

Life in the Son

A Journal of Grace and the In-Christ Message



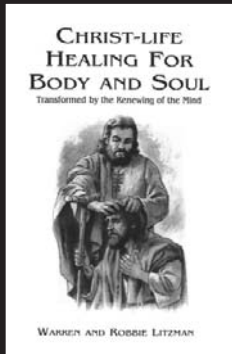
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Life in the Son

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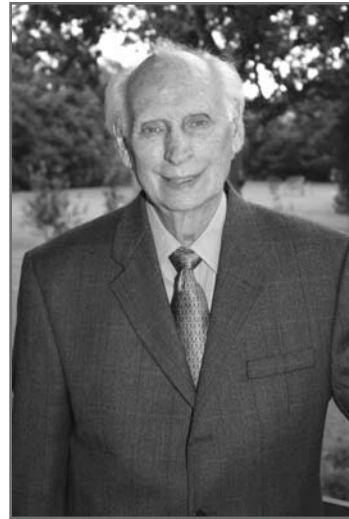
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EDITORIAL

GOOD NEWS FOR THE ON-GOING BELIEVER



Several years ago, I began using the term *on-going believer*. Some questioned the way I spelled it, but my intention in spelling it with a hyphen was to get the attention of those who struggle in their growth in Christ. There are many classifications that could be given to believers that hunger to know Christ in His fullness, but I like to think the term that best explains them is *on-going* because this means that they cannot be stopped in their desire to know nothing but Christ and Him crucified. This magazine is dedicated to this kind of believer. On-going believers cannot and will not be boxed in man-made doctrines and programs. Even when the circumstances of life seem to work against them, they will be on-going, not letting any setback in earthly living hinder their growing up in Christ. In fact, they

have learned from Paul's gospel that setbacks are simply different stepping-stones of victory on the journey.

Also, when on-going believers fail, sometimes miserably fail, they have learned that Christ was in the failure and now awaits their deliverance from the failure. Christ alone will be the person and power who will accomplish it. On-going believers cannot be stopped because their knowledge of the Scriptures and their state of being before God is based on the finished work of Christ on the cross. No programs or human doctrines compare with on-going believers' security. Their lives are set in Christ for eternity.

I recently read this story about two caterpillars who sat watching a butterfly flying overhead. After some time one caterpillar remarked to the

other, "You wouldn't get me up in one of those things for a million dollars!" Of course, the unsuspecting caterpillar was not aware that he was gazing upon his own destiny.

One important truth we learn from the Christ-life is that whatever place we are in at the moment is of use to our heavenly Father who has us in training. Whatever you are going through now will radically change, for in all things that happen to you, Romans 8:28 is working.

If you are in a caterpillar stage right now, you have the ability to release the Christ in you. You can do this best by listening to Christ as He gave the final gospel to Paul. Christ will come forth in your life, and you will rise above the lowly caterpillar stage. The on-going believer is already victorious and is just waiting for the issues of earthly living to prove it. †

THE CHRISTIAN AND THE SABBATH

By John LaVier

If Jesus observed the seventh-day Sabbath, and if Paul, many years later, also seemed to observe it, then why do we gather for worship on the first day of the week? When was the Sabbath changed from the seventh day, Saturday, to the first day, Sunday? These are interesting questions, the answers to which can only be found in the Word of God.

In Exodus 31:13 and 17, we learn that the seventh-day Sabbath was a sign between Jehovah and the children of Israel. It was a part of the Mosaic Law, and when Jesus Christ was here on Earth, as a minister of the circumcision, He did not in any way interfere with Israel's law program. He was made under the law; He lived under the law, and He died under the law. As one with His nation, He kept the law and observed the seventh-day Sabbath (Luke 4:16). Christ did not come to bring an end to Israel's law regime. He said:

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets I am not

come to destroy, but to fulfill" (Matt. 5:17).

Remember, the law was given to Israel. The nation and the law stood together. When Israel rejected and crucified Christ and then continued in their rejection, God cast the nation away, temporarily (Rom. 11:1-5). Paul writes in Romans 11:25, *"That blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in."* Surely those today who claim to be Israel, or who confuse Israel with the Body of Christ, are also blinded. When Israel was thus set aside, the law, and all religion, including Sabbath-keeping, was set aside as well. When Paul was called out and sent to the Gentiles with the gospel of the grace of God, he resisted every attempt to put the Gentiles under the law. The council at Jerusalem was convened for that very reason, for some had said:

"That it was needful to circumcise the Gentiles, and to command them to keep the law of Moses."

