

TO THOSE WHO MOURN

"Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." (Matthew 5:4)

These words of the great comforter who visited the Earth two thousand years ago are brought to the minds of all during the Easter feast which brings joy to millions, for humanity is now awakening more and more to its true import.

Easter, which at one time was celebrated by the few Christians, is no longer only a Christian festival. It is no longer reserved for those who accept the sacramental bread and wine from the hands of their minister. It has now become a great day of rejoicing by peoples of all nations, and followers of all religions, as well as those who never see the inside of a church.

It has become a custom for people in rural districts as well as in cities to select a hill upon which they plant a cross and on the glad Easter day to meet in fellowship; worship as a community, regardless of race, creed, or color; and in the name of the greatest Spirit that has ever inhabited a physical body to worship the Universal Spirit, offering up praise and thanks for the life and the light which were His part of the great scheme of God. This universal spirit of joy is expressed on a day which in memory brings to us the picture of a man nailed upon a cross. It pictures to humanity a face drawn in pain, a human body suffering in the agony of death. Why should all mankind rejoice on a day which is connected in memory with that act of brutality of two thousand years ago?

Christ Jesus

Man, in his lack of knowledge, his vague understanding of the justice of a loving Father, has made the grave a darkened sepulcher, a thing to be dreaded, and an end to all his aspirations and his ambitions. For ages he has feared this ending of physical existence and has made of it a time of intense mourning, a period filled with tears. BUT, this great Spirit who had power over life and death permitted Himself to be crucified; He came to the Earth for that great purpose. But the question may be raised: If we claim that Jesus the Christ had power over His life, then why did he permit the great indignities and cruelties which were perpetrated upon Him and why did He not save Himself from this undignified and cruel death? In the parable of the sheepfold in John 10, Jesus tells His hearers, "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." We find another

statement given by the Christ after the crucifixion, after He had suffered death on the cross--when He had come back from the spiritual world to commune with His disciples. In the twenty-eighth chapter of Matthew, the eighteenth verse, He again claims the same power. "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in Earth."

Life After Death

The Christ came to Earth to teach mankind a particular lesson; and if He was destined to become the Savior of mankind, then the greatest lesson which He could have taught man was that of faith; faith in his God and faith in a life after death. By His very death Christ Jesus must bring to man faith, and the belief in a **LIFE AFTER DEATH**. He preached immortality, and to further impress this fact upon humanity, He must go through the throes of death in order to return to life and bring to man proof of an after-death life. To accomplish this He appeared to His beloved disciples in His spiritual body. In I Corinthians, 15:6, Paul says, "After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once: of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep." He walked and talked to them so that they might believe that what He had preached, the immortality of the soul, was a fact and that after man has laid aside his physical body, he still lives in a finer and more ethereal body.

The Spiritual Body

Paul also brings man much hope in a life after death in the fifth chapter of II Corinthians, verses 1, 2: "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven." In the fifteenth chapter of I Corinthians, Paul again preaches to those who have no faith in the life after death. This wonderful chapter is used by the majority of ministers to bring comfort and faith to those who have been bereaved by the loss of their loved ones. "It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body."

During the old dispensation and all through the Old Testament, man had very little hope in a life after death; to him the grave ended all. We find such discouragement when we read the ninth chapter of Ecclesiastes, the fifth verse, where the statement is made, "For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten."

Made in God's Image

The Rosicrucian Teachings claim that man is an immortal Spirit, made in the image of God, for are we not told in the 26th verse of the first chapter of Genesis that God said, "Let us make man in our image?" Now if God is Spirit and man is made in His image, can we longer deny that man cannot die, or that if he did that a part of God would die? Can one imagine a great Spirit which would create a being like man in His own image and then permit him to die? Could such a being himself become a creator as God had destined him to do if one Earth life were all, and if, when man had lived his three score and ten years, he should pass out of existence with no further chance to become as his Father in heaven, perfect? If he but stops to reason this thing out he cannot but be convinced that man, too, must go on evolving, learning, in order to become all wise as his Father in heaven is wise, and that this cannot be accomplished in the few years of one short life. To learn these lessons on the Earth over which God gave man dominion, he must return again and again, and in each embodiment he must take up his cross of matter (his physical body).

It is through the physical vehicle that man must learn to become a creator like unto his Father in heaven; it is the tool which he uses in his efforts to master the numerous lessons of life so that he can be recognized by his Father in heaven as a son. This tool (the physical body) becomes tired, wears out; and it is necessary that the Spirit be given a time to assimilate and digest all the experience gained on Earth. Therefore, God has arranged that the Spirit step out of this worn-out old robe and function in its spiritual body.

When this occurs, man, with his limited vision, grieves over this change; to him it appears as a final parting from a loved one when this worn-out garment disintegrates and the loved one is permitted to function in a finer and a more ethereal robe, or body, one in which the individual is not limited by distance, nor can physical matter obstruct him in his progress. This is the spiritual body of which Paul tells us in II Corinthians, a building not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. In this vehicle our loved ones can visit us, and while we in our blindness may not have the spiritual eyes with which we can see them, yet they are none the less very near to us. They are still interested in our welfare, and when we need them they do not fail us; they encourage and help us more often than we realize, though by our very grief we may hinder their progress in this new life to which they have been called.

When a man enters into a sound sleep and his physical body is inert on the bed then he is awake and active in the realm of the spirit. He is no longer hampered by a physical body. However, he is tied to this vehicle by the silver cord which leads him back again to his body upon

awakening. During the unconsciousness of sleep he is in the land of the living dead and if he will he can communicate with his loved ones who are ever near him.

The Rosicrucian Fellowship student has this assurance of his nearness to those who have passed over in what is commonly termed death and does not grieve as do others who have no hope. He knows that his loved ones have not gone away, but, as John McCreery says in his poem, "There Are No Dead"--

They are not dead. They have but passed
Beyond the mists that blind us here
Into the new and larger life
Of that serener sphere.

Immortal Life

The actual knowledge acquired by the students of these advanced teachings has removed the sting of death, and they know that those who have laid aside their mortal bodies are not dead but are now enjoying the freedom of life in the spiritual worlds. They are convinced that God did not build the house of man's soul, and inspire the human Spirit with faith and love, to pull it down in death, to destroy His own handiwork. Man is God's masterpiece, and as such this spark of divinity made in His image cannot die, else a part of God were destroyed.

The Christ willingly came to the Earth to be encased in a physical body, knowing that the result would be to bring hope and faith to mankind. He must die and rise again, thus proving to man that death is only a physical manifestation, a freeing of a divine Spirit. He came to a humanity blinded with the fear of the grave, to whom the grave was an abyss where the Spirit was swallowed up and lost. He found death the king of terrors, and knew that only He could restore man's faith in an immortal life and give him the assurance of being a glorified Spirit. He left these comforting words which should bring solace and faith to all who believe in Him:

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." (John 14:1-3)