

In Light of the Cross

William H. Gottfried



Orlando, FL

In Light of the Cross
Copyright © 2020 by William H. Gottfried

ISBN 13: 978-0-9994899-7-0

FarMor Group Inc.

P.O. Box 585633

Orlando, FL 32858

www.farmorgroupinc.co

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or by any information storage and retrieval system, without written permission of the publisher.

Scripture quotations taken from the *King James Version* of the Holy Bible. Copyright © 1989 Thomas Nelson, Inc. Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville.

Cover photo by Creative Digital Art

Printed in the United States

Library of Congress Control Number: 2020903285

Table of Contents

Preface.....	xi
Acknowledgments	xvi
Introduction	xvii
Section I – Life	1
1. Life: <i>The gateway to eternity</i>	3
2. Time: <i>The balanced scale that weighs out life</i>	17
3. Reality: <i>The full expression of life</i>	25
4. Relationships: <i>The defining nature of life</i>	39
5. Love: <i>The essence of life</i>	43
Section II – Mankind	49
6. Mankind: <i>The pinnacle of creation</i>	51
7. Mind: <i>The set of government, the focus of reality</i>	59
8. Reason: <i>The defining edge of reality</i>	65
9. Wisdom: <i>The advanced guardian of the soul</i>	71
10. Conscience: <i>The compass of direction</i>	77
11. Soul: <i>The window of enlightenment</i>	81
12. Character: <i>The mold that defines our being</i>	87
Section III – Kingdom	91
13. Kingdom: <i>Birthright to immortality</i>	93
14. Christ: <i>The Day Star, the light of the world</i>	101
15. Law: <i>The defining word of God</i>	109
16. Sin: <i>The cancer of the soul</i>	119
17. Grace: <i>The pardoning favor of God</i>	125

18. Cross: <i>The light of hope, the star of deliverance</i>	131
19. Gospel: <i>Liberation, life to life, rebirth of the soul</i>	137
Section IV – Faith	143
20. Faith: <i>The anchor of the soul</i>	145
21. Scriptures: <i>The wall that shelters our life</i>	155
22. Prophecy: <i>The confirmation of the Word</i>	165
23. Truth: <i>The cornerstone of life</i>	173
24. Religion: <i>The tabernacle of light</i>	185
25. Worship: <i>The highest form of praise</i>	195
26. Prayer: <i>The breath of the soul</i>	199
Section V – Mission	207
27. Mission: <i>To comprehend and reflect the divine will</i>	209
28. Witness: <i>To exalt the Word</i>	219
29. Ministry: <i>The divine embracing of humanity</i>	227
30. Holy Spirit: <i>The indwelling presence of God</i>	241
31. New Birth: <i>Conceived anew, growing in grace</i>	247
Section VI – Salvation	257
32. Salvation: <i>Deliverance from sin and death</i>	259
33. Perfection: <i>The defining standard of God</i>	269
34. Righteousness: <i>The image of God restored</i>	273
35. Victory: <i>The triumph of God’s love</i>	277
36. Vision: <i>Insight to the unfolding future</i>	283
Epilogue	295

Poetic Verse

True Love	48
Genesis	58
The Power of Love	136
In His Image	142
In the Garden	206
Togetherness	217

**“...weeping may endure for the night
but joy cometh in the morning.”**

- Psalm 30:5

Section I

Life

Chapter 1:

Life

The gateway to eternity

“In the beginning....”

- Genesis 1:1

Life exists because there was order and direction from the beginning. It did not arise out of chaos! That soul, which is drawn to reverence for life, has already begun to form a conscious awareness of reality through the marvelous wonders of nature and the confirmation of the written Word.

“Life is no accident. It is a designed and purposeful creation.”

The concept of a creative force with power to form all that is witnessed in the earth and the confines of outer space is a self-contained reality (exceeding the inherent limitations within the confined nature of creation).

Who then can know the absolute nature and character of the One who has been presumed to inhabit an unapproachable throne of glory? The Self-Proclaimed One has gone beyond the sheer majesty of His creative power, graciously revealing His righteousness and love toward those who are open to receive His Son.

Being receptive of the Messiah is an anchoring revelation, requiring a personal leap of faith that transcends any initial reverence that mankind may have for life.

Through the revelations of His appointed prophets, God presents Himself to be more approachable and loving than any earthly father.

He pitched His tent in the very midst of His people, marking out the standard of each tribe destined to inherit a portion of the Promised Land.