Even Peter saw the folly of trying to force the law upon the Gentile believers, who had been

saved by grace, without the deeds of the law or any religious works. He said:

"Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?" (Acts 15:10).

The decision of the council was *"as touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing"* (Acts 21:25).

Some time after this, Paul wrote to the Gentiles, *"For ye are not under the law, but under grace"* (Rom. 6:14), and that *"Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth"* (Rom. 10:4). He also wrote that Christ had *"blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross,"* and that therefore no man should judge us *"in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days"* (Col. 2:14-16).

The word *Sabbath* means "rest," and the

believer, in this dispensation, does not rest in a day, but in a person, and that person is the blessed Son of God Himself.

While it is true, as stated in our question, that Paul seemingly did observe the Sabbath, let us note that during the early part of Paul's ministry the gospel was to the Jew first. He said, "It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you." Naturally, in endeavoring to preach to the Jews, the best time and place to contact them would be in their synagogue on the Sabbath day. (See Acts 9:20; 13:14; 14:1; 18:4; 19:8.)

When Paul thus gathered with the Jews, it was simply that he might reach them. He was becoming a Jew to the Jews, that he might gain the Jews, but nowhere did he ever tell a single Gentile to observe the seventh-day Sabbath. In fact, it would seem that the

Gentiles were accustomed to fellowship and worship on the first day of the week, as for instance at Philippi:

"And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them" (Acts 20:7).

That this was the usual procedure seems to be indicated by 1 Corinthians 16:2,

"Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him."

Nowhere, though, is the first day of the week referred to in Scripture as the "Christian Sabbath," nor even as the "Lord's Day."

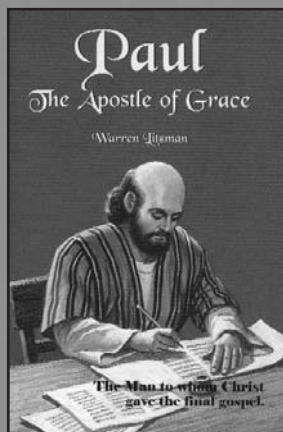
During this age of grace God does not want man to be religious, but righteous. Those who turn away from the grace of God to religion, or to the weak and beggarly elements of the law, with its observance of days, are called "foolish" and "bewitched," and the

inspired apostle said that he was afraid of all such. (See Gal. 2:21; 3:1-3; 4:9-11.)

However, even though we do not observe Sunday or any other day of the week because of commandment or legal constraint, and while we recognize the fact that every moment of every day should be dedicated to the Lord, yet we do praise Him that we live in a land where we are permitted on one day of the week to lay aside our secular tasks and to come together for the worship and service of the Lord. Surely this is pleasing in God's sight, and He will hold us accountable for our use or abuse of this great privilege. It is a sad commentary on our times to note that America is fast changing Sunday into "Fun-day." It only proves that we are living in days when men are "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God." †

THE BELIEVER, IN THIS DISPENSATION, DOES NOT REST IN A DAY, BUT IN A PERSON, AND THAT PERSON IS THE BLESSED SON OF GOD HIMSELF.

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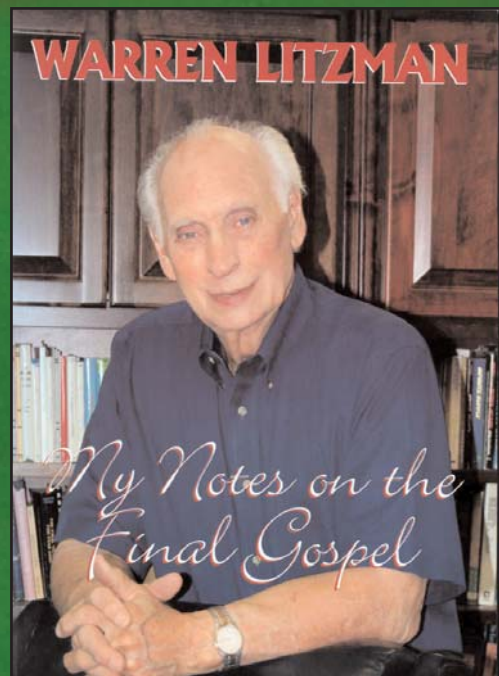
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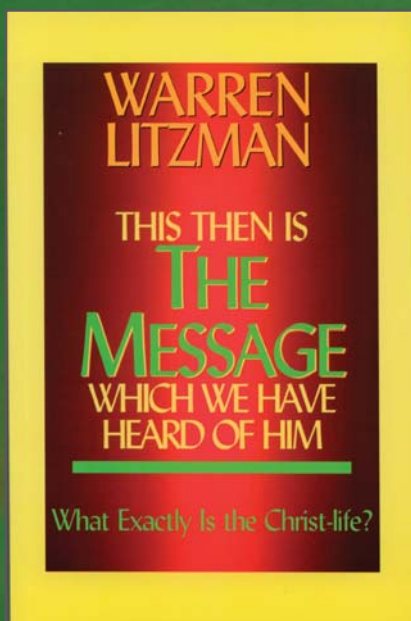
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— Warren Litzman



