

My dear Friends,

I am just about off to another European Summer School, this time in Switzerland. I meant to have written a great many letters, but I see that there will not be time before I go, so if you do not hear from me for another fortnight, please forgive me. The School is to be held at Leysin. I believe it is high up in the mountains. That will be lovely, and I am looking forward to seeing again many European friends. Just recently I have met American and S. African friends here, for Camberley seems quite a meeting ground for Theosophists of all nationalities.

Last letter I tried to answer a question about the dark night of the soul which was asked me by one of our correspondents. Now another one has asked me to comment on the state of the T.S. She says that her Section continues to decline and she wonders if the Society has fulfilled its purpose? Many people wonder about that. And yet the Master M. said that "so long as there are three men worthy of our Lord's blessing in the T.S., it can never be destroyed." My correspondent writes that she sees "no reason for trying to build a big membership, it seems to me our main concern should be in helping others by our Theosophical knowledge and generally spreading by example the Light that Theosophy offers." I agree with her there. Long years ago I used to talk to enormous audiences of over 2,000 in the big cities of the British Isles. I never thought once of asking any of them to become members, although many did, and some of them are noted workers in the T.S. today. My one thought was to take the truths of Theosophy to a hungry and bewildered world, to make their lives better, never mind whether they joined us or not. I was censured for that by authorities long passed away. H.P.B. evidently thought the same as my correspondent and I, for she writes: "We are not working merely that people may call themselves Theosophists, but that the doctrines we cherish may affect and leaven the mind of a century." And we have largely done just that very thing.

There are many factors now which did not exist in the early days of the work. At first we were the only workers in our particular field of work. Now there are hundreds all doing a similar work to ours. They are mostly the outcome of the Society's mission, for if you go into the history of some of them you will find that they were founded by old Theosophists. Occultism has now a popular appeal, and schools of Yoga, secret societies of all sorts, are increasing almost every day. Some of them do not seem to me to be too wise, but they are all tending in the same direction and are symptomatic of the hour. They are the excrescences of a deep, underlying world movement which really heralds the "coming religion." In the only letter that we possess from so high an official in the Hierarchy as the Maha-Chohan He says: "The Theosophical Society was chosen as the corner-stone of the future religions of humanity."

This is what I feel about that new religion, though of course there is nothing really new anywhere. I feel that the old distinctions between what is sacred and what is worldly is going. A great religion of life itself is coming in. And when the twin evils, war and its inevitable companion, poverty, have disappeared on this planet forever, the Masters of the Wisdom will come back amongst us and found again those schools of occult training and experience which we used to call the Mysteries.

But then, too, if we come down to the smaller brass tacks, one reason for the decline of the Society is the quite unconscious foolishness of some of our members sometimes. I hesitate to say this for the vast majority are such good, kind people and mean so well. But if one has a rather small outlook or deeply embedded prejudices of any sort, we are bound to bring that unhelpful influence into the Society's work. I will give you two mild examples. One of our members, long since passed over, was the President of a big Lodge and also a devoted L.C.C. priest. He always wore his purple vest and never failed, at the end of every lecture, to tell everyone about the Church. A lady in the audience told me that she would like to join us, but could not make up her mind to join the Church too. "But, my dear, you don't have to," I told her. She thought that if you joined one you had to join the other too. Sometimes people tell me that they would like to join but they cannot be vegetarians.

Again I tell them that they have to do nothing of the sort. We should not exalt a small thing into a fetish. I think some people forget the words of the Lord Christ that it is what comes out of a man's heart and not what goes into his mouth that defiles him.

Sometimes people, generally good Christians, say to me, "How can Theosophists do such a thing?" Something a little silly, or perhaps a little worse. And I reply: "Supposing you had never heard of Christianity, and you read the Sermon on the Mount for the first time. Full of enthusiasm you go off to the nearest Church or Chapel to find these wonderful people. And what would you find?" The Theosophists are just like anybody else. We call it human nature, which really means not being quite spiritually grown up. I know members who like to call themselves occultists. I knew a young man, now passed over, who used to talk to me a great deal about "we occultists." But he was a very resentful person if anyone offended him. So one day I said to him: "You know, occultists never bear any resentment about anything." One of the best men I ever knew, Don Fabrizio Ruspoli, said to me one day, "I never get offended. If anyone says anything nasty to me, I say to myself, Fabrizio, you do not exist, so how can you possibly be offended?"

Somewhere Karl Jung says that high ideals have no effect upon a person's conduct. As long as they remain only ideals, which is the case with most of us. I remember a special meeting that was called long years ago to consider the immoral doings of a certain prominent member. I was astonished to find that the two what we might call prosecuting attorneys were, as I knew from the confidences of their victims, of a very immoral life themselves! It takes a thief to catch another thief, says the old proverb. So perhaps after all this I shall have laid myself open to be so classed!

There are two qualities which are necessary for Initiation, Uparati and Titiksha. They may be described as "letting people be what they are," and "letting events be what they are." This reminds me of a definition of a friend I once heard: "A friend is one who knows all about you but loves you just the same."

Going back for a moment to the state of the T.S., H.P.B. says at the end of her book, "The Key to Theosophy," that if we remain true to our original message, we shall be an instructed, organised body when the next great Teacher comes from the Brotherhood. That coming is due in the last quarter of the century, 1975, not so very far distant. We must be ready to support Him and to take the burden of organisation off His shoulders. Let us all do our best looking towards that event.

Before long we shall have a week-end here in Tekels Park whose keynote will be the "life side of Theosophy." Now, the life side means the living side, the heart side. The heart is always more important than the head. Once Mrs. Besant said: that it is the pure heart and not the well-filled head that leads us to the Master's feet. Our work must have the warmth of pure emotion. Have you ever pondered over the meaning of the word emotion? It means the motive or moving power. If we really care about the happiness and welfare of humanity, if we really want to help them to be happier and more enlightened, our words and deeds will be full of power. There will be a warmth, an attractive power, a conviction, about them which draws.

The Theosophical Society may one day disappear, although I hope not, but the real Theosophy can never cease to be. Let me close with some more words by H.P.B.: "Theosophy is the shoreless ocean of universal truth, love and wisdom, reflecting its radiance on the earth, whilst the T.S. is only a visible bubble on that reflection. Theosophy is divine nature, visible and invisible, and its Society human nature trying to ascend to its divine parent.... It was formed to assist in showing men that such a thing as Theosophy exists, and to help them to ascend towards it by studying and assimilating its eternal verities."

Your affectionate friend,  
Clara Codd

From your secretary: For those who pledged, Nov. 1 is a new beginning!