The insightful provisions of His divine love could not be restrained, as the God of Israel reached out to personally

identify Himself with all mankind through the person of His only begotten Son.

Deity was fully identified with humanity by being born of a woman. The Son of man reflected the Creator's love for lost souls when He drew close to the outcasts and the downtrodden.

His all-embracing love was further unveiled when He willingly submitted to an agonizing death upon a cruel cross of suffering and shame to rescue everyone who feels lost and forsaken.

On the cross, the Savior cried out for all mankind, breaking the chains of bondage that once held us captive.

We are now drawn by love into the very presence of God, for the veil that separated the Holy from the Most Holy was rent by Christ's last breath (bridging the immense void which for generations existed between heaven and earth).

Those who have come into the full light of the cross recognize Christ as the divine Son of God, the Word made flesh. He is our promise of *deliverance* from similar agonizing torment and everlasting death.

Such self-sacrificing love, which the heart of deity desires from His own, only comes when our spirit becomes one with the Holy Spirit.

This holy union of pure love and oneness with God is destined to take on a lasting abode within the heart of all those who have secured a place in the coming Kingdom of Righteousness (which will fill the earth with its wondrous grace and glory).

Our awareness of self, and an individualized place in a seemingly endless universe, continues to be cloaked in mystery. Yet, within this *shrouded* mystery, there is definable structure which suggests an initial design.

This remarkable blueprint causes many thoughtful individuals—apart from the light of revelation—to conclude that the order of the universe and the miracle of life may truly be subject to a higher form of intelligence.

The *perceived possibility* of a higher form of intelligence has essentially been stored in an abstract file labeled God. Such an obscure concept leaves the nature of God, and the initial origin of life, open to our unstable imagination.

Life is better understood and enhanced by nailing down the true nature and source of our being. If God is the reality that precedes all subsequent reality, He merits our primary focus! He becomes the ultimate starting point for building and maintaining a meaningful and lasting life.

“In an exhaustive search for God, we develop an understanding of ourselves, of life and of our future destiny.”

Faith and trust in our divine origin is our present anchor and fortified stronghold in this embattled life. Our commitment must not waver! This identifying bond is a covenant relationship that promises to fulfill every longing that resides in the soul.

The nature of God’s sovereignty and eternal being will forever remain with God. Doubt must give way to trust! The lesser must concede to the greater.

Life is all encompassing, reaching out from the cradle to the most distant star of the universe. As a force in nature, it is witnessed and defined in part by the activity it displays, be it manifested in our personal being or that which makes up our surroundings.

It's clearly apparent that what is defined as life is more inclusive than a simple breath or that which sustains it. For the entity of life exists independently from all that gives evidence of participation in it.

This pairing of God with life has been evident from the beginning of time. Ancient records from the past show the gods of their day were to be feared and appeased. Some became patron gods, championing the heroics of those who bowed in submission to them.

Our expanding knowledge of our surroundings continue to influence the perceived meaning behind the term *God*. The Scriptures, which had their start with Moses, present God as the source and sustainer of life. Both give Him sovereign control of His created works, even the very words that come from the lips of His prophets.

Those sacred scrolls of the past continue to challenge today's proud Schools of Science and their formulated theories for the origin of life and the nature of mankind.

It is not enough to conceive of deity as simply the source of life. God must become a living presence, involved in all that occurs, leaving a lasting imprint that goes beyond the dark cloud of death.

While we all strive to experience the full measure of life, few truly open the depths of their soul to its fullest expression.

"The life we seek is not confined to religion!"

Joy comes from that which transpires between one another. Learning what brings completeness to the soul is the most important aspect of our being.

Spiritual influences revive the breath of life within the spiritual side. This awakening of the soul brings greater significance to every aspect of life.

While the darkness of the present is given to steal away all that we treasure and love, God remains in control. Heaven-sent rays of light, delivered with His seal, have the power to drive out every fear and misgiving that have deprived us of life-saving truth.

The Spiritual entity—a Higher Power that so many of us are openly driven to seek and acknowledge for rescue—is far more than an energizing source.

It is intelligent, caring and personal, ever ready to uplift both the weak and humble, ensuring them a safe passage throughout their journey on earth.

The Omnipotent One is *not* a bystander! He is actively involved in every life. Just how involved He becomes is left to us. Those who are inclined to envision God in some distant heaven have a tendency to place Him outside the immediate realm of their needs.

