

LETTER 53. Johannesburg, S. Africa
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My dear Friends:

I am still enjoying my new home. It is really a nice, spacious flat which I share with one of our very best workers. I am getting along with my book, but it is surprising how often I get interrupted. There are so many things to do and think about.

I said I would tell you about Father de Caussade's little book. One of my American friends sent it to me as a Christmas present. It is called "Abandonment," and is full of homely and true wisdom. In many ways it reminds me of St. Therese of Lisieux. He begins by saying: "God speaks today as He spoke to our fathers... All their spirituality consisted in simple fidelity to the order of God... Their whole attention was concentrated simply upon the duty of each successive moment with the fidelity of the hour-hand of a clock which steadily traverses stroke by stroke the circle in which it is appointed to move." Then he says that "the duties of each moment are the shadows which veil the Divine action" and that "sanctity consists in but one thing, fidelity to the order of God." He reminds me of a young priest I once heard preach in the wilds of Australia. He had been holding a revival series of meetings, and my hostess took me to his last one. He told us that he had one supreme message to leave with us, to live no more than one minute at a time. I have often thought of his words since, and I can see their wisdom. So much psychic or soul energy is wasted in anticipating something that may never happen, or in going over again and again something that is past and cannot be altered. If we could live every moment perfectly!

Father de Caussade says that God speaks to each one of us through the events of daily life, and to the nations by cosmic events. H.P.B. tells us the same. In a wonderful letter to an aspirant she says that in the life of a devoted disciple nothing, even the smallest event, is without its spiritual significance. Life is leading him, through the Master, step by step, which means event by event, to the Golden Gateway of Initiation. I think if we all look back we shall see milestone after milestone by which we have come, not realizing at the time that we had passed them. Let us all learn of life. So often, as I once heard Krishnaji say, we try to twist and confine life into our own small and selfish pattern, instead of trusting life and letting it shape us. That Master of the Wisdom who was Shakespeare wrote: "There is a destiny doth shape our ends, rough-hew them how we will." And we do rough-hew them, don't we? So along comes Karma and patiently tries to smooth it all out again for us!

I once heard Mrs. Besant say something very wise about this. Someone had been asking her how we would know what the Master wanted us to do. She replied that even with His high disciples the Master very rarely told them to do something special. He rarely gave orders, only hints sometimes, which the intuition of the disciple thought out. But without being psychic or intuitive, she said, there is one way in which we may always find out, by watching our circumstances. For, she said, if our hearts are wholly given to the Master and His work, (and we are not always taking it back again) we have given Him a certain karmic right, not to alter our karma, that He cannot do, being one with that Divine Law, but to re-arrange its events so as to bring before us what we can best do for His work and also to grow our quickest in capacity for Him.

Now how will we watch our daily events? Perhaps a person suddenly appears before us asking for help. No doubt the Master sent him. Perhaps a difficult problem comes up for decision. The Master wants us to face it bravely and grow in discrimination and strength. We would like to be doing something else and we are

pinned down to something uncongenial, or held by some duty. Perhaps He wants to develop another side of us, and it is hard because undeveloped. Perhaps we owe a duty to someone from another life and we should fulfil it now. Of course, as He himself says: "Because you try to take up higher work, you must not forget your ordinary duties, for until they are done you are not free for other service. 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." H.P.B. said that the first duty of every Theosophist was to do his duty by every duty. I have here some words of hers: "If you ask me how we understand Theosophical Duty practically and in view of karma, I may answer you that our duty is to drink without a murmur, to the last drop, whatever contents the cup of life may have in store for us, to pluck the roses of life only for the fragrance they may shed on others, and to be ourselves content but with the thorns, if that fragrance cannot be enjoyed without depriving someone else of it." Does this not remind us of the Voice of the Silence: "Step out from sunlight into shade, to make more room for others."

And so we are "led by life," finding our way as birds their trackless way through the air. The Master of our heart's desire is one with Life, therefore Life through Him leads us ever onwards. Long years ago, when I was in prison, and only had a Bible, and a hymn book to read, I read through every hymn in the English Hymnal to decide which hymn was perfectly Theosophical. I found only one. It must be well known to may of you.

"Thy way, not mine, O Lord, However dark it be.
Lead me by Thine own Hand, Point out the way to me.

The Kingdom that I seek Is Thine, so let the way
That leads to it be Thine, Else I must surely stray."

Now look how long I have been about this! There is now no more room to talk about The Voice of the Silence again. I must continue that next time. Meanwhile, let us all be happy and deal courageously with each moment as it occurs. The shining god in us can never be destroyed. I must quote the V. of the S. again "The tears that water the parched soil of pain and sorrow bring forth the blossoms and the fruits of karmic retribution. Out of the furnace of man's life and its black smoke, winged flames arise, flames purified, that soaring onward, 'neath the karmic eye, weave in the end the fabric glorified of the three vestures of the Path."

Your affectionate friend,

CLARA CODD

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