

My dear Friends,

Here I am, established at "Krotona", the very lovely Theosophical colony founded by the late Vice-President, Mr. A. P. Warrington. He called it "Krotona" after the Krotona in Italy where Pythagorus had his great school. I first flew to Chicago from London, in order to attend the Convention at Oicott before coming on here. I shall never cease to be glad that I did so, for the Convention and the Summer School which followed it were the most inspiring I have attended in my whole life. We had wonderful lectures from Mr. Geoffrey Hodson. I have never heard anyone else describe so well the spiritual consciousness. I know one other who also does it as well, Mr. John Coats. These two are symptomatic. They are living examples of what long, steady practice of meditation and a dedicated life will produce. They are the flowering of what the esoteric side of our work is for. I think many members have a slightly erroneous idea of what that work is. They think it is a private gateway to discipleship and that taking part one has as the chief aim to become a pupil of one of the Adepts. The true aim is the attaining of the spiritual consciousness, of the bringing down into life down here of the Spirit within one and his illumination, loveliness and power; in fact creating and slowly building that bridge from the ordinary mind to the higher which the Sanscrit scriptures call the Antahkarana. H.P.B. says this is done by thought purified of egotism. It generally takes long years of steady practice and aspiration. It cannot be forced or produced at will. It comes. And it comes when the hour is ripe, when "God wills." It is by His grace and not by human ambition. We must grow to it and all real growth is slow and steady. But it is the most important thing that a man can do, a greater achievement, says H.P.B., than to know the future or command the elements.

She also says that the first step in occultism is to realise that we are ceaselessly self-deceived. Nothing is as it seems. The world reported to us by our senses is the phenomenal world, and the word phenomenon means the appearance only. It is in what Plato calls the noumenal world that the true thing is discerned. This reminds us of The Voice of the Silence: "Mistrust thy senses; they are false." There is a wonderful book by Dr. Alexandra David Neel, the French lady who spent so many years as a Buddhist nun in Tibet, just published, called "The Secret Oral Teachings in Tibetan Buddhist Sects." These teachings are only given by word of mouth to those who are judged to be ready to receive them. And the first word is to "doubt", doubt what you see and what you think and conclude most of all. I have long seen that to jump to conclusions, to hold hard and fast opinions, however comforting, is to shut the door to any further understanding. We must have the "Open mind" the Master speaks of, be willing to learn, to investigate, to wait, at all times. The teachings tell the pupil that there is no such thing as dead or static matter anywhere in the Universe. Everything is moving, changing, living, all the time. It is a never ceasing tide. Flowing towards "some far off Divine event, to which the whole creation moves." Everything is a rhythmic wave-length. Perhaps that is what Pythagorus meant when he said that number ruled the universe. And we must grow sensitive enough to be aware of that thrilling life and not only of the gross material form which a Master calls "phantasmal".

The next step, says H.P.B., is to realise that the truth can be found by effort. But that truth is within ourselves, "it takes no rise from outer things, whate'er you may believe," says Browning. "There is an inmost centre in ourselves where truth abides in fullness; and to know rather consists in finding out a way whence the imprisoned splendour may escape Than by effecting entrance for a light Supposed to be without." Two things must be done; the gradual sensitizing and development of the vehicles of consciousness, and the awakening and bringing into play of the spiritual nature within. For we all have that divine flame of Reality within us and no one can bring us near to it and its realization but ourselves.

The whole world is very gradually turning in this direction and therein lies its future salvation. Along with this dawning spirituality lies also the awakening of the psychic faculties. The Master tells us that this must be taken hold of and guided into spirituality. But we cannot do that very successfully until we have attained some measure of awareness ourselves. Brother Raja once said that the foremost object of our T.S. today is the awakening and guiding of the spiritual nature in man. The world is looking dimly for the way home, the real way home, and many will try to find it and sometimes get lost in an unreal way. This is the foundation of the new religious outlook that is coming into the world. As Dean Inge once wrote, it will be founded upon science and mysticism (both attempts to get at the Real). I feel that a religion of the natural, the universal, the real, is coming.

