

THE SCIENCE OF DEATH

Fear of Death

When the birth of a child is expected the parents prepare for its coming months in advance, usually with the greatest joy. Sometimes the entire family, especially the feminine part of it, will assist in preparing the most wonderful creations for the comfort of the tiny stranger who has not yet made its appearance. For a few years this little life is sheltered if it is fortunate enough to be attracted to parents who have been blessed with this world's goods; but the greater number are among the poorer classes who are unable to provide the child with the material necessities for its well-being. While they may welcome and love it, still their lives are more or less filled with adversities and sorrows, and the child grows to manhood or womanhood amidst hardships and suffering. Yet with all this suffering which often makes man's life a burden to him, he clings to life tenaciously, and the thought of death fills him with horror.

The writer visited some of the helpless, hopeless, and aged invalids in one of the large county hospitals. She found that a number of them looked upon death with fear. Some repeatedly read their Bibles, but the fear of death could not be removed.

We find aged ones, feeble, tottering, surrounded by grandchildren whose flippant and more modern ways often elicit criticism from the neglected and lonely grandparents. The latter are often made to feel that they are in the way, yet when the time arrives for one of them to journey into the Great Beyond, he or she usually meets this period with fear and regret. The doctor is called, and the relatives who at one time felt that the grandparent was in the way, now do their utmost to prevent the exit of this Spirit into the unknown world.

Why should the thought of this journey into the life beyond be filled with so much horror, especially in a Christian nation which accepts the teachings of the Great Master, THE CHRIST, Whose mission upon Earth was to take away the sting of death?

Death as Punishment

The ancient history of mankind as recorded in the Bible from the time of Adam and Eve, when the Lord turned mankind out of the Garden of Eden, shows that death has always been associated with the idea of punishment. In Genesis, 2nd chapter, 17th verse, the Lord threatened Adam with death if he ate of the Tree of Knowledge. All through the history of the ancient Israelites we find that their Lord, Jehovah, constantly threatened them with the punishment of death for their sins. This fear was implanted in the minds of these earlier races, whose

infantile minds were not yet able to reason, and who could only comprehend through fear. They could not conceive of a God of love, but responded only to an angry God Who would thrust them into unknown darkness for their sins.

The ancient people were very superstitious, and they used a great deal of ceremonial to free themselves from the powers of darkness. The fear of death created in them a desire to preserve their bodies which resulted in embalming of various kinds. Among the ancient Egyptians embalming became an art. After the body had been put through a preservative process by the priests, it was placed in a sycamore box fashioned in the form of the body and returned to the relative, who often kept it in the home, and sometimes in a private vault or sepulcher. Some of these mummies may be found in our museums.

Life After Death

The ideas of death have undergone various alterations in accordance with man's evolution, but the deep mystery of life after death was not explained until after the advent of Christ, Who through His death upon the Cross brought to man the hope of salvation.

St. John, 5th chapter, 24th verse, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my words and believeth on him that sent me hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life." The Apostle Paul states in the second epistle of Timothy, 1st chapter, 9th and 10th verses, "God hath saved us and called us, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, Who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."

How has the world grasped the opportunity of Christ's supreme sacrifice to bring to the world the hope of immortality? Has the fear of death diminished? Has the method of caring for the bodies of the dead changed from that of the ancient Jews or Greeks? Has the science of death kept up with evolution? Let us see if a change is perceptible. Among the more advanced among us mourning robes are slowly disappearing. The method of embalming has been changed, the viscera and brain are no longer removed as in olden times, but a fluid is injected into the main arteries which temporarily keeps the body from putrefaction. But the fear of death and great grief are still prevalent. Fabulous sums are expended on costly funerals and floral pieces. This extravagance has been carried to great extremes and has become a custom which is often very embarrassing to the relatives, who may be restricted in this world's goods. The relatives must pay for the plot of

ground, the sexton is paid for digging the grave, and the undertaker for his casket, robe, and conveyances to take the relatives to the funeral. To add to the loss of their loved ones, the funeral expenses are often a burden to the bereaved ones. It is also customary with many ministers to prolong the services, and in their great zeal for converts to grasp this opportunity to appeal to the emotions of those present, thereby adding to the mourner's grief and strengthening the fear of death and the life beyond.

