



# THE THEOSOPHIC MESSENGER

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR

THE INTERCHANGE OF THEOSOPHICAL OPINIONS AND NEWS.

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All readers are cordially invited to send questions, answers to questions, opinions and notes upon Theosophical subjects. All communications should be written plainly and on one side of the paper only, and addressed to **The Editor, 4940 Washington Ave., Chicago, Ill.** Subscription price to non-members, 50 cents per annum.

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## An Appeal to All Our Members.

Within the last few weeks I have received many letters from members in different parts of the Section asking me for information as to the coming election of a successor to Colonel Olcott, what my opinion is in regard to the Adyar phenomena and messages, how I intend to vote, or for advice as to how the member writing should vote.

I take it that these inquiries are directed to me more because I am the oldest member (in point of time of membership) of the American Section and am known personally or by name to most of our members, than because of any special qualifications I may have for giving information or for giving advice. My only apology for coming before the readers of the MESSENGER in this way must be that it is impossible for me in the press of business

correspondence and duties to answer all these letters in detail, and I have therefore asked space to briefly state my position with reference to the coming election, and my reasons for taking and holding it, and to bring to the attention of our members the position held and statements made by Colonel Olcott and Mrs. Besant in the crisis of 1894, bearing as they do upon the present crisis.

Let me say that I have not and shall not advise any member how he should or should not vote. I regard the present crisis as a test of the perception, wisdom and courage of each member and hold that each should be left entirely free to decide and to act as to him seems best and right. But I also hold that when one is asked for information, or is asked to state his position and why he holds it, he should if possible comply—but with dispassion and

without any attempt or even the wish to unduly influence anyone else.

As to the technical part of the coming election, the explanatory circular which has gone out from the General Secretary's office with the voting slip (which should be promptly filled out and returned by each member to that office) gives brief but clear information. Should Mrs. Besant not receive the necessary two-thirds majority, the General Council will then place in nomination another member to be voted upon.

Full information as to the Adyar phenomena messages and communications and circumstances connected with them, may be found in the communications from Colonel Olcott, Mrs. Besant, Mr. Mead, Mr. Keightley, Mr. Upendra Nath Basu, Mr. Fullerton and others appearing in recent issues of the MESSENGER, *The Theosophical Review*, *Theosophy and New Thought*, and other T. S. periodicals. These and the various circulars and other letters, *pro* and *con*, which no doubt most of us members have received, should be carefully read and weighed by each and every member in order that he may be as fully informed and have as clear an understanding of the existing situation and the issues involved, as possible and thus be enabled to decide and to vote intelligently.

As to my position:

I shall vote against the election of Mrs. Besant. I shall do this, much as I love and revere her, because I believe that to vote for her would be an endorsement of precedents and methods which, in my judgment, have properly no place in the Theosophical Society and which, if recognized and admitted as valid and binding, will destroy it. I

refer more particularly to the alleged psychic phenomena, messages and "directions" claimed to have taken place or to have been given recently at Adyar. I do not for a moment question the good faith of those concerned in or reporting them—least of all, that of Colonel Olcott and Mrs. Besant. But by their very nature, the verification of the authenticity of all or of any of these or of their source by myself is absolutely impossible. This is equally true of the vast majority—practically of all—of our members. But it is not, to me, a question of whether the phenomena and message are authentic or not. The real question is far more vital than this.

There was published in 1894 by the General Council of the T. S. a document entitled "The Neutrality of the Theosophical Society," containing the proceedings of the Judicial Committee, called to try Mr. Judge on charges preferred by Mrs. Besant. It includes the *Address* of the President-Founder and a *Statement by Annie Besant*. Parts of these bear so directly upon and are so illuminative in the present crisis that I commend them to the thoughtful consideration of all our members, because the present acute confusion, differences, and dissensions in the T. S. are almost or wholly due to alleged personal psychic phenomena and communications.

In her statement, Mrs. Besant very sanely and truly says:

\* \* \* "The source of messages can only be decided by direct spiritual knowledge or, intellectually, by the nature of their contents, and each person must use his own powers and act on his own responsibility, in accepting or rejecting them. Thus I rejected a number of letters, real precipitations, brought me by an

American, not an F. T. S., as substantiating his claim to be H. P. B.'s successor. Any good medium may be used for precipitating messages by any of the varied entities in the Occult world; and the outcome of these proceedings will be, I hope, to put an end to the craze for receiving letters and messages, which are more likely to be sub-human or human in their origin than superhuman, and to throw people back on the evolution of their own spiritual nature, by which alone they can be safely guided through the mazes of the super-physical world." \* \* \* —(*The Neutrality of the Theosophical Society*, p. 14.)

I stand with Mrs. Besant in this. To me the vital question at this time is not the fitness or the unfitness of any particular member of the T. S. for any particular office. With many of our oldest and most earnest members, I believe there to be a vastly more important question than this involved in the coming election, and that is, as to whether or not members of the T. S. should have moral questions decided for them from the outside, or by others, or by personal psychic phenomena and messages (whether authentic or not does not matter) and especially whether or not the T. S. is to be governed in its administrative affairs by and through such phenomena and pronouncements.

I do not believe that it should be so governed, nor that members should so depend for their guidance and decisions on moral or on other questions. To concede validity and binding force upon the T. S. or on its members to the Adyar phenomena and messages—whether genuine or not—would, in my judgment, take away individual, moral and intellectual (and official as well) responsibility, would set up the "fatal dogma of authority," and would open the door to unlimited fraud, delusion and imposture in the adminis-

trative affairs of the T. S. I do not believe any real Masters of Wisdom would wish either members, officials, or the T. S. to be so governed, or that They would seek or would wish to impose Their will on anyone. To do so would be contrary to all we have been told or believe of Their nature and methods. I prefer to believe that They meant what They said when they told H. P. B. and Colonel Olcott: "Work as though we didn't exist."

Part of the objects and teachings of Theosophy, so far as the individual is concerned, is to show him how best to build right character, and to help him to develop mental balance, clear moral perception and moral sanity, intuition, wisdom, courage, self-reliance. To set up the "fatal dogma of authority"—whether from visible or from Occult realms—would defeat this.