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ROMANS 5:10

By Nat Florian

From the 2007 Christ-life Ridgecrest Conference

Pogo once said, “We have met the enemy, and he is us!” Romans 5:10 infers that he *was* us:

“For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more we shall be saved by His life” (KJV).

“For if while we are enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life” (NAS).

“For if while we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to Him through the death of His Son, it is much more certain that since we have been reconciled we shall finally be saved through His new life” (Williams).

“If while we were His enemies, we were made God’s friends by the death of His Son, now that we are His friends, we are the more certain He will save us by his life” (Beck).

“If while we were His enemies, Christ reconciled us to God by dying for us, surely now that we are reconciled, we may be

perfectly certain of our salvation through His living in us” (Phillips).

All five translations offer the same message but with slightly different word usage and verb tenses. Thoughtful consideration of them all in the light of Holy Spirit guidance can give us deeper insight and understanding rather than confuse us or tempt us to criticize the inconsistencies or differences within the translations.

Some modern translations, though, are examples of attempts to water down, commingle, diffuse, confuse or discourage clear understanding of the Apostle Paul’s message of pure grace and thereby deserve such criticism and exposure. Watering down Paul’s gospel is a device used as part of the agenda of the religionists and humanistic thinkers of today to keep their “flocks” locked into organizational doing as opposed to recognition of being part of a living organism called the Body of Christ. These people need to be challenged to trust the Holy Spirit to be

the ultimate teacher and revelator of the indwelling Christ in each and every believer.

Phillips and Williams, when compared to other versions, use some word choices that uniquely enhance our understanding of Paul’s message. Williams uses the phrase “*through His new life*” and Phillips uses “*through His living in us.*” Phillips appears to have the best understanding of Pauline gospel while Williams helps us to gain understanding of the precept of exchanged life (new for old).

The use of verb tenses also infers a difference in reconciliation versus salvation. Reconciliation appears to be instantaneous or immediate, brought about by an event: the death of Christ or as Phillips reads “*Christ’s dying for us.*”

From His love for us and by His tortured death, Christ, being obedient to the Father, destroyed the veil of separation between mankind and God brought about by Adam’s disobedience. The physical ripping of the veil from top to bot-



tom that set apart the Holy of Holies in the temple was a physical statement symbolic of what Christ accomplished in the spiritual realm. Adam's legacy, the spiritual wall of separation between mankind and his Creator was made void forever. Reconciliation to the Father from that point in time has been and is currently freely available for any and all who make the free-will choice to accept Christ and His sacrifice. Our Creator—now, more importantly, our Father—gives every human enough faith to make this choice. The problem with so many creatures who are not yet sons is that they think they know better. Their knowledge has become a stumbling block rather than a bridge to the necessary choice with which all are faced.

The changing of verb tenses in the texts also infers a distinction between reconciliation and salvation that can be made known. For example: while we were/are enemies we were/are reconciled versus we shall be saved by His life. Past or present tense versus future tense is an indication that reconciliation happens dually but instantaneously by Christ's obedient and necessary sacrifice and our necessary choice. On the other hand, "*shall be saved by His life*," suggests that salvation is a continuing process only begun by reconciliation. Lest any one begin to think that process

consists of meritorious acts which we must perform to earn what is freely graced to us, remember that Paul wrote, "*He who has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ*" (Phil. 1:6).

I hear a term often used by motivational/inspirational speakers today that can be applied here. "It's not the destination, it's the journey. Our destination as believers is established and fixed. It is the journey there with which we are most concerned. The text(s) in all cases expresses certainty (much more, etc) about the process of salvation over the instantaneous reconciliation. So then while salvation appears to be progressive, it is also certain and not regressive or abortive. So what is really happening throughout the short span of our lives referred to as our Journey? What is happening is the process of mind renewal. A phenomenon, if you will, that requires a bit of our cooperation under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Have you ever been told or warned by well meaning religionists or legalists trying to explain in a particular time of trial that you have backslidden or may have sin in your life and therefore are in danger of losing your salvation? Perhaps your own imagination or old thought patterns have told you that. To that, I respond confidently as Paul said in

Philippians 1:6. "*He who has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.*"

It should be emphasized that soul salvation or mind renewal is a forward moving process, regardless of how your own mind (old hard drive data) or anyone else perceives at any point in time or through any circumstance or situation. Memories don't erase from the hard drive, but they remain stored. How we deal with that information can have a big effect on the process of mind renewal. They can help us to remain grateful and faithful to and for our Triune God for what He saw fit to do with us as opposed to what we used to see fit to do with ourselves.

