever, and I decline to be put in the position of making any. As you know, I promised two years ago not to repeat the teaching, since the world seems not to be ready for it, and of course I adhere to that promise; I do not see what more can be asked by the "enemies" of who you speak, nor do I for a moment admit their right to ask anything whatever from me. I am not at all disturbed about the manifestations at Adyar; I have looked up that matter and I know exactly what happened and what was said. In reality there is not contradiction, but it is not my business to make any pronouncement upon that subject.

I have written at considerable length, because I want to make clear my position once for all to you through whose books the light first came to me; but I think I may safely say promise not again inflict upon you so voluminous an epistle. How is Mrs. Sinnett?

With cordial good wishes

I remain

Ever yours

C. W. Leadbeater

Pedro Oliveira

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14 Westbourne Terrace Road  
July 27 [1908]

My dear Leadbeater,

We have just got back from a brief stay at Cromer where Mrs Sinnett has picked up a little as regards general health in a way that may give my ministrations as regards the more serious trouble a better chance of bringing off results. I write in answer to yours of the 12<sup>th</sup>. I thought as a matter of course that some of friends here would have sent you a copy of that convention resolution. It was not so offensive to you as you supposed. It was aimed at Van Hook's pronouncement and was no new attack on you. But anyhow that all matters nothing. For the rest it is as you say impossible for me to adopt your view of A.B. and all that led to her present attitude, and your attitude therefore remains for me an insoluble mystery which I can only put aside as beyond my capacity to account for. I am writing these few lines less for the sake of discussing any of the main problems than in order to protest against the idea that "voluminous" epistles from you can be an "infliction". They are always most welcome and read with deep interest.

I suppose you would not contest the idea that evil powers of no small capacity are mixing themselves up with the affairs of the T.S. Has it ever occurred to you that sometimes, when it suits their game, they may assume your shape? I have a motive for asking this question that I cannot put into plainer words.

We are going abroad for a bit some time next week, but letters will be forwarded if marked with a request to the effect.

Ever yours,

A. P. Sinnett

1056 Harwood Street,  
Vancouver B.C.  
Aug. 5 1908.

Dear Mr Leadbeater:-

I have one or two things to write you for it is about now over two years I corresponded with you since this miserable T.S. busi-

## CWL Speaks

ness has been going on thanks largely to Fullarton's [sic] activities. I have long since withdrawn from active participation in the row and while make some allowance for the old man in what looks like senile decay, I am still of the same opinion I held two years ago that the celebrated committee proved itself the most crass and idiotic assembly of incompetents that it has been my lot to meet or even hear of. It has been well said by someone that if such disturbance as this had come to any other society of the world, that half a dozen business (balanced) men would have settled the matter once and for all inside of twenty-four hours. But then we do not appear to be dealing with "balanced" individuals in the T. S.

Now the first thing I want to ask about is regarding certain correspondence of MINE which was sent to India two years ago at the request of Mrs Tuttle. I believe both Mrs Russack [sic] and Mrs Courtwright had the handling of it on behalf of Mrs Besant. It was understood at the time that after perusal and that it had served its purpose, that it was to be returned to me. Judge of my astonishment therefore, when I had a letter or rather Mrs Tuttle did from Mrs Russack [sic] saying that the bundle had been DEPOSITED IN A BANK at Adyar to your order. My object in writing is to get you to authorize the bank in question to send it to me for I don't suppose for a minute that you want to see or hear any more letters etc on this miserable affair. I may mention in this connection that I dont [sic] understand Mrs Courtwright who is now in the States and who has been making mischief with Mr F. in New York by telling him all about my sending HIS letters to Douglas out to India (as if Douglas or rather myself as father of a boy, had no jurisdiction over his correspondence with outsiders). The result is that Fullarton [sic] is accusing Douglas of giving me (HIS FATHER) letters he had received from A. F. or accusing me of STEALING them. Of course the old man is "nutty". No question about that.

The next matter is about Douglas. You know of course that he is still subject to the fits, they average about two a month. Very naturally we are trying all we can to help him, have been trying

## Pedro Oliveira

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Count Mattei's remedies but I am wondering if men like Lambroso or Dr Baraduc of Paris could do him any good, with that in mind I would like to ask if you know either of these or any other eminent men that might give the boy some relief. Dr Baraduc's recent experiments seem to indicate that he has progressed very far and can say possibly how a disease of this nature can be approached with regard to cure. We have had Christian Science working on him, but Douglas has very little confidence in it. The whole question is: what is Epilepsy? The medical profession does not know and others like yourself will not say although it goes without saying that you **MUST** know for someone with astral sight could help seeing the cause. The silence in this direction to me means only one thing and that is that it is deemed wiser for the boy in the long run to work off this bit of Karma. I should dearly like to know if such is the case.

I shall hope to hear from you in any event for I believe that you are still attached to the boy and I have never been able to think that you could willfully bring on a lasting injury on any living thing much less a dear child like Douglas. There is not the slightest sign of any mental weakness and he came through the McGill Matriculation 673 points [several undecipherable words, *Compiler*] and this in spite of three years setback for this was really his first year at school since he left Nelson in 1903 when you met him here. But the fits are a terrible and sad drawback to a boy of his nature for naturally people are afraid of him and so to an extent shun him for he had two at school and while everyone was very kind, still many are nervous over things of that kind.

I was very interested in the joint article "The Aether of Space" in the June Theosophist. It somewhat revolutionizes our ideas of things. If this Koilon be what I suppose might be called the 8<sup>th</sup> plane matter with but two dimensions, it is fair assumption from analogy that there must be a still lower plane with but one dimension and still another with no dimension at all? Am I right?

I have been doing some active work, hindered somewhat by financial troubles that seem to be my bête noire in this incarnation. I have got quite a number of the West End people here interested in T. [Theosophy, *Compiler*] and we are having regular

## CWL Speaks

meetings. I hope to blend the West with the East and thus give the Vancouver Branch a lift. It is troublesome however when one has the different classes to deal with. I have in mind attempting some penitentiary work if I can manage it, there is one in New Westminster and the Warden may allow us, if so I will go and talk Theosophy with the inmates say every Sunday. I have improved much in my speaking and can now deliver a fairly acceptable address.

By the way I wonder if I could get any slides of Professor Schron of Naples for use in a lecture "Life in the Mineral". I gave this before the Art, Historical and Scientific Association here as well as one on Atlantis and another on Pregistoric [sic] History. I make them interesting and "sandwich" Theosophy well in between the "chunks".

When answering this I would like you to send it to care of Mr Yarco and with all good wishes, believe me to remain

Yours very sincerely

F. W. Pettit

*The Vahan*, in its August 1908 issue, includes interesting information regarding how the Leadbeater case and its aftermath was dealt with by the British Section's Executive Committee. One of the main issues under consideration was the inclusion by Herbert Burrows, in the text of his speech, of serious allegations against C.W. Leadbeater. We present some of the relevant statements below:

### THE SPECIAL CONVENTION REPORT.

*To the members of the British Section T.S.*

Members who were present at the July Convention will remember that a resolution was passed to the effect that a report of the discussion on the amendment moved by Mr. Burrows and seconded by Mr. Mead, should be printed and sent to every member of the Section. It is therefore right that I should give the

## Pedro Oliveira

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reason for its non-appearance. The letter printed below was sent by me to the members of the Executive Committee, and few words are needed in explanation.

It was clear after reading the report in proof that I could not be responsible for it, and equally clear that I could not, by publishing it officially, make the Section, which as a whole is ignorant of its contents, responsible for such a document.

The fact that since then a good firm of solicitors has advised, after careful reading, that this report could not be published without grave risk to both publishers and printers, should weigh with some to whom my own reasons do not appeal.

I am convinced that its publication would be a disastrous mistake. I know that no regret, however keen, could by any means recall it; and I refuse to believe that any one Section of the Theosophical Society would desire to leave such an action as its most noteworthy legacy to the future.

S. MAUD SHARPE.

Under 'Correspondence', the General Secretary of the English Section wrote as follows in the September 1908 issue of *The Vahan*:

40, Clarence Gate Gardens,  
London, N.W.  
*July 26, 1908.*

My Dear -----,

I write at once to tell you that I cannot allow the Report of the discussion on Mr. [Herbert] Burrows amendment at Convention to go out with THE VAHAN, and thus give it my sanction.

My principal reasons are these:

- (1) I do not think that any action would justify advertisement in the particular way that is being followed.
- (2) The Report contains much evidence that has never yet been sifted.
- (3) The publication of a private letter, either in whole or in part, without the permission of the writer, is never justifiable, and is not

## CWL Speaks

rendered more so by the fact that some person or persons have been guilty of such action previously.

- (4) It entirely remains to be proved that the majority of the Section would consent to the publication and distribution of this Report as it stands. The decision by a majority of the Delegates at Convention to issue it in some form was a very hasty one. No such momentous decision should be taken without some previous knowledge that it would be asked for, and time for consideration.
- (5) For these special reasons I, the most responsible officer of the Section, must refuse to take a step in its name which would commit it irretrievably to a line of action it would probably later on regret. If the Section thinks I am wrong, I, as its servant, will answer to it. In the meantime I must be, as it were, the guardian of its honour as I see it.

I have as yet mentioned my decision to no one and am alone responsible for it; but I must leave myself free, in justice to the Section and to the Special Committee (to each of whom I am today sending a copy of this letter), to make it known in the way that seems best.

Sincerely yours,

S. MAUD SHARPE,  
*General Secretary British Section, T.S.*

The Minutes of the Special Report Committee meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> July, and published in the October 1908 issue of *The Vahan*, state that 'in preparing the report the written speeches of Mr. Burrows, Mr. Mead and Mr. Whyte were accepted in full, being taken as read'. The Minutes also say that 'it was agreed that 2,000 copies be printed for circulation to the members of the British Section and to the General Secretaries of other Sections and that members should be able to purchase extra copies if they so desired, for the use of members of the Theosophical Society only'.

However, a problem arose when 'on receipt of the printer's proof which was forwarded to each member [of the Special Com-

mittee, *Compiler*], Mr. Whyte claimed to notice certain passages in Mr. Burrows' speech which he said had not been read at Convention... Herbert Burrows then challenged Herbert Whyte and the latter 'withdrew the charge of interpolation' and 'then stated with the regard to the passages in question that he had a number of witnesses who confirmed his recollection. Within the Committee itself there was a conflict of testimony'. The Minutes further state that 'Mr. Burrows produced his original MS., which was checked by the Chairman (Miss Ward) and found to contain all the points objected to by Mr. Whyte'. Burrows, maintaining that 'it was impossible to remember every item in a long manuscript' offered to withdraw them from the official report.

In the end, S. Maud Sharpe and Herbert Whyte stated, for the Minutes, that the Special Report Committee 'had failed to obtain a report of this Committee to which we could all agree, on conditions which we were able to accept', and regretted 'being obliged to express our opinion that [the transcript of the Minutes, *Compiler*] does not give a fair impression of the actual proceedings'.

In the October 1908 of *The Vahan* we see further deliberations regarding the Convention report:

The Special Report of the discussion of Mr. Burrows' amendment at the July Convention was brought before the meeting. The following cable from Mrs. Besant was read: "Ask Executive to await letter by next mail. – BESANT." This was sent on September 11, from Madras, and the letter could not arrive at earliest less than a week after the meeting. The General Secretary could give no information beyond the fact that Mrs. Besant would have just received a proof of the Special Report and the information of her (Mrs. Sharpe's) refusal to publish it.

Mr. Whyte moved, and Miss Mallet seconded the following:

The Executive Committee of the British Section supports the General Secretary in her refusal to publish the Report of the discussion at Convention upon Messrs. Burrows' and Mead's resolution, in view of the following facts:

1. The publication of such a report would, according to legal opinion, render those responsible for it, *i.e.*, the General

## CWL Speaks

- Secretary and Executive Committee, liable to proceedings for libel.
2. Messrs. Burrows and Mead based their resolution upon their interpretation of passages in a recent *Open Letter* of Dr. Weller Van Hook; in answer to enquiries, Dr. Van Hook has written entirely repudiating this interpretation.
  3. A private letter of Mrs. Besant's is quoted without her sanction.
  4. In the proof copies of the report of Mr. Burrows' speech there appeared certain statements containing grave allegations against Mr. Leadbeater, which Mr. Burrows had not made at Convention.
  5. No answer has been received from Mr. Burrows and Mr. Mead to questions addressed to them asking for the evidence on which they base their accusations; on the other hand, since July important evidence refuting the allegations has been obtained.
  6. A cable was received from Mrs. Besant (on receipt by her of the proof of the Report) asking the Executive Committee to wait the arrival of a letter from her posted on September 10.

Mr. Burrows moved and Mr. Mead seconded:

That as the Special Report Committee was appointed by the Convention, the Committee is responsible to the Convention alone, and that the Executive has no power to deal with the Report.

Miss Mallet moved as an amendment, and Mr. Wedgwood seconded:

That in view of Rule 9 of Sectional Rules this Committee does not endorse Mr. Burrows' interpretation of the functions of the Editing Committee.

The amendment was carried.

Mr. Burrows moved as an amendment to Mr. Whyte's resolution, and Mr. Kingsland seconded:

That the Executive Committee confirms the right of every member of the Section to have a Report of the proceedings of the Annual Convention of the Section; and that a Special Committee having been appointed by the Convention to draw up a part of that Report, and the same having been agreed on by the said Committee, the Report should be issued to the Section.

This amendment was lost by five votes to nine.

Mr. Whyte's resolution was put and carried by eight votes (Mrs. Sharpe not voting) to five against.

Mr. Leo proposed and Mrs. Larmuth seconded:

That the Executive Committee of the British Section desires to express strong censure of the action of Dr. Hiestand-Moore in publishing in the *Theosophic Voice* a portion of the Special Report of Convention, after having been informed by the General Secretary of the British Section that it was uncorrected; and requested by her not to use it. Further, that a copy of this resolution be sent to the General Secretary of the American Section to use at his discretion, and to Dr. Moore.

Carried by nine votes to two against, three members not voting.

Mr. Wedgwood moved and Miss Mallet seconded:

That this Executive Committee has no desire to infringe any of the laws of the land, and hereby states most emphatically that it will not in any way whatever be associated with the publication, dissemination, or sale of indecent or libellous literature.

Carried unanimously.

Resolutions from various Branches on the action of the General Secretary and a letter on the same subject were read to the Committee.

It was agreed not to distribute the type of the special report in question until the next meeting of the Committee, when Mrs. Besant's letter would be before it.

## CWL Speaks

Lieut. George Herbert Whyte was awarded the Military Cross (posthumously) for storming the almost impregnable fort of Jerusalem on 7-8 December 1917. He was shot while defending Jerusalem on 21 December 1917. He was born of Theosophical parents in 1878 and joined the T.S. on 25 May 1894. Mr Whyte was secretary to C.W.L. in 1895. He was also the Founder of the Round Table, a ceremonial movement for children and became Senior Knight in 1907. He worked as Assistant Manager for many years at the Theosophical Publishing Society in London and also worked with the volunteer hospital unit in France 1914. Herbert Whyte was a Second Lieutenant at the London Irish Rifles in 1916. While on special duty Malta, he did research on Knights of Malta or St. John. His publications include: *Is Theosophy Anti-Christian? The Great Teachers; A Sketch of the Life of H. P. Blavatsky; and Glimpses of the Great War* (published posthumously from letters).