To know that in his normal condition (see Mrs. Besant's account in March *Theosophist* of the mental and physical condition of our late President-Founder in his last illness) our late President-Founder—beloved and revered by all of us—would have been the last to violate the fundamental principle of the T. S. by seeking to impose psychic authority and pronouncements on it officially or on its members, and the last to knowingly violate the Constitution (of which he himself may be said to have been the father) by exceeding his constitutional right to nominate—not to appoint—we have only to read parts of his "Address" referred to: (*Italics mine.*)

\* \* \* "Mr. Judge's defense is that he is not guilty of the acts charged; that Mahatmas exist, are related to our Society, and in personal mentary proofs to support his statements. You

connection with himself; and he avers his readiness to bring many witnesses and docu- will at once see whither this would lead us. *The moment we entered into these questions we should violate the most vital spirit of our federal compact, its neutrality in matters of belief.* Nobody, for example, knows better than myself the fact of the existence of the Masters, yet I would resign my office unhesitatingly if the Constitution were amended so as to erect such a belief into a dogma; everyone in our membership is as free to disbelieve and deny their existence as I am to believe and affirm it. For the above reason, then, I declare as my opinion, that this enquiry must go no farther; *we may not break our own laws for any consideration whatsoever.* It is, furthermore, my opinion that such an enquiry, begun by whatsoever official body within our membership, cannot proceed if a similar line of defense be declared. If, perchance, a guilty person should at any time go scot-free in consequence of this ruling, we cannot help it; *the Constitution is our palladium, and we must make it the symbol of justice or expect our Society to disintegrate.* \* \* \*

\* \* \* "The meeting was worth holding for several reasons. In the first place, because we have come to the point of an official declaration that it is not lawful to affirm that belief in Mahatmas is a dogma of the Society, or communications really, or presumably, from them authoritative and infallible." \* \* \* The inference, then, is that testimony as to intercourse with Mahatmas, and writings alleged to come from them, *must be judged upon their intrinsic merits alone*; and that the witnesses are solely responsible for their statements." \* \* \* —(*The Neutrality of the Theosophical Society*, pp. 7 and 8.)

I stand with Colonel Olcott in the position here taken by him, as I believe will every member who has the well-being of the T. S. at heart. Indeed, no other position is logically tenable and every one of us should thoughtfully consider and weigh these statements of Colonel Olcott's and Mrs. Besant's, with all their import, because they have direct bearing upon much that has

taken place in the T. S. within the last few months.

To our older members it is a fact of deep significance that all three of the great crises that have come to the T. S. have come through psychism, and especially that the crisis which up to this time most nearly destroyed the T. S. came through the attempt to force upon some of its members the acceptance, as valid and authoritative, of alleged psychic phenomena and messages. Let us hope with Mrs. Besant that soon there will be "*an end to the craze for receiving letters and messages, which are more likely to be sub-human or human than superhuman in their origin.*"

For these reasons I shall vote against the election of Mrs. Besant to the Presidency. But because I shall vote against her, is no reason in itself why any one else should so vote. Each should decide and act for himself, giving expression by his vote to his honest convictions, having regard only to the welfare of the T. S. movement. The fact that Mrs. Besant—beginning long before either of us became members of the Theosophical Society—has always been my ideal, and that I feel such a profound debt of gratitude to her because of what she has done for the T. S., for Theosophy and for the world makes it all the more painful for me to now place myself in apparent opposition to one to whom we all owe so much and whom I especially so deeply love and revere. But I should be untrue to myself and to all that is best and the highest in her and in her teachings, if I did not now refuse to follow her when I honestly believe she is going in the wrong direction, or if I did not now refuse to support her in

what my best judgment tells me is a mistaken course. And while opposing her election, my recognition and appreciation of all she is and of all she has done, and my gratitude to and affection for her personally remain undiminished. My confidence in her honesty of purpose remains unshaken, even while I no longer feel the same assurance of her wisdom and good judgment in administrative affairs that I once felt. No one—myself least of all—doubts her devotion to Theosophy and to the Society, nor that any mistakes that she has made or may make are mistakes of the head and not of the heart—of judgment, and not of intent. In coming to my decision I have tried to follow, in a humble and perhaps very imperfect way, the teachings of the *Gita* and of *Light on the Path*, especially the injunction in *Rule 10* (*Second Series*) and the *Note* to it. While recognizing the value of devotion, I believe that it should be devotion to principles, rather than to persons, for devotion to persons is very apt to degenerate into the fanaticism that blinds to right, to truth, and to justice. The truest loyalty to a teacher is to follow—not the teacher—but the best and highest of his teachings.

And now may I be permitted a few words to those who stand with me, as well as to those who differ from me? For I hold both equally my friends and brothers.

To me, the T. S. is greater than any member of it, however exalted, and the T. S. movement is greater than is the T. S., which is only the vehicle and "form side" of the T. S. movement. Behind and greater than either or than both, is our philosophy. Nothing can

injure nor affect our philosophy, but unwise or precipitate action may cripple or even destroy the T. S. and greatly injure and retard the T. S. movement and cause, both of which are in our care.

I am told that some of our members intend to resign in case Mrs. Besant is elected, that others intend to resign in the event that she is not elected, while yet others have resigned or are resigning because of the troubles that have recently arisen in the T. S. Now such action to me does not seem wise nor in accordance with Theosophical teachings. The good soldier does not desert in the midst of the conflict, nor does the good sailor mutiny in the height of the storm, nor desert his ship because those in command are not just those he thinks should be in command nor because they do not, in everything, do just as he thinks they should do. If Mrs. Besant is elected, let all of us who, as a matter of principle and because we believe it to be for the best interests of the T. S. and of the movement, now oppose her election, turn to and heartily support her in all right efforts she may make to carry the T. S. safely through and beyond its present troubles, and if in our judgment she makes mistakes, there is all the more reason why we should remain in the T. S. and help right them. Disturbing and perplexing as the events of the last year have been and must be to all of us, they have useful and needed lessons to teach if we will but look at them rightly and dispassionately. The great danger in this present crisis is that members may allow honest differences of opinion and of judgment to degenerate into mere personal contro-

versies, sure to lead to personal animus and personal antagonisms. Let us all avoid this, and without sacrificing honest convictions, let us try to take the other's point of view—at least temporarily—and to feel the same tolerance for and sympathy with it as we would wish him to feel for and with ours. For those of us who are now in earnest in our Theosophic interest and work, will again take up that work together in many lives in the future, and antagonisms set up now will hinder and make difficult our work then. We would better learn here and now the lessons of forbearance, tolerance, and harmony. Let each of us therefore grant to every one else the same liberty of thought, of decision, and of action that each claims for himself. In so doing, we shall be working for real Brotherhood and shall earn the privilege of again coming back into and of working for the theosophical movement. And finally, let us all join in the hope that before long the clouds that now hang so loweringly over the T. S. may be dissipated, and that we may once more all be permitted to go on with our Theosophic work and studies, free from the perturbing influence that the painful events of the last year or two have brought into the Society and the movement.