How do we draw ever nearer to the Real in ourselves? By steady aspiration and seeking. But the law is that we must, each one of us, take the first steps ourselves and Heaven will always answer. In the words of St. James, "Draw nigh unto God, and He will draw nigh unto you." Never let a day go by that we have not, even for a short time, lifted our hearts to the Heart of the Universe, thought about that true life, wondered about it, pondered upon it, pondered upon great descriptions of it though it cannot really be described in words. Fixing our mind upon that which is invisible and soundless, yet trying to "see" the invisible, to "listen" to the soundless, not with our senses but with the deep intuitive response of the soul, clothing it, as the mind will, in images, but realising that the image is not the reality. Some people call it prayer, or meditation. It is the lifting up of the heart, the reverent seeking of the mind, and there will come a day when the mind will drop below the surface, and instead of thinking about, we shall know, by direct cognition. To know is the union of the knower and the known. It is the source of all real wisdom, illumination and joy. St. Augustine tells us that one day he passed beyond his thought and in the flash of a trembling glance came face to face with That Which Is. He could say no more than that. Listen to Mr. Hodson and Mr. Coats describing it, and then set out on the road yourselves. I know that this is the real work for every one of us and also the true cure for all our troubles.

Another thing that made this Convention and Summer School so wonderful for me was the opening speeches of Dr. Smith, Joy Mills and Geoffrey. The great revolution in our beloved T.S. has started, and perhaps the American Section can lead into future beauty and power the whole T.S. We have been in danger in the past, and to some extent even now in the present, of becoming a static, dogmatic sect. If this had gone too far we should have become what H.P.B. in "The Key to Theosophy" warns us of, landed upon some psychic sandbank and become a soulless corpse. But we are saved, and I never was so thrilled in all my life. We have no dogmas or set beliefs in the T.S. We have no creed beyond life itself. "Life," said Professor Radhakrishnan, India's Vice-President, "is God, and the recognition of this constitutes spirituality." I have often quoted to you those words of the Master K.H. to Mr. Judge: "Let faith (which is unlearned knowledge) carry you through your life as a bird flies in the air -- undoubtingly." Life is the great Teacher. To be able to read the Book of Life is wisdom. And in that great life there is no "sin", only lack of growth. There are no dogmas and beliefs, only the inexpressible truth at the deep root of us all. The natural, beautiful river of faith, hope and love, that is the truly original thing in every man. We must believe in that loveliness, seek for it, know it is there awaiting our finding through all the ages.

Let every one of us, no matter how old he is, or inexperienced, set out on that road. We can only begin from where we are and as we are. Leave the rest to God, to the Eternal Life, which H.P.B. says is longing to pour himself down into his purified personality. That is the real way to happiness and peace. The star may seem very far away and dim, but, says Light on the Path, steadily as we watch it and worship it, its light will grow stronger until one day, when the hour is ripe, it will suddenly become the Infinite Light. I will continue this subject next time and give you some extracts from a splendid book I have just come across.

I was also delighted to see the picture of Mr. Judge put up now in Olcott. I would so like all of us to forget disagreements that happened in the past. H.P.B. said of Judge that he was a chela -- disciple -- of thirteen years standing and that she had never asked a pledge of him as she knew it was not necessary. Let us only remember his great and lasting work for the Society. Perhaps we forget that he also was one of the Founders. I see coming the ultimate reunion of all branches of the Theosophical Society. May we all be one before the next great Messenger from the Lodge comes. Let everyman believe what he will, only try sympathetically to understand his point of view. There is no hell except the self-made prison of narrowness and despair. We are all of us, if we so will it, on the way Home. But we must each of us walk that road ourselves. There are no lifts or cars to take us there. So let us all go steadily forward together, holding out a hand to those behind us, and gladly accepting the hand of one who may be a little in front. It is much easier to tread that road together than alone.

Your affectionate friend,

Clara M. Codd