GREAT LOVE XIII

Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. John 15:3

I read a story from Anecdotes Illustrative concerning the Civil War. A certain man was called to serve in the war. He was in great distress over having to leave, not because he was a coward but that his children had no mother. How were they to be fed and taken care of? It came the day prior to going into town where the conscripts’ names would be called and the clothes and weapons would be issued, and this man was in his field working for he farmed to provide for his family. As he rested, leaning on his spade, a young neighbor by the name of Durham came to see him and said “Farmer Blake, I will go instead of you.” The farmer was so astonished that he could not speak for some time. It was like an angel of light had come and illumined his deep dark dungeon. “How could this be?” He grasped the hand of young Charles Durham and praised the Lord. The next day all the little town was there to wish him God’s speed. Mr. Durham left feeling quite noble that he had helped his fellow man. Maybe he had visions of grandeur, being the hero in battle, gaining a general’s sash, or sitting in the seat of the Presidency. Who knows? In the very first battle he was killed. Back home, Farmer Blake found his name in the list of missing. He saddled his old horse and rode off to the battle field and searched until he found his body and brought him home to be buried near the little church they had attended and often accompanied one another walking to worship. From the quarry on the hill he dug marble and made a tablet to serve as a marker. With his own hand he carved out words and with every blow of the hammer a tear was shed. Finally, with tears falling, he placed him, his substitute, and his devoted friend in a grave near the church and covered the grave with sod from his own garden. At last he placed the marble tablet upon the grave and the entire town’s folk would come and read the few words on the tablet and they too would shed tears as they read:

C. D.

He died for me.

You and I have a story also. There is one who died for us. He took our place on a hill called Calvary. The only vision of grandeur he ever had was that we would be saved and live with Him forever in glory. For the joy that was set before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame. Every time we hear or read or see the story of the crucifixion we should remember “He died for me.”

Yours in Christ,

Brother Randy Burtram