



(Note: I have discussed the possibility of foregoing, for the present time, the devotional series on Death and Dying since it is a bit of a morbid subject during the season of Life (Spring). Though it is not truly morbid to those who trust in Christ, it can never rise to the importance of pure and undefiled life in Christ. So, today's devotion is not of the sleep of death, but of the awakening glory of LIFE. The respondent agrees.)

When I was a child – quite a very long time ago, I admit – it seemed that night came with cold abandon and was both unwelcomed and uninvited. This was especially so in Autumn season as the shadows lengthened earlier day by day. Saturday nights were especially short-lived since we played hide and seek, kick the can, red rover, and made homemade ice cream, until mother called us indoors with increasing tones of impatience. It was hard to surrender the joys of the closing day. As we (one brother and FIVE sisters) begrudgingly went into the house, it seemed our happiness had just ended forever. Mother usually provided a late-night snack (late night being 9:00pm), and sent us off to bed after washing up. The cool, fresh sheets smelled of sunshine; and it was only a few seconds, or minutes, before we were so sound asleep that we knew not the passing of the hours of darkness and sleep. Suddenly, we opened our eyes and were blinded by the morning sun peering through our window. It seemed that we had simply blinked our eyes and a night had mysteriously vanished into the ether of dreams. As Longfellow says:

*And the night shall be filled with music,
And the cares, that infest the day,
Shall fold their tents, like the Arabs,
And as silently steal away.*

I believe this fleeting of night during our sound sleep is representative of life itself. Life is full symbolic nights, and wonderful sunlit days. We dread saying goodbye to the beauty of the day, but it is essential for the darkness of night to bring to us the rest and refreshment that is essential for our joy in life come the morning. Life, and especially the FULLNESS of Life, is a gift of God. We were not created by a chain of accidental combinations of atoms and molecules. Our bodies were created from the dust of the earth. The body of Adam was not a living body when God formed it from that dust, but merely a clump of inorganic clay. But God breathed the breath of life into those cold, insensitive

nostrils, and Adam became a living soul. Regardless the braggadocio of modern science that claims it has discovered the 'secret of life' – they have not. They cannot even define life. They know that a human body ceases to live at death, but they can determine no chemical, organic, or physical answer for what changed in the body – except that it ceases to evidence life. God tells us that the life is in the blood, and indeed it is for God has placed every property in the blood to support life.

God says: *For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.* (Lev 17:11) God also says: *And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.* (Heb 9:22) We all know that under the Law of Moses an innocent animal must be sacrificed to remit sins. This remission was actually a partial and temporary remission for it symbolized the more perfect sacrifice to come of the Lamb of God. Our Lord proclaimed, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.* (John 6:53) It is only by the righteous and sinless blood of Christ that our sins are remitted. That Old Testament model pointed to Christ alone.

So, life is dear and costly. It is a gift of God to us, but the eternal life made available by grace through the sacrifice of His dearly beloved Son is the greatest gift of all for it is life eternal. But wait, have we defined what we mean by life? Does a living body live? Not really, it is the life that is in the blood that exhibits the properties of life and relates them to the facility provided by the body (which has no real life without the blood). Even blood itself has no life, but life is IN the blood. So, when we take the blood from a lifeless corpse, the physical properties remain intact, but that blood is lifeless. Where did the life go? Can you answer that simple question? NO! Could Einstein, Newton, or Copernicus have answered that question? NO! So much for science and its gilded parchments. Life belongs to God. It has no earthly properties. Life is a spirit, in a sense. It is what returns to God when the body returns to the dust of the earth. *Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.* Eccl 12:7 (KJV) This spirit somehow defines the property of life, and a spirit never dies. When the spirit of life is graced by the election and calling of the Holy Spirit, it becomes an imperishable entity. It is this spirit that never dies, as Christ has told us. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.* (John 6:47) This life is not interrupted, even momentarily, by physical death; but immediately returns to the Keeper of Souls in Heaven.

Remarkably, our bodies, blood and physical attributes are fashioned for the soul and spirit that God imparts to us. Our DNA is a spiritual blueprint for our being. It determines our racial makeup, our eye color, our hair, our body size and type, our talents, our physical attributes, etc. It is a complete plan for our lives imparted, before conception, as to who we shall be before we were ever conceived. How amazing and how un-evolutionary!

4 Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, 5 Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations. (Jer 1:4-5)

God knew Jeremiah before he was conceived. He knew YOU before you were conceived. He knew His only Begotten Son before Mary conceived. And God named and anointed Cyrus the Great before his conception. *24 Thus saith the LORD, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the LORD that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself; 25 That frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad; that turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish; 26 That confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers; that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I*

will raise up the decayed places thereof: 27 That saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers: 28 That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid. (Isaiah 44:24-28) Two hundred years after this prophecy came forth Cyrus out of Elam and Persia to conquer Babylon and return the Jews to Jerusalem.

If the redeemed of the Lord never die, what of those who willfully reject His atoning sacrifice? They will die the second death (eternal separation from God) that follows Judgment, yet, if it can be so called, they continue to in an eternal existence, but not in the bliss and presence of our Lord, but among the damned and irreverent inmates of the forlorn gates of Hell.

God made you and me. He fashioned us according to His will and plan; and He did so with great care. The next time you ponder, or hear questioned, the legitimacy or righteousness of abortion, ask yourself if it is not an abomination in the face of a Holy God to destroy the very works of His hands in the womb: *11 If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. 12 Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee. 13 For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. 14 I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. 15 My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. 16 Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them. (Psalm 139:11-16)*

Tennyson wrote, in his *Idylls of the King*, the model for the Knight's Pledge: *Live pure, speak truth, right the wrong, follow the king; else wherefore born?* This is a grand model for the Christian life that has been given us freely and without merit of our own. The pure life is a Holy life; the Christian must speak the truth and do all in his power to right the wrongs waged not only against himself, but all others within his power to right. But above all else, the Christian must follow the King – our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Author and Finisher of our Faith, and the Bishop of our Souls.

Life is a precious gift of God. Guard it with Holy zeal. Protect all life from those who would mercilessly waste it. Remember that we were purchased at an awful and terrible price. We owe our Lord not only our being and life, but every good gift we have ever possessed.