What is the process of salvation? How does it work? It's the journey, not the destination (already determined). The destination is assured, as God is not the author of abortion. He birthed us. He will keep us. In His mercy He made a way for our old death life. "Stink'n think'n," everything in our soul/mind/brain, to be renewed, bit by bit, piece by piece, precept upon precept, here a little there a little. If the Father's timing were not the controlling factor in the process of mind renewal, in our earthly human condition, we would literally explode if mind renewal were an instantaneous event rather than a continuing process or journey.

IT SHOULD BE EMPHASIZED THAT SOUL SALVATION OR MIND RENEWAL IS A FORWARD MOVING PROCESS,

Our minds and bodies were made to eat and digest slowly a bite at a time, lest we wind up with bloated indigestion, malnutrition or starvation. The process of mind renewal is unique to each and every believer, and therein lays the difficulty with religion and sectarianism. Mind renewal or soul salvation cannot be made to conform to a set of manmade rules.

As we go through life's joys and trials, we become increasingly sensitive (though not overly spiritualistic) during that journey to knowing that in adversity we may be enduring just a tiny bit of Christ's undeserved suffering, or our loving Father may be chastising us for some reason that will be made known when He is ready to tell us, or more likely when we are ready to listen. By now we are aware that outright sin carries with it a cost that far outweighs its apparent convenient temporal benefit to the body or the unrenewed part of the mind. Romans 6:23 says that the wages of sin is death.

Our life in Christ is really expressed by what we give our minds to. It often takes conscious, decisive effort to redirect our minds and our thinking process or thought patterns. All the old records still remain in the hard drive (mind), and breaking old habits can be a disciplinary challenge, but the Father-Creator's endowed gift of choice is always available

to our minds. We individually need to put old hard drive data in its appropriate place so that each morning when our minds restart or boot up, the old data remains archived and new data or renewed mind, is on the desktop, readily available for our use during our journey.

As an example of personal experience, I have encountered dreams (stimulated by old hard drive data) that reintroduce old thought patterns that need to be put aside for their interference with going on and growing up in Christ. If I am shown a better perspective from this, I can be grateful to the Father for that. If not, then I am learning to chalk it up or write it off as just another fiery dart, and I simply ask the Father's help in ignoring it, or perhaps better said, archiving it.

The point I am making is that remaining focused on past negative issues; events, sins, etcetera, can hinder the forward progress of our mind-renewal/soul-salvation. Our minds have the potential for marvelous achievement or accomplishment. We can compare life styles and conveniences of today with those of fifty or so years ago (if we are old enough) and be utterly amazed at mankind's innumerable noble discoveries and inventions that enhance and ease our lives. All of these can, and will, be used for good or evil in this world (full of both believers

and non-believers) that is mostly unconcerned with being (or ignorant of how to be) Spirit led.

With all this noble achievement and accomplishment, the world does not seem to have become any closer to becoming the peaceful Shangri-La that so many are nobly striving to make it. If we listen to the news more than we listen to the Father and his good news we can begin to believe that there isn't a balance of good versus evil but that evil appears to be tipping the scale in its own favor. Does the onus of responsibility belong to the media for exploiting and selling evil or to the public for buying it? Chicken or egg? I say it goes both ways due to unrenewed minds of the media and the public. News is business and business succeeds by selling what people will buy, often with minimal conscience involved. Mankind invents its own idea of nobility (apart from the Father), but man's inventions do not ever change or improve upon the Father's character or plan and the absolute righteousness thereof.

Some twenty-five years ago, while serving on a local school board, I could see humanistic thinking infiltrating our public school system. The concept of "public education" originated for the purpose of teaching people to read and understand the Scriptures. Its purpose has now become

OUR LIFE IN
CHRIST IS REALLY
EXPRESSED BY
WHAT WE GIVE
OUR MINDS TO.

just the opposite (unless non-biblical Scriptures are used, i.e. Koran, etc.). Humanism (worshipping man as his own god) gets away with imposing its views of relative morality on our public school system without being named as a religion, which, as a value system (however skewed), in fact it is by its own definition. Any ideology can be characterized or defined or even lived as a religion.