(Source: *Theosophical Year Book 1938*, TPH Adyar)

Following the speeches of Herbert Burrows and G.R.S. Mead at the July 1908 Convention of the TS in England, which contained serious accusations directed at C. W. Leadbeater, Herbert Whyte prepared the following two papers. Both papers will be included on [www.cwlworld.info](http://www.cwlworld.info). At the end of the second one is included a letter from one of C.W.L.'s English pupils, probably Basil Hodgson-Smith, who had travelled extensively with him for a number of years.

At a meeting of the Executive Committee held on September 19<sup>th</sup> Mr Burrows and Mr Mead refused to answer these questions, stating that they would lay their evidence before Convention or a Court of Law.

H. Whyte

(The questions are from the proofs of the Special Convention Report)

Accusations or Allegations  
made by  
Mr. Herbert Burrows.

- No. 1 “To set forth to the Society and to  
(A) the world that these doctrines and practices are to be one of  
the foundations of Theosophy of the future.”  
(Galley 3)

Where and by whom was this statement made?

- (B) “And some of his friends justify and glorify such teaching.”  
(Galley 5)

Names of such friends? Their words, and the occasion and full  
context?

- (C) “And because the teaching was Theosophy”.  
(Galley 5)

Who made this assertion? When and where?

- (D) “the bare facts are that C.W.L. friends and upholders are now  
not only vehemently asserting that in teaching what we rightly  
call “corrupting practices” he was actuated by the highest moral  
motives and that he taught them in the name of Theosophy the  
Divine Wisdom.”

(Galley 6)

see above.

- (E) “His (C.W.L.’s) teaching must inevitably become one of the  
bases of Theosophical doctrine and propaganda.”

Grounds for this assertion?

- No. 2 “Under a pledge of secrecy”.

## CWL Speaks

(Galley 3)

Name of boy or boys from whom a “pledge of secrecy” was extracted by C.W.L.? What was the exact nature of this pledge?

No. 3 “Because access to the boys had been obtained through a deceptive assertion made to the parents.”

(Galley 3)

Name of parent or parents to whom a deceptive assertion was made? Nature of the assertion? Names of the parents who complain of this description? What does Mr. Burrows mean by the phrase “access to the boys was obtained”?

No. 4 “After stating how rumours afterwards proved to have been current in India, Ceylon and England”.

(Galley 3)

What were these rumours? What proof has Mr. Burrows as to their ac [sic] currency? From whom did he hear these rumours? Has he made any enquires [sic] among parents in England were children were in close touch with C.W.L.?

No. 5 “The rumours having been verified by direct testimony by boys in the States”.

(Galley 3)

Names of boys who give testimony? Full details as to their statement?

No. 6 “Even more emphatically the discovery of two notes from two boys.”

(Galley 3)

Has Mr. Burrows the originals or copies of these notes? To whom were they addressed? Were they replies to letters addressed to

Pedro Oliveira

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C.W.L.? If so has Mr. Burrows any information as to these letters?  
Has Mr. L. ever been shown these notes?

No. 7 “A full shorthand report of its proceedings was taken by Mr. Glass.”

Can Mr. Glass take a verbatim report of a meeting? Will Mr. B. state that no important question and answer was omitted from this report?

No. 8 “and also admitted something else which both here and in America would bring him within the pale of the criminal law.” Mr. Thomas put this question to him. “There was definite action?”

C.W.L. “You mean touch? That might have taken place”. That of course is nothing less than indecent assault.”

(Galley 4)

Does Mr. Burrows make any allegation of sodomy?  
To prove an indecent assault Mr. B. would have to produce

A. The victim who complains of such an assault.

B. The time and place.

Can he do so?

No. 9 (A) “He himself has admitted the teaching and the practice”.

(Galley 4)

(B) “Self-abuse as taught and practiced with boys by C.W.L.”

(Galley 6)

It is implied in A & B that this is not only C.W.L.’s teaching but also his practice. Will Mr. Burrows definitely deny this construction of his words? Or prove that this has been admitted by C.W.L.?

## CWL Speaks

(C) "I believe it is asserted that those words (of Van Hook's) do not refer to C.W.L.'s practices."

(Galley 6)

Names of boys with whom this was practiced and exact nature of their evidence?

No.10 "Take it that most of the boys were innocent, and there is no proof whatever that they were not."

(Galley 5)

It is clearly asserted here that C.W.L. corrupted innocent boys. Names of such boys? Evidence as to their innocence?

"So we have the terrible fact of these innocent boys being taught self-abuse."

(Galley 5)

"Under whose charge these boys were."

(Galley 5)

Names of boys in C.W.L.'s Charge?

Definition of the word "Charge"?

No. 12 "And who regularly took them (i.e. the boys) to sleep with him (C.W.L.) although they strongly objected and begged for a separate room as I have actual proof.

(Galley 5)

This is implication of sodomy on the part of C.W.L. with certain boys. Will Mr. Burrows definitely deny this or produce proof?

Who were the boys who were asked to share C.W.L.'s bed and who strongly objected? Will Mr. Burrows produce his actual proof? Has C.W.L. ever been shown the proof?

Accusations made by Mr. G.R.S. Mead  
(in [a] speech on Sunday July 5<sup>th</sup>.)

- No. 13 “He (G.R.S.M.) had so far said nothing against C.W.L., but at the time the committee called by Col. Olcott met to decide the case a wire came saying that evidence of a more serious sort was found.”  
(Galley 13)

What case was the committee called upon to decide?  
If this evidence was of a “more serious sort” presumably that said before the committee was less serious. Did the Committee thoroughly investigate any evidence? If so what? Or did it concern itself chiefly with the fact of the admitted evidence?

- No. 14 “This arrived after the meeting and was part of a cipher letter which had been decoded by one of the boys and was of a shocking nature” (Galley 13)

N.B. This letter (which the convention declined to hear) is the one from which Mr Burrows (on Galley 3) quotes the sentence “Glad sensation is so pleasant”.

Can Mr Mead say where the original cipher letter is to be seen? Has he himself ever seen it? Does he know whether it has ever been shown to C.W.L.? Has he any information as to the origin of the cipher? The name of the boy to whom it is alleged to have been written? Has Mr Mead any knowledge of the letter to which it was a reply? Has Mr. Mead any knowledge of the boy’s reply to C.W.L.?

- No. 15 “Mr Mead the brought forward a part of the evidence in the Leadbeater case relating a man admitted by C.W.L. to have had improper relations with one of the boys. Yet C.W.L. did not dissent from the proposal to leave some of the boys in his charge.”  
(Galley 14)

## CWL Speaks

Who was this man? Who was this boy? Who were the boys whom

C.W.L. proposed to leave in his charge? Were they ever left in his charge? What does Mr Mead mean by the phrase “in his charge”?

What serious charge against C.W.L. does Mr Mead bring in connection with the above?

### Mr. Marsden' Accusation

(16) These boys “had been taken from their parents because they were seen to have such high spiritual attainments that they were fitted to be trained to teach the world.”

(Galley 10)

What boys were taken from their parents? Did the parents object? Who is Mr Marsden's authority for the statement about spiritual attainments?

Evidence rebutting accusations by Messrs. Burrows and Mead.

The numbers at the side refer to the accusations.

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(1) Mr. Leadbeater remarks that “The statement is absolutely unfounded.” Mr. Leadbeater says: “This advice is not and never could be ‘one of the bases of Theosophical doctrine and propaganda.’ If one member of the medical profession advised the use of arsenic in certain cases which came under his own eye, are we therefore justified in declaring that the entire medical profession is about to preach the abuse of arsenic to the world as a whole? The man takes the responsibility for his own advice in those individual cases. To publish his opinion as a universal recommendation is grossly unfair and false.”

## Pedro Oliveira

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Mr. L. says: "The teaching was never given as Theosophy, 'under the name of the Divine Wisdom'; the boys were told that there were different opinions but that this was mine."

N.B. The boy who stated that this was an Initiation and that the advice was described as Theosophic is Boy No.2.

It was his account of an interview with C.W.L. which the Advisory Board accepted as evidence, and the above statement is in possession of Executive Committee of the British Section T.S.

(2) Mr. L. remarks: "The pledge of secrecy mentioned in paragraph 5 is mere fabrication; every boy was told that these were not matters to be spoken about. One only asked what he might say to his parents about them, and I told him to refer them to me if the question ever arose, so that the explanation given might be clear and adequate."

(3) Again: "The statement in paragraph 9 about the deceptive assertion to parents is directly false."

(4) The following English parents amongst others have allowed their children to be associated with Mr. Leadbeater: Mr. Hodgson Smith; Mrs. Whyte; Mr. & Mrs. Sidley; Dr. and Mrs. Marriette; Mr. Dyne.

Has any enquiry been made as to whether they complain of C.W.L.'s influence?

The following are copies of letters from English parents: (See separate sheet attached) [They appear at end of the text. *Compiler*]

(6) N.B. The first note is the cipher letter, which is dealt with later on.

Mr. L. states: "The second note referred to in paragraph 8 must be that to Boy No. 3 which is mentioned in the proceedings before the London Board as 'found in the pocket of a discarded garment.' I have, of course, no copy of it, but it was a counsel of moderation.

(7) N.B. Mr. L. says: "The statement that 'the rare relief became a daily habit' has absolutely no justification as is shown even by the notes to the boys. Everyone present at the London Meeting knows this, for Mr. Sinnett asked a special question about it and I answered emphatically. Mr. Sinnett will certainly remember this, if it does not appear in the stenographic report."

N.B. This question and answer is not in the Report at all.

(8) Mr. L. states: "The report of Thomas' question, and the answer is misleading, and something beyond any possible underlying truth is im-

## CWL Speaks

plied both here and in Mrs. Besant's E.S. Circular. Ask Miss Ward, or any reliable and impartial person who was present, and I think such an one will be able to corroborate my correction.

(8) "Thomas was pressing for an explanation or a remark in the so-called evidence of Boy No. 2, that the young man Z. 'did not do anything' – implying that I did. (That disagrees utterly with what the boy himself told me about Z., but that is not the present question). Thomas' question was at first so put as to suggest Sodomy, but then restating it, so as specially to exclude that, he said: 'Can you suggest any explanation of the boy's words? Can you recall anything which may have taken place which would account for them?' or words to that effect.

"At first I did not quite catch what he was suggesting and then I said, 'Oh, you mean may there have been some explanatory or indicative touch on my part? Yes, there may have been that, I do not remember.'

"I wished to be strictly scrupulous and accurate, and entirely open and honest. You will observe that I never said that there was any such touch, but only, in seeking to account for that expression in the boy's evidence 'perhaps there might have been such touch.'"

N.B. To prove such an assault there must be someone who complains of it, and who gives time and place.

Can these three essential questions be answered?

Action could only be taken in the United States.

(8) Mr. L. further states that "the boy's account of what took place that night is imaginative and inaccurate but it may of course have suffered distortion in passing through many hands, for I should be sorry to believe that the boy would tell a direct falsehood. I talked to him kindly and gently as to his relations with the young man at Chicago and I drew forth a confession which I do not propose to repeat. The boy has apparently since denied this; at which I can hardly wonder, for no one could [have] any possible right to question him upon the matter; so it seems that he has made two contradictory statements, and we can only set one against the other. I myself believe that which he made to me because it was accompanied by certain details that could hardly have been invented. But that is immaterial. His recollection is quite playing him false with regard to what passed between us. The word Initiation was never used nor was there any pretence that the advice was Theosophic."

## Pedro Oliveira

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(10) N.B. Proof to the contrary with regard to Boy No. 2 is involved in the story of his relations with “Z”.

Mr. L. writes: “The case of Boy No. 2 is curiously distorted in the letter under consideration, for Fullerton says that I ‘paid the expenses of a boy for hundreds of miles in order to get hold of him.’ The facts are these: the boy was not one of those whom I took in hand for training at all – not one of those whom I chose as specially hopeful. But he had become attached to me (8) in Chicago and his mother used to consult me with reference to him. She was at this time worried about a friendship which he had formed with a certain young man who frequently (10) invited him to come and spend the night at his rooms. She wrote to me about this, and asked how this undesirable influence could best be removed without wounding the boy’s feelings. I was at that time about to visit Toronto, where I was to stay at a hotel, and it was (15) therefore possible for me to invite a guest. I therefore asked the mother whether she would be willing that the boy should spend some weeks with me there, thinking that during that time he would most likely be, to some extent, weaned from that other friendship, especially if I explained to him fully exactly what such things really mean.

“The mother replied most gratefully and effusively that there was nothing which would please her so well, but that unfortunately she had not the money for the fare and could not ask it for such a purpose from the boy’s father who was not a Theosophist and knew nothing about the circumstances. Mrs. Dennis had been in consultation with Mrs. Nevers about the (8) undesirable friendship and was aware of my offer. Indeed, Mrs. Dennis was at Ridgewood with me when the letter from Mrs. N. arrived, and as she knew all about the case I showed it to her. She at once offered to pay the boy’s fare to Toronto, but I thought it would be less embarrassing to the boy’s mother if I myself made this offer, and it was settled that way. . . . . The mother accepted it with much gratitude, and the money was sent.”

N.B. This statement is corroborated by Mr. Whyte, who says, “I myself can corroborate the statement that it was the Boy No. 2 who thus went to Toronto. I corresponded with him for over a year and I received a letter from the hotel in Toronto where he was staying with C.W.L. telling me how very happy he was.

Mr. L. also writes with regard to this boy No. 2

## CWL Speaks

“In conversation with him on the night of which he speaks, he told me of the relations with regard to sexual matters into which he had entered with Z; we talked it all over with apparent openness on his part, and he voluntarily promised to drop the whole affair, and try to lead the life of an ascetic in these matters. . . . . I spoke to Z of the matter, as I think I told you at the (8) time, when I met him in Chicago, and induced him to promise to abstain from such relations with “B”, so that the latter might have a fair opportunity to try to keep his resolution. I doubted however, whether “B” would find himself able to lead the life which he had chosen; so I told him if he found serious difficulty he might always consult me by letter. Some months afterwards he did this, explaining that he found it impossible at present to follow out his original intention, and asking for advice. I replied that in that case it would in my judgment be best to discharge the accumulation at stated intervals, gradually lengthening these, but with the proviso that there must be absolutely no thought of these matters between times. I have not heard from him since on the subject. In this case, it will be observed that I was not the first to introduce these ideas to the boy, as he will surely testify if asked; and the advice which I gave was what seemed to me best to meet the case.”

(Letter from Mr. L. to Mr. Fullerton Feb. 27. 1906)

With regard to “Z” Mr. L. writes:

(8) “The young man was a protégé of Fullerton’s who regarded him with more than paternal affection; by Fullerton’s request I had a long interview with Z, and spoke to him quite frankly about the matter of the boy No. 2. He took what I said in good part and promised me earnestly that nothing of the sort should ever occur again. (I already had the boy’s promise to the same effect). Later there arose urgent need to find someone to adopt a little boy, many years younger than Boy No. 2 and quite unconnected with him. The proposal that Z should take charge of him was not made by me. (I think it originated with Mrs. Dennis, but am not quite sure.) All these people who were supposed to know the young man were enthusiastic about him; I felt less so myself, but then I did not know him that well, having seen him only once. From astral indications I judged him in some ways undesirable, but capable of strong affection, an opportunity for lavishing which might develop him greatly. This was a mere child; besides I had his (Z’s) promise that the other habit was for

## Pedro Oliveira

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him a thing of the past; so I (8) assented to the proposition faute de mieux, and as a temporary step. Nothing ever came of it, and the little boy never passed into his charge – for altogether other arrangements were made.”

