

Box 863, Johannesburg,
South Africa
April-May, 1949

My dear Friends:

Here I am settling down again once more in sunny S. Africa. I am afraid my correspondence has suffered very much these last three months for there was so much to do and pick up again that I seemed to spend most of my time flying around the country. We are all looking forward to our coming Convention at Easter time. Not only will it be the Convention, held this year at Johannesburg, but it will also be the Jubilee of the Johannesburg Lodge, so some of the founding members will tell us of older days here. The Keynote of our Convention will be the words of Annie Besant: "Go forth into the darkness and change it into Light." I think that is a lovely motto, and a feature of the Convention will be a dramatic presentation of the Idyll of the White Lotus, arranged by our good lecturer, Mr. Dudley Gower. I have to talk about "The Way of Initiation," and "The Return of the Mysteries."

Our Group has now nearly reached the level of 300 members all over the world, and I think of each one of you so often. I am wondering if you could all send me a small picture of yourself. I would like to put them in a special book. I have one or two already, but it would be nice to have all of you. Even a snapshot would be enough.

Following on what we were discussing last time I have found a wonderful little bit by H. P. B. about Will and Desire. She says, as Dr. Besant does in her book, A Study in Consciousness, that will and desire are the upper and lower poles of the same force. I will quote you the whole piece as I do not think you will readily find it, for it is printed in a very old number of "Lucifer."

"Will is the exclusive possession of man on this plane of consciousness. It divides him from the brute in whom instinctive desire only is active. (Mrs. Besant used to tell us that the lower kingdoms are moved from without, by instinct; and that we should be moved from within, by will. C.C.)

"Desire, in its widest application, is the one creative force in the Universe. (In its highest sense it is the will of God. C.C.) In this sense it is indistinguishable from Will; but we men never know desire under this form while we remain only men. Therefore Will and Desire are here considered as opposed. Thus Will is the offspring of the Divine, the God in man; Desire the motive power of the animal life.

Most men live in and by desire, mistaking it for will. But he who would achieve must separate will from desire, and make his will the ruler; for desire is unstable and ever changing, while will is steady and constant. Both will and desire are absolute creators, forming the man himself and his surroundings. But will creates intelligently--but desire blindly and unconsciously. The man, therefore, makes himself in the image of his desires, unless he creates himself in the likeness of the Divine, through his will, the child of light. His task is two-fold; to awaken the will, to strengthen it by use and conquest, to make it absolute ruler within his body; and parallel with this, to purify desire. Knowledge and will are the tools for the accomplishment of this purification."

We can also put it another way, and call will and desire intuition and instinct. We often misunderstand will and consider it a special screwing up of our energies. Once H. P. B. asked Dr. Besant to make an effort of will, and Dr. Besant screwed herself up. H. P. B. smiled and said: "My child, we do not will with our muscles." William James describes will as "shutting off the alternatives." I feel it is the steady direction of our souls, which after a time becomes habitual and unconscious. Now, when once we have decided upon a course of action or life, who is it that at once suggests all sorts of very valid-seeming reasons why

we should not pursue such a course? Ourselves, of course! No one can cross our will so well as we can do it ourselves. Sometimes, just to see how far our sub-consciousness will go, let it carry on. It is quite amusing to see what it will do. When our lower and self-indulgent self begins to argue, we can say: "It is decided, I shall not listen."

You will observe that H. P. B. says that most men live in and by desire. Look around and you will see how true this is, even with ourselves. We can always tell a desire, for it aches and pulls at us. Most men, thinking they are wanting this, give way at once and often hurt others in the ruthless way of satisfying that ache. Do they satisfy it? Not for long. For presently it will arise as strongly as ever again. Says The Voice of the Silence: "Do not believe that lust can ever be killed out if gratified or satiated, for this is an abomination inspired by Mara." (A footnote says "Mara is personified temptation through men's vices and translated literally means 'that which kills the soul.'") With so very many people to want means we must have at all costs to ourselves and others.

Will or intuition, the Divine Spirit in man, never "wants" and "aches." It is serene and peaceful and knows "this should be done." Let us ask ourselves: Is this the Voice of God or of our lower selves? For says H. P. B. again: "When desire has lost all tinge of 'self' it becomes pure will. The first step towards this purity is to kill out the desire for the things of matter, since these can only be enjoyed by the separated personality. The second is to cease desiring for oneself even such abstractions as power, knowledge, love, happiness or fame; for they are but selfishness after all. Life itself teaches these lessons: for all such objects of desire are found Dead Sea fruit in the moment of attainment. This much we learn from experience. Intuitive perception seizes on the positive truth that satisfaction is attainable only in the infinite; the will makes that conviction an actual fact of consciousness, till at last all desire is centered on the Eternal."

We all need happiness most, but, as H. P. B. tells us, enduring happiness is not to be gained on earth, only by the realization of the Divine Light, so she writes: "Let us wait patiently for the day of our real, our best birth." Then we shall find, as Browning tells us, that in every love and joy of earth "Thou wert there." Meanwhile do not let us hold on to things. Let them go. There is such wisdom in William Blake's lovely verse:-

He who binds to himself a joy
Does the winged life destroy;
But he who kisses a joy as it flies
Lives in eternity's sunrise."

Let it come; let it go; happily, peacefully, for all is God's Will for our future bliss and perfection.

Always your affectionate and faithful friend,

CLARA CODD

P. S.: Please keep your corresponding secretary informed of any changes in your addresses; write to (Mrs.) Mary G. Patterson, Box 22, Larkspur, Colorado.