

Write JC + led her to many letters -

LETTER 12.

Wheaton, Illinois, U.S.A.
June-July, 1947

My dear Ones;

I am just concluding a year's tour, and am writing this in the "twin cities" of St. Paul and Minneapolis. Tomorrow I leave for Madison and then home to "Olcott" again. When I reach Madison I shall have recovered every one of my friends of long ago in this country. What made this year's work so wonderful, personally, was meeting again these friends and finding that they had not forgotten me as I had never forgotten them. To my friends in other countries I must tell what generous, affectionate friends Americans are. Their hospitality is boundless. I have just come from the heights of the Rocky Mountains, Butte, where snow is still evident, and it was very cold, and am now in Minnesota, the land of lovely lakes. I found at Butte an old and valued member of our Society who is a "coloured" man; I am happy to say that we have more than one such. The other day I listened to the great Negro contralto, Marian Anderson, who sings with such a spirit of dedication, purely religious, especially when singing "spirituals" that one cannot be otherwise than deeply moved. I love the "spirituals." To me they express in an unforgettable and moving fashion the hidden yearnings of a suppressed and alien race who had nothing left to them in the years gone by but God. And I shall never forget the piano-playing of a tall, young negro, a friend of a friend of mine, whose powers of improvisation were unique. Dr. Arundale could improvise beautifully. I once heard lovely music coming from the lounge in the Manor, Australia. I opened the door and there was Dr. Arundale improvising all to himself. Now the Convention, held this year at Olcott, and the famous Summer School, is drawing near. I shall be speaking at them on "Saintship in the Theosophical Society," and "The Coming World-Order."

This letter I thought I would like to talk about duties. I find so often that people get confused as to what is their duty. Sometimes they will come and ask me to tell them. Of course, in this matter, as in all other decisions, the ultimate decision must come from ourselves. Do not be afraid to make a decision even if it should turn out in the long run to be mistaken. We shall never evolve our powers of judgment unless we boldly decide, and are bravely willing to learn from the results. If we ask other people to decide for us that power will never grow. "Oh!" people say, "but I don't want to make a mistake." Now the man who never made a mistake, never made anything else either. Look how philosophic we are about other people's mistakes. Why not be just as philosophic about our own? In these matters we must learn to judge from as impersonal a standpoint as possible. H.P.B. used to say that if someone's else life was more important to humanity than ours, it was our duty, if we were both starving, to die ourselves and feed the other man. And a Master of the Wisdom once wrote to an aspirant: "Try to look at yourself with the absolute impersonality of a stranger and do not be led into anxiety or remorse."

Anxiety and remorse: have we ever meditated on what they really mean? They both take their rise from our quite natural egotism. We are anxious because we fear what may happen, or may not happen, to us or to those we love. We have not the same care for what may happen to those not so bound to us by ties of love. We are remorseful because by our own ignorance or negligence we have done something, or omitted to do something, which would have brought us, or not brought us happiness and success. Again it is the personal loss which hurts. But what wisdom we would learn if we could be strong enough and pure-hearted enough to be willing to learn from the results whether they brought us bliss or pain. H. P. B. said that vanity and remorse were both rooted in the personal life and could only be cured by the realisation of the One Life. Even a too morbid criticism of personal motives is unwise. Let us look on our characteristics as a workman looks at his tools. If he has work to do he uses his tools as they are. If he has a little leisure he polishes them, but he does not think he is his tools. In the same letter mentioned above the Master writes: "Cultivate happiness, knowing that depression and over-morbid investigation of motive and undue sensitiveness to the criticism of others leads to a condition wherein a disciple is almost useless. Happiness is based on confidence in the God within us, a just appreciation of time, and a forgetfulness of self. Take all glad things which may come as trusts to be used to spread joy, and rebel not at happiness and pleasure in service. Suffering comes as the lower self rebels. Eliminate desire and all

is joy. Have patience. Endurance is one of the characteristics of the Ego. The Ego persists, knowing itself immortal. The personality becomes discouraged, knowing that time is short. To the disciple naught occurs, but what is in the plan, and where the active and sole aspiration of the heart are towards the carrying out of the Master's will and the serving of the race, that which eventuates has in it the seeds of the next enterprise, and embodies the environment of the next step forward."

Two things alone matter in all the worlds - love and courage. So we must not only learn to love, but to have the deathless courage of our own immortality, too. Of course, we may always consult the wisdom of those who are more experienced than we are as yet, but do not follow blindly or shunt our decisions on to their shoulders. Mrs. Besant once told us that when anyone came to her to ask what they should do she always suggested the path of least resistance, "for," she said, "if they had been strong enough to take any other they would never have asked me."

The Master said to Krishnaji: "Discrimination is to be practised not only at the beginning of the Path, but at every step of it every day until the end." We are asked to make continual choices. Which is right? Which is best? With regard to our duties one thing is clear. Some people will argue that the least little duty to the Lodge or to the Society must always come before home duties. I think they are often wrong. H. P. B. told us that the first duty of every Theosophist was "to do his duty by every duty." And the Master put it thus: "Because you take up higher work, you must not forget your ordinary duties, for until they are done, you are not free for other service. You should undertake no new worldly duties; but those which you have already taken upon you, you must perfectly fulfil - all clear and reasonable duties which you yourself recognize, that is, not imaginary duties which others try to impose on you. If you are to be His, you must do ordinary work better than others, not worse; because you must do that also for His sake." And again: "all helpful, unselfish work is the Master's work, and you must do it for His sake."

Is a member, called home to the aid of ailing parents, giving up the Master's work for personal service? What a terribly short-sighted, inhuman point of view! What is the Master's work? It is not merely addressing envelopes in a Lodge room, or even giving fine addresses to the public. It is all kind, helpful, unselfish work for others, especially those to whom we owe a debt of gratitude for their aid in the past. "Ingratitude," wrote a Master, "is not one of our vices. And He once said: "He who breaks one single human tie to come to us cannot be our disciple." The love, the understanding, the inspiration of human beings is our paramount work, far, far more important than the mere mechanical business of carrying on the organized side of the work, valuable and important as that is. The old-fashioned people used to talk about the stars in our crown which represented everyone we had brought to Christ. The stars in our Theosophical crowns represent all those whom we have loved and served, encouraged and inspired. "Act thou for them today, and they will act for thee tomorrow," says The Voice of the Silence, though perhaps it sounds a little self-calculating to put it that way.

I find that some of you have misunderstood what I wrote in Letter 10 about St. Therese offering her pain to mitigate the pain of unknown others. I did not mean it in the old sense of atonement to an angry God. But it is ever true that we may act and suffer "on behalf of humanity." When we do that we share the unseen and unknown burdens of others. We follow the direction of St. Paul to weep with them that do weep and to rejoice with them that do rejoice. The Master K.H. told a young group of people with C. W. L. that they could help by teaching, by ceremonies, by meditation, but that the highest way of helping of them all was to do all these things "on behalf of humanity." Then the Karmic return goes to help humanity instead of ourselves. Ever since I heard that I have always said the Confession in Church, not for myself or for the Society, but on behalf of that troubled and benighted humanity who do not yet stand in the light of Day as we have the joy of standing.

Your affectionate friend,

Clara Codd.