

October-November, 1949
Johannesburg, S. Africa

My dear Friends:

I am now in Cape Town, the oldest and perhaps the most beautiful part of South Africa. And I am staying at Hout Bay which is approached by a winding and very lovely road round the sea and mountains from Cape Town. When the sun sets over the sea the effects are dazzlingly beautiful. The lectures are going well also. The audience seems to have almost every nationality there is in it, but that often happens at seaport towns. We are fond of stating how small the world is, but here again, as once at Durban, I met a member who is an officer on board a new ship running between S. Africa and America, so I was able to give him the addresses of several members who live in New York and Baltimore.

Some of you have asked me to write on this or the other subject, and I surely will someday. This time I want to talk about the Master's work again, for so often we have no very clear ideas as in what it consists. Sometimes we are too objective about it, as if His work consisted of something concrete which we can all see and approve on the physical plane. Many non-members look at it that way. They so often accuse us of being very impractical, of not doing anything, pointing out that we should be feeding the poor or taking part in some reform movement. As the Master said to Krishnaji, any rich man can feed the poor, but only those who know can feed the soul, and if we know it is our duty to feed the soul of humanity. That does not mean that we should never feed or provide for a needy brother. H.P.B. says that the only "charity" she approves of is personal aid, where a man really sacrifices his own good or pleasure to help a needier brother. She says that the personal element is here of great account. Would we not rather give food or clothing to a poor brother ourselves rather than send it to a charitable association, not that we should not do that as well if we must?

But if we know we must feed the soul. The soul-hunger of the world is worse today, much worse, than even the body-hunger. Wars and disasters have removed the ancient land-marks. Sorrow and privation confront us on all hands. I have just had a letter from the S. African National President (T. S.), newly returned from Europe. She writes: "Paris is not the old gay, brilliant city any longer. It is still, I feel, the historical and perhaps cultural heart of Europe, but then all Europe is poor now. I saw all the worn-out faces of working people--men and women who plod along day after day with little to look forward to. How wonderful the human race really is, to be able to go through the years, toiling, doing their duties, with little joy and much sorrow, still keeping up some standard of decency below which they will not stoop--still clinging to some remote ideal with little hope even to realize it. And tired, weary, pale children whom one would like to put on a sunny lawn to play! Of all the impressions I have of Europe, perhaps this picture of the common people will last longest, for I felt such a love and such a wish to do something to make their fate and outlook happier. If Theosophy can help to make the world happier and to bring more hope into people's lives, how worthwhile it is to spread the message! Life is still so sad for most, there is so much to do it is almost disheartening but for the knowledge of the Inner Guidance. I wish we could do more for the common people, I think they are really so wonderful." Mr. Sinnett once spoke rather contemptuously of "second-class minds," and the Master replied: "You sin against the multitudes."

We know, but let us put it in terms they will understand, and deal with commonplace problems which occur in all men's lives. The Master wrote: "The only object to be striven for is the amelioration of the condition of man by the spread of truth suited to the various stages of his development and that of the

country he inhabits and belongs to."

But do not let us make the mistake of thinking this is done by word of mouth only. (And some of us are not very clever at that either!) It is done even more by our own clear and steady thought, by our own characters and lives which means the steady, unseen influence of our souls. Let me quote H.P.B. once more: "We are not working in order that men may call themselves Theosophists; we are working to influence the mind of a century." And the Master wrote: "Ideas rule the world and as men's minds receive new ideas the world will advance, mighty revolutions will spring from them." That is the Great Work the Occult Brotherhood have been engaged upon for ages. "For countless generations hath the adept builded a fane of imperishable rocks, a giant's tower of INFINITE THOUGHT, emerging at the end of every cycle to invite the elect of mankind to cooperate with him and help in his turn enlighten superstitious man. And we will go on with that periodical work of ours until that day when the foundations of a new continent of thought are so firmly built that no amount of opposition and ignorance guided by the brethren of the shadow will be found to prevail."

So our chief work comes from what we are, from the steady direction of our souls, from the ever-growing insight, unselfishness, dedication, hope and trust within our own souls. That will communicate itself to others, that will be our small share in impressing the mind of a century. Perhaps its potent, unseen influence is far greater than we can imagine. I saw a letter the other day in which the writer spoke of the "petty" duties of looking after little children. How can the love and care of living souls ever be "petty?" There is no higher work than that in all the world, and it is very essentially the "Master's work." Let me quote Brother Raja: "Words spoken to a brother in distress, little gifts of money, visits to someone in pain, a thought of tenderness if we have nothing else to give, we can offer all these to God, or to the Master."

We are "His," little privates in His "army of Light against darkness." H.P.B. said: "The Masters require only that each man shall do his best." We cannot, most of us, become great occultists in this life, but says H.P.B. again: "If one cannot, owing to circumstances or his position in life, become a full adept (perhaps she meant disciple?) in this existence, let him prepare his mental luggage for the next, so as to be ready at the first call when he is once more reborn." How splendid to belong to that army! Would you belong to any other? In the words of the Upanishad: "No other way at all is there to go." The Master's work is our duties, our opportunities, our surroundings. Not what happens to us, but how we take it, what use we make of it, is what matters. And ordinary life is a splendid training ground for the life of the spirit. I seem to do nothing but quote, but I must close with this supremely lovely Aphorism of Patanjali: "By sympathy with the unhappy, compassion for the sorrowful, delight in the holy, disregard for the unholy, the psychic nature moves to gracious peace."

We may die, we may be incapacitated, we may be stricken low, but as long as we hold on in love and trust we shall be doing His work and very surely He will never forget or leave go of us.

Always your affectionate friend,

CLARA CODD