Mr. L. further says: “The suggestion was made (but not by me) that he (Z) might adopt a little boy who needed a home, and also that being specially fond of boys he might after my departure from America, correspond with some of my special boys and answer their questions. I was not enthusiastic over this, but I thought it might have its use, so offered no objection, and I mentioned the idea to Mr. Fullerton because I knew that any proposition to make use of or put a little confidence in his favourite, would greatly please him. Nothing ever came of it all, for Fullerton quarrelled with his protégé and heaped the most virulent abuse upon him. I can only infer that this correspondence (suggested but never commenced) must be the “leaving in charge” of which so much is said.”

N.B. Mr. Mead brings forward as a serious charge against Mr. Leadbeater. He does not define it, but whatever it is it rests upon the fact that Z was an undesirable character, and that Boy No. 2 had been one of his victims.

This is a direct contradiction of the boy’s denial of having confided the matter to Mr. L. in Toronto. Who was the authority, or authorities for the evidence on these counts submitted to the Advisory Board? Were the names of the witnesses given?

Mr. L. says: “On no occasion were boys ‘taken from their parents’; they were glad and proud (16) that they should go. The supposition that they were intended to teach the world is an entirely gratuitous one.”

Copy of a letter from a boy (now a young man) who was more intimately associated with Mr. Leadbeater in England, and America than anyone else, as he lived and travelled with him all the time.

(12)

June 18th., 1906.

Dear.....

With regard to the conversation which we had just before I left London I was so startled by the nature of it that I hardly had time to think of it in its full significance.

## CWL Speaks

I have never had the slightest idea that my name was being associated with that of Mr. Leadbeater in connection with the horrible practice of sodomy. How is it possible to meet innuendo or even direct charges of this sort? I can quite understand how numbers of trifling things can be regarded as evidence of conduct of this sort where people are suspicious of it. I suppose nothing can be done, however, as anything like a public disavowal seems only inviting more attention to the foul charges. I have been intimately associated with Mr. Leadbeater for the last ten years in fact since I was nine years old, and who has been my friend as well as my teacher during the whole of that time and everything in our relationship has only tended to make me respect him. Don't you think many people would be surprised if I told them this and could make them believe it, for how could I have such regard for a sodomist? I must take this opportunity of saying to you now, that there has never been the slightest suggestion in Mr. Leadbeater's conduct towards myself or anything of the nature of sodomy. This seems to me to be an awful word to have to use, but I feel at the moment that I cannot let this opportunity pass of ventilating myself to you on the point now because I hardly know whether or not you yourself might not be influenced by the popular belief. So far is Mr. Leadbeater from being a sexually unbalanced man that in all my close intimacy with him I cannot recall a single instance for several years past of any conversation or reference to sex matters.

Yours very sincerely,

(Signed) .....

From *The Lotus Journal*, December 1<sup>st</sup>, 1908:

As an indication of the high regard in which Mr. Leadbeater is held by those who know him, we print below some letters from parents whose children he has helped.

51, BRONDESBURY VILLAS,  
LONDON, N.W.,  
26<sup>th</sup> August, 1908.

## Pedro Oliveira

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In view of recent discussion respecting Mr. Leadbeater I write to state that during the seven years my three children, two boys and a girl, came in close contact with him, his influence was altogether for good, and I know that after a lapse of six years our affection and gratitude to him remain unchanged.

I hope that other English parents, whose children he helped, will join me in this expression of their feelings.

KATE E. WHYTE.

10, EAST PARADE, HARROGATE,  
*27<sup>th</sup> August, 1908.*

I am glad of the opportunity of certifying that myself, my wife, my daughters, and my son, value very highly our friendship with Mr. Leadbeater and consider it one of the greatest privileges of our life.

My son Basil was in his charge for many years and was influenced by him greatly for good. We have only feelings of grateful affection towards Mr. Leadbeater and think that the world in general and the Theosophical Society in particular owe him a debt of gratitude for his superphysical researches and writings.

HODGSON SMITH.

22, SUNDERLAND RD., FOREST HILL, LONDON, S.E.,  
*1<sup>st</sup> September, 1908.*

As a commentary upon the curious discussion of Mr. Leadbeater, it is interesting to note the nature of this gentleman's actual teaching and influence upon the young people whom he assembled about him. My own four children – daughter and sons – were for some years under his instruction, and his teaching was ever such as could but lead to the worthiest ideal standards of thought and behaviour. His influence was wholly for good, and is remembered by me with nothing but regret that it could not be continued and furthered. And in young womanhood and manhood the juniors of my family ever recall their helper and friend with unchanging gratitude and affection.

G. DYNE.

ELLESMERE, COLWYN BAY, *8<sup>th</sup> September, 1908.*

## CWL Speaks

I am glad to have an opportunity of expressing the gratitude and affection which my wife and I feel towards Mr. Leadbeater for his many acts of kindnesses.

I know several of the young men who have been intimately associated with him. They are all fine manly young fellows with high ideals; and their association with Mr. Leadbeater has evidently been greatly to their benefit. The public teachings of Mr. Leadbeater, and the affection which is shown to him by all right-minded youths who know him, go very far to discredit the charges which have been brought against him.

ERNEST MARIETTE, M.B. (Lond.)

STRATHLEVEN, OAKLEIGH PARK, LONDON, N.,  
*September, 1908.*

For some years my children (two daughters and two sons) were members of the *Lotus Circle*, and as such came under Mr. Leadbeater's direct teaching and influence. It is needless to say that they derived great benefit. They love him now as they loved him then.

Yours sincerely,  
LILIAN SIDLEY

Below is the text of Annie Besant's letter to the Executive Committee of the British Section regarding the publication of the 1908 Convention report:

Headquarters, Theosophical Society  
Adyar, Madras  
Sept 7<sup>th</sup> 1908

To the Executive of the British Section.

My dear Colleagues,

I took the liberty of cabling to ask you to await this letter, because there are some weighty considerations which should be thought over ere you come to a decision on the publication of the report of the late Convention. I write as President of the Theosophical Society to the Executive of one of its Sections.

- (1) The Report is obviously a libel, which is criminally indictable on two grounds:
  - (a) for obscenity: indecent terms are used.
  - (b) For libellous statements on an individual, every one of which might have to be legally proved, and after they were legally proved, it would have to be shown that their publication as without malice and for the public good.

It is clear that no Secretary of a Society, who, it must be remembered, would be personally criminally indictable for publishing this libel, would be justified in obeying the order of a legally irresponsible body to commit a breach of the common law. If the document is to be published, it should be done on the responsibility of some individual willing to assume the risk, and honestly believing in the sentiments made; say by Mr Herbert Burrows, or Mr Mead, or Mr Sinnett; i.e., by one of the three names which come first in the support of the resolution on which the debate arose.

- (2) The Report contains false statements, as well as unproven ones.

I ask you to consider whether it is just to circulate this Report without verifying the accusations? It is my duty to inform you that the falsity will be met and exposed, and that you would do wisely to throw on the accusers the responsibility of their statements, instead of implicating the Section, and making it responsible for them.

- (3) The Report publishes portions of private letter of my own, addressed as private and confidential document to members pledged to keep it private. The quotation "You can use my opinion," etc., is misleading; it was addressed only to a few specified persons, who were my appointed agents, and was a permission to state my opinion if the need arose; but there was no permission to quote my words, and the persons to whom I gave that limited permission were not those who have used the letter. By some one in America my confidence was betrayed, and long extracts were given – for all I know, the whole letter – to a person outside the circle to whom it was addressed, and he published it; to honourable people I need not characterise such an action. The outrage has

## CWL Speaks

been repeated by other individuals. Now that there is a danger of the British Section being dishonored by being unconsciously made a party to a breach of the honor observed in all decent society, I make my protest, and I am sure it will be acted upon. I have already taken steps to prevent any further use of this letter, for the reasons given in my reply to the Resolution sent to me. That reply is being printed, and will soon be in the hands of all members.

(4) The resolution on which the debate arose, though called an amendment, had no bearing on the resolution it replaced, and was sprung on the Convention without notice; on a matter so grave it would surely have been well to have consulted the Lodges before coming to a decision, for the votes of 38 persons, uninstructed by their Lodges, cannot be taken – save technically – as representing the opinion of the British Section on the gravest question submitted to it for years. To snatch a hasty victory on a one-sided and highly colored statement is not a proceeding which sober men and women can approve. It can but cause a re-action in favour of those hastily condemned. Would you not do wisely to ask your Lodges if they wish to authorise the publication of this libel, before allowing the Report to be sent out even by an individual? If they do, they will then morally share the credit or discredit, although they cannot share the legal responsibility.

I am not seeking to avoid the publication of the Report, for I think it is better that the question involved should be faced; the passing annoyances caused by its publication will be less harmful than the subterranean innuendoes and accusations which have been disturbing the Society for 2 1/2 years. But I urge you, my Colleagues, that you should not, as an official body, commit a breach of the law, knowing that you are protected by your non-corporate character from punishment, and that you should throw the responsibility of publication on the individuals who have made the accusations. Then the matter can be fought out, without disgrace to the Society, whether Mr Leadbeater's accusers or defenders ultimately gain the day.

Your faithful servant,                      Annie Besant, P. T. S.

The full text of their speeches at the 1908 Convention in England was later on published by G.R.S. Mead and Herbert Burrows.

*The Adyar Bulletin*, in its issue of January 1909, carries a communication from Annie Besant regarding the decisions made by National Sections around the world and by the General Council of the TS, its governing body, in the matter of the readmission of CWL:

MR. C.W. LEADBEATER.

Since February, 1906, there has been trouble in the Society, with regard to some advice given by this famous theosophical writer and lecturer to a very small number out of the many boys who have been closely under his influence. Mr. Leadbeater, following the precedent set by H.P.B., desired to resign at once in order to save the Society from a discussion that could only be mischievous, but meanwhile accusations against him had been sent to the President Founder. The accusations were second-hand and the names of the accusers were concealed, so that no proper investigation could be made. But Mr. Leadbeater, while he repudiated many of the statements made, frankly admitted that he had given the advice in a few extreme cases, asserting that he had given it with good intent, but that as friends he respected regarded the advice as wrong, he would never give it again. His resignation was accepted. The late President-Founder left on record in his Presidential Address that "I firmly believe Mr. Leadbeater's motives are absolutely honest, and that these teachings are intended by him to aid instead of harm his pupils," and expressed the hope that he would see their unwisdom and not repeat them. Unfortunately the resignation did not stop the trouble, and both friends and foes continued to debate the matter, until the advice given—not teaching, but *advice*, given as a doctor might give a prescription containing strychnine, without expecting to be charged with giving teachings advocating poisoning — became regular 'teachings,' and assumed abnormal proportions. For more than 2 1/2 years the dispute has been raging, becoming more and more excited and bitter, until the British Section appealed to the President and General Council to put an end to a state which was becoming a scandal. I have read the whole of the accusations, and have personally talked with the parents in

## CWL Speaks

England and America of most of the boys who had been, at one time or another, in Mr. Leadbeater's care; I found them—leaving out the three who had accused him—enthusiastically grateful for the growth in character and purity shown by their sons under his influence, and it became abundantly evident that the advice had only been given in rare cases, not generally. Having acquainted myself with every available detail, I wrote the letter which you have all received, which contained an invitation to the Society to express its views. To this invitation I have so far received the following replies: the French Executive called a special Convention of Lodge delegates to vote whether Mr. Leadbeater should be invited to return: Ayes 32; Noes 4; Blanks. 2. The Australian Council was unanimous but for one vote, in favor of invitation; Finland has voted by members, 287 for, against 1. The British Executive has voted by 9 to 4 in favor, and has resolved in a referendum vote, the most exact impartial way of ascertaining opinion; meanwhile some voting has been going on, and 7 Lodges have voted for, 7 against, and 1 for investigation; I have also had 60 individual votes for, and 2 against, and I received a telegram the day before yesterday from Messrs. Mead, Burrows, Kingsland and Miss Ward, that there were 500 British Section votes against re-instatement up to December 24<sup>th</sup>. Presumably this will all be done over again in the referendum. 117 Indian Lodges have voted so far, 107 for, 6 against, 3 for investigation, 1 that he should be left to apply. The American Section in Convention voted in favour, before my letter went out, by nearly 4 to 1.

The General Council has voted on the following series of resolutions submitted to it by myself; I drew them in this form for two reasons: first, that I cannot, as stated last spring, take part in an invitation until February 1910; secondly, that a clear declaration of principle, affirming Mr. Leadbeater's right to return, if he wishes to do so, seems to me more likely to prevent the arising of a similar case the future than special invitation to him as an individual.

*Resolved:* That this Council puts on record its full agreement with the action of Mr. C.W. Leadbeater in tendering, and the President-Founder in accepting, his resignation, in the hope that the peace of the Society might thereby be preserved, and undesirable controversy avoided.

## Pedro Oliveira

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That this object having been entirely frustrated, and a controversy, ever increasing in bitterness, having arisen, destroying the unity of the Society in Great Britain and in the United States, and hampering the whole work of the Society in those countries, it has become necessary for this Council to intervene in the matter under dispute.

That it therefore re-affirms the inviolable liberty of thought of every member of the Theosophical Society in all matters philosophical, religious and ethical, and his right to follow his own conscience in all such matters, without thereby imperilling his status within the Society, or in any way implicating in his opinions any member of the Society who does not assert his agreement therewith.

That in pursuance of this affirmation of the individual liberty of each member and of his individual responsibility for his own opinions, it declares that there is no reason why Mr. C.W. Leadbeater should not return, if he wishes, to his place in the Society, which he has, in the past, served so well.

18 General Secretaries out of 14 voted for; the 14th abstained from voting only on the ground that as Mr. Leadbeater had resigned, he could be admitted again into any Section, and Germany would “never oppose the slightest resistance.” The 4 official members voted unanimously for; of the 7 additional members, 4 voted for; 2 against; 1 did not vote. Out of the 25, 21 thus voted for; 1 did not vote, as thinking it unnecessary, though agreeing; 2 voted against.

*Resolved:* That this Council re-affirms the principle laid down by the Judicial Committee and the President-Founder in the case of Mr. Judge, that no charge against a member, official or non-official, involving the existence or non-existence of Mahātmās can be considered, and that the Society as a body remains neutral as to the authenticity or non-authenticity of any statements issued as from the Mahātmās. It further declares that every member is equally free to assert or to deny the authenticity of any such statement, and that no member can be bound to accept or to reject, on any authority outside himself, the genuineness of any such statement.

All the General Secretaries, the official members, and 5 out the 7 additional for; 1 against; 1 did not vote.

## CWL Speaks

*Resolved:* That the two preceding Resolutions be sent by the Recording Secretary to the General Secretary of the British Section, and to the American co-signatories, in answer to the appeal made by the British Section in Convention assembled and by the others.

Agreed.

*Resolved:* That this Council agrees with the action taken by the President in issuing *A Letter to the Members of the Theosophical Society* and recommends that letter to the careful consideration of Members.

13 General Secretaries in favor (2 agreeing with the *Letter*, but asking to be allowed to use discretion in its circulation); 4 official members for; 4 additional for; 1 against; 3 not voting.

The highest authority in the T.S. has thus affirmed by an overwhelming majority, the right of Mr. Leadbeater to return to the Society, if he wishes to do so, and the votes already given, inviting that return, show that he will be welcomed with gladness if he be willing to come amongst us once more – a signal that he may well wait for before entering. In all Societies, in which the majority rules, the minority yields when the final judgment by the constituted authority has been spoken, and in this case the minority has had full speech, full discussion, and has failed to carry its case. It is bound now to let the mass of the Society, with all its responsible officers, go forward unimpeded, and to be content with the protest it has made.