DAVITT D. CHIDESTER.

### The Coming Election to the Presidency

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 honor for the truth of it. *This letter has been sent for publication to all the Sections of the Theosophical Society.*<sup>2</sup>

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, Col. 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 Col. Olcott and Annie Besant, and on the other side the supposition and conjectures of Mr. Mead.

Col. 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.<sup>3</sup>

Mrs. Besant has through her life, works and writings, proved to be in possession of first-hand knowledge about superphysical things.<sup>4</sup>

In opposition to them we find Mr. Mead, a highly respectable, aye, learned man, an old member of the Society who, however, has never shown any possession of higher faculties, and never was in contact with the Masters, for so far as I know, and who now, on his own authority, wishes to impress us with the idea that both Mrs. Besant and Col. Olcott have lost their power of discrimination, and are no longer able 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."<sup>5</sup>

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 "the 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* 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 fulfill 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 and America; that also the preparation 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 honor 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 Col. 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 Col. Olcott gave their lives, 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.*  
Amsterdam, March 13, 1907.

1. Neither Mr. Mead, nor anyone else has questioned the honesty of the witnesses, nor the genuineness of the phenomena, but the high authority claimed for these pronouncements is utterly and openly rejected, not only by Mr. Mead, but by Mr. Basu, Mr. Keightley and many of Mrs. Besant's most devoted friends in India and England.

2. This letter was not sent to this office, nor to the Gen. Sec of the American Section. It was sent by Mrs. Besant to a leader of the Leadbeater faction in Chicago, with request to circulate it.

3. It is true Col. Olcott mentions receiving advice and instruction from the Masters as to his personal action; but never before was any official edict promulgated to the T. S. in the name of the Masters.

4. The possession "of first-hand knowledge about superphysical things" cannot be proved, in the ordinary acceptance of the term.

5. Personal character is one thing; official fitness is another. To say that Mrs. Besant is not fitted, by abilities or temperament, to fill an executive office, is not to impugn her character. Her unhesitating belief that the recent communications at Adyar came from the "Masters," prove how easily she can be now deceived and "glamored" and her attempt to impose her "Master's" orders upon the whole Society does justify the statement that her elevation to the presidency will result in a "psychic tyranny."

6. Yes, probably; but Mr. Mead and others, who do not believe that the "Masters" had anything to do with the late manifestation at Adyar take the common sense view that the proper performance of the duties of President of the T. S. is impossible to one already burdened as Mrs. Besant is. She certainly will not give up the Presidency of the Hindu College nor the headship of the E. S., and she has just announced her acceptance for life of the editorship of the Theosophist.

7. Not at all; it seems to us entirely right that a General Secretary should state his views and give his reasons for them on this issue, so vital to the Society. But he should be willing to allow the same privilege to those whose views are different from his own, and not accuse of a "personal attack" those who point out serious objections to a candidate in whom he can see no fault.

### To My Fellow Members in the T. S.

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 T. S. in succession to Col. 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.

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 T. S. 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 Col. 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 7th to the T. S., its officers and members, Col. Olcott purports to "appoint Annie Besant to take the office of President of the T. S." 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 21st.

All who have known Col. 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 any one of them 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 spirit of the constitution which always characterized 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 the constitution and rules, if such unrecognized 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 honor, 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.

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 Mas-

ters of Wisdom, and of the fact that They take interest in the T. S., 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 such an 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 recognized by every nation and people, but one who has committed an offense 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 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.

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.

### "The Basis of the Theosophical Society"

[The following letters upon this extraordinary article of Mrs. Besant's are reprinted from the April number of the Theosophical Review. They are only a small part of what appears on the subject in that magazine.]

LETTER FROM MRS. SCOTT-ELLIOT.

It is with the greatest amazement and pain that I have read the article by Mrs. Besant in the March number of the Review, entitled "The Basis of the Theosophical Society," as the principle—or rather want of principle—advocated in it is contrary to all which we have hitherto held to be the true basis of Theosophy, and is in direct contradiction to Mrs. Besant's own previous utterances, whether in her books or her lectures. Therefore I venture to protest most earnestly against this new and "dangerous doctrine," which is totally subversive of morals.

I also protest against the recent attempt made, in the "Two Communications from Adyar," and in Mrs. Besant's own letter to the branches, to force upon the Theosophical Society an entirely new departure, namely, that it shall be ruled and coerced by personal psychic experiences. The reality or non-reality of these visions is not the point at issue. The question is: Whether a world-wide Society shall be at the mercy of *any* psychic visions whatever, or whether it shall (as heretofore) be guided by reason and calm judgment?

But most emphatically of all do I protest against the manner in which the ideal we hold of the Masters of Wisdom has been desecrated and dragged in the dust through the inane and immoral babblings of the Adyar apparitions being attributed to them. We are

asked to believe that They have acted as did old-time electioneering agents, bribing and threatening to secure votes for their "appointed" candidate.

That anyone who has ever held a pure and lofty ideal of Them should for a moment believe Them capable of upholding vice (see the second "Communication from Adyar") or of ordering members of the Theosophical Society to "refrain" from doing all in their power to protect the victims of vice, is to me incomprehensible. Such a state of mind can only be accounted for by the much-talked-of "glamour." We all talk of this glibly enough but we too often forget that glamour can find no place in a soul filled with the Divine Presence. The Christ told us plainly that glamour must have a house "*empty, swept and garnished,*" before it can "enter in and dwell there" and blind the soul to truth and reason and all—save itself.

Mrs. Besant is right in one thing; the time *has* come for us each to choose whom or what we will serve. We must each of us take up our responsibility, and laying aside all blinding veils of "affection" or "gratitude," or *cowardice*, decide whether we mean to serve God and His Servers the Masters of Wisdom, or to be the sport of the present Adyar apparitions and of their future manifestations, for let us be well assured that this is only the beginning. The powers of evil having had so easy a triumph now, will be ready for fresh deceptions later on; and Mrs. Besant having once accepted their "glamour," will be even an easier prey to their next attempt. Let us watch and pray lest we, too, enter into temptation.

M. L. SCOTT-ELLIOT.

## LETTER FROM MRS. WEBB.

It seems desirable that, at the present crisis in the Theosophical Society, many of the ordinary members should express themselves, as well as those we look up to as our leaders. It is a moment at which every member of the Society must bear his or her share of responsibility. We cannot wait for others to decide things or to make up our minds for us. The vote of the newly joined and ignorant member counts for as much as that of the oldest and wisest.