Since World War I mankind has become greatly interested in life after death. The world has been flooded with books supposedly dictated by the so-called dead, who have used mediums to transmit their message. Numbers, through their great grief and longing to communicate with loved ones, have rent the veil and have been able to see into the beyond. But with the fear of death removed, which is a great step forward and a wonderful comfort to mankind, what is being done to prepare the Spirit for the change called death? Are such careful preparations made for this journey as for the entrance of the Spirit into the physical body (birth)? Is this passing from physical life made pleasant by love and good wishes of friends? Alas! No. This greatest of all journeys into the home of the Spirit is still attended by grief, the way is paved with fears, and washed with tears. The traveler is not attended by the love and joy which awaited his entrance into Earth life. The Spirit often enters into this new life unprepared, unhappy on account of the grief of relatives.

Death as a Birth

The question may be asked: What is the science of death? We will answer this from the Rosicrucian standpoint.

Death, so called, is but a passing of the Spirit into a larger sphere--a birth. It should be prepared for with the greatest care. The physical body is but a vehicle which the Spirit uses to gain experience in this school day of life. At the end of this life the Ego must assimilate what it has experienced, and in order to extract the best from its experiences certain conditions must be prepared for it at the time of the severing of the silver cord. This usually occurs about three and one-half days after death. Now in order to explain why the period immediately after the passing out of the Spirit is of vital importance, we must understand that man's body is fourfold, consisting of the physical or dense body, the vital body, the desire body, and the mind or mental body. At what is called death the Spirit withdraws with the two higher vehicles, which are tied to the etheric and physical bodies by a slender cord. This when seen with the eyes of the Spirit has a silvery sheen, and is in the shape of two figure sixes, connected at the points of the two hooks; the upper end is connected with the two higher vehicles while the lower end is still in touch with the physical body.

At death the desire and mental bodies leave the physical, taking with them but one permanent atom, which during life was deposited within the left ventricle of the heart. This atom, like the negative film of the camera, has been impressed with all the experiences of the life just ended. At death the force of this atom leaves the body and all these impressions are transferred from the vital (etheric) body (which is the storehouse of these experiences) into the desire body, which then forms the basis of the man or woman's life in purgatory and the first heaven. This transfer is done by the Spirit during the first three and one-half days after the rupture of the connection between the seed atom and the heart, ordinarily known as death. We may thus see that death is not complete until this transfer has been accomplished. Sensation is still present, and the Spirit suffers through inharmonious surroundings. It can feel somewhat during postmortem examination or embalming. When the body is mutilated or cremated before the silver cord is severed, the Spirit suffers pain. The doctors and undertakers, believing the person "dead," usually do not handle the body with the same care that they would if they knew the real facts.

Cases have been reported where those whose bodies were mutilated immediately after death were able to communicate with those in the body and complained that they had suffered. In one case a woman stated that they had butchered her, and she was helpless to make the undertaker understand that she could feel the knife. If it were more generally known that our dead can feel physical pain up to a certain time, embalming would be discontinued and the body kept on ice instead.

When the panorama of life has been fully etched into the desire body and the silver cord broken, the two lower ethers of the vital body gravitate back to the physical body, leaving the Spirit free to go on into the higher realms. The two higher ethers coalesce with the desire body. When the physical body is buried, that part of the vital body which remains disintegrates synchronously with it. When the body is cremated, the Spirit is freed much more quickly from all ties that bind it to the worn out physical robe.

As the interest and belief in a life after death becomes more universal, the necessity for a scientific method for the care of those who are passing into the higher life will be impressed upon the people, and we shall then have nurses, doctors, and ministers who are versed in the science of death as well as in the science of birth. The Spirit will then be surrounded not only with love, but with peace and quiet at the time of passing. It will also have a deeper and clearer record with which to begin its life work in its new state.