In the following extracts from letters, written some years after his readmission to the Theosophical Society, CWL reminisces with Marie Russak, but also much more comprehensively with Fritz Kunz, about important aspects of the crisis which had begun in 1906.

From a letter of CWL to Marie Russak, May 4<sup>th</sup>, 1911:

“It is curious that all this trouble has come from boys who were thrust upon me from without – never once in any case from those whom I myself chose as hopeful. With Raja, Basil, Carl Holbrook, Fritz Kunz, Ernest Mariette, Douglas Baldwin there

## Pedro Oliveira

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was never the slightest trouble; it has all arisen from Robert Dennis, for whom I tried to do something because long before I went to America the President mentioned him to me as the son of a prominent and valuable member for whom it would be well to do something if possible; from George Nevers, whom I never liked, though he absolutely thrust himself upon us at all times and seasons, and was eventually invited to Toronto because his mother was so much troubled about his association with Graeme Davis, and from Douglas Pettit, whose father wrote to me asking me to take him in charge before I had ever seen him, and practically forced him upon me for that journey though California.”

From a letter of CWL to Fritz Kunz, 31<sup>st</sup> October 1912:

“I am glad that the Convention was so harmonious and successful. It was certainly quite the right thing to put Dr. Van Hook in the chair at the E.S. meeting, and I hope that it may be found possible for all to work harmoniously towards the same goal, even if they do so along different lines. I am much interested to hear of the reappearance of our old friend Hotchner. For some years now he has been writing to me in the most friendly and genial manner, apparently quite ignoring the truly abominable manner in which he behaved at the critical moment. I fancy he has forgotten, or does not realise, what he did and said at that time; and if he has forgotten it, it is obviously best for us to forget it too, and to receive him precisely as though it had never happened. I believe that others besides Hotchner acted in those days under the stress of violent external influence, and were in that way caused to say and do things that otherwise they would not have dreamed of. On my side I am always most willing to forget the past, and to try to make use of the people in the work.”

“So Douglas Pettit is married! Is it to that Miss Forde of whom you wrote as being infatuated with him? I am afraid that he is quite a dangerous person. I have no doubt that he was hypnotised during his interviews with Mrs. Tingley, but the fact remains that she extracted from him some kind of af-

## CWL Speaks

fidavit of impure connection or improper connection with me; and no doubt that affidavit still remains, and will be used by the Tingleyites all over the world. Now Fullerton at the time of the original trouble made that very same enquiry from Douglas (sic) most indignantly and emphatically denied the insinuation; and his father wrote a letter to Mrs. Russak in which he reported this with much strong comment, and with much indignation that Fullerton should write such an abominable letter to his son. But most unfortunately old Pettit afterwards asked to have that letter back and all believed that Mrs. Russak returned it to him – in fact I seem to remember writing to Mrs. Russak about it myself, as of course we did not then know that it would afterwards be of importance. If we could now recover that letter or get a copy of it it would be of value to set against the affidavit. I know that Mrs. Russak and Mr. Warrington obtained from Douglas a statement that he was under influence when he signed; but you can see that that other original statement, made so much nearer to the time of the alleged improprieties, would carry far greater weight. All the more is this important because of recent developments here.”

From a letter of CWL to Fritz Kunz, 12<sup>th</sup> November 1912:

“Was the person whom Douglas Pettit married the Miss Forde of whom you have previously written? I am afraid that the poor fellow is distinctly a danger, for he appears to be suffering under delusions. You may remember that when Mr. Fullerton endeavoured to induce him to accuse me of a certain kind of misconduct he very indignantly denied the whole thing – and indeed the father also said in a letter at the time that he even had to explain to Douglas what the accusation meant. At one time that letter of the father’s was out here, but he asked that it should be returned to him, which was duly done. When Douglas came under Mrs. Tingley’s hypnotic influence, I understand that she made him confess to this

very thing which he had so strongly denied before, and made him execute some sort of affidavit on the subject. Since then he has admitted (I understand) to Mrs. Russak and to Mr. Warrington that he did not know what he was saying when in the presence of Mrs. Tingley, and that he does not now remember anything about it! Meantime, he and his father have gone off into Christian Science, having done to the Theosophical Society all the harm that they can.”

From a letter of CWL to Fritz Kunz, 6<sup>th</sup> February 1913:

“You speak of ‘going out after’ Mrs. Tingley; I am thoroughly averse to all legal proceedings upon principle, and I think that they very rarely eventuate in poetic justice, but I do feel that in this case the Tingley woman has altogether passed the bounds of forebearance (sic), and if her nefarious career of poisonous slander can be stopped by legal proceedings, it may possibly be worth while breaking through one’s ordinary rules in order to produce so desirable a consummation. But I think that before you strike her you ought to be as certain of success as is possible; because a legal attempt of this kind which failed would not only make us ridiculous but would act as an advertisement for her scurrility. I believe that when the President comes over to America she means to discuss this matter with Mr. Warrington; but at the same time your idea of collecting all possible evidence against her is distinctly a good one.

“Frankly, I do not think quite so well of your chivalrous attempt to put right all that went wrong in the affair of seven years ago. I do not mind telling you my real, interior reason for feeling in that way; but you will see at once that it is not a reason that could ever be offered to the world, or indeed even mentioned outside an extremely limited circle. You may or may not know that the President and I took a certain occult step together in the spring of the year 1907. Now, the preparation for this step involves a great deal of unpleasantness in various ways, and among others it would seem that the candidate is always accused wrongfully and subjected to public obloquy. In the Gospel story the crucifixion

## CWL Speaks

and its attendant indignities and sufferings are supposed to typify this; and if you will read the quotations which I give on page 49, vol. i of The Inner Life (American edition) from the Flemish mystic Ruysbroek (sic) and from Madame Blavatsky, you will see that all that happened to me was nothing more than might have been expected, and the outcome of it was eminently and entirely satisfactory for me. Now since that was the real reason of it all, I do not myself believe that it will ever be possible to clear the matter up in the ordinary way; and I am not even sure that it would be desirable to do so! Please remember that in all historical cases of which we have any record the stigma has never been removed from the candidate. It is still reported of Pythagoras that he was a ‘corrupter of boys’; it is still on record against Bacon that he was ‘the meanest of mankind’, even though they recognise in the same breath that he was the wisest and the greatest; neither Cagliostro nor Madame Blavatsky were ever cleared publicly of the charges of fraud and deception brought against them; our President herself still lies under the reproach that an English Court officially pronounced her unfit to have the guardianship of her own children, even though at the same time they proclaimed that there was nothing against her character; and even Jesus himself was certainly not reinstated by the public opinion of his time, whatever people may think now of all the wild charges that were brought against Him. So you will understand that while I thoroughly appreciate the kindly friendship which induces you to want to put all these things right publicly, I yet feel inside that you are foredoomed to failure.”

“However, if you have made up your mind to attack Mrs. Tingley, I should think that the wisest and safest plan would be simply to go for her on the incontrovertible ground of malicious libel, very widely circulated with the obvious intention to injure both financially and in reputation. Without touching the question of the truth or falsity of the original accusations made against me, it ought to be easily possible to convict her of malicious action, which is all that is needed to secure a verdict. There is legal axi-

## Pedro Oliveira

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om, you know, ‘the greater the truth, the greater the libel’. Also, most of her circulars which I have seen do not touch the question of the cipher letter, but claim that I had twice confessed to immoral conduct, which is a direct and absolute falsehood, and can easily be proved to be so, since they cannot produce the confessions.”

From a letter of CWL to Fritz Kunz, 10<sup>th</sup> April 1913 [regarding the custody case between Mrs. Besant and Krishnamurti’s father, Narianiah, *Compiler*]:

“In my own evidence I had the opportunity not only of denying these recent falsehoods but also of clearing up some part of the unpleasant matter of 1906. The report of that London Advisory Board was cast aside as obviously valueless, though the opposing counsel asked me two or three questions about it, which I answered very plainly. The forged cipher letter was put in the hands of our opponents by the President; but they were afraid to produce it in Court, so I did not get an opportunity of actually repudiating it. The general impression seems to be that this evidence has cleared up matters a good deal and put a much better complexion on them.”

From a letter of CWL to Fritz Kunz, 1<sup>st</sup> May 1913:

“I feel the dangers of uncontrolled psychism as strongly as you can feel them, for I have had bitter experience of them; but I feel still more strongly that we must stand by our leaders, and that we must not on any account cause rupture or hard feeling. No doubt the true work of the Society will suffer from the excesses which you describe, but it is far better that it should so suffer than that we should have any kind of rupture, or even that we should allow unkind feeling to arise among the workers. I think we must clearly understand that there are all sorts of people in the world, and especially that in connexion [sic] with religious movements there are always two broad types, which in the Christian Church have developed into the Catholic and the protestant. The former delights in all sorts of ceremonial, and holds very strongly to hierarchical ideas of

## CWL Speaks

absolute submission to authority. The latter is impatient of ceremonial, which it usually regards as waste of time and as coming between the man and his clear vision of higher things, and it is also strongly individual, and somewhat impatient of control, holding very much to intellectuality and common-sense. The ignorant followers along each of these lines always hate those of opposite opinion, and wish to persecute them; the wiser leaders recognise the real existence of the two tendencies and are quite willing to admit that both have their good points, and should be allowed freedom to work. I myself, for example, am by instinct strongly Catholic; but I have learned the necessity of balancing emotion by intellect and common sense. I am decidedly a ritualist, but I want my ritual to be the genuine article, and to have a real basis. My earnest advice therefore is: do not quarrel with these people, however extravagant may be their words and actions, but go steadily on doing your own work in your own way, neither saying nor thinking anything uncharitable about those who are trying to serve the Masters, but in a different way. Remember, I have the privilege of knowing Mr. Warrington fairly well, and I feel quite sure that it will be his desire to act with absolute justice, and that he, as leader, will try to utilise all the power for work possessed by all his subordinates, each along his different line; and I also feel sure that he will do what he can to protect the enthusiasts on each side from the attacks of the others, so that all alike may learn tolerance and charity. People who accuse fellow-workers who do not happen to agree with them of being under the domination of black-magicians are simply silly, and no sensible men will pay any attention to what they say.”

From a letter of CWL to Fritz Kunz, Melbourne, 21<sup>st</sup> October 1914:

“I have replied to our President that while I care nothing for disgusting and silly accusations, I am getting heartily sick of this

## Pedro Oliveira

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constant reiteration of them, and that I really think (as I have often said to her before) that it would be better both for the Society and for myself if I did not live at Adyar, as my presence there arouses the hatred of the enemy, while my work could just as well be done elsewhere. At this moment, for example, [T. H.] Martyn urgently desires that I should stay in Australia for a year, to help them to fill the big new hall which they are building. I can clearly see what an opportunity there is for an important piece of Theosophical work here, and I should much like to try to do it, if she will permit me. That would give time for the enemy to simmer down, and in twelve months anything may happen; at the end of that time there may be quite a new situation, with which we can deal as it arises. I do not know whether our President will agree, but I am awaiting her reply; for I really do not see why I should be compelled to live among people who hold such attitude towards me. They are a thousand miles from understanding the true position, for they know nothing whatever of real occultism, and they instinctively hate and fear those who do know.”

As mentioned in my the article ‘Adyar Beach, One Hundred Years Ago’, published in the April 2009 issue of *The Theosophist*, the international journal of the TS, following the General Council’s December 1908 decision to invite him to resume his membership in the Theosophical Society if he so wished, C.W. Leadbeater arrived in Madras on 10<sup>th</sup> February 1909, accompanied by the Dutch scholar Johan van Manen. Among his several assistants at that time was Ernest Wood, a young member from England who joined the TS in 1902 and had come to Adyar in 1908 to help Annie Besant in her educational work. He became CWL’s private secretary. Another of CWL’s assistants was Russell Balfour-Clarke who arrived at Adyar in 1909, having met Annie Besant in London in 1908. Wood reminisces about CWL’s daily schedule at Adyar (from *Clairvoyant Investigations by C. W. Leadbeater and The Lives of Alcyone* (J. Krishnamurti) Some Facts Described by Ernest Wood with Notes by C. Jinarajadasa, Adyar, 1947):

## CWL Speaks

He would be up at half past six ready for work. Then he would take a little coffee or a couple of bananas just to begin the day, and then begin his work with correspondence or letters or a book that he was writing, or something of the kind, and generally he would sit there at his table or desk until about Five o'clock in the afternoon. We used to clear the papers away in order to bring him his lunch in the middle of the day and he would stay there and eat his simple food and then go on with his work.

At five o'clock it was his custom to take his physical exercise, a bath in the sea generally, and then have a little soup, which was his evening meal, and then we had our meeting from 7.15 to 8.15 and then a quarter of an hour more for meditation. I used to be with Mr Leadbeater all this time and we would do a great deal of answering letters and looking up things for people who wanted to know about the dead or obsession, a great variety of things. And then at night he would begin again after the meditation was over at half-past eight and go on with some work until 11, 12, 1 or 2, or whatever time it was finished. Every moment was filled up with work. I have not met a more energetic man.

Annie Besant had left Adyar on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 1909 on an extensive lecture tour of Europe and America, and would not return until November. Ernest Wood described the encounter that happened on the Adyar beach where he saw some boys playing, sometime after her departure:

One evening, Mr Leadbeater, on our return to his room after our swim, told me that one of the boys had a remarkable aura. I asked which one, and he said it was the boy named Krishnamurti. I was surprised, for I already knew the boys, as they had been coming to me and to Subramanyam in the evenings to help in connection with their school home work, and it was evident that Krishnamurti was not one of the bright students. Then Mr Leadbeater told me that Krishnamurti would become a great spiritual teacher and a great speaker. I asked, 'How great? As great as Mrs

## Pedro Oliveira

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Besant?’ He replied, ‘Much greater.’ And shortly after that he said that Krishnamurti would be the vehicle for the Lord Maitreya, the coming Teacher, who inspired Jesus. He was directed to help in training the boy for that purpose, which would be fulfilled, he told me, ‘unless something goes wrong’. This I want to emphasize, in justice to Mr Leadbeater.

In a question and answer session with TS members in Washington, D.C., during his lecture tour of the United States in 1922-23, which was included in the booklet *Clairvoyant Investigations by C. W. Leadbeater and “The Lives of Alcyone” (J. Krishnamurti) – Some Facts Described by Ernest Wood with Notes by C. Jinarajadasa (1947)*, Ernest Wood reminisced about Krishnamurti and his interaction with CWL:

I was there when Krishnamurti appeared with his father at Adyar and I knew him before Mr. Leadbeater did. He was a school boy. When we first knew Krishnamurti he was a very frail little boy, extremely weak, all his bones sticking out, and his father said more than once that he thought probably he would die, and he was having a bad time at school because he did not pay any attention to what his teachers said. He was bullied and beaten to such an extent that it seemed the boy might fade away from this life and die, and the father came to Leadbeater and said: “What shall we do?” Mr. Leadbeater said, “Take him from school and I will inform Mrs. Besant.” Mrs. Besant had done much for Hindu boys. She had the Central Indian College, in which many of the boys were entirely maintained by her – food, shelter, education, everything. So it was nothing unusual for her to look after boys. Mrs. Besant was in America at the time. She replied that she would be very pleased to see to their welfare, so the two boys were taken from the school; Krishnamurti’s younger brother was all right, but they didn’t want to be separated; and some of us agreed to teach them a little each day so that they might be prepared to go to England for their further education. Seven or eight of us taught them a little each day. The boys used to sit in Mr. Leadbeater’s or one of the adjacent rooms, with their teacher. I do

## CWL Speaks

not know that it could be said that Leadbeater trained him in any sort of particular way. To be anywhere near Mr. Leadbeater was a training for anybody. He made him drink milk and eat fruits. Krishnamurti did not like this. He [C.W.L.] attended to his health. He did not much like this eating fruits and milk, but did it. He also arranged for swimming and exercises in the way of cycling and other things, and they played tennis in the evening, so that very soon Krishnamurti was quite a healthy and strong boy and began to take more interest in the world. I think that he must have been always more or less psychic and therefore did not pay attention to his teacher. I noticed very soon that Krishnamurti used to collect people's thoughts, and I have seen him do some quite remarkable feats of conversation with dead people while still a little boy, and that developed quite naturally. I do not know of any special and deliberate training in that way. In Mr. Leadbeater's room and in his company, of course, he really received the best of training in courtesy, etc.

