

WESTERN WISDOM BIBLE STUDY

The Victory of Life



Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed,

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.

For this corruptible must put on incorrup-

tion, and this mortal must put on immortality.

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.

I Corinthians, 15: 51-55

These moving words, vibrant with the zeal and faith of the consecrated St. Paul, bring to the minds of most orthodox Christians an awe-inspiring picture of a time in the future when the so-called dead will rise from their graves and "in the twinkling of an eye" change so that they can live in happiness and glory with their Lord forever after. However, as comforting as such a vision may be to those who live entirely by faith, it fades into nothing for those who view it through the cold eye of logic and reason. Hence we look further for an explanation of this passage which will satisfy the reasoning mind as well as the questing heart, and find it in occult philosophy.

The Western Wisdom Teachings postulate that man is essentially Spirit, and as such cannot "die," or cease to exist. Spirit *is*, always has been, and always will be. So it is that we, as individualized Spirits within the body of God, our Creator, have been sent into materiality to learn the lessons we need for the changing of our *all*-consciousness into *self*-consciousness. We come again and again to the earth in gradually improving bodies, learning to live according to God's immutable laws, the "corrupt-

ible" thus putting on "incorruption"—the "mortal" putting on "immortality."

By living according to the precepts of love and service given us by Christ Jesus we refine our vehicles, and at the same time build our soul body. This *soma psuchicon*, composed of the two higher ethers, which are attracted by love and service to others, is the vehicle in which we will meet the Christ when He returns, and which was referred to by St. Paul in the 44th verse of Chapter 15 of First Corinthians: "There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body." Those who are still in the body when the Christ comes again, and possess the soul body, can be lifted out of their physical vehicle (which they will no longer need), as described by Max Heindel in *Teachings of an Initiate*:

"When Christ appears we must be prepared with a soul body and thus be ready to part from our dense body to be 'caught up and meet Him in the air'. The results of the investigations which form the basis of the present article may give us an insight into the method of transition when compared with the information given in the Bible. It is said that the Lord will appear with a mighty sound like the voice of an Archangel. We read of thunders and blasts of trumpets in connection with the event. A sound is an atmospheric disturbance, and since the passage of a projectile made by man can lift the vital bodies of soldiers out of their dense bodies, it needs no argument to prove that the shout of a superhuman voice could accomplish similar results more efficiently—in the twinkling of an eye'."

So it is that we triumph over "death" (of the physical body) by learning to serve our fellow men with love in our hearts—this is the golden key to the mystery whereof St. Paul spoke.