

115 February-March 1965

"Way's End", Beech Ave.
Camberley, Surrey, England

My dear friends,

Christmas has come and gone, and I hope you all had a very happy and blessed time. As always, it was very cold in England. England is a very lovely island, but it has a bad climate. Perhaps the best climate that I know is South Africa. Even in some places over the equator it is never really too hot or too cold. It rivals California and Florida, the other good climates I know. What one misses in England is the sun which we rarely see here. But there are compensations. The 52 counties of this little island are almost like different countries, each with their own scenery and their own form of speech. If I have a slight favourite, it is for the sterling North, embodied in the well known saying that "What Manchester thinks today, England thinks tomorrow." Myself, I was born in the South, in the lovely county of Devonshire. When I was a little girl I remember going to the different farmers' wives around us and getting feasted on cut-rounds piled high with thick Devonshire cream and raspberry jam. Devonshire is the land of "girt Jan Ridd" and the Doones. To this day I still have a trace of the Devonshire accent.

One of my correspondents has asked me to talk about criticism. I wonder if that will prove useful. I originally meant to talk about sin and suffering, but I will do that next time. I must say that the critical spirit is very common. And it certainly produces a great deal of unhappiness. Let us consider the root of that habit. It lies in the old enemy -- egotism. We feel that what we think or desire or consider as true is so important. And we all feel called upon to judge our neighbors, and to lay down the law about everything. I certainly was very critical myself when I was young, but I try not to be that now. People who have ideas different from our own come along and scold and argue that we should not have them. Now, who are we to dictate to another what ideas we should hold. All ideas are passing things. There will come a day when we shall certainly change them. Unless of course they have become cast-iron prejudices which rule our lives. Sometimes these awful chains are forged by our teachers and surroundings in early youth. But I was never taken in by any of them.

To begin with, does it really matter what you or I think? Only as it affects our conduct to others. If what you and I think is going to make other people unhappy, we had better keep quiet about it. Sometimes people come to me in a great state of indignation about what the Government has done. As we can do nothing about that we had better let it go. It develops into great arguments, and arguments are very tiresome. C. W. Leadbeater could not bear arguments. Debates are a polite form of argumentation. But even they bore me.

Criticism is a habit. It is a frame of mind. We can either see what is wrong all the time, or we can see what is right. Generally if we see one we do not see the other. And both of them must pass one day. I am reminded of two great qualifications for Initiation on the Path of Adeptship. As you probably know there are Four Great Qualifications for entrance to the Path. These were codified by the Lord Buddha and are recorded with comments by His great successor, Shri Shankaracharya in a little book translated as "The Crest Jewel of Wisdom." The first is Viveka, which is often translated as discernment, but which I will call "insight." Insight is the beginning of Wisdom. The next, the natural outcome of the first, is Vairagya, desirelessness, but which I will call a "Balance between the 'pairs of opposites'," under the ceaseless play of which we slowly evolve self-consciousness and self-motivation. The final "pair of opposites" are good and evil. Spirituality is beyond both. "God" is neither good nor evil. All that can be

said of Him, that all-pervading Divine Life, is -- as St. Augustine said -- that He IS.

Then come the six attributes of the Third Qualification, of which I will mention two. Uparati, generally translated as "tolerance;" and Titiksha, given as endurance. Uparati is not mere tolerance, which can degenerate into condescending putting up with people. It is simply cheerfully, happily, letting people be what they are. Now what do most of us do? We just ache to reform everybody. We think we know what is best for them and what they should do. True love never wants to do that. Let me quote you the words of Starr Daily, a lifer in prison who became a saint. It is from his book "Release". "There is a selfish emotion which hurts. It has often been called love. It is but the shadow of the miracle worker..... Just as science, art and invention do not desire to reform anybody, neither does love. By not wanting to reform others, it transforms them. By setting others free, love binds them. A friend is a lover. He does not preach, find fault, condemn. He frees; and the thing he frees, he binds. You cannot have the thing you will not give away. You cannot be free of the thing you hold. To hold is to belong to the thing held, a bond. What you set free belongs to you. You do not belong to it, for you belong to love..... All things below love encircle and squeeze. They press and inflict and hurt. Love is Reality, the Liberator, the Miracle-worker. By making others glad you give them a foretaste of heaven on earth."

Are these not wise words? And the other qualification, Titiksha, endurance. I call it "Just letting events be as they are," "taking everything," as H.P.B. said, "with the gratitude of a disciple." For events are the Will of God in action, and are leading us all to final blessedness.

I am here quoting a little from my new book "The Way of the Disciple" which is now on sale. I feel it is my best book.

With best wishes to you all,

Your affectionate friend,

Clara Codd

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