In his book *The Boyhood of J. Krishnamurti* (Chetana, Bombay, 1977), Russell Balfour-Clarke gives his own testimony of those unique events:

When I visited Madanapalle [K's birthplace in Andhra Pradesh, *Compiler*] Krishnaji was about fourteen or fifteen years old, and had not yet made his mark in the world, as he has since done with such benign dignity. And yet as I stood there, in the place of his birth, I realized that there was something about this Indian boy which had touched me as with a finger of fire, and for me that cradle and the room wherein it hung were holy and sanctified. I felt the grace which flowed there and drew strength from it to follow the Light of which he is now so radiant and glorious a manifestation.

Krishnaji's family moved from Madanapalle in January 1909 and came to live at the International Headquarters of the Theosophical Society at Adyar. At first they occupied a house just outside the Theosophical compound, not far from the Vasanta

## Pedro Oliveira

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Press, but it was inadequate for the accommodation of so large a family, and was in many ways entirely unsuitable. Annie Besant, the President, later permitted them to move into a better house (though still much too small) situated quite near to the main buildings of the Society, where the famous Oriental Library and her South Indian home were located.

From all that has happened subsequently it would seem that the causes which moved this family to Adyar served a mightier purpose than that which was known at the time to any of its members; no one then knew what were the silent intuitions of this boy who, so soon after his arrival at Adyar, became the chosen of Our Lord the Bodhisattva. (pp. 2-3)

In her book *Krishnamurti – The Years of Awakening*, which was referred to in the Introduction, Mary Lutyens comments on the appearance of the boy Krishna when CWL ‘discovered’ him:

It could not have been Krishna’s outward appearance that struck Leadbeater, for apart from his wonderful eyes, he was not at all prepossessing at that time. He was under-nourished, scrawny and dirty; his ribs showed through his skin and he had a persistent cough; his teeth were crooked and he wore his hair in the customary Brahmin fashion of South India, shaved in front to the crown and falling to below his knees in a pigtail at the back; moreover his vacant expression gave him an almost moronic look. People who had known him before he was ‘discovered’ by Leadbeater said there was little difference between him and his youngest brother, Sadanand. Moreover, according to Wood, he was so extremely weak physically that his father declared more than once that he was bound to die. (p. 21)

Lutyens also reported about what CWL had said to Dick Clarke regarding what his Teacher had instructed him to do in relation to Krishna’s training:

We have a very difficult job to do; we have to take these two boys out of an orthodox environment, change their diet, teach

## CWL Speaks

them physical exercise and Western methods of bathing. We have to take them away from school where they are being beaten by a master who ought to be selling bootlaces instead of being a teacher. There will be a lot of opposition to all this and yet it has to be done. (p. 25)

In a letter to George S. Arundale, dated 24<sup>th</sup> March 1911, CWL says:

If anyone asks me whether his body is to be used by the coming Christ, I always say that that is not my business, and I am simply doing what I am told in trying to prepare him for an important work in the future.

Pupul Jayakar, in her book *Krishnamurti – A Biography* (Harper & Row, San Francisco, 1986, p. 25), states:

Krishnamurti described his meeting with Leadbeater—who was quite possibly the first European he had ever met—in his autobiography (Adyar Archives):

When we first went to Adyar we lived in a house close to the new printing press. Every day we walked to the Mylapore high school. In the early mornings and in the evenings we prepared our home lessons. After some time we began to paddle in the sea with some other boys who lived near. On one of these occasions, in the year 1909, we met for the first time my dear friend and elder brother, C. W. Leadbeater. The meeting was quite casual.

As far as I remember, he (Leadbeater) was going down to the sea with Mr. Van Manen and others to have a swim. I do not remember any particular conversation, especially as I did not know English at all well. After this we met very often and he sometimes invited us to his house or rather bungalow. He was living at the time of which I write in what is known as the river bungalow.

When I first went over to his room I was much afraid, for most Indian boys are afraid of Europeans. I do not know how it is

## Pedro Oliveira

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that such fear is created; but one of the causes, there was, when I was a boy, much political agitation and our imaginations were much stirred by the gossip about us. I must also confess that the Europeans in India are by no means generally kind to us, and I used to see many acts of cruelty which made us still more bitter. I wish the English people in India could understand that Indian boys have as deep a love for India as the English have for their own country and feel as deeply any insult, however unintentional.

It was a surprise to us, therefore, to find how different was the Englishman who was also a Theosophist. We soon became very friendly with Mr. Leadbeater, and he helped us regularly with our lessons. Sometime later Mr. R. B. Clarke, a young engineer, arrived at Adyar and it was arranged with my father that my brother Nitya and I should leave school and be taught at Adyar by Mr. Leadbeater and Mr. Clarke. We soon began to make much better progress than we had ever made before. Life became very regular. We came to Mr. Leadbeater's bungalow early in the morning, studied until what might be called breakfast, which we took at home, and then returned to him. In the afternoon we played tennis or went to the sea to learn swimming. My father was very pleased with the progress we were to make and on August 14th it was finally decided that we should not go to school any more.

Mary Lutyens also includes in her book Krishna's description of his first meeting with Annie Besant:

After reaching Adyar we went back to Mr Leadbeater's bungalow and waited there a long time while he was talking with Mrs Besant in the main building. At last we heard the peculiar coo-ee by which Mr Leadbeater often called us. He was standing on the Shrine Room verandah which looks down upon his bungalow, and he told my brother and myself that Mrs Besant wished to see us. We both felt very nervous as we went upstairs for although we were very eager to meet her, we had heard how great she was. Mr Leadbeater went into her room with us, and we

## CWL Speaks

found her standing in the middle of the room. Mr Leadbeater said: 'Here is Krishna with his brother.'

As is the custom with us towards those for whom we have great reverence, we both prostrated ourselves at her feet. She lifted us up and embraced us. I do not remember what she said to us, as I was still very nervous, although full of a great happiness. We did not stop very long as there was to be a meeting of T.S. members as usual in the big drawing room on the same floor. As we were going in we met my father and Mrs Besant said to him: 'I suppose this will be the first of the private T.S. meetings that your sons have attended. I hope you approve of their coming.' He replied that he was very glad. I sat at her feet facing the people who were gathered there, and I was very nervous. (pp. 29-30)

The letters Annie Besant and Krishna wrote to each other during that period show the depth of the link between them (transcribed from the original in the Adyar Archives):

My dear Mother,

Will you let me call you mother when I write to you? I have no other mother now to love, and I feel as if you were our mother because you have been so kind to us. We both thank you so much for taking us away from home and letting us sleep in your room; we are so happy there, but We would rather have you here, even if we had to sleep at home. They are so kind to us, they have given us beautiful bicycles, and I have learned to ride mine, and I go out on it each day. I have ridden 31 ½ miles and I shall add some more this evening. I have seen you sometimes in the shrine room, and I often feel you at night and see your light. I send you very much love.

Your loving son,  
Krishna

My loved Krishna,

... There was such a big meeting in Calcutta for the animals: and I told the people about the robin who tried to pull the nail out of the hand of Christ on the Cross; that is not a story of a fact but of

## Pedro Oliveira

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a real truth, like the story of Shri Rama stroking the squirrel who wanted to help Him, so that all Indian squirrels have pretty stripes at Sarnath where the Buddha preached His first sermon, I looked back to see it; and a little fawn came up and put her nose into his hands. The Lord was all love, so the animals were not afraid of Him.

Tell dear Nitya that I give him a kiss on the top of his dear head every morning, and send him thought-forms too.

You know that I love you very much, Krishna, and am always  
Your loving  
Mother

As mentioned in ‘Adyar Beach, One Hundred Years Ago’, during her Presidency, Mrs Besant decided that an apartment for Krishnamurti would be built on the top of what is known as the Russak Wing in the Headquarters complex at Adyar. He lived there for a number of years. From the window in Krishnaji’s room one can see a beautiful view of the Adyar river and, in the distance, the Bay of Bengal, along with the unique greenery on the river bank. The merging of the river and the vast sea speaks of the vastness of life and also of Liberation, a journey into boundlessness, and it is a most appropriate setting for a discovery that happened more than one hundred years ago.

### **Epilogue**

In the wake of the 1906 crisis it was not surprising that CWL was accused of ‘inventing’ a Messiah when he discovered the boy Krishna and Annie Besant announced him to the world as the vehicle of the World Teacher. There were mocking commentaries in magazines, journals and newspapers across the world. Some people then, as well as now, maintained that CWL’s ‘invention’ of Krishna was nothing but a diversionary tactic in order to take the spotlight away from his ‘crimes’. However, J. Krishnamurti’s accomplishments, as a speaker and writer as well as a spiritual teacher, provide a resounding testimony of CWL’s insight in discovering him.

## CWL Speaks

The Madras Court case of 1912-1913, brought by Krishnamurti's father against Annie Besant, in which the central accusatory piece was the charge of sodomy against CWL, saw that charge dismissed in the course of the proceedings. The contextual information available about that case makes it amply evident that Mr Narianiah had powerful legal and financial support to launch it, including that of associates of Mrs Katherine Tingley.

When in Australia, from 1914 onwards, CWL was once more hounded by nobody less than Mrs Tingley's right hand man, Joseph Fussell, who wrote to the police authorities in Sydney, enclosing all the documents pertaining to the 1906 crisis. After two police investigations were conducted, during which a number of people were interviewed, the authorities declared that there was not enough evidence to obtain a conviction on any charge. CWL was subjected to a relentless press campaign against him and against Dr Besant; the remnants of it can be seen even today in Sydney.

In her Foreword to the book *Letters from the Masters of the Wisdom*, compiled by C. Jinarajadasa (1919), Annie Besant mentions:

Many a pilgrim on the Probationary Path will find in it much of help and inspiration, and it will serve to deepen the sense of the reality of our Teachers, sometimes blurred in the minds of neophytes by the tumultuous happenings in the outer world, as the notes of a vina are drowned if played in the rattle of an engine shed.

The attacks and accusations which started in 1906 accompanied CWL for the rest of his life and continue even today. And yet, they did not prevent him from doing the appointed work he had to do. The incredible noise made around him – and about him – did not disturb him. During those twenty-eight years between 1906 and his death in 1934 his literary proficiency was nothing but astounding, and it included not only many books but also hundreds of articles

## Pedro Oliveira

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published in different journals around the world. In addition, he carried an extensive correspondence as many people would approach him for guidance and information about the challenges of life.

Harold Morton shared with TS members in Australia the last moments of CWL's life in Perth, before he passed away on 1<sup>st</sup> March 1934:

The afternoon before his passing over, Brother spoke for about three-quarters of an hour. As he had not slept much during the previous night, the nurses wanted him to settle down as early as possible. On helping him back to bed, it looked as though he were prepared to doze, so I prepared to leave him. When I got to the door, he sat up in bed, waved his hand in characteristic style, and called out "Well, if I don't see you again in this body, carry on!" Those were the last words to us, for when we went back to the hospital the following morning, he did not speak to us at all. The nurse asked him if he wished to see his visitors. He opened his eyes and smiled, and I think recognized us; but he did not speak again. He sank then into unconsciousness from which he did not awake.

Today, eighty-three years after his passing, although not present, he continues to 'speak' and spiritual seekers interested in the chakras, in life after death, in the power of thought, in the hidden side of ceremonies, in the different hues in the human aura, in our activity during sleep, in talismans and the magnetism of places, in the power of the sacraments and the existence of perfected humanity – the Adepts, Masters of the Wisdom – can find help, solace and hope in his body of teachings.

I will carry on, CWL, until my time comes.

## CWL Speaks

## Appendix 1

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### C. W. Leadbeater at Bramshott Parish

By James W. Matley<sup>3</sup>

(Originally published in *The "K.H." Letters to C. W. Leadbeater – with a Commentary by C. Jinarajadasa*, The Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, Madras, 1941; reprinted in 1980.)

C.W.L. was a curate in a parish in Hampshire called Bramshott, and lived with his mother at a cottage called "Hartford", about a quarter of a mile from the small village of Liphook. The Rector of the parish was the Rev. W. W. Capes, an Oxford double first man; his wife Mrs. Capes was C.W.L.'s aunt. The other curate was a Mr. Kidston who was married and lived further along the same road.

I only vaguely remember Mrs. Leadbeater; she had such lovely white hair and a face that one took to instinctively. There was also in the parish a lay reader, an old man. When he died another curate came. Mrs. Leadbeater died before I had much to do with C.W.L., and after her death a Mr. Cartwright came as curate and shared the cottage with C.W.L. I must not forget the cat Peter, a noble tabby of great size and a favourite of C.W.L., always kept in his room night and day; he left it with us when he went away.

In front of the cottage was a large oak tree, and on this in the winter C.W.L. would hang pieces of meat for the half-starving birds; there was of course a nice garden of which C.W.L. was fond.

I have no idea of the date when C.W.L. came to Bramshott, in a vague way I seem to remember him always. Frank, an elder brother

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<sup>3</sup> From 1890 till a year before his death in 1939, I used to meet "Jim Matley" in England whenever his ship returned to England, and later when he was a planter in Papua, whenever he and I were in Australia at the same time. He wrote this account at my request several years ago. The last paragraph is from a letter received from him after Bishop Leadbeater's death.

## CWL Speaks

by six years, was first with him a great deal, and learnt to play the organ and was taught music generally, and was in the choir; and I when old enough also came there, when about 9 years old, I suppose. When I first seem to know C.W.L. was one Saturday; I was with two other boys, I suppose between nine and ten years old; we had a dog, and were going, with the aid of the dog, to catch a rabbit (I think the rabbit was fairly safe).

We met C.W.L. on the way, or rather he was with my brother on a small hill, and appeared to have been firing with a saloon pistol at some target; he pointed the pistol towards us and fired, and for fun I dropped down; he having seen the real thing was I fancy not greatly alarmed. The two came down to us and C.W.L. wanted to know what we were doing. We explained, and then C.W.L. told Frank that he thought it was time I was taken in hand, and that he would find for me a nicer amusement than the one I had contemplated. So there and then I was taken on, and from that time on we three were always together when possible, and became three brothers. Only studies and such like interfered with our meetings, which were at "Hartford". This was after Mrs. Leadbeater's death.

