

Box 863, Johannesburg, S.Africa
December-January, 1949-1950

My dear Friends:

First I must wish you all the happiest Christmas and New Year. It is in my mind to write a Christmas letter personally to everyone. If this does not quite eventuate, please take my best of good wishes now. I think our Group is a very real and blessed thing. All the time it grows more and more blessed and united. I think of each one so often, and I feel sure that we have all made a bond that will go down through the ages, and so we shall meet again and again.

After more than two months in Cape Town and a week in George, I am now back again in Johannesburg. Sometimes I think that I am now getting old enough to stop lecturing. But when I see how great is the need and how few we are, I just have to go on. It reminds me of the words in the Bible about the fields being white to the harvest and the reapers so few. I feel we could have more and better exponents of the Ancient Wisdom if only our members would give up the idea that they are lecturing and merely talk heart to heart. And never mind about the deeper truths of occultism. Tell the people how to apply the great Principles to daily life, for it is daily life, with all its preoccupations and problems that concerns the majority of our fellowmen.

I think I will talk this letter about a subject that has had to be occupying my mind so much recently. I will call it "occult glamour." We all know what "glamour" is supposed to be. It is not very real or very reliable. But it has a great and mystic power. A scoundrel with glamour can "get away with it" by its virtue quite often. A worthless woman can dazzle a worth-while man. Is there such a thing as occult glamour? I am sure there is. How else can I explain to myself the numerous self-styled "initiates," "disciples," and even "arhats" that I am continually meeting? And worse still the astonishing number of people, even among our own members, that these people will fascinate. I have seen some very sad cases in life. I remember a great personal friend of Dr. Besant who had been with her through many lives. She left Dr. Besant and her work for one of these, I will not say "bad" men, for this one was pure and good. Many times have I seen this, and generally it is our women-folk who are led away. I can see why now. These kinds of occult leaders are generally men of great fascination and even of what is called sex-appeal. And it is in the nature of woman to yearn for the personal touch and personal attention and affection. With men it is generally the love of power or even a kind of psychic curiosity which leads them astray.

What should we do about it? Let us discern, and it is quite easy to see it, the root of the matter. It is the craving for personal satisfaction and upliftment. We all suffer from some form of inferiority complex, and we yearn to be someone, to have a certain amount of prestige or powers, or the glow of personal attention and assuredness. It is so comforting to have the problems and troubles of the path of aspiration taken off our shoulders by a charming person who will tell us such gratifying and comforting facts about ourselves, never mind whether they are really true or not! I remember Bishop Leadbeater warning us all to be extremely wary of anyone or any spook from the other side who flatters us in any way, and these sort nearly always begin with flattery. Sometimes they have tried it on me, and I have let them go on just to see how far they will go! They will tell us that our way is old-fashioned and not suited to us and the West, that a Master has commissioned them to take us in charge, etc., etc. Now, the truth is that there is no such rubbish as Western and Eastern occultism. There is only one Occultism, and its Rules and Laws are very ancient and unchangeable. They came to this planet six and a half million years ago with the Lords of the Flame. I have not space here to describe these Rules perfectly. Perhaps in

another Letter. But they demand absolute purity of body, mind and spirit; the sacrifice absolutely and unconditionally of the personal ego (without which progress on the Path is extremely dangerous) and the patient and whole-hearted acceptance of all that life, as karma, brings. We know why, don't we? Because "karma" is the Will of God in action, and that holy and loving Will can never will anything but final bliss and fulfilment for every living thing. On the way to that the troubles and trials of life are shaping us, if we will let ourselves be shaped. Tennyson put it so well:

"Life is not as idle ore,
But iron dug from central gloom,
And heated hot with burning fears,
And dipped in baths of hissing tears,
And shattered with the shocks of doom
To shape and use."

The path to bliss and the Masters of the Wisdom may be long and weary. That depends upon our growth in the past. But it requires unflinching determination, endurance, unflinching charity, and a sweet and patient acceptance of all that Life - which is God - brings. We are here in this wonderful world to learn, to increase in character and consequently in understanding and power to help, not merely to have, humanly or spiritually, what is called "a good time." The saints show us the way here. Who of us would have had the strength of little Thérèse of Lisieux, who for the nine years of her short conventual life lived in a perpetual "dark night" devoid of all "consolations." But what she learned by that! She writes that she does not desire consolations which she can feel. When a novice told her how she had prayed for consolation, she replied: "Ah! that is a thing I would never do, ask for consolation. It is so sweet to serve the good God in a dark night of trial; we have this life only in which to live by faith."

Beware of glamour, my friends. Let us rather grow in strength, simplicity, selflessness and charity. And let us leave the reward of our souls to God and the Master Who alone can truly reward us. If the sky is so dark that we feel no response from that which we love best, remember that always behind the clouds the Sun of our souls shines with undiminished beauty. The clouds are earth-born and self-made, though we may not realize it. And whilst they are there they do certain wonderful things to our souls. Trust Life, which is God and the Master, too. Perhaps nothing in the world is so important as simple trust. For that means our own deep and unswerving soul-knowledge within. Let us leave our prestige and happiness to come when and where He wills. Our concern is to be sure that when it comes, as it surely will one day, we shall be strong enough and selfless enough, yes, selfless enough to use it truly. For more people can heroically bear suffering than use happiness and success selflessly. Especially beware, the psychics among you, of anything, by voice or sight, that comes from the astral plane, the world, as The Voice of the Silence tells us, of the Great Illusion, where every, even sub-conscious, impulse and desire takes shape and form, wearing quite often the appearance of an angel of light. Joy will come, comfort will come, success will come, when we are worthy and have earned them. To long for them too much, to be unable to go on and work unless we have them in some measure, is to make terms with Heaven, to bargain with Life. And that will always fail. Says The Imitation of Christ: "How few there be, O Lord, who will serve Thee for naught!" But those who can are the saints and heroes amongst us, who are like a shady tree in a thirsty land, giving solace and inspiration to countless weaker souls.

Your affectionate friend,

CLARA CODD

P.S.: Happy Holiday Greetings to each one of this group from your Secretary.

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