We must remember that this is no ordinary election of a President. This nomination has been put to the Society on an *extraordinary* basis. It is no question now of whether we do or do not wish Mrs. Besant to be President. It is a question of whether we mean or do not mean to allow the Theosophical Society to be governed by the personal psychic experiences of individual members. Everyone must have some opinion as to the principle here at stake. Nor can we stand aside and do nothing, even if we would. To abstain from voting is not to do nothing, it is to add a vote or votes to the side from which we differ, and each member *has* to take a share in deciding the fate of the Theosophical Society in what has become a very critical situation.

Let us then face our responsibilities with courage, not trying to shelter ourselves behind others or to leave them to do our duty for us. They cannot and we can. There is no member who is not able to form a judgment as to whether it be wise or not that we should depend in our official acts on inspirations of this kind; and we may well consider whether it be evidence of

wisdom in those from whom the messages come that they should suggest our doing so.

For one thing, not all the members of the Theosophical Society believe even in the very existence of Those we call the Masters. This in itself is a strong reason against basing a purely official election on the ground of entirely unprovable assertions as to Their wishes; and this would hold even if the fact of its being Their wish were undoubtedly true. But to many—perhaps most—this will hardly appeal. If they believed these manifestations to be true they would care little for the correct official attitude, or anything else.

And for such, what must be the test of the truth or untruth of these reported interviews? Surely there is none worth having but the test of reason and conscience applied to the interviews themselves. Do they show forth the Holiness and Wisdom of their supposed Source?

I suppose all who believe in the Masters have some ideal which that term connotes for them. Probably most of us believe that this falls immeasurably short of the reality, or, at any rate, few would accept anything lower than that ideal, such as it is. If we take any words that appeal to us as in some measure expressing it, and, putting them over against these supposed revelations, ask ourselves how they correspond, I think the answer will be pretty certain. We might take any of the great words that have come forth to the world from the Highest Sources, but I will take only a few words from a little book that professes no authority whatever, words which the context

shows were written concerning the need for discrimination between the False and the Real in such manifestations:

“Master’s words, however much they may be opposed to one’s previous thoughts, never fail to bring the most absolute conviction, alike to the intellect and to the moral sense of the person addressed. They come like a revelation, rectifying an error which becomes at once apparent; they stream down like a column of light dispelling the gloom; they make no claim on credulity or blind faith.”—(*The Doctrine of the Heart*, pp. 55, 56).

To turn from this to the petty, and paltry, and immoral messages we are offered as coming *direct* from Sources of Light and Truth is a descent so sharp that it must surely make us pause.

The form the present crisis takes is such that in opposing these psychic happenings, we find ourselves in apparent opposition to one who is looked up to, with much reason, as one of our chief leaders,—who is, by many, regarded as a special instrument of Those whom some believe to stand behind the Theosophical movement.

For many members this is a grave difficulty. Their love and respect for one to whom they owe very, very much, and whom they believe to be far beyond them in spiritual and mental development, is on the one hand, and on the other the duty of following truth, at the cost, apparently, of opposing themselves to the leader they love and venerate. But this I believe to be a fallacy. There are different ways of showing love and respect. If the person you revered most in the world were stepping into a quagmire, mistaking it for solid earth, it would be a poor way

of showing your devotion to walk in too; and if a leader is mistaken, those who follow knowingly do a cruel wrong, while in refusing to follow they offer their best help. This seems so obvious as not to be worth saying; but one hears of members who, rejecting the truth of these supposed revelations entirely, yet feel it is right to support Mrs. Besant,—because she is Mrs. Besant.

I, for one, have enough faith in Mrs. Besant to believe that she desires truth and light far more than I do myself. I believe that for the moment she is holding for truth something entirely false, and so I do not believe that those who oppose her in this are in reality opposing her at all, but that, on the contrary, in fighting for truth here, we are fighting for what she too loves best,—are *with* her and not against her—only *against* some cloud of darkness that has risen up from the Not-Self.

If we doubt there is a cloud, let us look at her article in the last number of the Review, with its shaky morality, and ask ourselves which comes from the real Mrs. Besant, this, or the lofty teachings of “*The Outer Court*” and “*The Path of Discipleship*”? If the latter, then surely her heart is on the side of Light and Truth, whatever she may believe for the moment, whatever cloud or “glamour” may temporarily hide Reality from her.

We have all heard of, and perhaps talked glibly enough of, “glamours” and the “difficulties that bestrew the path” of those who advance, and yet it seems the last thing that most of us take into our calculations as a practical possibility for such. Why should we be dismayed if this be so? Should we

not do better to try, from the comparative safety of a lower level, to realize a little what the dangers and difficulties of those ahead must be, who "wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against the powers, . . . against the spiritual hosts of wickedness"?

BEATRICE WEBB.

### In the Matter of the Presidency.

If any facts bearing upon the question of the Presidency, now before the T. S., have been long well understood, by every member of the Society, in all its branches around the world the following have been:

1. That the President Founder has been guided for 31 years by Masters of Wisdom whom he often met face to face, which guidance he in many ways, in "Old Diary Leaves" and other writings, publicly declared on his Honor to be the Truth, and a number of prominent members of the Society, have often publicly declared that they knew the same Masters, and the declarations of Col. Olcott in this matter have been so supported and endorsed for 31 years, that there has been created in the Society, a settled belief in the existence and supervision of the Masters over the Society, and the thought of this guidance has been a source of great joy.

2. By the Constitution, the President Founder, had the right to nominate his Successor, to take office on receiving a two-thirds vote. This gave him the power to name who he chose, to give many reasons if he chose, or none whatever, and to call an election when he chose. It may be said, this was giving him great power, and so it was, but it was given to one who had given his all to the Society, and who would not do it harm.