This leaves their grand expectations of His promises until some distant time of future reward. Such a view is diminishing to all truth and reality.

God is one with us! He is as close and personal as our own conscious thoughts. His presence and power manifest themselves in the present when He is enthroned within the heart and mind of our flesh.

All mankind should marvel in God's infinite love. For even under the burdensome curse of sin, He has upheld the promise of a meaningful and fruitful life (motivating us to reach for the stars, instilling in us a wellspring of hope with our own vision of immortality).

God is our ultimate assurance! He is presently active in our life, even if we remain aloof or have never consciously acknowledged Him.

Yet, our trials would be easier and our joy more complete if we would open our heart and mind to His intimate overtures.

These overtures offer us a covenant relationship, personal in nature, with intrinsic power to draw us into a rapturous experience (prompted by His infinite love and righteous counsel).

The mystery surrounding the origin of life continues even in the light of inspired works of faith. If not for the sign of the Word *becoming* flesh, mankind would remain troubled and confused.

A basic assumption of creative intelligence can never come up to par with divinely inspired insight from God's Word, leaving our natural speculations grounded upon earthly fantasies.

The carnal nature seeks to immortalize itself through worldly exploits and grand monuments that highlight its achievements. But all that glorifies the flesh is destined to crumble into dust and blow away with the power of the wind.

God's light has entered through the windows of the soul, giving us opportunity to commune with Him as Enoch of old. Such a relationship will open the door to a realm of life that is beyond limits, for it borders on the edge of eternity. No longer will we be left with a lingering fear of death, giving us magnified courage for living.

“Daring to live is the only way to experience the fullness of life. The defining nature is marked by the motivating spirit of the quest.”

The purpose of human intelligence is to uncover truth; to measure both good and evil; to seek meaningful experiences; and to order one’s life accordingly.

The fool primarily ventures out for selfish pleasure but may awaken to the error of such an ill-fated course and then refrain from further evil.

The wise acknowledges both God and His inspired counsel by walking humbly before Him from the very onset of their journey.

Our awakened consciousness of God, coupled with the certainty of His promises and the unchanging nature of His self-proclaimed character, are the greatest bulwark for hope that life has to offer. Those who actively seek Him confess to an inner voice of reason, assurance and steadfast direction.

God is the light of our life! Sin blocked out the light of God’s presence, leaving the soul in utter darkness. That blinding darkness has been lifted from our eyes by the rising of the Son, for the presence of God now touches our flesh.

On Christ’s return, the whole earth will be glorified by His presence, banishing darkness forever from the face of the earth.

“Life, here and now, is primarily the active pursuit of our creative being. It evolves around that which we basically learn to value, trust and hold to be the definable truth and reality.”

We have a natural love for life when we see ourselves free to participate in it. Life is a set stage, an interactive textbook from the hand of the Creator.

It unveils the raw edges of truth, which promote a graphic understanding of the conflict between good and evil.

Our personal experiences will leave a lasting imprint upon the pages of time. They will help those born in the Spirit to understand the heart and soul of the Sovereign One and the wisdom behind both His Law and counsel.

While the miracle of life may remain a mystery within an unfolding universe, life in the present is an open window with endless possibilities. It holds forth abundant promises and a fulfilling experience when kept in harmony with the order of its creation.

“Are you connected to the Vine that will sustain the life you are presently experiencing?”

The Creator is the source of all life, be it eternal or temporary. If we are disconnected from this important fact, our fate is sealed. We are the living dead, no more than a vapor which is destined to pass away.

Discovering Life in a Dying World

Life prompts many theories. A limited, scientific theory of today promotes evolution and the survival of the fittest. Yet, life cannot be reduced to such a degraded level.

Our link with the Divine causes us to sense each day as far more important than just surviving. Because a need for a higher purpose continues to gnaw at our flesh, God cannot be removed from the equation.

If we are not inclined to question what we are presently experiencing, we will never find any meaningful answers. In fact, we will be left with an endless void that will swallow up the very soul of our being.

We will never be able to cope with life without attaining a true understand of it. Only by applying the mind to the unfolding mysteries that surround us can we discover the nature and law of our being.

How far are you willing to go to test the waters of life? While life remains a complex riddle, we are surrounded by a creative scheme. It holds a line of predictability! Everything comes into season in an orderly plan.

Only by understanding life's conflicting nature can we hope to find our way to its inherent promises, which alone satisfies the inner needs of the human spirit. Though we are shaped by what we are dealt, we contribute to our reality by our personal response.