I can't help recalling how fifty-seven years ago, when I was in fifth grade, we were given an assignment to memorize the 23rd Psalm. We had to write it from memory to prove we did the assignment. There was a bit of moaning and groaning, but it got done and nobody failed. I didn't think much else of it at the time, but as I reflect on it now I can see that it had a profound effect on my thought life. Imagine what would happen to the tenure of any teacher today who would give out any such assignment to a grade school class. Instead, such subjects as "values clarification" are taught today, exalting relative morality for the sake of comparison and broadminded "tolerance" and lauded highly by current world standards of "political correctness" or modern convenience. Righteous tutors and governors are being systematically outlawed in our public schools by humanistic religionists imposing their

warped "progressive" (or should we say "regressive") values on the system, all the while not being recognized as a religion.

The problem with a mind that is too open is that it can be a catch-all that is willing to consider anything and everything that will satisfy the body it happens to be attached to.

Mind leading body, or body leading mind? Chicken or egg? In our case, it is neither. It is Spirit leading mind leading body; the Holy Spirit being our ultimate teacher.

On the other hand, minds that are unwilling to think out of the box are kept inside their own religious prison keeping the liberty (and I do not mean license) that is available "in Christ" (in each and every believer) at arm's length, or much farther than arm's length for agnostics and atheists, be they considered to be angry or happy. The angry ones without admission, which is their form of denial, are simply angry with God for His unwillingness to march down their street. The happy ones are floating down "D'Nile" river ignoring the obvious for the sake of personal convenience. What is kept at arm's length cannot be embraced. Believers who are willing to be taught by the Holy Spirit to embrace the mind of Christ, will not become a catch all for "every wind of doctrine" but will, through being sensitive to the Holy Spirit as

teacher and revelator, allow life experiences, situations and circumstances to be used as the pavement for the living journey of learning Christ.

Thoughts for Consideration and Meditation:

Faith in God is rational response to our own observation of the simple witness of nature's order and beauty. We recognize ourselves as created beings, a product of divine order and design in His creation.

Faith of God is relational response to our acceptance of Christ's reconciliatory sacrifice and His assured process of soul salvation. We recognize ourselves as the Father's offspring learning Christ by Holy Spirit revelation.

Scriptures on Life for Study and Meditation:

Wisdom is the Tree of Life (Prov. 3:18).

Whoso finds me finds Life and favor with God (Prov. 8:35).

"Hope deferred maketh the heart sick, but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life" (Prov. 13:12).

"The ear that heareth the reproof of life abideth among the wise" (Prov. 15:31).

"And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food: the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil" (Gen. 2:9).

“And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever” (Gen. 3:22).

“To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God” (Rev. 2:7).

Strength of My Life

“The Lord is my light and my salvation. Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life. Of whom shall I fear?” (Ps. 27:1).

Life and Light

“In him was life and the life was the light of men” (John 1:4).

“I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in me though he were dead, yet shall he live” (John 11:25).

Life of Jesus

“Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus that the life of Jesus may be made manifest in our body” (2 Cor. 4:10).

Life I Live

“I am crucified with Christ nevertheless I live, yet not I but Christ, liveth in me, and the life that I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave his life for me” (Gal. 2:20).

Life Hid with Christ

“For we are dead and our life is hid [surrounded with] Christ in God” (Col. 3:3).

Life Is in His Son

“And this is the record that God has given to us, eternal life and this life is in His Son” (1 John 5:11).

Eternal Life and Sin’s Consequence

“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord” (Rom. 6:23).

Spirit of Christ Is Life

“But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit. If so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness” (Rom. 8:9–10). †

From the Christ-life Dictionary

Soul - n. one of three parts—the body, the soul and the spirit—in the tripartite human. The soul consists of the mind, the will and the emotions.

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GLEANINGS FROM HEBREWS

PART 3

By Don Byrd

The purpose of the Hebrews epistle is to show the excellency of the Father-Son relationship over all else in eternity. The book of Hebrews takes everything the Hebrews used in their worship services and in their relationship with God and compares them with the Father-Son relationship of Hebrews 1:5. When the word *Christ* is used, it can mean a great number of things. However, the English word *Christ* is not used in the Old Testament. The English word *Son* pertaining to God's begotten Son is found 192 times in the New Testament, excluding the Pauline epistles. Paul uses *Son*, pertaining to God's only begotten Son, 28 times. The English word *son* is used 11 times in the book of Hebrews, which is more prevalent than in any of Paul's other epistles. I use this data to show that, in his epistle to the Hebrews, Paul compares the Son to all else that is important to Israel. This is very important because the Hebrews did not know or believe that God had a Son before or after creation. They did not know about the value of this Son to His Father.