In view of the foregoing:

a. Why are not the witnesses to the Masters as credible now as at any other time?

b. Why should not the Col. have sought Their presence and counsel on his approaching dissolution?

c. What more like him, and to be admired in him than that he should at once tell the members what he had seen and heard?

d. If he had withheld the Truth or if there had been no visit to him of the Masters, at so great a crisis, would not those who now object have filled the air with shouts. "What has become of the Masters?"

e. Who can imagine the mental turmoil which would have ensued in the Society today, if the President-Founder, had departed and left no story of the 'Masters at Adyar'?

f. Though he might have named as his successor, that most gifted, devoted, untiring and lovable leader (A. B. whose name I think has long been in the minds of more than two-thirds of the members) without any story of the "Masters at Adyar" would not even she be called upon to explain, "What has become of the Masters"?

g. Fortunately, I think for the good of the Society, *the Master came* and the whole story has been told by these two brave leaders, and though one be now dead, no one dare say that either of them would prevaricate.

h. There was an object doubtless, in the framing of the Constitution, to give the President-Founder, the choice of his successor. The selection of a successor by him, (subject of course to the vote) was a right conferred upon him by the Constitution. Is it not too late after his death to question the Constitution, or condemn the Founder for acting upon it? Who made the Constitution, which is now considered so lame?

i. What danger is there of any "Autocracy" when the President is bound by the provisions of a written constitution?

j. If the nominee, Annie Besant, is burdened with offices and responsibilities some of which she might have to drop if she becomes President, is it not for her to decide which, if any, she will drop? And pray, what other competent Leader is there in the T. S. who could fill the office without dropping some of his "offices and responsibilities?"

k. Do we not all desire to have the greatest and best fitted member to be President? And who can stand along side of Annie Besant?

H. C. WITHERS.

Carrollton, Ill.

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### The Real Issue Before the T. S.

It is a hard thing to oppose the wills of those we have long loved and revered, but there are times when to do this is an imperative duty. Such a time has come to us now. Let us try to look at the matter calmly and see what are the causes that have brought us to this painful pass; then we shall know that in courageously and resolutely doing our duty to the T. S. we are also showing the truest love and devotion to the leaders—both the one who is here and the one who has passed on ward—whose wishes we find ourselves bound to disregard.

It will be admitted by most, if not all of our members, that until she was actually named by Col. Olcott to succeed him, Mrs. Besant had never been thought of as his possible successor. The facts that she was the head of the E. S., that she was generally recognized as the best speaker and writer in the T. S., that she already had more work than she could possibly accomplish, and that she was not fitted by character or temperament to fulfill the duties of an executive office—all these prevented any thought of her as our possible president.

Now let us consider what would probably have happened if our late President had nominated Mrs. Besant in a simple and constitutional way. The objections cited above would have remained and would have been urged against her election; other and more serious objections, of which we will speak later on, would have been brought forward. But there would have been no such turmoil and excitement as exists today. The election could have gone forward at once, and, in all probability, Mrs. Besant would have been elected. If the Masters of Wisdom, Who, we confidently believe, do interest Themselves in the welfare of the T. S., had deemed it best for the interests of the Society that Mrs. Besant should be our next President, They could have easily brought this about by advising Col. Olcott—not in the presence of witnesses—to nominate her, and by advising her to make no objections, but to accept the office if elected.

But what really happened? After his return to Adyar, and when in a state of physical and mental prostration, the idea came to Col. Olcott of appointing Mrs. Besant to succeed him. Being worried about it, he concluded to ask the advice of the Masters, and—you all know what happened—"In the presence of witnesses the Masters appeared" and told him to appoint Mrs. Besant. They also told him to publish the fact that they had so instructed him, and Mrs. Besant approved of this publicity. She not only approved of giving these facts to members of the Theosophical Society, but she stated them in an obituary of Col. Olcott given by her to the press of India, and sent Mr. Fullerton a similar article containing the same statements, with a request that he give it to the New York papers. When she found that the authenticity of these instructions was being questioned, Mrs. Besant published a letter to the members of the T. S., giving the most minute details of her instructions from "her



Master," pledging her word of honor to the truth of what she had stated (though no one had doubted her word), and closing with a warning that in voting against her, members were rejecting "the Masters."

Throwing aside all other considerations for a moment, is it conceivable that the Masters of Wisdom and Compassion could have set on foot anything that could possibly lead to such deplorable results?

But is it not quite conceivable that the entities who at Adyar made the statements contained in the "Conversations with the Mahatmas," should have been unable to foresee the results of their efforts and should have believed, as Mrs. Besant evidently did, that with such backing she would be carried into the presidential chair on a wave of enthusiasm, without a dissenting voice?

That Mrs. Besant could be so deceived, that she could descend to use such methods to influence an election and believe she was doing the Master's work, is infinitely sad, and shows how completely her common sense and perception of the fitness of things were held in abeyance by the influences surrounding her.

But this is not all. We have not yet reached the lowest depths of this soul-tragedy. The melancholy events of the last year may be said to have culminated, so far as they concern Mrs. Besant, in the publication in the February *Theosophist* of "The Basis of the Theosophical Society" and "A Recent Conversation with the Mahatmas." In order to understand this it is necessary to review briefly Mrs. Besant's course of action during the last year in relation to the withdrawal from the T. S. of Mr. Leadbeater. We have carefully refrained from mentioning his name in these pages heretofore, but it has been published far and wide recently, "by order of the Mahatmas," and reticence on our part is therefore

useless. When the case was brought to Mrs. Besant in January, 1906, she took the ground that he had only been guilty of an error of judgment, that he had promised her not to continue giving the objectionable teaching, and in consideration of this and his great services to Theosophy, she saw no reason to dissociate him from his work, either in the T. S. or the E. S., or to do anything about the matter. She continued to hold this view until she received from London the details of the Advisory Council, when she reversed her decision and cabled to America: "Seen evidence; defense impossible; sending repudiation." This was followed by a letter which reached America in July, in which she expressed her repudiation in very clear and decided terms. While this was in a letter to the E. S., she expressly stated that the passage containing her repudiation could be given to the T. S. generally, if thought necessary, and it was generally given out at the time, and is quoted fully in Mr. Fullerton's circular, dated February, 1907. In August, 1906, in reply to a letter from a Chicago member, inquiring about the possible rein-statement of Mr. Leadbeater, she wrote: "Mr. Leadbeater's restoration to membership would be fatal to the T. S. Even if carried in America it would never be accepted in the other sections." But after her repudiation of him, Mr. Leadbeater began writing her, and his letters, pleading his own cause, undoubtedly were a potent factor in bringing about the complete change of base indicated first in her article, "The Basis of the Theosophical Society," which, if adopted as the platform of the T. S., would utterly destroy its usefulness as a means for the uplifting of humanity. It is a piece of special pleading, and its application to Mr. Leadbeater's case is clearly demonstrated in the following paragraph: "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 realization 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 inquire whether, as a matter of fact, he *has* helped any to realize brotherhood, and the testimony that he has helped would be final." In other words, according to this article, Mr. Leadbeater should never have been removed from the T. S. at all. Her second recantation is contained in her statement appended to the "Conversation with the Mahatmas," in which, upon the word of the Adyar appearances, she abdicates her own judgment, and accepts their declaration that she was *not* glamoured when she thought she had worked with Mr. Leadbeater on the higher planes. A third time she declares a reversal of judgment, when, in reply to the question, "Would you, as President, permit X's (Mr. Leadbeater's) re-admission?" cabled her by the Council of the Blavatsky Lodge, London, she answered: "If publicly repudiates teaching, two years after repudiation, on large majority request of whole Society, would reinstate, not otherwise." No person with strong convictions, one way or the other, would ever take such a position. But it indicates, as other things have done, all through this Leadbeater case, an instability of purpose when faced with opposition which is a fatal defect in a ruler. As she has changed from one side of this vital question to the other and back again within twelve months, what guarantee have we for any stability in the future? A cable message to the General Secretary from Mrs. Ruskak, the last of March, "Publish nothing; await very important letter first," would indicate that already some change is going on at Adyar. It is idle to speculate as to what it may be. It cannot nullify what has taken place.

