

My dear Friends,

I have again come back from another Summer School, this time in England, at Swanwick. Our President, Mr. Sri Ram, was there and gave us a wonderful talk. I think he understands what Krishnaji has to say better than anyone I know. I said last time that I would talk about the "new religion" which is coming into the world. Benjamin Kidd once wrote that religions and civilisations are co-terminous. They arise and fall together, for the religion provides the mental mould into which the dawning civilisation flows. Thus the Christian religion rose just when the great Roman empire was breaking up. This doctrine of cycles was clearly seen by the Italian reformer, Joseph Mazzini. He said that humanity advanced by great "days," and that the signs of the passing of one such great day was with us now. "Wars and rumours of wars," and "men's hearts failing them for fear." There are two Greek words not quite accurately translated in the question His disciples asked the Christ: "What shall be the sign of Thy coming and of the end of the world?" The word given as "coming" really means a physical re-appearance; and the term "world" is better translated as "age." So let us put it this way: "What shall be the sign of Thy re-appearance and the end of the age?" Now we can see how very appropriate His answer was and how appropriate to the present time. "The old order passeth, giving place to new, and God fulfills Himself in many ways, lest one good custom should corrupt the world." I feel sure I have quoted the poet incorrectly, but I have lost my volume of his poems.

But here is the point. Every form of thought and custom, from methods of government to systems of religious or any other kind of thought, are in the melting pot. If they cannot be adapted to the rising tide of life, they will inevitably be cast aside. I remember a splendid simile used by Dr. Besant in her famous lectures on "The Changing World." She said that evolution proceeded like the sea, in waves. If we were short of vision and could only see the wave which was breaking on the shores of time, we would see only devastation and ruin. But if we had the eyes of vision, and you remember the Biblical words that where there is no vision the people perish -- we would be able to discern the wave which was following on behind, on the crest of which rode the spirit of the Future.

Personally I never have a tremor of doubt or fear. I believe in Life and its great purposes. Perhaps life will not be too easy or comfortable for the rest of this incarnation. The times are too cataclysmic for that. But we are alive in a very wonderful age. Not often do we personally see the passing of an age and the birth throes of a new. For one thing our First Object is on the way to being realised, "without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour." Such distinctions are rapidly disappearing. And look at the rise of the darker races to the management of their own affairs. I feel that Britain has made "good karma" there, for a great Adept wrote that "the white race must be the first to stretch out the hand of fellowship to the dark nations -- to call the poor despised 'nigger' brother."

Before she passed, H.L.B. told us that in 1897 the first five thousand years of the Kali Yuga (black age) ended. "The great European nations have now reached their iron age -- an age black with horrors. They are moving onward through ways unmarked from guilt to punishment.... The next terreur will affect all Europe when it comes, and not one country alone.... We have not long to wait and many of us will witness the dawn of the New Cycle, at the end of which not a few accounts will be settled and squared between the races." And she also gives us the key-note of what we individually can do: "True civilisation teaches us that by altering the surroundings of an organism we can alter and improve the organism, and in the strictest sense this is true with regard to man. Every

Theosophist therefore is bound to do his utmost to help on by all means in his power every wise and well-considered social effort which has for its object the amelioration of the conditions of the poor. Such efforts should be made with a view to their ultimate social emancipation, or the development of the sense of duty in those who now so often neglect it in nearly every relation of life.... In every conceivable case he himself must be a centre of spiritual action, and from him and his own daily individual life must radiate those higher spiritual forces which alone can regenerate his fellow-men.... Any failure on his part to respond to the highest within him retards not only himself but all, in their progressive march."

That is a big quotation, but I think you will like to have it. The war against poverty is on in nearly every country. Asia is a long way behind the rest of the world here. I have myself seen the grinding poverty of the East. Most people in the East never all their life long have enough to eat. The war against disease is also on, but it is the malnutrition of the world which causes most of it. Poverty, as Bernard Shaw once said, is a crime. The key-note of the coming age is, as Mazzini told us, co-operation, not domination. This shows in the new religious impulse now rapidly growing. Long ago Dean Inge said that there was only one real religion, mysticism, the individual knowledge of God. The others, dogmatic and formalized, are "about and about." Direct experience constitutes the truly religious man. And that is coming in a most amazing fashion. When I was a little girl my father read out of the Times newspaper a statement about mysticism, describing it as an "exploded superstition." No one would say that now. Look at the astonishing growth of mystic and occult groups all over the world. I once heard of a group of people discussing the irreligion of the present world, especially among the young. "I do not agree with you," said one old gentleman, "the young people are no longer interested in dogma and ceremony, but they are intensely interested in first hand religious experience."

"The hour cometh," said the Christ, "and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth. Neither in this mountain nor yet at Jerusalem."

Another "sign of the times" is the steady growth of non-meat-eating and the fight against cruelty in all forms. "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of God, as the waters cover the sea." (Isaiah, II, 9) You have heard me quote that often! I really meant to talk about old age this time, and to answer a question about animal suffering which has been sent in. Next time!

Your affectionate friend,

Clara Codd

From your secretary: For those who pledged -- November 1st is almost here again.