The evenings which were to spare were used in learning songs, and other music, or playing euchre; Saturdays were used to take long walks to all the pretty places in the neighbourhood, and at times further afield to Portsmouth, seeing the sights there, and to London where at my first theatre I saw with him "Princess Ida" at the Savoy. Guildford was a favourite place, boating on the River Wey, also Midhurst and the river there. G. A. Henty's "Union Jack Field Club" was started by C.W.L. and a good few boys joined this. I think it was a club in which you promised not to be cruel to any creature, and to report anything of interest that happened amongst the creatures about you. Anyhow we at times with a crowd of boys would take walks into the Forest and across the Commons, collecting all sorts of specimens of natural history. C.W.L. of course was a favourite with boys, it was to these that he seemed to go and have most to do with.

## Pedro Oliveira

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The Church Society was also formed, this for boys and by C.W.L. In this I think we promised not to tell lies, and to be pure and good as far as in us lay. If any other boy wished to join, he had to be proposed and seconded; then if any one had any objection on the score that he had not been truthful or had done that which was not right, he was (so to speak) black-balled for a certain time. At the meetings held every fortnight, we had songs, told stories, or had readings, also C.W.L. provided refreshment in the shape of cake, fruit and nuts; hence there was keen competition to get into the Society, which I think was for all boys over ten. I fancy that it caused some jealousy, as of course only Church boys joined, and there was a fairly strong crowd of Dissenters there. The Juvenile Branch of the Church of England Temperance Society was also started by C.W.L., this for boys and girls, and was a success and a large number joined. This was in March 1888, and I see that I am No. 1 on the roll.

The meetings were made very attractive; they were opened with prayer, C.W.L. having a surplice on, and a hymn or two sung, hymns that had a go in them and were enjoyed. After that the surplice was doffed, and all sorts of songs were sung, solos by any that could; I was of use here, as I had a large stock, and the chorus was joined in by all. Readings also were read by C.W.L. or some of the boys or girls; an annual tea was given, and also some little present I fancy, in the shape of books, decent books, too, none of that sanctimonious sort telling of impossible boys and girls; the boys had Mayne Reid, Marryat, and Kingston; I don't know about the girls' books.

About this time C.W.L. used to go to a good few spiritualistic séances, and one Easter we spent going to a number in London, to Mr. Husk where the famous Irresistible was, also to Eglinton. He had Husk down to "Hartford" one night for a séance; I think that a Mr. Crowther came as well as we three. We had quite a good evening and lots of phenomena.

Astronomy was a favourite hobby of C.W.L. and he had a fine telescope; I think that it had a 12" reflector. I know that we had

## CWL Speaks

many enjoyable evenings in the garden looking at stars and the moon. Once an eclipse of the moon was an event; C.W.L. saw a shadow that was noticeable before the eclipse fairly started, and wrote to some paper as to this, and it was found to be in all probability the shadow cast by the Andes.

In the summer of 1884 we three went for a month to Ramsgate together, and had a lovely time visiting all the places near, also going across to France; this was my first great sea trip; I think that C.W.L. was unwell but I was not, nor have ever been. C.W.L. taught me to swim at Ramsgate, also he nearly drowned me, and also saved me another time. We were bathing when the tide was out, and had been playing leap frog; C.W.L. tried to jump over my head into the water, but his hand slipped and his leg with a large bell mouthed pair of bathing pants slipped over my head, and we both tumbled into the water fairly deep; I don't know what happened after, but I had a bad time for a while, as I could not get clear till we were both hauled out. Another time in the sea (I had learnt to swim a few strokes) I had got to where C.W.L. was, and then tried to go on to shallow water; but the tide took us both off our feet, and myself away so far that I was nearly drowned, before C.W.L. could get to me.

He started all sorts of games for the boys, and was with them all he could be at cricket; we used to have a great deal of tennis together, and I think that he preferred this to cricket.

About this time I took up French, Trigonometry and Navigation, C.W.L. teaching me in spare time; but with meetings, choir practice and my own music lessons and the practice for that, though there was not a great deal of time, we seemed to fill it all in.

I remember C.W.L. put some music to words out of some of Mrs. Hemans' poetry. I liked the music, I don't know what special piece the words were from, they run thus, "In the shadow of the pyramid, where our brother's grave we made." I fancy that my brother Frank has the music yet.

## Pedro Oliveira

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You know from other sources that it was through Spiritualism that C.W.L. came to Theosophy. I think that he tried to reach the Master through Eglinton the spiritualistic medium. I am not quite sure now how finally he came to be a Theosophist, that is, to join the Society. Anyhow he decided to offer his services to the Master, and I think that Madame sent the message. The reply came in a curious way; a letter came to someone in England to be posted to C.W.L., and the Master had sent his message to C.W.L. in it. The man who posted the letter had of course had no idea what was in the letter.

I think that he packed up and left almost at once. There was to be a firework display on Nov. 3<sup>rd</sup> for the choir and the Church of England Temperance members. All in both societies were invited to Hartford Cottage for a firework display, and I think there was also tea and cake. I am not sure now if the date of the firework display was for that particular day or if it was advanced. It was a great display; we had been busy fixing on Catherine wheels and such like ready; then we had a box of fireworks, all in nice order, so that they could be handed out as required, rockets, Roman candles, and such like. It was dark of course; the display started about 8 p.m. A few boys were allowed to use crackers, and throw them about; one, I forget his name, decided he would throw one into the box of fireworks. The result was simply gorgeous, and really dangerous too, every sort of firework going off at once, Roman candles shooting into the audience, and even rockets dangerously near, a wonderful display. We all decided that it was really far ahead of anything arranged. It was a hectic time; I well remember that firework display. After the display all went home.

We three went up to Brother's room to pack and sort things. Frank and I left Hartford Cottage in the early hours, Frank wheeling a wheelbarrow full of special books, to our home; we went a short cut across fields, rough going, I was too small to use the wheelbarrow but carried things. He left on the 4<sup>th</sup> of November, 1884; no one but we three knew; the rest of the folk were left in ignorance.

## CWL Speaks

*Written after Bishop Leadbeater's death.*

His old boys have not forgotten him, and still think of all he tried to do for them, and with love I feel sure. To myself he has been all the time a Brother, and that means everything that it is possible to be I think. If it were possible, he has been more than that to me, a Brother such as the world at large has no idea of. I don't think that I can repay to him what he has done for me, only to the world at large, and I know that will please him best of all.

J. W. MATLEY

*Wanganui Plantation,  
Samarai, Papua.*

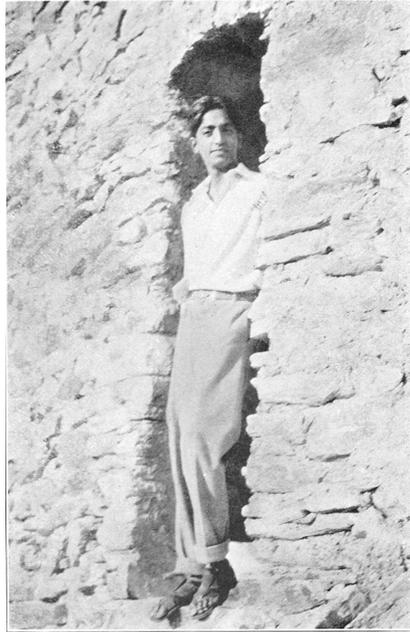
“Brother” was the designation by which all spoke of and addressed Bishop Leadbeater, after he settled in Sydney.

## Appendix 2

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### Krishnaji and CWL

Compiled by Pedro Oliveira and originally posted on [www.cwlworld.info](http://www.cwlworld.info).



J. KRISHNAMURTI AT PERGINE

*The ‘received tradition’ about Charles Webster Leadbeater, which begun in 1906, maintains that he was a pedophile, a child molester, a ‘black magician’, a ‘sex magician’ as well as a ‘tantric magician’. This tradition is at variance with and ignores the testimonies of many people that worked with him and knew him well for many years, in different countries.*

*One of the elements of the ‘received tradition’ about CWL is that J. Krishnamurti regarded him as ‘evil’. The evidence contained in this article shows that, once again, the statement ascribed to Krishnamurti seems*

## CWL Speaks

*to be at variance with what Krishnamurti actually said about the man who discovered him in 1909, at Adyar.*

### **Krishnamurti and CWL: a Brief Timeline**

1909 - One day in the second half of April 1909, while walking back from the beach with his assistant Ernest Wood, CWL told him that one of the boys he had seen on the beach [Krishnamurti] had “the most wonderful aura he had ever seen, without a particle of selfishness in it”. He predicted that the boy one day “would become a spiritual teacher and a great orator.” “As great as Mrs Besant?” asked Wood. “Much greater” replied CWL.

1910 – After received help from CWL in preparation for his first Initiation, Krishnamurti wrote about the experience:

‘The next night I was taken to see the King, and that was the most wonderful experience of all for He is a boy not much older than I am, but the handsomest I have ever seen, all shinning and glorious, and when He smiles it is like sunlight. He is strong like the sea, so that nothing could stand against Him for a moment, and yet He is nothing but love, so that I could not be in the least afraid of Him.’

1914 to 1922 – Corresponds with CWL, who had moved to Australia. Grows more independent as an individual and declares not be interested in ceremonies, including those of the Liberal Catholic Church.

1922 – Visits Sydney and participates in the TS Convention, during which CWL was the target of violent attacks. This is how Krishnamurti described his intervention at the Convention:

‘There were those who spoke for C.W.L. and those against him. He was there all the time. The storm of accusation & defending went on for about 2 ½ hours. [T.H.] Martyn spoke & said C.W.L. could not be trusted because he was associated with Wedgwoode [sic]. Then Fritz Kunz, Nitya & I finally spoke. We thundered at them. I said that I knew C.W.L. better than most of them & so I could speak with some authority. I declared he was one of the purest & one of the greatest men I had ever met. His

## Pedro Oliveira

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clairvoyance may be doubted but not his purity. As to his style Bishop, a man can call himself what he liked, etc.’

(From Mary Lutyens’ *Krishnamurti – Years of Awakening*, Shambala, Boston, 1997, p. 143.)

1925 – At the Ommen Camp of the Order of the Star in the East, there were some personal proclamations by individuals who had claimed to have achieved higher Initiations, including that of an Arhat. Some of them were anxiously expecting C.W.L. to confirm those so-called advancements. However, no confirmation came from him. But when C.W.L. met Krishnamurti in December he greeted him saying: ‘Well, at least you are an Arhat.’

1928 – In a letter to Lady Emily Lutyens, Krishnamurti wrote:

‘I had a long talk with him [C.W.L.] for an hour and a half. He agrees with me to an astonishing extent. He asked me what I felt like & and I told him there was not Krishna – the river & the sea. He said yes, like the books of old, it’s all true. He was nice and extraordinarily reverential.’

1934 – Harold Morton, one of the pupils of CWL in Sydney, writes the following in March 1934, following CWL’s death”:

The next important thing is that we are at last having the long promised visit from Krishnaji. Owing to my absence in Perth, I have tonight met him. He is certainly a most fascinating figure, and I am looking forward to a conversation with him. He has very kindly asked me to visit him to tell him all about Bishop Leadbeater’s last days in Perth.

(See [www.cwlworld.info](http://www.cwlworld.info))

CWL was cremated on 17<sup>th</sup> March 1934 at the Northern Suburbs Crematorium in Sydney. Harold Morton added the following in his report:

There was seating accommodation for 200 people, but the crowd that gathered stood all around in the aisles and up in the organ loft. I was told that there were close to 500 people present (I think the 300 mark might be nearer, but we could not estimate properly from in-

## CWL Speaks

side). It was especially pleasing to note that Krishnaji and Rajagopal were present at the cremation. Some have suggested that Krishnaji was unfriendly towards Bishop Leadbeater because of his changed view on discipline, ceremonial, discipleship, etc. But (though it ought not to be necessary to say such a thing) I am glad to report that this is far from the facts, and is borne out by the fact that Krishnaji sent for me to tell him about C.W.L.'s passing.

### **Krishnamurti and Group at Pergine, Italy**

*The extracts and photographs in this article are from the little book Towards Discipleship – A series of informal addresses for aspirants for*



AT THE FOOT OF THE CASTLE WHERE IN THE MORNINGS  
KRISHNAJI GAVE HIS TALKS

*Discipleship by J. Krishnamurti, The Theosophical Press, Chicago, 1926. In the summer of 1924 Krishnaji and a group of friends stayed in the Castle of Pergine, in the region of Trento in Italy. Krishnaji at that time was 29 years old and had come to his own profound understanding of life, following life-altering experiences in Ojai,*

*California, in 1922. Nityananda, his younger brother, would pass away the next year, which turned out to be another profound experience in Krishnaji's life.*

**KRISHNAJI:** We are all so ambitious. We want so much to see the Masters. But what have we done to deserve that They should show Themselves to us? Look at Amma [Annie Besant] and

## Pedro Oliveira

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C.W.L. Look at what they have suffered, and what they have gone through in life; and it is only then that they realized the Masters.

KRISHNAJI: Take C.W.L., for instance. Do you think that he ever waited for us to make up our minds? He said: "Look here, whether you like it or not, I am going to help you; I have this piece of work to do for you." And there was no question of our decision. He just drove us into it. He insisted on making a background for us.

It is the same with you here. You may go from here and become multi-millionaires, or anything else you like, as long as you have the background. But I think you are too far away from the background as yet to fit into it. I have been wondering for the last two or three days who is going to give to each one of us the inspiration which will make us go and switch on that light?

KRISHNAJI: C.W.L. just drove us like mules. He will not do that with you, because you are much more grown up, much more individualistic. Therefore, we have to have the desire and the urge ourselves. Why do you want to go to C.W.L. or A.B., when you have something here, when every morning you have meditation here, when every morning you think of the Buddha? Why do you not get sufficient desire and impulse here? C.W.L. and Amma might put you off, for all you know.

Those who are selfish have not usually sufficient desire to become unselfish; it is the same with other failings. Just imagine if we went to C.W.L. as we are, what would he find in us? He would not think: "By Jove, here is someone whom it is worth while to help."

KRISHNAJI: There is another thing. You notice how any stranger who came to the Buddha sat respectfully at a distance on one side, and not right in front. That is the Eastern way of showing respect. Personally, I feel awkward when sitting in front of Amma [Annie Besant]. In the West that reverence is lacking. If you have

## CWL Speaks

that true reverence in your heart, you can never be unkind to anybody. You notice when you are with Amma how reverent she is to



you, and so kind; she treats you as if you were some big person. When a person of that height can do it, it is still more important for us to do it to an even greater extent.

You want to make progress, and you want everybody to evolve. It is like looking at that beautiful Castle and wanting everybody to come and look at it. Look at Amma or C.W.L., they are unconquerable in their happiness. They are true disciples.

Do you not see what a thrill it gives to be in such a position that you can honestly say that from every avenue which is open before you the self is absent? We ought to examine every avenue, take it in turn, and destroy the self in that avenue. You have got to fight it out. But if you are a real devotee, sitting at the feet of the Master, then there is no need to explore any avenue, because you do not recognize any other avenue except the one, that of a disciple; and nothing else matters.

### **E. L. Gardner's Criticism of CWL and Krishnaji's Response**

Edward L. Gardner was a distinguished member of the Theosophical Society in England and a profound student of H. P. Blavatsky's *The Secret Doctrine*. In 1963 he published a booklet entitled *There is No Religion Higher than Truth: Developments in the Theosophical Society*. In it Gardner presents a strong criticism of CWL's perception of the Masters, encapsulated in the following statement:

‘With the advantage of forty years perspective, plus the letters to Annie Besant and the events of 1920-30, it is now clear (as some have long known or suspected) that the Lord Maitreya and the Masters with whom Leadbeater was on such familiar terms were his own thought-creations.’