In view of the facts stated above, it must be clear that in voting for Mrs. Besant for President, members will vote for a lowered standard of morality, for the ultimate return of Mr. Leadbeater to the T. S., and the continued possibility of psychic interference in the government of the Society. To those who desire these things, the way is clear, but those to whom the preservation of the high ideals, of the purity and of the independence of the Theosophical Society is of paramount importance, cannot afford to let their personal affection and gratitude to Mrs. Besant blind them to the truth. Shall we not best serve *her*, best show our love and devotion to *her*, by refusing to give her power to do more harm, when clearly shown that she has been so worked upon, so distracted by conflicting forces, that she has lost her mental poise, her moral insight.

### A Statue of Col. Olcott.

We learn from the March *Theosophist* that Mrs. Besant has placed a commission for a statue of Col. Olcott in the hands of Mr. Govinda Pillai, who executed the statue of H. P. B., which stands in the large hall at Adyar. The pedestal of this statue will be enlarged so that the two founders of the Theosophical Society may stand together. The model of the statue has been approved.

Any friends who wish to share in the raising of this statue are invited to send their contributions to the Treasurer of the T. S., Adyar, Madras, India.

### The "Theosophist."

Mrs. Besant announces in the March *Theosophist* that, at the request of our late President-Founder, she has undertaken the editorship of the *Theosophist* for the rest of her life. The general policy of the magazine will be the same as heretofore.

### One View of Psychic "Orders."

(From "The Meaning of Adeptship," by Mr. Sinnett, in *Broad Views*, for April, 1907.)

The Adept never makes automata of his fellow creatures, nor even when these are in conscious relations with himself,—turning for a moment to the minority of partially illuminated disciples actually treading the path that leads to Adeptship. Never, even in dealing with them, does he constrain their action, as he might so easily if he chose. Deplorable misconceptions are apt to arise from a failure to appreciate this profoundly important principle, and neophytes, zealously enthusiastic in their devotion to exalted Masters whom they reverence without reserve, are but too prone to talk of the "orders" they receive, and are proud, when received, to execute. One must not be too dogmatic in attempting to interpret the mysteries surrounding Adeptship, and circumstances may sometimes undoubtedly arise in that world of spiritual existence already partially withdrawn from the turmoil of commonplace life, when the activity of the subordinate in the performance of the work assigned to him may be guided by definite directions from his chief.

But such guidance, be it observed, would be in the nature of detailed directions, filling up a programme in harmony with the bent of his own desire to be of service. So far as limited opportunities have enabled those of us who are students of occult mystery to observe the course of events, the cases in which "Masters" intervene in what would be called physical plane affairs are quite extraordinarily few; so few that many of us engaged in occult

study, learn to believe that no such interventions ever take place, and that if, on any occasion, they may seem to take place, that semblance is terribly suggestive of the possibility that an intervention of a very different kind from those of which we have been speaking has somehow been possible.

For, be it remembered, in the discussion of all mysteries connected with Adeptship, we are unhappily as sure that evil influences are sometimes operative on higher spiritual planes, as well as those designed to serve the spiritual growth of the world, and included in the term so often used in this essay—Adeptship. It would be a misuse of language to talk of evil Adepts, but influences and conscious agencies desirous for reasons too intricate here to analyze, to impede the spiritual progress of mankind, and to disconcert measures for its promotion which the loftier Adeptship may have designed, do actually exist, and play a part in the complexities of occult experience. It has been said that, as regards individualities on this plane which such agencies may desire to influence or deceive, that under the operation of some subtle law relating to spiritual activity they cannot reach any one whose mental attitude is perfectly untinged by any motive but that simple desire to do the right thing, which lies at the root of all genuine spiritual aspiration. If personal ambitions of a self-regarding character happen to color the behavior of anyone in the service of the divine hierarchy, if, under embarrassing temptation, such person is betrayed into paltering with the truth, if the attractions of the transitory life are sufficient to drive into the background the duties

appertaining to the loftier, then those who allow such crevices in their armour to be discerned, become terribly subject to deceptions of the kind hinted at above.

(Reprinted from the April Vahan.)

MY DEAR EDITOR.

May I beg a small space in which to speak of a subject which seems to me just now of extreme importance? A letter I received from Benares a few days ago contains the following passage: "Our Masters themselves told the Colonel that Mrs. Besant was the best person (for President), and, therefore, he has nominated her. I should think this would be a direct guide for most of the members in their vote." I wish, at the earliest possible moment, to record my protest against any renewal of the fatal attempt to govern the Society by "Master's Orders." The pretention to give out these orders has been from the very beginning the plague-spot, the source of all evil in the Society, the reasonable foundation for most of the distrust it has awakened. I do not doubt that H. P. B. was in communication with the Masters, and occasionally learned what They thought of things. She could not resist the temptation (perhaps it was more than human nature *could* do to resist) to convey this to her pupils. And what came of it at Adyar? A Celestial Postoffice, into which everybody could drop a letter and get advice or money, piping hot from the Himalaya Ashram, in five and thirty seconds! And in her last years the supposed interference of the Masters in the domestic affairs of Avenue Road became simply comic, even to her most devoted disciples. Mr. Judge

carried it just one step farther—from grey to black magic—with what results we all know. And now our dear Col. Olcott, who in health would have been the last to allow it, on his helpless and almost unconscious sick-bed is made to revive the Original Sin of the Society!

