

REFLECTIONS

November 1, 2015, Refreshed from October 3, 2010

**The grass withers and the flowers fall,
because the breath of the Lord blows on
them.
Surely the people are grass.**

Isaiah 40:7

Old Photographs

Among a stack of file folders, I found some old photographs. I paused for a few moments to look through them, and one of them caught my eye. I was drawn to it not because of nostalgic memories I had—quite the opposite. It was a photograph of an old house, and though the picture was unmarked, someone had told me that it was once the homestead of my maternal grandparents. It was a beautiful two-story Victorian style home and even the grey tones of an old photograph could not disguise its majesty. But in one flaming moment almost 100 years ago, it vanished from the world. Now, only a few generations away, that old house has fallen among the ashes of the world's memories.

The picture of that old homestead reminded me of an antique photo album among my possessions. The family pictures in it date back at least to the turn of the previous century. There is no identification of the images that populate the album, so even as their pictures remain, who the family members were has been lost in the generations.

Later in the day, I browsed through some photographs of a family celebration. In them, we stood among lifelong friends who are a part of our very being. Grey hair and wrinkled brows could not cover the memories of youth, or the marks we have made in each other's lives. And as I gazed upon those pictures I was reminded that our lives are but a few generations away from becoming another of the vanishing memories of life. One day those old photographs will be the ones of you and me.

Vanishing memories or not, our lives have meaning beyond today. Scripture tells us, "*The grass withers and the flowers fall, because the breath of the Lord blows on them. Surely the people are grass.*" And God doesn't waste his breath. Memories are conscious bits of the past. They persuade the way we live our lives; and the way we live our lives persuades the way others will lead theirs long after memories of us are gone.

Old photographs present images of people and things that once were. They are wonderful reminders, but photographs seldom shape the lives of those who view them. But our lives do.

The way we live influences the lives of others. And the influence lingers on long after our lives have fallen among the ashes of the world's memories.

"You are the light of the world."

Richard +

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