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 Box 863  
 Johannesburg, South Africa

My dear Friends,

I have just been reading such a splendid article that I feel I should give you a digest of it in this letter. It is by my old friend, Baron Axel von Fielitz-Coniar, and appears in the June Theosophist. Many of you may have read it already. It is called "Looking Inward." He begins with quoting a line from a poem of Goethe's: "To behold is my dower, to look is my employ," and states that in these few words we have substantially all that a thoughtful man needs upon which to base his life. Most people have eyes with which to see the world around us, but all have not yet learnt to see the world within. Goethe himself was one of the greatest beholders of life, one who could contemplate that which is within, one who could reflect. And to reflect means a looking out on the world from within and a looking in from without upon the world of one's own being.

We live in the machine age and a great speaker said that the technical age is a challenge to us all to develop our inner powers that we may assert ourselves against the machine. We cannot develop those inner powers until we recognise that we have them. So the first step on the path of Self-realization is to realize what is our own true being, and also to recognise upon which rung of the ladder of evolution we are ourselves standing. That is our starting point. We must learn to evaluate ourselves correctly, neither to under-estimate or over-estimate ourselves.

Every human being is composed of several powers, some dormant, others developed and active, and no two individuals are alike. The basis of all art is the creative faculty in man. But the creative faculty is not composed of the mind alone. The mind is never creative. It analyses, dissects and reassembles, but always with data already given. What then creates? The Divine Power which shows itself as Love, Will and Wisdom. Love must lend its warmth to wisdom, and wisdom must endow love with clarity. The recognition of the goal will be our driving power, but until we put our knowledge into action we do not go forward, and bring into play the further power, the Will.

The way to perfection is by the development of the Self, and this is done only by turning inward towards that Self. The more we regard that Self within, the greater our response to the cosmic world around us, the great symphony of life. And the greater the degree of unfoldment, the more transparent do we become. Leonardo da Vinci says that "transparency is beauty in the highest degree." (Could we also say sincerity, simplicity, which are ever the hall-mark of the "pure in heart"?)

We experience this at high moments, but our way in life is like a path through the mountains. Continually do we have to descend in order to climb a higher peak. But if we learn to know the valleys of our life as places of transit, they will take on a new significance. For many these valleys are the daily round of clamorous trivialities, but if, looking inward, we are able to stir the creative power, they will take on the face of a wonderful teacher. If we wish to be creative in the highest sense, we must learn to be creative at every moment, thus making life vital, holy.



He has some wise words to say of the quality of desirelessness. A forced desirelessness can have a paralyzing effect. Mere suppression is dangerous. But the richer a man's inner life becomes, the fewer will be his desires. We do not need desires in order to give to others, for giving is a radiation of something already there waiting to be used.

Three things are needed in modern life -- reverence, refinement and chivalry. Reverence not so much to the outer form as to the indwelling life. When we begin to see the One Life of which we are all part, subject and object disappear. Refinement, because of the spirit of callous brutality abroad today. The more we experience our own inner selves, the more sensitive we become to others. If we are to be messengers of harmony and peace we must not only be such in ourselves, but also able to react to the harmony and beauty which exists in the world, and immune to the negative influences. The one way to be immune is to become as positively loving, strong and full of light as we possibly can. It will be our shield for the simple reason that nothing in us can react to the negative influences.

Life is a tragedy for most people, a hard school for us all. We who try to live a Theosophical life are strengthened by our knowledge. We can understand our suffering better than most men. But understanding is not sufficient. We must learn to appreciate the creative powers which suffering brings, and so learn not to fear pain and sorrow, in fact not to fear anything. He who fears has not sufficient self-confidence. The truly self-confident man is not arrogant but has placed his confidence not in the small self of personality but in the Divine Self within. He knows that it is not the personality which creates, but the One Eternal.

All religions lay stress on Love, because love is always light. It is only through love that we arrive at knowledge. It is only love which is creative. Dostoevsky said: "To love someone is to see him as God meant him to be." The Divine in us loves the Divine in him. Tagore says that the ideal of Paradise radiates to us in the sunlight, in the joyousness of the young spring, in the deep peace of a winter morning, in the beauty of a human face, and in the depth of human love. The greater the beauty within us the more we shall become aware of the beauty without. And so the exchange of without and within leads us ever higher to that goal which is our destiny.

Perhaps I have not made so very good a recension of this beautiful article. Read it for yourselves. And above all, turn inward at some one moment of each day, that we may become progressively aware of that ever-growing and transcendent Self within. Nothing in all the world is so important as that. For that we really came into incarnation. Do not let life slip by without some daily attempt to become in tune with the Infinite within ourselves. Even if we do not achieve conscious union with that Infinite, and this is always a life-work, we shall have laid good foundations for the next life and have immeasurably strengthened and made lovely the present one. For life has always a spiritual foundation, and only as we recognise this and live in its light do we save our little lives from pettiness and boredom and spiritual ineffectiveness.

Ever your affectionate friend,

Clara Codd