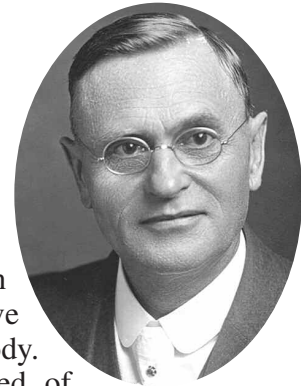


Retrospection and Remorse



AS THERE ARE many among the Rosicrucian students who perform the exercises given by the Elder Brothers for the purpose of furthering soul-growth, though they have not felt inclined to enter the Path, it is thought to be well to consider the occult effect of the emotions engendered by these exercises.

When we perform the exercise of retrospection, we should give ourselves over to the feelings of regret and remorse with our whole soul; we should endeavor to shed tears of fire that may burn into our very innermost being; we should make the cleansing process as thorough as possible, to the end that we may grow in grace thereby to the utmost. But having finished the exercise we should do the same as is done in purgatory—consider the incidents of the day closed and forget all about them, save insofar as they demand restitution of something, the making of an apology, or such subsequent acts to satisfy the demands of conscience. And having thus paid the debt, our attitude ought to be one of unfailing optimism. "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow." "If God be for us, who can be against us?" By that attitude we die daily to the old life and we are born each day to walk in the newness of the spiritual life, for our desire bodies are thus renewed and ready to serve a higher aim in life than the day before....

There are people who live with regret as with a boon companion, who take it to bed with them at night and get up with it in the morning; they take it to the office, shop, or church, they sit with it at meals, they nurse it as the most precious thing in their possession, and they would sooner part with life itself than give up their regret for this, that, or the other thing.

Remorse and regret, when continually indulged

in, have the same effect on the desire body as excessive bathing has on the vital body. Both vehicles are depleted of strength by excessive cleansing, and for that reason it is as dangerous to the moral and spiritual health to indulge indiscriminately in feelings of regret and remorse as it is fatal to physical well-being to bathe too much. Discrimination should govern in both cases.

As a vampire sucks the ether from the vital body of its victim and feeds upon it, so perpetual thoughts of regret and remorse concerning certain things become a desire-elemental which acts as a vampire and draws the very life from the poor soul who has shaped it, and by the attraction of like for like, it fosters continuance of this morbid habit of regret.

We are not helping the loved ones who have departed this life by our regrets, which we love to fancy are evidences of our faithfulness, but we are hindering them. They have left the present sphere of experience and are going onwards to other realms where there are other lessons to be learned, and we are holding them back by our thoughts, for they feel us most acutely for some time after they have passed over, and we owe them a duty to think thoughts of cheer and love instead of selfish regret, which hurts both us and them. Regret is subversive of all spiritual growth, for while the thought-elemental thus created hangs about us as a vampire, we cannot climb the rugged path.

Loathsome as the vulture which feeds upon the noxious, decomposing carcasses of the dead are the vain regrets which live upon the morbid contemplation of the past and its mistakes. It is our duty to drive them out of our mental habitation as we would eject a vulture from our physical abode were it to seek entrance. □