

June-July, 1950  
Box 863  
Johannesburg, S. Africa

My dear Friends,

We have here in S. Africa just celebrated a splendid Convention. Our guest of honour was the Vice-President of the T.S., Mr. Sidney Cook. He brought with him the lady he has just married, Dr. Jocelyn Todd-Naylor, who won all our hearts with her kindness and grace. This is the first time that S. Africa has had a real visit from one of our leaders, and it proved a wonderful and happy time for us all. The Convention was held in the beautiful little hall in Pretoria, the Capital City of the Union, famed for its groves of Jacaranda trees in full violet bloom during the months of October and November. The theme of Convention was the words of Pythagoras: "Take courage! the race of men is divine." And the opening day had a symposium of speakers on that theme. One evening we had a most interesting concert, with part-songs sung by a Bantu men's choir, solos by a famous Bantu singer, and Indian dances by girls from an Indian school where one of our members teaches. Mr. Cook gave a public lecture on "Theosophical Ideals in Practical Life." I liked his members' talks best of all. I thought he was simply splendid in them. Sometimes Mrs. Cook spoke to us and we found her most interesting. They flew here from India and flew on again to England, having to start at the terrible hour of 2 a.m.! It reminded me of a visit I paid to a little town in Australia where the only train by which we could arrive or leave was about 3 a.m.

Five of our S. African members are going to Adyar this Christmas for the great Convention. It is so blessed for any of our members to visit Adyar. I wish everyone could do it for I have never forgotten the tremendous effect two years in Adyar had on me. I was never the same again afterwards.

One of our group has sent me a question he would like illumination upon. If any more of you would like me to discourse on any particular point, do let me know. My correspondent asks whether the desire to feel safe, contented and comfortable in life is a desire we should strive to get rid of in the spiritual life? He wonders whether children who have had a somewhat unpleasant home-life are perhaps really better off than those who have had a soft, luxurious, protected home life. Being the youngest in the family he was always given the preference in everything, and is still inclined to want it and to feel desolate if he does not get it. (Sir Francis Bacon said it was best to be in the middle, as the elders had too much responsibility and the younger ones were often spoiled.)

One thing is very clear. Everyone in the world wants to feel secure and untroubled. The psychologists tell us that it is a primal necessity for all children to feel that, or they will develop queer quirks in their characters later on. What is the case with children can be applied on a vaster scale to humanity. Most human beings are as yet but spiritual children and need to feel the safety of a father's guiding hand and a mother's tender care. The great religions answer this need, especially the faith of Roman Catholicism. Therefore, says Carl Jung, and he says, too, that many leading psychologists will bear him out in this, among all the thousands of patients who have come to him in life, the smallest number have come from Catholicism and the largest number have been of the Jewish faith. The Jews have been a hunted race for generations, so we can understand that. And I have observed the relief that comes to nerve-racked souls when they find refuge in the arms of the great Catholic Church. So I feel the answer to my correspondent is quite clear.

Let us first recognize that it is purely human and blameless to desire to be secure and safe. The majority of men must feel like that. The change comes



when the soul is approaching the Path of Return, sometimes called the Path of Occultism. Then indeed he must renounce safety and the personal happiness of being petted and appreciated. He does not exactly surrender his sense of security--though he must always, from the world's standpoint "live dangerously"--but his trust is now placed on a far greater, eternal centre. The human child trusts and relies upon his parents. The child soul trusts and relies upon a personal Deity, and rightly so. The occultist trusts and relies upon Life itself, which is God, the Eternal Love-Wisdom, in action. He has at last glimpsed the great truth that the universe is his home, designed for him to live and grow and experience in, that the changeless laws of that universe are his friends for they are the impress of the Divine Mind upon matter and have no other purpose than to lead men gradually towards their final beatitude and fulfilment. Love, harmony, co-operation clearly rule the universe or long ago it would have ceased to be.

There is a wonderful little book, written by a Father Caussade, called "Abandonment." In spite of its clerical terminology, it teaches a profound truth. I will quote you some of his sayings, though I think I have done so before. He says that God speaks to us today as much as He spoke in past ages, that He speaks to nations through universal events, and to each one of us through the simple events of daily life. "The duties of each moment," he writes, "are the shadows which veil the Divine action." Have we ever realized what Karma really is? It is the Divine Will in action. How then can it mean anything but final good for everyone of us? So the occultist is not afraid of what Karma may bring him. "The contacts of matter, O son of Kunti," said Sri Krishna, "giving heat and cold, pleasure and pain, they come and go, impermanent; endure them bravely, O Bharata." Endure them bravely until the time comes when they will no longer affect us, because we shall have risen above all "pairs of opposites."

Let us take Life--which is God--as our rock and our salvation, and have no other "creed" than faith in the Eternal Wisdom and Love and Life. "You must trust your Master, (and God who shines through Him) said the Master K. H., "because if you do not even He cannot help you. Unless there is perfect trust there cannot be the perfect flow of love and power." And that same Master, long ago, wrote to Mr. Judge: "Draw on the breath of great Life throbbing in us all and let faith (which is unlearned knowledge) carry you through your life as a bird flies in the air--undoubtedly." The Master closes this same letter with counsel only to be given to the dedicated soul: "You must live for other men and with them; not for or with yourself." Should we not make the offering to God and the Master of desiring nothing, asking nothing for the separated self? My correspondent fears that thus we shall become lifeless things. We must not "kill" desire, but transmute it to be desire for all life to have and to be and to attain the best. St. Therese of Lisieux told a lay-sister who confessed that she had no love for God, to be glad that such was the case, and to be still more glad that others were blessed with that capacity. "He attaineth peace unto whom all desires flow as rivers flow into the ocean, which is filled with water, but remaineth unmoved--not he who desireth desires."

Your affectionate friend,

CLARA CODD

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P.S. Your secretary will be at Olcott for two months including the Convention and Summer Sessions, and hopes to see many of you there. The Larkspur address will be resumed August first for an indefinite time.

Ever fraternally,  
Mary G. Patterson