

GETTING OVER GRIEF Frequently in the course of counseling with someone, the conversation will turn to an area of hurt and sorrow over the death of someone very close. As we talk more in this area, tears often begin to flow and the pain is relieved. And then there will be an apology: "I know I should be over it by now . . . I don't know what's wrong with me that I keep feeling this way. . . "

My reply usually goes something like this: "I don't think you should expect yourself to get over it. Why get to the point where the loss of this dear person is a matter of emotionless intellectual reflection only? This person was a part of you who cared deeply about. You will go on without him or her but will there ever be a point in your life when the memory of him will not evoke feelings?"

A friend of mine told me about a conversation he had had with an aged woman. She had lived a full and active life. She had two married sons. But she had given birth to a baby girl also. The baby girl had died. She told about it with tears, with pain. Even though sixty or more years had passed since then. She had never "gotten over it." But because she hadn't she was a warm person -- caring, compassionate; very real.

Another person told me that her friends and relatives keep saying to her "where's your faith?" because she is still frequently talking about and crying over the emptiness in her life since her husband died nearly two years ago. This woman has had to get professional counseling in part because those around her are saying "don't grieve with us;" "there's something wrong with you if you haven't gotten over it yet." Another way of describing this is to say she had to "purchase friendship" from a counselor because her friends were unable to tolerate her emotions.

The tears, empty feelings, loneliness, guilty feelings that are part of the consequences of the death of a dear one will diminish with time. It's unfair and unreal to expect them ever to be totally gone. They'll always be there. Life must go on. That's the important thing. New friends, new dear ones; new activities, new joys, work. But those other hurts can co-exist with the new life.

"Blessed are those who mourn for they shall be comforted."

LIFE AND DEATH The mystery of Life is Death; the mystery of Death is Life . . . In Life-- Death haunts the mortal mind yet when we leave the world behind, with all its stress and storm and strife -- Death proves to be the gate of Life.

Our loved ones go -- and yet they stay, and walk beside us on the way. O sweet and secret paradox! In vain the seeker stands and knocks, and never finds the hidden key that will unlock the mystery.

They pass -- and yet they do not die. What use to probe with "How?" and "Why?" We need no proofs. God made it so. We who have loved and lost . . . We know; we who have watched the last faint breath . . . We know the Truth -- There is no death.

A SCIENTIFIC REPORT Thomas Edison was a scientific genius, an exacting and practical man who didn't casually say things he didn't believe. Mrs. Edison told about the night Edison was at death's door: Suddenly it was evident that he wanted to say something and so she and the doctor bent down close. This great scientist, with a smile on his face said, "It is very beautiful over there!"

Are we to believe that, at the last, Edison, who had been dedicated to exactitude and practicality, had suddenly become a dreamy-eyed poet? Hardly. He reported what he saw, "It is very beautiful over there!"