



VERILY, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. (John 12:24)

BEHOLD, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, ⁵² In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.. ⁵³ For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. ⁵⁴ So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. ⁵⁵ O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? ⁵⁶ The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. ⁵⁷ But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 15:51-57)

Perhaps the most important, and yet most neglected consideration in life is the destiny of the soul. Our earthly life can in no wise compare with that eternity future that awaits every man, woman and child. It is likely that the butterfly has as little awareness of a coming death as the average unbeliever. For some reason, we come into this world believing that we shall live forever. That fact is not far from true since the soul will, indeed, spend eternity at one or the other of two destinations – Heaven or Hell.

The federal head of the human race, Adam, brought both physical and spiritual death upon his progeny. But the second, Adam, - Jesus Christ - has granted eternal life to all who have been granted mercy and grace through His shed blood at Calvary such as that enjoyed by the beggar Lazarus. Others, like unto Dives (the Rich Man), will

spend an eternity looking up from the fires of Hell with grievous regret and mourning. There exists at this very moment a room of dying for each reader of this devotion – perhaps to be reserved for this very day, tomorrow, or even decades in the future. But that room will be our last glimpse of light in this life sooner or later. Then what? For the Christian, there is no dread of that eventual ‘good-bye.’ If our lives are on deposit in that Great Stone Vault which is Christ, we should even be joyful at the coming prospect.

A single grain of wheat would scarcely serve as a meal for any of us. As long as we hold it in hand, it remains a single grain; however, when we plant that grain in the soil, well-watered and cultivated, it will shed its protective covering. The tiny spark of life in the heart of the seed will convey life to a new plant which has emerged from the germinated seed. It remains hidden to the farmer’s eye until it struggles to break the surface and burst into the effulgent light of the sun. Instead of one tiny grain of wheat, the farmer will, by-and-by, have a great multitude of seed which have been born of that single grain. This is why our Lord died for us – that we may be born anew and produce much fruit. It is the life of the first grain that the wheat crop will possess. For the Christian, our life is in Christ, and He in us. We have a new life that is made to conform to His life which is now in us.

I performed a funeral service for family friends last week. I had done so four years earlier for the husband, and now for the widow’s son. Naturally, she was overcome with grief. The mother was approaching 80 years of age, and her son had died at 55 years. I asked the mother this question: Suppose you are in great need to make your house payment when a benefactor offered to give you, *free gratis*, a sum of \$55,000 to pay off the balance of your home. Would you simply accept that sum with gratitude, or would you ask for a bit more? She responded that she would accept the amount with gratitude. I then suggested that the 55 years of her son’s life was just like that gift of God, *free gratis*, for that term of life. I believed that helped her to understand and appreciate the gift and not mourn the brief period of the gift. All life is a gift of God. Whether the gift is for two years, five years, twenty years, or even one hundred, it is still a gift of that duration. Moreover, the departed soul is in the best, most loving, merciful and just hands of any other. There is no room to mourn the departed, but those of us who remain in this world of trouble and strife rightfully mourn our own continuing worldly life.

I read a brief account in ‘Signs of the Times’ which tells a story of similar nature:

A lady, when her husband was absent, lost both her children to cholera. She laid them both out with a mother’s tenderness, spread a sheet over them, and waited at the door for her husband’s return.

‘A person lent me some jewels,’ she told her husband on his return., ‘and he now wants to have them back. What shall I do?’ ‘Return them by all means,’ said the husband. Then she led the way, and silently uncovered the little forms of their beloved children.

I consider this a beautiful manner of softening the loss for her husband, for it is true.

I have several Federal Reserve Notes minted in the 1950’s. These are called, Silver Certificates, because the one who possesses these bills is assured that the bill is redeemable in REAL silver at the nearest Federal Reserve Bank. The problem with this instrument is the fact that the nation has been taken off the silver standard and the promise is no longer valid. The guarantee has expired.

The same is true of our bodies of flesh and bones, but without expiration. Our lives are based on the Gold Standard of Heaven. Though wrinkled and soiled, we will carry these worn out bodies to the great Exchange and receive, in their places, the pure

Gold of Heaven's treasure. The passing soul will be more than fiat currency – it will be more beautiful and genuine than ever before. Instead of a bill of fiat, we have the actual promise fulfilled in the gold granted. The paper was never of any worth whatsoever – it was the promise of the Sovereign that gave a potential value to the currency.. There is no greater Banker than God, and no mightier Sovereign than the Lord of Lords and King of Kings.

If we have lived a life of depravity and sin, our lives will be as the expired Silver Certificate, for they have been printed on counterfeit paper.

I do not know precisely what to expect when my body is buried and my spirit has returned to God who gave it. . . . *because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets: 6 Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern. 7 Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.* (Ecclesiastes 12:5b-7) But I do know that to be absent in the body is to be present with the Lord, and there can never be a more blessed or joyful place of eternal abode.

I do know the promises made sure by the Word of God. To expound upon the second leading text of this devotion:

- 1) *We shall not all sleep* – those who remain alive at His Coming shall not suffer the first death.
- 2) *but we shall all be changed* – indeed, these corrupted and decomposed bodies shall be instantly reconstituted from the divine atoms which have scattered to the four winds.
- 3) *In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump* – The change will be instantaneous. The sleeping body will sleep so soundly that it will have no awareness of time having lapsed while the soul awaits reunion with that new body.
- 4) *for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed* – a trumpet is a military instrument alerting the sleeping soldier to awaken as the Armies of Heaven, led by our Lord of Lords and King of Kings, returns with the armies of Heaven. Our risen bodies will no longer be subject to pain, sorrow, or death.
- 5) *For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.* The curse of Adam shall be cancelled and we shall be changed from the soiled currency to the gold of the realm.
- 6) *So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory* – No more death. Death and Hell were conquered by our Redeemer. Instead of the bars of Hell, we shall behold the glorious victory of the long and hard fought battle.
- 7) *O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.* That old harbinger of darkness (death) will no longer trouble our minds and hearts. The Christian saint, just as his Lord and Savior, shall exchange his borrowed tomb for the white robe of righteousness purchased by our Lord. Our Lord has satisfied the demands of the Law, and we are set free in the Perfect Law of Liberty.