Son Compared to Angels

The angels are God's greatest and most perfect creation. Angels are a better creation than man:

"Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands" (Heb. 2:7).

"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Heb. 2:9).

This simply means that when Jesus came into this world He was in human form, which is lower than the angels. It is my understanding that Jesus was born as a human so that He *"by the grace of God should taste death for every man"* (Heb. 2:9). This happened at the Cross when Jesus died, taking the "old man" into death (Rom. 6:6).

Angels Greatly Used by God

The Jews thought they were special to God if He sent an angel to them. The Bible is filled with information about angels and instances when God used them to interact

with men. Most born-again believers still think the same way. God does use angels to interact with mankind for His own purpose. No doubt about it; angels are God's greatest living creatures. God used angels throughout the Bible. However, the book of Hebrews brings us to a very specific place where God cannot use angels in His purpose.

"Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they" (Heb. 1:4).

"For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?" (Heb. 1:5).

Who is better than the greatest of God's creatures? The Son of God, of course. The Son is being brought to the forefront. We all know the greatness of Christ as the supreme one, the mighty one of Israel, the omnipotent one, King of kings and Lord of lords, etcetera. There are few who know the greatness of our Father's Son. One of the major points in the book of Hebrews is to show the greatness of who the Son of God really is!

God, by His omnipotence, created myriads of angels who are beautiful, full of wisdom, and will continue to live through eternity. Look at the two verses above and think about what these two verses declare. Even though the angels are the most perfect and greatest of all of God's creation, the Son is greater than the angels. Why is this? Because of what verse 5 states. A question is asked and answered in verse 5: *"Unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?"* It is quite obvious that angels are brought into existence through God's creating abilities. How is the Son brought into existence? Through the birthing. God by His omnipotence can create worlds and universes without end and creatures such as angels, but God by His omnipotence cannot create a son! Sons are birthed, not created! The birthing proclaims the greatness of the Son over all!

It is important to understand the relationship that exists in these two verses. The relationship between God and angels is Creator to creature. What is the relationship of God through the birthing? The Father-Son relationship has nothing to do with Creation. Can you see the importance of the birthing over all else that has ever occurred? God cannot be Father to an angel simply. *"For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?"* Angels are not sons; they have no birthing.

"God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets" (Heb. 1:1).

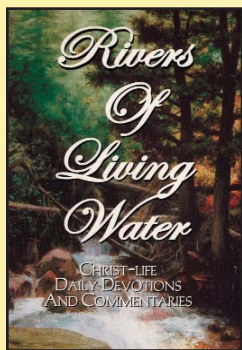
God did not communicate one-to-one, face-to-face when He interacted with Israel. God spoke with His people indirectly. He used prophets, priests, angels, etcetera, when He interacted with them.

"Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator" (Gal. 3:19).

This shows God using a mediator.

"I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son" is the criterion throughout the book of Hebrews. Paul uses this to show the greatness of this relationship over all else that is found in the remainder of the book of Hebrews. The birthing is compared to everything the Hebrews used as a means of having a relationship with God. The angels have a Creator-to-creature relationship; Israel had a God-to-people relationship. The Son has a *"I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son,"* one-to-one, face-to-face, nature-to-nature relationship with God through the birthing! (To be continued.) †

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FROM OUR READERS

To Christ-life Fellowship,

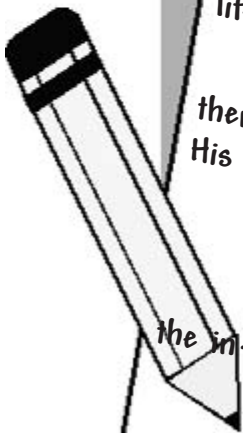
I know it's been a little while since you've last heard from me. Sorry about the wait. I ended up getting caught up in some silliness I shouldn't have. I enrolled in a course for an associate's degree in "religious education" through the mail and, wow, whatever was I thinking?! The course was very informative (but in a soulish, mindful way). It was very Bible-centered (instead of Christ-centered); and it was very self-gratifying (instead of self-denying). It was like I put His life on hold and picked up my own life once again. I got so caught up in writing essays, learning Hebrew and Greek words, etcetera, but I forgot to include Christ in everything. My life was increasing instead of our Lord's life. I got greedy with my time and my patience.

