

Our Responsibility to “The Dead”

We have often expressed our appreciation of the science of birth, with its efficient methods of helping both the mother and the child when the latter is entering our earth-life, but we have also heartily deplored the lack of a science of death, which would teach people how to intelligently help the soul that is passing from earth life into the unseen realms of nature. At such times we usually stand helplessly by and often do in our ignorance the very things which are detrimental to the comfort of the spirit then in transition. If people could only know how their moans and hysterical outbursts affect their dear departing ones, unselfish considerations would probably change their attitude and quiet their manner. So far as the body is concerned, it is not really dead until about three and a half days after the spirit has passed out of it, for the silver cord still connects it with the higher vehicles, and anything in the nature of a postmortem examination, embalming, or cremation is felt by the spirit almost as keenly as if still within the body. These are facts well known to all students of the Rosicrucian Philosophy, but it has perhaps not received the emphasis it deserves—that our attitude after that time continues to affect the spirit, for our friends do not usually leave their accustomed places right away.

Many stay in or near the home for a number of months after they have left the body and can feel conditions there even more keenly than when in earth-life. If we sigh, mourn, and moan for them, we transfer to them the gloom we ourselves carry about with us, or else we bind them to the home in efforts to cheer us. In either case, we are a hindrance and a stumbling block in the way of their spiritual progress, and while this may be forgiven in those who are ignorant of the facts concerning life and death, people who have studied the Rosicrucian Philosophy or kindred teachings are incurring a very grave responsibility when they indulge in such practices. We are well aware that custom used to demand the wearing of mourning and that people were not considered respectable if they did not put on a sable garb as a token of their sorrow. But fortunately times are changing and a more enlightened view is being taken on the matter. The transition to the other world is quite serious enough in itself, involving as it does a process of adjustment to strange conditions all around, and the passing spirit is further hampered by the sorrow and anguish of the dear ones which it continues to see about itself, when it finds them surrounded by a cloud of black gloom, clothed in garments of the same color and nursing their sorrow for months or years; the effect cannot be anything but depressing.

How much better then the attitude of those who have learned the Rosicrucian teachings and have taken them to heart. In such cases, when a dear one makes the transition, their attitude is cheerful, helpful, hopeful, and encouraging. The selfish grief at the loss is suppressed in order that the passing spirit may receive all the encouragement possible. Usually the survivors in the family dress in white at the funeral and a cheerful, genial spirit prevails throughout. The thought of the survivors is not, “What shall I do now that I have lost him or her? All the world seems empty for me”; but the thought is, “I hope he or she may find himself or herself to rights under the new conditions as quickly as possible and that he or she will not grieve at the thought of leaving us behind.” Thus, by the good-will, intelligence, unselfishness, and love of the remaining friends, the passing spirit is enabled to enter the new conditions under much more favorable circumstances, and students of the Rosicrucian Philosophy cannot do better than to spread this teaching as widely as possible. According to the Bible, the redeemed of the Lord will finally vanquish the last enemy, death, and they will then exclaim, “O Death where

is thy sting? O Grave where is thy victory?" For those who have evolved the spiritual sight, there is of course no death, but even those who have studied the Rosicrucian teachings may in a measure be said to have attained this great victory.