

Oct.-Nov. 1946

Wheaton, Ill.

My dear Ones:

I am still living in the wonderful Headquarters of the American Section. In many ways it must be the most splendid National Building in the world. It is very large and spacious, and since I saw it last, about 14 years ago, it has mellowed in its brick work, and lovely trees and shrubs have grown up around it. I wish you could all see it. There is a high and spacious hall, whose walls are covered with symbolic paintings by a first class artist. There is a beautiful library, which is high enough to have a gallery running around it. At one end there is an oil painting of Dr. Besant, at the other a grand piano for when we have musical evenings. All lectures are held in this library. On one wall of the hall hang the pictures of those who have worked at "Olcott," as the Headquarters is called. The comfort of the whole place is wonderful. Each room is beautifully furnished, and has its own bathroom. A tremendous amount of work is done in the Headquarters, and there are many Staff Offices. One work is the sending of food and clothing to the starving peoples of Europe. I am so thrilled with everything that I am more than ever determined that we must have before so very long a similar National Headquarters in South Africa.

I want this letter to talk about the "Beginning of the Way." So many people never take the first step because they feel that they are "not good enough," or evolved enough, or something like that. Now, that is something that we cannot individually know. We must always begin just where we are. "To go far we must begin near." This pilgrimage of the soul, like all cycles, large or small, has two arcs. Plato describes them in his own lovely and unforgettable way. The Indian scriptures speak of the out-going path, the Pravritti Marga, and the path of return, the Nivritti Marga. Upon the out-going path man is rightfully self-centered, or even selfish. We can see it in the lives of children which epitomize the race. No little child is naturally unselfish. This regard for self forms round the spark of hardly-individualized Spirit a carapace of selfhood, which acts as a protection, like the shell round a chicken. On this path we grow by taking.

But when the cycle is nearing completion, the man's orientation begins to differ. The organization of the various sheaths of Spirit are almost completed, and now begins the time when the Christ-Child within must be awakened to grow and shine forth through the gradually purifying sheaths of matter. On this path a man grows by giving. What he keeps he loses. What he pours forth he gains.

I think St. Paul was referring to these two paths when he spoke of the Law of sin and death, meaning that which governs the first path, where, because personal aims and motives rule, personal effects ensue. If happy, bringing happiness to the individual concerned; if unhappy, bringing evil to him from the past. In reality there is no "evil karma," for all reactions are framed to teach the man, to cure the original disease. Thus pain and sorrow cure the disease of selfishness and insensitivity. It is always during the last of a man's lives upon this road that the heaviest burden of sorrow and disaster generally fall upon him. "God doth not suffer a man to be tempted (tested) beyond what he is able." If the results of our misdeeds came back to us at once we might be crushed by them. So the Lords of Karma hold them back until the soul, like gold tried in the furnace, is strong enough to learn their dark and wonderful lessons. This is why the good and spiritual seem to have so much trouble, whilst the "Wicked" seem to flourish like the green bay tree. Let us remember the words of the Master K. H.: "Take it as an honour that suffering comes to you, for it shows the Lords of Karma think you worth helping."

In one of Alcyone's lives the Lord Maitreya says to two little girls, in prophecy of what would happen to them: "This is the first of the lives of expiation, that old karma may be outworn, old wrongs made right." To turn our steps to



the Path of Return is to challenge our karma. But we shall always be strong enough to face it, if we trust our Master and Life.

There are so many today who are upon the threshold of this Return Way, who would seek the Kingdom of Heaven, if only they knew how and where. The Buddha told His disciples that there were many young men in the world whose minds were only lightly covered with the dust of worldliness, and who would see their way did some enlightened and unselfish soul point it out to them. How shall we know that we are near this Return Path? The very fact that we enquire or aspire is a clear indication. But we may still, even for lives, find ourselves unwilling to make the personal sacrifices which that austere and lovely road will ask of us. Still the divine ego within us will have the patience of eternity. Only in these marvellous days the Gates of Heaven are so far open. It is an appointed time, a spiritual flood-tide in the affairs of men.

Only the law is that everyone must find it himself, must tread his own road, and that no brother may make compensation for him, or carry him one step. And the first step is to be taken from just where he is, and just as he is. Goodness does not come into the picture. It is true that the path develops an utter purity of heart and life, but if we wait to be pure of heart and life before we begin, we shall never make one step. God does not ask a man beyond what he is able. Has he a murky past, many faults, many blindnesses? It will be accounted to him for righteousness that he took one right step. "Even if the most sinful worship me with undivided heart, he too must be accounted righteous, for he hath rightly resolved." (B. G. IX, 30) Eternal Life and Love cares more for what we shall be than for what we have been. The wonder of life is the patience and love with which Life awaits our slow, but inevitable, unfolding.

So without fear, and in utter confidence, let us take the first step. "Draw nigh unto God, and He will draw nigh unto you." Our Father will never fail to meet us, stumbling and dark as may be our first steps. And wise shall we be never to compare ourselves with others to our own detriment and spiritual enfeebling. In the eyes of Spirit no differences matter. The Great Lover of all life cares as much for the smallest, most blinded soul, as for all His Saints and Perfected Men. Just as we are, let us set out upon the road; the days of taking are over. As we grow in power more and more to give, so shall our destiny come to us.

How long will it take? Do not ask. That is heavenly bargaining, and leads nowhither. When and where we must leave in the hands of the Master and of God. The way is sure, and the end is certain, if we have the strength and the perseverance to tread it. "Have patience, candidate, as one who fears no failure, courts no success. Have perseverance, as one who doth for evermore endure." Ah! who has the patience and the perseverance? I think truly the ready of spirit. There is a story told in the East of two yogis who went to see a great sage. They wanted to know how soon it would be before they would attain liberation. To one the sage said: "You will attain in two more lives." The yogi thus addressed began to groan and complain. To the other the sage said: "Do you see this tree? As many leaves as this tree bears, so will the number of births be before you attain." And this true chela fell on his knees in thanksgiving that he was upon the true road, and so selfless was his soul that at that very minute he entered into the peace and bliss of Eternity.

Your affectionate friend,