Anyway, as you can see, it's been a very hard and lonely month. But, even so, our Lord used that bad experience to teach me something: I need Him more than ever. I need Him and not religious things. Spreading Christ's love and His life to others should be my only agenda.

So, through this letter I hope to encourage everyone there to be obedient to Christ within and continue to spread His love and His life to each other.

All my love in Christ,
Don Edwards

(Don Edwards is one of many learning and sharing the in-Christ message in prison.)



THE BEST IS YET TO COME!

PART 1

By Richard Cassidy

From the 2007 Christ-life Ridgecrest Conference

Half a lifetime ago, it never dawned on me to give any thought to the matter of my eternal destiny; nor did I have thoughts that in the long ages past, in the pre-creation phase of everything created, God had fixed in my life the need of a Redeemer and brought it to its fullness. And, yet, God did not see fit to invade my life with such information until I reached that place and time where He could reveal to me His phenomenal plan and I would come to put my faith and trust in that plan. His plan for me was exquisite, meaning that I was the sum-total of, and the object of, His great love in that He gave up the dearest possession of His eternal existence, His Son, in order that I could become His and His alone. I did not know then what I am saying to you now. I only knew that on that day, when I came to Christ, that I was not going to Hell, and that is the long as well as the short of my knowledge of what had occurred to me. However, over the next half-a-life-time, I am not what I was on that long-

ago day either, for I have determined in my mind to know more about that moment and the monumental and miraculous work that went on to and in me that was exacted as well as completed by the Holy Trinity of which I had no part in whatsoever—except to believe that I had a new life in Christ.

Beloved friends, that may appear to be a rather odd way for me to begin, but I felt it necessary to lay a bit of foundational history about my life in Christ before I spoke about His life in me. And so what better way than to briefly say to you that I was indeed saved, that I am saved, and that I will eternally be saved, not of my own doings, but by the life that Christ lives “IN” me. In other words, *“I am saved by His life!”*

Before I venture into this message, I must present to you the thoughts from the mind of the Apostle Paul, which is the basis for the theme, *“Saved By His Life.”* So, let’s hear what this ancient thinker had to say in Romans 5:8–10, and then get quickly into my thoughts on the matter:

“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. For if while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.”

Paul does not hide the fact that there is yet a salvation to come that has not yet been fixed into our earthly state, for it cannot be so fixed!

We human beings can be very generous in giving to those we consider to be worthy of our affections and respect— that is to love those whom we choose to love. But, others? Well, we reserve the right to do otherwise. The unique majesty of God’s love, however, lies in the combination of three factors, namely that when Christ died for us, (1) God was giving Himself, (2) even to the horrors of a sin-bearing death on the Cross and (3) doing so for His undeserving enemies.

God's Salvation Has Come

God has given all there is to give from out of His holy Heaven in order to provide for all the salvation that the Holy Trinity designed for eternal salvation. There is nothing more coming down from the Eternal, nothing! However, that does not mean that there is nothing more for us to experience once we have gone home to be with Him. The Plan was put into place before the foundation of the world, before the creation of human beings, and long before there was any such thing as sin that would ultimately contaminate that which would be created, hence the absolute need of a salvation plan. Those who would contaminate are yet with us, and everyone of us have had our confrontations with them. For indeed we know, for we, too, were once one of them until we came to the realization of who we actually are in the grace-love of the Father in Christ Jesus. It would be His Love that would not only administer this plan but would also be generously established in those who would become children of God. In this salvation plan, God could thus become what He always desired to be—a Father—through the birthing of men and women into His Son, Christ Jesus, Savior and Lord. Once again, this is but another of many things

THE ENEMIES OF THE CROSS OF CHRIST WILL INSIST THAT THERE IS YET MORE TO THIS SALVATION THAN WHAT PAUL AND OTHERS HAVE TAUGHT IN THE SCRIPTURES.

that I did not know on my salvation day, and for many years later. But I did come to know it, and that is what is immensely important in my life-days now, and that will remain with me until that glorious Resurrection Morning when I will finally see the one who died and now lives for me.

Knowing this, how can any saint doubt the love of God? How can we foster any thought or idea that God has not provided once and for all the abounding grace of His love for us by the giving of all that is givable from His heart of love? To be sure, we are often profoundly perplexed by the tragedies and calamities of life, but those are not the things that prompted God to make provisions for eternal salvation. And until we come to that understanding, we will not fully comprehend the depth of God's love for us and His ultimate motive to have us, as His children, home with Him.