He also stated that the World Teacher movement was a creation of CWL – who was, according to Gardner, self-deluded – and that the supposed manifestation through Krishnamurti had gone wrong. He said that what had happened to CWL was a “projection ... a vivid example of the phenomenon of ‘unconscious kriyāśakti’, the power of thought to create vivid images in the mind”.

I quote an extract from my article on the subject:

[http://www.cwlworld.info/There is No Religion Higher than Truth.pdf](http://www.cwlworld.info/There%20is%20No%20Religion%20Higher%20than%20Truth.pdf)

It may prove interesting to compare Gardner’s above statement that ‘the first letter of C.W.L.’s to A.B. in 1916, introduces the ‘Lord Maitreya’ so abruptly and easily as to imply a long familiar topic between them. Looking back at all the happenings I feel certain that the source and only source of the COMING was C.W.L.’s ‘Lord Maitreya’, with the following passage from Mary Lutyens’ book *Krishnamurti: Years of Awakening* (1975). It contains an account by C.W.L. to Fabrizio Ruspoli, who was at Adyar, of an event that took place on 28<sup>th</sup> December 1911 in Benares, when Krishnaji, as the Head of the Order of the Star in the East, was handing over certificates of membership to new members. Approximately 400 people were present, including Mrs Besant [President of the TS], C.W.L., Miss Francesca Arundale, J. Nityananda and a number of European members, besides many others:

All at once the hall was filled with a tremendous power, which was so evidently flowing through Krishna that the next member fell at his feet, overwhelmed by this mighty rush of force. I have never seen or felt anything in the like of it; it reminded one irresistibly of the rushing, mighty wind, and the outpouring of the

## CWL Speaks

Holy Ghost at Pentecost. The tension was enormous, and every one in the room was most powerfully affected. It was the kind of thing that we read about in the old scriptures, and think exaggerated; but here it was before us in the twentieth century. ... At a meeting [of the Esoteric Section] the President said for the first time that, after what they had seen and felt, it was no longer possible to make even a pretence of concealing the fact that Krishna's body had been chosen by the Bodhisattva, and was even now being attuned by Him. (p. 55)

From 1983 until shortly before her passing in 2013, I was privileged to have had a number of conversations with Mrs Radha Burnier, who was the President of the Theosophical Society. Some of them were included in an article in *The Theosophist*, January 2014 issue. This was the episode she mentioned to me at Adyar before my return to Australia in September 2011.

Following the publication of Gardner's booklet on CWL, she went to Saanen to meet Krishnaji as part of her European visit. She said someone present described to Krishnaji the nature of the central claims in E.L. Gardner's booklet and asked him for his views. Krishnaji replied: 'Give me a minute.' He then said: 'This man does not know what he is writing about.' The same person then asked him: 'How do you know that?' To which Krishnaji replied: 'I can see. It is all there.'

As we shall see, Krishnaji's last statement seems to indicate a discrepancy between Mr Gardner's reasoning regarding CWL's perceptions and the depth of Krishnaji's experience.

### **Krishnaji's last statement**

Below is the verbatim transcription of Krishnaji's statement from 7<sup>th</sup> February 1986, recorded in his residence at Ojai, California. It was published in Mary Lutyens's book *Krishnamurti – The Open Door*, London, John Murray Publishers, 1988, pp. 148-149.

## Pedro Oliveira

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I was telling them this morning—for seventy years that super energy—no— that immense energy, immense intelligence, has been using this body. I don't think people realise what tremendous energy and intelligence went through this body—there's twelve-cylinder engine. And for seventy years—was a pretty long time—and now the body can't stand any more.

Nobody, unless the body has been prepared, very carefully, protected and so on—nobody can understand what went through this body. Nobody. Don't anybody pretend. Nobody. I repeat this: nobody amongst us or the public, know what went on. I know they don't. And now after seventy years it has come to an end. Not that that intelligence and energy—it's somewhat here, every day, and especially at night. And after seventy years the body can't stand it—can't stand any more. It can't. The Indians have a lot of damned superstitions about this—that you will and the body goes—and all that kind of nonsense. You won't find another body like this, or that supreme intelligence operating in a body for many hundred years. You won't see it again. When he goes, it goes. There is no consciousness left behind of that consciousness, of that state. They'll all pretend or try to imagine they can get into touch with that. Perhaps they will somewhat if they live the teachings. But nobody has done it. Nobody. And so that's that.

Mary Lutyens adds:

When Scott [Forbes] asked him to clarify some of what he had said in this statement for fear it might be misunderstood he became 'very upset' with him and said, 'You have no right to interfere in this.'

As I said earlier, K knew far more than anyone else can ever hope to know about who and what he was, and in this last recording he ever made was he not sharing with us all something of what he did know which he had never revealed before? This sharing is surely an ineffable privilege. Did he not intend this message to be for all of us? Is he not telling us that the work is done, that it will not, and does not need to, be done again—at any rate not for a very long time? Nor is he taking away hope from us, for he tells us again, as he had maintained

## CWL Speaks

most of his life, that if we live the teachings we may be able to touch 'that'. If. The teachings are there. The rest is up to us.

### **Annie Besant's Vision**

In a note in *The Theosophist*, February 1926, Dr Annie Besant stated:

Last summer, in Holland, I mentioned to a large audience (in a Camp held by members of an Order to which only those are admitted who believe in the Coming of the World Teacher) that J. Krishnamurti was the chosen vehicle, a fact already largely recognised among them in consequence of his speeches and writings. I suppose this was the basis of the inaccurate statements made subsequently in the London papers. I have never had any idea of "proclaiming him as Messiah". Modern psychology recognises some of the subtler and rarer aspects of consciousness, from the cases of the influence of one mind over another through higher cases of inspiration – such as those of "prophets" – to complete temporary change of "personality". I believe, with many of the early Christians, that the World Teacher, named by them the Christ, assumed, at the stage of the Gospel story called the Baptism, the body of a disciple, Jesus, to carry on His earthly work at that time. A similar event is to take place among us. Without inflicting the reasons for my belief on this occasion – I have given dozens of lectures on the subject – I will merely add that which may have given rise to this telegram.

Mr. Krishnamurti was lecturing, on December 28<sup>th</sup>, to a very large audience under the Banyan Tree [at Adyar]. He was concluding his lecture, speaking of the World-Teacher, with the words: "He comes to lead us all to that perfection where there is eternal happiness: He comes to lead us and He comes to those who have not understood, who have suffered, who are unhappy, who are unenlightened. He comes to those who want, who desire, who long, and" – There was a slight start, and a Voice of penetrating sweetness rang out through his lips:

“I come to those who want sympathy, who want happiness, who are longing to be released, who are longing to find happiness in all things. I come to reform, and not to tear down: not to destroy, but to build.”

The meeting shortly after broke up in silence. Probably some account of this filtered out. That the World-Teacher spoke through the then speaker I believe. Since 1909, as said above, I have known that he was chosen as the vehicle, and I expect an ever-increasing tenancy of the selected body by Him for whom it has been prepared. I believe that

we are at the beginning of a New Age, a new civilisation, as has occurred five times already in the Aryan race – in Central Asia, Egypt, Persia, Greece and Palestine – as well as before in human evolution.

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This compilation would not be complete without her testimony. She – and CWL – endured widespread ridicule because of their faith that Krishnaji had been chosen to give to the world a new wisdom-teaching and be the embodiment of that compassionate intelligence that has never abandoned the world. Theirs was a job well done.

## Appendix 3

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### C. W. Leadbeater: A Comprehensive Bibliography

- Abridgement of the Power and Use of Thought, The  
Ancient Ideals of Modern Masonry  
Attitude of the Enquirer, The  
Creating Character (with Annie Besant)  
Difficulties in Clairvoyance  
Great War, The  
Law of Cause and Effect  
Masters of Wisdom  
Our Relation to Children  
Ancient Ideals in Modern Masonry (an address given in Sydney, 1917)  
Ancient Mysteries, The; (article from *Theosophia*, Dutch translation 1900)  
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“ “ “, 1900  
“ “ “, 1905  
“ “ “, 1910  
“ “ “, 1920  
“ “ “, 1933  
“ “ “, 1941  
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## Pedro Oliveira

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- Basis of our Belief; 1921
- Beginnings of the Sixth Root Race, The, 1980
- “ “ “ “ “ “; Dutch translation, 1908
- “ “ “ “ “ “; Dutch translation, 1936
- Beginnings of the Sixth Root Race, The, 1931
- “ “ “ “ “ “ , 1954
- Buddhist Catechism; Vietnamese translation, 1937
- Chakras, The; Slovenian translation, 1994
- Chakras, The; Hungarian translation, 1995
- “ “ Italian translation
- “ “ Kannada translation, 2000
- “ “ Marathi translation, 1975
- “ “ 1959 Dutch translation
- 1927 French translation
- “ 1928 “ “ German translation
- “ 1965 “ “ German translation
- “ 1945 “ “ Spanish translation
- “ 1964 “ “ Spanish translation
- “ 1960 “ “ Portuguese translation
- “ 1985 “ “ Finnish translation
- “ 1927 “ “
- “ 1938 “ “
- “ 1947 “ “
- “ 1962 Chakras, The (Extracts); Norwegian translation
- “ 1904 Christian Creed, The; Dutch translation
- “ 1904 Christian Creed, The

## CWL Speaks

“	1899	“	“	“
“	1904	“	“	“
“	1909	“	“	“
“	1909	“	“	“; Braille translation
“	1914	Christian Creed, The;	Spanish translation	
“	1915	“	“	“; Italian translation
“	1904	Christian Creed, The;	Swedish translation	
“	1983	Christian Gnosis, The;	(Based on his MSS)	
“	1916	Christ, the Saviour of the World;	Spanish translation	
“	1914	Christ: the World Saviour, and the Gospel of the New Era;	Two lectures delivered at Sydney, Dec 20, 27 <sup>th</sup>	
“	1902	Clairvoyance;	1 <sup>st</sup> . Italian translation	
“	1899	Clairvoyance		
“	?	“	“;	Russian translation
“	1903	“	“	
“	1908	“	“	
C. W. L.	1977	“	“;	Japanese translation
“	1975	“	“;	French translation
“	?	“	“;	Spanish translation
“	1923	Clairvoyance;	French translation	
“	1925	Clairvoyance;	Dutch translation	
“	1908	Clairvoyance and the Akashic Records;	Spanish translation	
“ and A. B.	1951	Creating Character		
“	1981	“	“	“; Kannada translation
“	1899	Death and the States after It;	Hebrew translation (Lecture, 23.11.99, Paris)	
“	1983	Devachanic Plane, The;	Italian translation	
“	1977	Devachanic Plane, The;	Kannada translation	
“	1962	Devachanic Plane, The;	Tamil translation	
“	1902	Devachanic Plane, The; or the Heaven World;	Dutch translation	
“	1923	Devachanic World, The, or The Mental Plane;	French translation	
“	1909	Divine Sight from The Other Side of Death;	Telugu	

## Pedro Oliveira

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“	1924	Doctrine of Economy, The; Dutch translation
“	1903	Dreams, What they are and how they are caused
“	1908	“ “ “ “ “ “
“	1908	“ “ “ “ “ “
“	1935	“ “ “ “ “ “
“	1946	“ “ “ “ “ “
“	1957	“ “ “ “ “ “
“	1949	“ “ “ “ Braille translation
“	1904	Dreams; Dutch translation
“	1901	“ ; German translation
“	?	Dreams; Indonesian translation
“	1911	“ ; Italian translation
“	1900	“ ; Gujarati translation
“	1978	“ ; Bengali translation
“	1920	Faith of our Fathers, The
“	1948	Fifth Root Race and its Migrations, The
“	1934	Four Qualifications, The (from talks on At the Feet of the Master); Gujarati translation
“	1952	As above
“	?	Fourth Dimension, The
C. W. L.	1928	Glimpses of Masonic History; Dutch translation
“	1926	Glimpses of Masonic History
“	1927	Glimpses of Masonic History; Greek translation
“	1978	Glimpses of Masonic History; Portuguese translation
“	1904	Glimpses of Occultism; Ancient and Modern; Spanish translation
C. W. L.	1914	Gospel of the New Era; (Lecture – Sydney)
“	1903	Guardian Angels and Other Unseen Helpers; a lecture
“	1925	Healing Forces and Healing Angels
“	1926	Hidden Life in Freemasonry
“	1928	“ “ “ “
“	1930	Hidden Life in Freemasonry, The; French translation
“	1977	“ “ “ “ Portuguese translation
“	1929	Hidden Life in Freemasonry. The; Greek translation
“	?	“ “ “ “ ; German translation

## CWL Speaks

- “ 1948 Hidden Life in Freemasonry, The; Spanish translation
- “ 1927 Hidden Life in Freemasonry, The; Dutch translation
- “ 1920 Hidden Side of Christian Festivals
- “ ? Hidden Side of Church Festivals, The;  
Hungarian translation
- “ 2005 Hidden Side of Lodge Meetings, The;  
Croatian translation
- “ ? Hidden Side of Lodge Meetings;  
(reprint from the Lotus Journal, Vol. II)
- “ ? Hidden Side of Things, The
- “ ? “ “ “ “; Dutch translation
- “ 1911 Hidden Side of Things, The; Italian translation
- “ 1927 Hidden Side of Things, The; French translation
- “ ? Higher Consciousness; Braille translation
- “ 1932 How the Powers of Darkness work;  
Spanish translation
- “ 1930 How Theosophy Came to Me
- “ 1980 How Theosophy Came to Me; Kannada translation
- “ 1909 H. P. Blavatsky – An Outline of Her Life by George  
Herbert Whyte: Preface by C. W. Leadbeater
- “ 1920 H. P. Blavatsky – An Outline of Her Life by George  
Herbert Whyte: Preface by C. W. Leadbeater
- “ 1982 Inner Life The, selection from; Kannada translation
- “ 1913 Inner Life The; Gujarati translation
- “ 1936 Inner Life The; abridged Hindi translation
- “ 1910 Inner Life, The; (Talks at Adyar)
- “ 1917 “ “ “ “
- “ ? Inner Life, The; Braille translation
- “ ? Inner Life, The, Vol.1; German translation
- “ 1912 “ “ “ “; Dutch translation
- “ 1974 Inner Life; Marathi translation
- “ 1967 Inner Life; Finnish translation
- “ 1919 “ “; Spanish translation
- “ 1910 Invisible Helpers; Hindi translation
- “ 1948 Invisible Helpers; Guwahati translation

## Pedro Oliveira

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“	1980	Invisible Helpers, The; French translation
C. W. L.	1978	Invisible Helpers; Japanese translation
“	1972	“ “ ; Spanish translation
“	1899	“ “
“	1901	“ “ “
“	1908	“ “ “
“	1942	“ “ “ (2 vols.); Braille translation
“	?	Invisible Helpers; Bulgarian translation
“	?	Invisible Helpers, The; Russian translation
“	1909	Invisible World, The; Portuguese translation
“	1998	Kamaloka (abridged - The Astral Plane); Oriya translation
“	1912	Last Thirty Lives of Alcyone, The; Spanish translation
“	1903	Law of Cause and Effect, The; a lecture
Jinarajadasa	1951	Law of Sacrifice, The; and other Places
“	1924	Liberal Catholic Church, The Ceremonies of the Holy Eucharist
“	1919	“ “ “ “, Liberal Catholic Liturgy
“	1924	“ “ “ “ “ “ “ “
“	1903	Life after Death; (a lecture – Harrogate)
“	1952	Life after Death; German translation
“	1920	Life after Death, The; German translation
“	1929	Life after Death, The; Braille translation
“	1975	Life after Death, The; Bengal translation
“	1996	Life after Death and How Theosophy Unveils It, The; Hungarian translation
“	1912	Life after Death and How Theosophy Unveils it, The; Finnish trans
“	1918	Life after Death and How Theosophy Unveils It, The
“	1964	“ “ “ “ “
“	1912	Life after Death and How Theosophy Unveils It, The (includes an extra Chapter by Annie Besant)
“ and A. B.	1924	Lives of Alcyone, The
“ “	?	Living Alcyone, The; Russian translation
“	1924	Liturgy, The