"In a sense, life is what we make of it. It has as much meaning as we choose to give to it."

Our everyday walk sharpens our overall discernment and understanding. Life will continue to unfold its hidden secrets, if we have the wisdom to become more observant of all that defines and sustains our surrounding world.

Alas, there are many provocative influences that capture our attention, but time deals well with falsehood (exposing all pretenses, thus breaking their hold upon the inquiring mind).

The final molder of truth and opinion proves to be in this school of reality—life itself. No argument can offset its focused testimony.

Discovering life is getting past the reigning deceit that denies us the truth and its accompanying revelations.

Neither truth nor falsehood are readily discerned upon their first encounter. But time and added experience bring all things into focus, giving us a more purposeful direction and an ever-increasing love for life.

Scholarly attempts have been made to simplify life by giving it structured tenets. Yet, it remains complex in reality. All of our efforts to explain the order and meaning of life become philosophical in nature.

That which is begun in earnest desire often turns into a strange bedfellow. Every form of philosophy that loses touch with the immediate becomes alienated to our present needs and desires.

One must retain faith in tomorrow to adequately live today! We need a burning desire (a consuming passion for something worth living and dying for) or our purpose of being is already lost.

The best part of life is in the *present*, not in the past or the future. Those who look to the past are dead and those who look only to the future for fulfillment are but idle dreamers, having no joy and little surety of ever attaining it.

Extremes within human emotions and the experiences that trigger them are part of our existence. They amplify the scope of our combined senses, portraying the full nature of our shared humanity (while qualifying the redeemed for their future priestly role in the courts of heaven).

The present is the cradle of our being. The projected future is yet to take place.

This life, in the natural order, must remain the fundamental foundation for all that is to follow in God's appointed order, giving substance and bearing witness to that which is unseen.

It is our natural experiences that bring understanding to the knowledge we possess. Truth, in fact, abides only in God, for like Him, it is eternal and unconfined (a steam of light that will never reach a definable end).

We do not possess truth simply by a knowledge of it. Truth must take possession of us, or we will continue to stumble in an unlighted path.

“Life brings judgment upon the Word. The Word, then being confirmed, brings judgment upon mankind.”

The main thing in life is for us to be receptive and accountable to Truth. While the Word of the Lord brings completion, we are consciously or unconsciously drawing our own definition of reality as it affects our being.

Keep balance in your life! Stay in touch with yourself and with the Book of Life, for they are integrated revelations, which will lead to great fulfillment.

Life is truly a mixed bag, *more so* for some than others. Yet, it remains principled in all that transpires. There is order and rule of law.

If we uphold the spirit and letter of the laws of society and the proclaimed Law of our *being*, we will remain upright before both God and man.

Life revolves around a conscious meaning and a corresponding response. Through active participation, we are privileged to learn the nature and the continuing consequence of every reality that influence and shape our future.

We have been left to define our own particular values and govern how to best maintain them, until they achieve a fulfilling sense of lasting reward.

If life had no such rational basis, we would have no response to it. All personalized values, which have found a place in our existence, will be reflected in our thoughts and behavior.

Life is built around our expectations and cultivated values, corresponding with our personal effort and basic beliefs. Thus, we come to inhabit an individualized world that reflects our vision and personal sacrifice to achieve our defined goal.

Life remains meaningful, even in this seemingly chaotic world. It is both open and fair in its revelations, for nothing is hidden from view. Yet, it is more than an experience; there is an intelligence behind all that transpires.

When we trace our footsteps with an open heart and mind, we will find evidences of God's hand steadying the unfolding of our life.

As long as we retain awareness of His presence, there is hope—no matter how bleak the situation may appear.

Do not sell yourself short, nor underestimate this life, for it is significant. It is literally shaping every tomorrow and the future of all mankind.

Yet, too few in this generation are taking the time to reflect on life's true meaning and where it is leading. Such reflection may challenge the very foundation of their life and all they have built upon it.

Life abounds in the earth and continues to revive itself as it gives birth to a new generation. A clear vision of its underlying potential opens the door for the realization of every imaginable dream that enters the heart and mind.

When life is conceived beyond the grave, it elevates our perceptions to a much higher plane of existence. A chancy roll of the dice is no longer an option. Nothing can be dismissed or taken lightly!

Every single choice has far-reaching implications, challenging us to be ever vigilant as we embrace the fullness of life that brings lasting joy to our being.