It is not only that in *all* such cases there is reasonable doubt of the authenticity of the messages. There is much more against them than mere doubt. The Masters do not—and we *know* They do not—give messages of this kind at all; it would be a use of Their powers They have always refused to make, just as all the Great Teachers in the flesh have done. I will not put it in my own words; take these few lines from Mrs. Besant's *The Case Against W. Q. Judge* (p. 6): "Concerned as these Merciful Beings are, with the *spiritual* development of mankind, with the drawing out of the highest faculties, the noblest virtues of the neophyte, They never try to *force* upon him a proposition which he is not ready to accept, even though the proposition embody a great truth. The Masters' method is not to storm or surprise the disciple, but so gently to open his inner vision as to make him think and feel that he has himself found the light and the truth." And yet we are asked to believe that these Masters wish to override our own judgment in an election!

What vote I myself may give when the time comes is nobody's business but my own; but my decision will be made, and I am certain the Masters *wish* it to be made, according to what seems *to me* to be the right thing to do, entirely uninfluenced by visions and revelations. An election proeured by

such means would be a mere farce, and it seems to me the duty of everyone who loves and reverences the Masters to join in repudiating this misuse of Their names. Are we not, in this and in other matters, just now inclined to forget that no good intentions can make a wrong thing right?

Yours sincerely,  
ARTHUR A. WELLS.

This letter was written and sent to the Editor before the publication of Col. Olcott's unfortunate "Conversation." This has but made its protest still more necessary.—A. A. W.

### GLAMOUR.

"Satan is the minister of God."  
"He is the magistrate of the Justice of God."

The Secret Doctrine reconciles us to the existence of evil in the world by showing us its necessity. Only by knowing evil can we do good, and only by swinging between the pairs of opposites can we exercise freedom of choice and develop wisdom. Lessons of pain teach one phase of truth, lessons of pleasure another. God, the One Supreme, is the author of both good and evil. He is the source of the pair of opposites, when the One falls into two, at the beginning of creation, never separated from Himself, but One in dual aspect. He is the Holy Ghost and Satan at one and the same time. He is the source and origin of the Suras (good forces) and the Asuras (evil forces), those Angels of Light and Darkness, who live but to do his bidding in the scheme of evolution, for the attainment of its perfection. Thus His devas arrange conditions which soothe and encourage men by joy, or tempt and test by suffering, according to his Law of Karma, and *at the call or need of each soul* that he may become perfect by overcoming, or may learn through falling if that is his inevitable Karma. Where man is weak, obstacles are set in his way that he may become strong by overcoming. Good and not evil material provides the punching bag for the athlete. Where man is in error, circumstances are

arranged which will prove the falsity of concepts, of premises or conclusions, and teach wisdom. Every experience of life is a God-given opportunity, be it good or ill.

Man can see the meaning of the happenings without suffering if he will, but if to him some evil seems good, it takes on a semblance of truth because of the reflection from his own mind of some deep misconception. The Century Dictionary defines glamour as a supposed "influence of charm on the eye causing it to see objects under an unreal semblance; hence, anything that obscures or deceives vision, mental or physical."

A man's personal prejudices bias the vision and thus provide the "glamour" thrown over events and he reads into them what his own impurity reflects back to him. He is self-deceived, falls into error and endures the suffering necessary to replace a false perspective for a true one. Glamour, then, is that which makes evil appear good, and the false true (or vice versa), because of some false note in ourselves. It is the temptation of ignorance of personal desires or of false ideals within us. Only absolute purity is proof against temptation.

The devil of the Christian is no God-defying power, before which He is helpless, but is the lower self in each, created by God himself out of which to evolve His own image and likeness, the Higher Self. In this sense, the old Christian plea, that the devil tempted me and I did fall, finds its analogue in theosophical phraseology in "glamour." Neither is an excuse but the evidence of some weakness or vulnerable spot in the lower self. Satan tempts, but is not to blame for the yielding, as he is God's agent for giving the opportunity for the gaining of wisdom; whether we call this aspect of God, Devas or Asuras or Lords of Karma, they are all one in the Supreme. The name for this entity or force is of no consequence, but it is well to see that he or it is not an irresistible fiend, a gloating black magician, but Venus-Lucifer (Satan), who is both tempter and redeemer. Christ says, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from Heaven."—Luke x-18. "It means that even the devils are subject to the Logos—who is Wisdom, but at the same time, as the opponent of ignorance, he is Satan or Lucifer. This refers to Divine

Wisdom falling like lightning on, and so quickening, the intellects of those who fight the devils of ignorance and superstition." (S. D., Vol. II, 240-257).

In this sense, we can recognize that the so-called dark powers have indeed done good work at Adyar, in revealing undreamt-of misconceptions and appalling credulity, that wisdom may be forthcoming. Because to some, exposure of a crime seems worse than the crime itself, and wickedness more deserving of protection and moral support than innocence and honesty, the Lords of Karma (nothing takes place outside of their agency), brought about a seance that carried these false premises to their logical conclusions of the absurd contradictions that one unfit to belong to the T. S., is fit to be an accepted disciple, that trifling human imperfections and grave criminal offences belong in the same category, and that too much publicity had been given in informing members of certain facts therefore give more and worldwide publicity to these messages. Indeed, the T. S. must be harboring most dangerous ideals, if it can reflect a glamour of truth and reason over these astounding instructions.

The occasion for them is a necessary and illuminative piece of ripe karma, which will show how much we really understand of those phrases of which we talk so glibly, piercing the veils of illusion, of the blossoms in the Hall of Learning (astral plane), and "under every flower a serpent coiled," of the dangers of premature gaining of the siddhis, of casting off the fetters of pride, and of the glamour of ambition, the first great curse.

If there is one thing which Theosophists should have learned, it is that there is no more certain indication that a superphysical message comes from a source of mediocre intelligence than flattery. No one worth listening to from higher regions ever wastes time in this way or would enlarge a person's self esteem or give him an exaggerated sense of his own importance. Flattery is a favorite weapon of astral entities and is the most subtle form of glamour, as we all have pride and vanity which responds and makes it seem for the moment true.

But entirely apart from the intellectual quality and moral tone of the Adyar messages, what has the T. S. to do with astral psychism,

which all its literature warns against, as both cause and effect of mental and moral degeneracy? What is the use of preaching that common sense flies out at the door when psychic guides come in at the window, if we are to yield our judgment to apparitional pronouncements? Can it be that the T. S., which claims the spiritual ancestry of true mysticism, is in danger of going to pieces on this same old commonplace rock of psychism—that malpractice of the Science of the Soul—which has destroyed so many ignorant cults of false mysticism—and from the dangers of which we believed that Theosophical teachings were a complete safeguard? The roll call in May will answer.