## CWL Speaks

“	1910	Magic of the Christian Church, The
“	1913	Man, Whence and How? (First two sections of Man, Whence, How And Whither); Finnish translation
“	1931	Man, Whence, How and Whither? German translation
“	?	“ “ “ “ Dutch translation
“	?	“ “ “ “ Spanish translation
“	1977	Man, Visible and Invisible; Kannada translation
“	1967	Man, Visible and Invisible; Portuguese translation
“	1927	Man, Visible and Invisible; Finnish translation
“	1920	Man, Visible and Invisible; Dutch translation
C. W. L.	1983	Man, Visible and Invisible; Italian translation
“	?	“ “ “ “ ; German translation
“	1902	Man, Visible and Invisible
“	1907	“ “ “ “
“	1920	“ “ “ “
“	1978	Man, Visible and Invisible; Indonesian translation
“	1913	Masters and Disciples; Spanish translation
“	1969	Masters and the Path; Kannada translation
“	1966	Masters and the Path The; Vietnamese translation
“	1932	Masters and the Path. The; Vietnamese translation
“	1983	Masters and the Path; Japanese translation
“	?	Masters and the Path The; Greek translation
“	1937	Masters and the Path; Hindi translation and summary
“	1960	“ “ “ “ ; Marathi translation (adaptation)
“	?	Masters and the Path, The; Spanish translation
“	1975	Masters and the Path, The; Gujarati translation
“	1979	“ “ “ “ ; Malayalam translation
“	1926	“ “ “ “ ; French translation
“	1928	Masters and the Path, The; Italian translation
“	?	Masters and the Path
“	?	“ “ “ “ ; Braille translation
“	1926	“ “ “ “ ; Dutch translation
“	1926	“ “ “ “ ; German translation
“	1992	Masters and the Path; Finnish translation
“	1911	“ “ “ “ ; Norwegian translation

## Pedro Oliveira

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“	1931	“ “ “ ; Hungarian translation
“	1958	Masters and the Path, The; Telugu translation
“	1931	Messages from the Unseen
“	1953	Message of Theosophy, The; Braille translation
“	1920	Monad, The
“	1947	“ “; Braille translation
“	?	Names of Characters in “The Lives of Alcyone”;
“	1903	Nature of Theosophical Evidence, The; a Lecture in Chicago
“	1910	Nature Spirits; Finnish translation
“	?	Neglected Power, A
“	1914	Noble Eightfold Path, The; an address in Rangoon
“	1920	Occult Chemistry; Spanish translation
“	1951	Occult History of Java, The
“	?	Occult View of the War, An
“	1911	Occultism in Nature: Series 1 and 2 of The Inner Life; French translation.
“ +A.B. +J.I.W	1918	Occultism of the Mass; and the Old Catholic Church Movement, J. I. Wedgwood and Others
C. W. L.	1916	Origin and Meaning of the Christian Creed; German translation
“	1952	On the Liberal Catholic Church: extracts from letters of C.W. Leadbeater to Annie Besant, 1916-1923
“	1905	On the Other Side of Death; Dutch translation
“	1978	Other Side of Death, The; Finnish translation
“	1906	Other Side of Death; Bulgarian translation
“	1910	Other Side of Death The; French translation
“	1923	“ “ “ ; “ “
“	1903	Other Side of Death
“	1904	“ “ “
“	1911	“ “ “
“	1928	“ “ “
“	1903	“ “ “
“	?	“ “ “; Braille translation
“	?	“ “ “; Vietnamese translation
“	1911	Other Side of Death, The; Spanish translation

## CWL Speaks

“	1963	Other Side of Death, The; French translation
“	?	Other Side of Death The; Vietnamese translation (condensed)
“	1905	Our Relation to Children; Spanish translation
“	?	Our Relation to Children; Braille translation
“	1904	Outline of Theosophy, An; Spanish translation
“	1969	Outline of Theosophy, An ; Tamil translation
“	1974	“ “ “ ; Malayalam translation
“	1913	Outline of Theosophy, An ; Italian translation
“	1902	“ “ “ ; Dutch translation
“	1936	“ “ “ ; Romanian translation
“	1905	Outline of Theosophy ; Bulgarian translation
“	1904	“ “ “ ; Finnish translation
“	1912	Outline of Theosophy, An ; Portuguese translation
“	1906	“ “ “ ; French translation
“	1992	Outline of Theosophy, An ; Russian translation
“	1909	“ “ “ ; Polish translation
“	1903	“ “ “ ; Danish translation
“	1902	Outline of Theosophy, An
“	1916	“ “ “ “
“	1933	“ “ “ “
“	1947	“ “ “ “
“	1942	“ “ “ “; Braille translation (2 vols.)
“	?	Outline of Theosophy, An; Russian translation
“	2000	Outline of Theosophy: The Power and Use of Thought: To Those Who Mourn and the Attitude of the Enquirer; Korean translation (Four titles in single volume)
C. W. L.	1911	Perfume of Egypt, The; and Other Weird stories
“	1912	“ “ “ “ “
“	1948	“ “ “ “ “
“	1904	Planetary Chains, The; Dutch translation (from stenographic report of a lecture – Amsterdam)
“	1964	Power and Use of Thought, The; Tamil translation
“	1961	“ “ “ “ “

## Pedro Oliveira

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“	?	“	“	“	“ Portuguese translation
“	1910	Power and Use of Thought, The;	French translation		
“	?	Power and Use of Thought, The; and the Mysteries;	Braille translation.		
“	1931	Presidential Address delivered at 1 <sup>st</sup> . session Bombay	Theosophical Federation.		
“	1924	Proofs of Theosophy; Portuguese translation	(also a Lecture – The Influence of Theosophical	Teachings on the Unfoldment of Man –	in Portuguese)
“	1903	Rationale of Telepathy and Mind-Cure			
“	1926	“	“	“	“
“	1906	Reality of the Astral Plane, The			
“	1903	Reincarnation; a Theosophical lecture - Harrogate			
“	?	Reincarnation and Karma, (portion of An Outline	of Theosophy); Portuguese translation		
“	1910	Return to Birth, The; Dutch translation plus an essay	in Dutch “The Education of the Child according to	Occult Science”	
“	?	Sacrament of Baptism, The (abridged version of	Science and the Sacraments)		
“	1927	Saviour of the World, The; Spanish translation			
“	1925	Science of the Sacraments; Spanish translation			
“	1926	“	“	“	; French translation
“	1920	“	“	“	
“	1929	Science of the Sacraments, The; German translation			
“	2002	Selected Works of C.W. Leadbeater; Russian transla-	tion		
“	1936	Smaller Buddhist Catechism, The; French translation			
“	1902	“	“	“	“ ; Singhalese transla-
		tion			
“	1923	Smaller Buddhist Catechism; Tamil translation			
“	?	Smaller Buddhist Catechism; Dutch translation out of	Singhalese by C. Jinarajadasa		
“	1953	Some Fundamental Teachings of Theosophy;	Italian translation		

## CWL Speaks

“	1909	Some Glimpses of Occultism; French translation
“	?	Some Glimpses of Occultism
:	?	Soul and Its Vestures, The
”	?	Soul’s Growth through Reincarnation, The (a study) introduction by C. Jinarajadasa
C. W. L.	1908	Souvenir of 22 <sup>nd</sup> . Annual Convention in honour of Colonel Henry Steel Olcott
“	1928	Spiritualism and Theosophy
C. W. L.	1917	Starlight (seven addresses given for Love of the Star)
“	?	Stray Notes on Races; Braille translation
“	1928	Talks on the Path of Occultism in Tamil;
“	1927	Talks on “At the Feet of the Master”; Italian translation
“	?	Temple Thought Form, A; Dutch translation
“	1938	Textbook of Theosophy; Italian translation
“	1913	“ “ “ ; French translation
“	1940	“ “ “ ; Hindi abridged translation
“	1961	Textbook of Theosophy, A; Icelandic translation
“	1942	“ “ “ ; Kannada translation
“	1912	“ “ “ “
“	1914	“ “ “ “
“	1941	“ “ “ “
“	1947	“ “ “ “
“	1954	“ “ “ “
“	1941	“ “ “ “ A Braille translation (4 vols.)
“	1915	Textbook of Theosophy, The; (chapters of), Malay translation
“	1911	“ “ “ “ ; Russian translation
“	?	Textbook of Theosophy; Dutch translation
“	1925	“ “ “ “ ; Finnish translation
“	1967	Textbook of Theosophy; Spanish translation
“	?	Textbook of Theosophy; Portuguese translation
“	1924	Textbook of Theosophy; Polish translation
“	?	“ “ “ “ ; German translation

## Pedro Oliveira

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“	1980	“ “ “ ; Bengali translation
“	1942	Textbook of Theosophy ; Telugu translation
“	1912	Textbook of the Theosophy ; Dutch translation
“	?	Theosophical Pamphlets Collection; (initialed by C. Jinarajadasa)
“	1903	“ “ “ “ ; Harrogate
“ and H.S.O.	1948	Theosophical Society, The; Addresses to New Mem- bers by C.W.L., H.S.O. and Others
“ and A.B.	1935	Theosophy (A.B.), Four Noble Truths (C.W. L.) and Light on the Path (M. C.), One Volume; Tamil translation
C.W.L.	?	Thought Forms; German translation
“	1913	To Those Who Mourn
“	1915	“ “ “ “
“	1943	“ “ “ “
C. W.L.	1913	To Those Who Mourn; French translation
“	1938	To Those Who Mourn; Italian translation
C. W. L.	?	To Those Who Mourn; Spanish translation
“	1995	To Those Who Mourn; Spanish translation
“	?	To Those Who Mourn; Dutch translation
“	1918	“ “ “ ; Hindi translation
”	1913	To Those Who Mourn; Dutch translation
“	1960	“ “ “ ; Greek translation
“	1922	“ “ “ ; Braille translation
“	1913	To Those Who Mourn; Kannada translation
“	1914	“ “ “ ; Portuguese translation
“	?	“ “ “ ; German translation
“	1936	“ “ “ ; Serbian translation
“	1913	“ “ “ ; Italian translation
“	1914	“ “ “ ; Hungarian translation
“	1917	“ “ “ ; Tamil translation
“	1913	“ “ “ ; Spanish translation
“	1963	“ “ “ ; Russian translation
“	1944	“ “ “ ; German translation
“	1967	“ “ “ ; Vietnamese translation
“	?	To Those Who Mourn; Rumanian translation

## CWL Speaks

- “ 1927 Two Wonderful Rituals; Dutch translation of a chapter from the Hidden Life of Freemasonry
- “ 1901 Unseen World, The; Lecture – Chicago
- “ 1906 Unseen World, The; Lecture – Harrogate
- “ 1905 Unseen World, The; Lecture – Madura
- “ 1907 “Use and Misuse of Psychic Faculties”, from Some Glimpses of Occultism; Dutch translation
- “ 1913 Vegetarianism and Occultism
- “ 1970 Vegetarianism and Occultism
- “ 1965 Vegetarianism and Occultism; Braille translation
- “ 1932 “ “ “ “ ; Italian translation
- “ 1905 “ “ “ “ ; Spanish translation
- “ 1974 Vegetarianism and Occultism; Indonesian translation
- “ 1963 What Theosophy Does For Us; Tamil translation
- “ ? What Theosophy Does For Us; Braille translation
- “ ? Why Not I?; Braille translation
- “ 1900 What Theosophy Does For Us; an address – Buffalo, New York, 27-10-00
- “ 1911 Why and How to Study Theosophy, (article in Adyar Bulletin 15-12-11); French translation
- C. W. L. 1916 Why does the World Teacher come? Tamil translation of Australian lecture
- “ ? World Beyond, The; or the Astral Plane and extracts from the Devachanic Plane; Hungarian translation
- “ ? World in Distress, A
- “ 1948 World Mother, The; Spanish translation
- “ 1982 World Mother, The; Kannada translation
- “ 1928 World Mother as Symbol and Fact, The

### About the Compiler

Pedro Oliveira was born in Brazil in 1957 and joined the Theosophical Society in that country in 1978, working for it in several capacities, including as a translator and national speaker. He was educated at the Military School of Porto Alegre and holds a degree in Philosophy from the Federal University in Brazil.

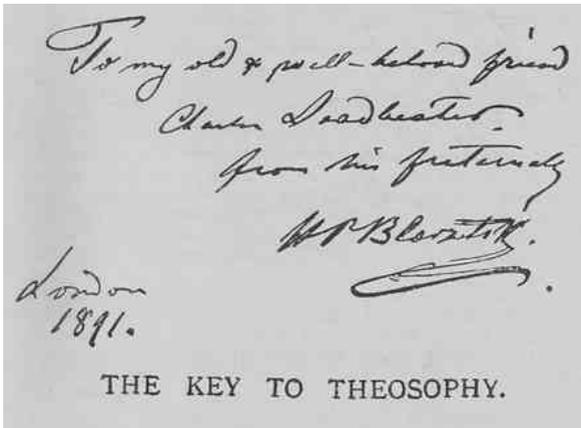
He was International Secretary of the TS from 1992 to 1996, during which time he lectured in India, the Asia-Pacific region, Australia, New Zealand and the United States. He was a guest presenter both at the Krotona School of Theosophy in Ojai, California, and at the National Headquarters of the American Section in Wheaton, during April and May 1995, respectively.

Oliveira was President of the Indo-Pacific Federation of the TS from 2001 to 2007, and during this period he travelled extensively through the region, giving talks and seminars. He also worked as Education Coordinator of the TS in Australia from 2002 to 2008, and from 2012 until now, producing educational material for all TS Lodges, Certified Groups and National Members. From 2009 to 2011 he served as the Officer-in-Charge of the Editorial Office at the International Headquarters of the TS at Adyar.

He has contributed articles to *The Theosophist* and other TS journals for the past thirty years. His works include (with Ricardo Lindemann) *A Tradição Sabedoria (The Wisdom Tradition)*, published by the TPH in Brazil; *Mysticism: Bridge to Nowhere*, an online study course written for the members of the National Lodge of the American Section, and *N. Sri Ram: A Life of Beneficence and Wisdom*, published by the TPH Adyar.

He is also the author of three study courses published by The Theosophical Society in Australia: *Introduction to The Key to Theosophy*, *Understanding the Psychic World* and *The Secret Doctrine – An Eclectic Introduction to its Study*.

## CWL Speaks



To my old & well-beloved friend  
Charles Leadbeater,  
from his fraternally  
H. P. Blavatsky.  
London  
1891.

THE KEY TO THEOSOPHY.

Dedication written by Madame Blavatsky on the copy of her book *The Key to Theosophy* which she presented to CWL in London, in 1891, the year she died:

‘To my old and well-beloved friend  
Charles Leadbeater  
From his fraternally  
H. P. Blavatsky  
London 1891.’