

60. June-July 1955

Box 863

Johannesburg, South Africa

My dear Friends,

We have all just come back from one of the best and most inspiring Conventions we have ever had. This time it took place in Cape Town and Mr. Geoffrey Hodson was our Guest of Honour. He was just magnificent, so clear and convincing, with a splendid delivery. I was able to attend one of his public lectures in the Banqueting room of the Town Hall after the Convention. A very large audience assembled and were deeply impressed. I came home by car, which to my mind is the nicest way of travelling. And today I am off for a week in Pretoria.

This time I will discourse upon something that I saw very clearly these past weeks. When one gets old the past keeps coming up in memory. I could see, as we all can, so many mistakes and faulty judgements. But I also saw that unless we had made these mistakes we should never have learnt. The wonderful thing is that Nature at once answers every action of ours, and every result is an illumination, a wonderful lesson.

I think I have often said that in my universe there is no "sin", nor has been for many years. There is only lack of growth. Dr. Hastings, in his monumental work "A Dictionary of the Bible," says that the word sin, both in the old and the new Testament, does not connote anything blameworthy in the original Hebrew and Greek. It denotes more exactly a lack of skill owing to ignorance, the Gita's "lack of skill in action." And there came to my mind a wonderful passage in the prophet Jeremiah: "Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee." That is eternally true. Every karmic result of mistaken action is a cure of the original ignorance. We are all so spiritually ignorant and inexperienced that we are always making wrong decisions and provoking painful re-actions. But we cannot do otherwise, and by those karmic re-actions we learn wisdom and intuition. We are bigger people because we did them and learnt of the results. Naturally we sometimes jib because those results bring pain. But H.P.B. calls pain the "Teacher, the awakener of consciousness."

The Christian Scriptures speak wonderfully of this, especially St. Paul. I wonder if many people realise that in the writings of St. Paul are indicated many of the esoteric teachings of the Great Brotherhood, which makes me doubly sure that he was, as our Leaders have said, an Initiate. For example, take these words from the epistle to the Corinthians:-- "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." Quite clearly the passing human man, against the eternal, spiritual nature within. Let us continue: "The first Adam was made a living soul (the human soul): the last Adam was made a quickening spirit (the god within)." Then he goes on to say: "Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural: and afterwards that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven." The man which elsewhere he calls "the hidden man of the heart in That which is incorruptible."

If we think it out the above explains the individualization of man from the lower kingdoms wonderfully. "For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God."



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Thanks for the  
press.  
See you at Alcott,  
I hope? R

Now along this heavenly journey, this long pilgrimage of the spirit, there are two great Teachers, Joy and Pain. They are like the sun and the rain which make a plant grow. Joy expands, pain purifies. Perhaps we learn most from the last Teacher. I remember Mrs. Besant saying that she would willingly renounce all her joys but not one of her sorrows, because she had learnt the most by them.

The law of Action and Re-action is so well described by those familiar words: "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them, for this is the law." And "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

Now the reaping is the Teacher, the reward of well-doing in greater opportunity or the cure of ill-doing by limitation and pain. Familiar are the words: "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth." The right translation is "Whom the Lord loveth He purifieth." So writes St. Paul: "If ye endure pain, God dealeth with you as sons.... for our profit that we might be partakers of his holiness... wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed."

Robert Louis Stevenson called pain the Great Healer too, and the word "pain" in the Hebrew means the "atonement." The ancient Celts said of a man who suffered much "he is making his soul." "Unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy: for thou renderest to every man according to his works." The very word mercy comes from the Latin merces which means "recompense."

The result is clear: "That he may know how to refuse the evil and choose the good." "Sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good," wrote St. Paul. He called the Law of Karma, or personal re-action, "the law of sin and death." Only when the spiritual man is finally triumphant are we freed from that law. So again he writes: "The law of the spirit of life... hath made me free of the law of sin and death."

One could write a book on this subject. The moral is that all things work together for good, and that never, never should we let ourselves become sorrowful, morose or despondent. Wrote the heroically-minded poet, Robert Browning, of:--

"One who never turned his back but marched breast forward,  
Never doubted clouds would break,  
Never deemed, though right were worsted, wrong would triumph;  
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better, sleep to wake."

Your affectionate friend,

Clara Codd

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