

*My niece says  
such lovely parcels  
have arrived from Washington  
Thank you all so much.  
Love, C.C.*

LETTER 11.

United States of America  
April-May, 1947

My dear Ones:

I am at present in the lovely State of Oregon, full of mountains and forests and big rivers. I watched its lovely scenery by moonlight, coming up in the train. I had such a wonderful time in California, meeting again so many friends of long ago. I have now recovered nearly all in this country whom I have never forgotten. Some of them are still active workers in the T. S., and some have left the work. That does not make any difference to me. Once a friend always a friend, and what a friend does or thinks is entirely his own concern. I spent an evening up at Arya Vihara, Krishnaji's home. There I met again some of the boys and girls who used to be around Bishop Leadbeater in Australia long ago. We sat and reminisced, and Krishnaji listened to us. He has now grown a beard which makes him look like a Rajput warrior.

Two other things remain potently in my memory besides the loveliness of Oregon: the giant redwoods, unbelievable in their astounding majesty, and the beautiful Memorial to Abraham Lincoln at Washington, D. C. It is in the form of a square Greek temple with white marble pillars; each of which represents one of the States. It is surrounded by dark cypress trees, and inside sits a gigantic figure of Lincoln, gazing out through the pillars over the land he loved and served so well. At night this is floodlit, and he can be discerned from a long distance. On the walls behind him are inscribed in gold lettering extracts from his famous speeches, especially the one at Gettysburg. They are so noble and simple and true. There is also a Memorial to Thomas Jefferson, circular in shape and with the figure standing. Behind him, too, are inscribed his most unforgettable words. Reading them one is aware that there were moral giants in those days, men of unassailable integrity and worth. The Lincoln Memorial has become a kind of National Shrine of America. There is an extraordinary atmosphere round it. So even in his death Lincoln is still the greatest President of them all. I am glad that America gave us the statue of him which now stands outside the Houses of Parliament in London.

This Letter I want to discuss the nature of charity. Ruskin told us that much old wisdom is wrapped up in derivations, so let us look at the origin of the word. Webster's dictionary says it is derived from two Latin words, caritas, dearness, love, and that comes from carus, dear, loved. It is clear that the spirit of charity does not mean giving to the needy, often that which we do not want ourselves. It really means "to whom all things are dear." If all persons and all things were dear to us what patience we would have, what willingness to learn to understand, what desire for their highest good. Sometimes I feel that there is only one lesson to learn in life down through the ages, how to love. We all think we know how, but I very much doubt it. For what passes for love is often only self-love projected. Love has to be learnt, and it takes many a life of sorrow, loss and disappointment to learn it.

Sometimes people will be honest enough to admit that apparently they do not love anything. Being human they must have got the power to love, but, like many of us, they are too negative. They do not love, but wait to be loved, and so their own active, forth-going power remains atrophied for lack of use. Like a man who has stayed too long in bed, the power must be slowly brought back to full use once more. St. Francis wrote a prayer that he might seek to love, not to be loved, to understand not to be understood, to console not to be consoled. Sometimes we will hear that a man once had friends, but because the friends did not live up to his ideals of them, he became disappointed and dropped them. One could say: "My dear man or woman, what frightful impudence. Why should your friends live up to your ideals for them?" St. Paul wrote: "Charity suffereth long and is kind; charity envieth not, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil. Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things,



endureth all things."

A Thibetan Scripture describes seven forms of love, three which belong to men, and four to the gods. The first and simplest is also shared by atoms and molecules and planets and suns. It is mere magnetic attraction and soon exhausts itself. The second we can call psychic. It is on a 50-50 basis: I love you if you will love me, and you owe me something because I love you. This carries the seeds of its own death. The love which is immortal and can never die is hardly natural to man and must be learned. It is so to love that we desire only our friend's highest good and in his own terms. Who is willing to do that? How often we try to force people into the groove we have marked out for them.

Sometimes we lose a loved one by death or estrangement. Then comes our chance to purify and enlarge our power of loving. "Death and estrangement" says Light on the Path, "show a man at last that to work for self is to work for disappointment." When we can hardly bear to go on living because death has taken our loved ones, what makes us suffer most? Are we thinking of their great gain, or are we mostly conscious of the loss to ourselves of their dear and attentive presence? One thing we must always remember. A man can never lose that which he loves if he continues to love it. A work will return, a lover will return, if in his heart he continues to love and serve. That is the deathless power of the Universe because it is the fundamental aspect of God. Dr. Besant had a friend who after having helped her in a great work, suddenly turned for a while against her and tried to destroy what he and she had done. She still kept his photograph on her desk, and when an impulsive member asked her why, she replied: "Do you not know, my dear, that if you still continue to love in spite of everything, you win the right to help that person in another incarnation?" Once a devoted wife asked the Lord Buddha how she might be sure that she would meet her beloved husband again in all future lives. The Blessed One told her that if she never ceased to love and forgave him everything she would forge bonds that could never be broken.

St. Therese of Lisieux meditated on the injunction of the Christ to His disciples to "love one another as He had loved them." She found that "true charity consists in bearing all my neighbour's defects, in not being surprised at mistakes, but in being edified by the smallest virtues." She knew too, that she should show herself honoured by the request for service and if anything was taken away she should appear glad to let it go. This, she said, was true of heavenly as well as earthly things. "Neither the one nor the other are really mine."

If we love we rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that do weep. In His great Meditations for His monks, the Lord Buddha taught them to love so that they longed for the happiness and welfare of all beings, and to be so compassionate that the sorrows and disappointments of others moved their hearts profoundly and their joys filled them with joy also. Such is Love which saves the world.

Your affectionate friend,

*Clara Codd.*

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