Because the T. S. needs to discriminate between self government and psychic guidance, between real tolerance and its travesty, to support persons because of the principles they uphold, not for personal affection, to prefer disruption to loss of honor or betrayal of trust, and to beware of the dangers of the wave of psychism sweeping through the movement, the Society deserved this cleansing expose of kindly and curative karma, and the events at Adyar are danger signals warning it against the direction in which it was drifting.

Because the welfare of the T. S. is of greater importance than that of any individual, we make this plea for impersonal and impartial consideration of what is due to the honor of the highest office in the gift of the T. S., and what constitutes fitness or unfitness for it.

Not because we forget but because we remember Mrs. Besant's teachings in "Path of Discipleship," "In the Outer Court" and "Dharma," should we reject the pseudo-morality in the "Basis of the Theosophical Society," which repudiates her former teachings, nullifies her true work when in her prime she gave her real message to the world. Not because we love her less, but because we love the T. S. more should we have the moral courage to answer the call of duty and loyalty to it, by voting to keep its ideals unshaken and uncompromised. It is ours to say whether or not we shall place the office of its President at the mercy of psychic guidance through the changing whims of other world messages (see last cablegram from Mrs. Russak, p. 134) and on a moral basis lower than that of commercial and secular institutions of the day.

If we do, the Society will slowly but surely become a spiritualistic order with no moral requirement for membership, and, should that happen, then heaven save theosophy from the Theosophical Society. Only if the Society rejects these astral, mental and moral indignities by voting against Mrs. Besant as President, will it have successfully pierced the glamour and read the meanings of recent happenings. Only by so doing will it show that its concepts of the Master are too real to be obscured and desecrated by the Adyar travesty.

While we believe that the enforced publicity of the Adyar communications is and ever will be a blot on the records of the T. S., we can but recognize with deep sorrow that it was a needed experience and a fitting climax in the sequence of recent events, and is rich in fruitage to all who understand, even though we grieve over its cost. If the Society shall be victorious by the defeat of Mrs. Besant in the coming election, it will be the third great crisis caused by psychism and safely passed. May it also be an end to blind, credulous and false hero worship and personal leadership in the T. S., when it can enter on an era of saner, purer and surer growth and usefulness.

F. T. S.

### Reasons for Mrs. Besant's Election.

Signed circulars containing arguments against the election of Mrs. Besant to the Presidency of the T. S. have been printed in the Theosophic Messenger. It is reasonable that all sides should be represented.

The questions before us are: Do we want Mrs. Besant as President? If not, whom do we want?

In my two visits to Europe I have become personally well acquainted with all of the probable candidates for the position. Some of these, as admitted by those who know them, would bring great hindrances to the office. None have the all-round qualifications of executive ability, knowledge of the whole field, and the devotion built out of many years of entire service to the movement that Mrs. Besant possesses.

For these reasons I support Mrs. Besant.

MARY WEEKS BURNETT, M. D.,  
3104 South Park Av., Chicago.

### To the Members of the Theosophical Society.

The President-Founder having passed away from earth, the chief authority in the T. S. is vested—by Rule 27 of the Constitution—in the Vice-President, Mr. Sinnett, until the votes of the Society confirm or reject the nomination of myself as his successor, made by the President-Founder. As he made me his deputy for the last months of his life, I am holding the headship of the headquarters temporarily—with the approval of the members of the Council within reach, Mr. Sinnett being in England—for ordinary business purposes; the officers the President-Founder appointed continuing in their several posts. Should the necessary two-thirds of the recorded votes of the members render valid the late President's nomination, I shall then assume office, and issue an address to the members.

This *interregnum* in the Presidential office will not occur again, as the Council will be bound to nominate the successor of the next incumbent six months before the expiration of his term of office, so that the newly elected President will take up his work so soon as his predecessor leaves office.

It should be remembered that while I, personally, regard myself as the nominee of my Master, as well as our President-Founder, no member of the Society is bound to take that view, nor to base his vote on any authority save that of his own private judgment. Neither the President-Founder, nor—with all reverence be it spoken—our Master does more than nominate; each member is free to accept or reject, and the responsibility of his vote is the individual responsibility of the member.

Belief in the Master is not incumbent on any member of the Society ; those who believe in Them are not bound to believe in any particular manifestation asserted as genuine by others. Perfect freedom as to belief or non-belief in any view or statement is the precious heritage of the T. S., and while I myself know the manifestations to be genuine, I defend the right of every member to disbelieve them, and to vote for or against the President's nomination, on any ground chosen by himself.

ANNIE BESANT,  
*Member of T. S. Council.*

### NOTICES.

Having received instructions from the Acting President, the circular of directions to voters, whereto is appended a voting slip, has been printed and will be mailed to every separate member on the last day of April, with an accompanying addressed envelope, wherein the vote is to be sent to me. As soon after June first as belated votes may be expected to arrive, the envelopes will be opened and the votes counted by a committee consisting of the General Secretary, the Assistant General Secretary, Mr. A. P. Warrington of Norfolk, Mr. D. D. Chidester of Philadelphia, and Dr. Weller Van Hook of Chicago. Official notice of the result will then be sent to the Acting President, and all members of the Section will receive their information through the July issue of THE MESSENGER. It is earnestly requested that members carefully observe the simple directions in regard to the voting-slip, so that no vote may be uncounted through blundering.

Every possible care has been taken

in addressing, but so many members have failed to apprise me of changed address in time for the preparation of the 2500 envelopes needed, that a number of envelopes may fail of delivery. In that case it will be necessary for the member to write to his former address and secure the forwarding of the envelope. Duplicate voting-slips cannot be furnished.

All votes must be cast in the month of May, as directed by the Acting President.

The Counting Committee have agreed among themselves that the vote of no member shall be disclosed to any person.

ALEXANDER FULLERTON,  
April 13, 1907. Gen. Sec'y.

A member of this Section notifies me of having received from India a voting-paper, of having filled out the vote, and of having returned it to India. The Indian action is a gross impertinence, as well as an attempted fraud. I have desired the Acting President to give notice to Adyar that such votes are illegal and cannot be counted, and I have requested Mrs. Besant to ascertain the name of the offender and to transmit it to me. It is intolerable that electioneering tricks should be attempted in the Theosophical Society, and I shall feel grateful to any other member who has thus been approached if he will inform me of the fact.

ALEXANDER FULLERTON,  
Gen. Sec'y.

We desire to call attention of members to another change in the Lecture Bureau. It is now in the hands of Miss Lillian Kelting, 14 Seeley Ave., Chicago, to whom all lectures should be sent that are now out.