Paul has been giving his teaching about God's love here in his Roman letter, within the context of tribulation, which can be very painful—as he has often pointed out in every one of his epistles, not as a promotion of his own sufferings and dilemmas in those sufferings, but to assure us that there is nothing that can invade our life that will cause God to act capriciously or indiscriminately that would end our relationship with Him in His

Son that would affect the love-salvation that resides in us. And so, it is rather that we are to remember that God both proved His love for us in the death of His Son, and poured out His love into us by the gift of His Spirit.

The enemies of the Cross of Christ will insist that there is yet more to this salvation than what Paul and others have taught in the Scriptures. Hence, they declare that for us to not be about the work of perfecting what God began is tantamount to then being subject to the wrath of God's displeasure with us. I am not aware of any religious system, ancient or active in this day, that doesn't promote its own philosophy as well as theology of its performance-based catechism; all of those systems, not just a few of them, all of them, because all such religious systems or organizations cannot stay in business without such a work ethic for its people. Many of us were at one time caught up in such teachings and works only to discover that we had been bewitched by those false teachings and came out from among them and now experience the true freedom in which we stand. That is clearly the grace of God in Christ Jesus, which is a teaching that cannot be judged insufficient in its prominence or promotion in all of Paul's letters. Although the doctrine of

the indwelling Christ is without equal from any other teaching in the New Testament, it is the least known and most often shunned.

And so, objectively in history, and subjectively in the world, God has given us good grounds for believing in His love. The integration of the historical ministry of God's Son—that is, on the Cross—with the contemporary ministry of His Holy Spirit, in our hearts, and with the ever-present residence and ministry of the Spirit of Christ in our spirit, all come to make for the believer the most wholesome and satisfying features of the Gospel of Grace—all of which came at one time when the atonement-plan was inaugurated and completed at Calvary.

Why else would Jesus cry out on that horrible and ignominious day, dying as the ugliest thing that His heavenly Father had ever seen, why would He say that it is finished if it were not finished?

Salvation has come; there is nothing more; nothing was overlooked; nothing was omitted. Nothing was required in the plan for you and I to complete, to work for, to win the favor and position of eternal life. It has all been done. It is secure in Christ's work, fully accepted by the Father, and the Father is satisfied. All that remains for you and I to do is to be content in our sal-

vation and to live for Him who has made us satisfactory to the Father. Paul's encouragement to the saints in Philippi speaks to the reality of who is the workman in their living days as he writes:

"For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus" (Phil. 1:6).

Likewise to the Corinthians another phenomenal teaching on the work completed by Christ:

"Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things have passed away; behold, new things have come" (2 Cor. 5:17).

I did not know any of that on the day I became a Christian, and I doubt most seriously that those two men who witnessed to me and who had such an impact on my conversion to Christ had any such knowledge either. Oh they most likely had heard of those Scriptures, but there was no information within their testimony which they could speak about to the fullness and completeness of who I now had become. It was never mentioned. It would be years, literally decades, before I would realize in my mind just what occurred to me when the grace-love of God came into my life and made me a new creature. Now that I know such things, I am unable to remain quiet about them. And when I have the blessed opportu-

nity to speak about His finished work in me, I speak as I do now. However, there is a problem that often arises in those times that I tell my "Jesus Story" to those who are also in Christ. They don't necessarily want to hear what I have say, nor do many of them have any understanding of what I say when I do speak. So, why do so many Christians not know about these fundamental facts concerning their salvation as well as the one who has provided this salvation straight into eternal life? The answer is usually discovered in two ways. First, some saints were never told what it means to be saved by His life. Secondly, none of them have taken the initiative on their own, and apart from their religious affiliation, to find out. So, they languish in the hope of what they have been taught that they will be acceptable to God on the day they stand before Him. But they are not at all confident, only hopeful, that they will not be rejected. There is not one iota of a possibility that the "hope we have in Christ" could ever see one of His children rejected, one of His children condemned or one of His children judged in such a way so as to become a castaway. If that were in any sense a possibility, then all that Christ did, all that He taught, all of the anguish He had to endure

SOME SAINTS
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(CONT'D. ON PAGE 21)

CAN THE TRUE GOSPEL BE BALANCED?

By Warren Litzman

Numerous times in the Lord's work, I have been challenged by some people to be more balanced in my presentation of the gospel. This always bothered me—that others did not see the most important thing in the message I was bringing. I felt that the heart-truth of the message should be highlighted in every way I possibly could. To present any God-truth, taken directly from the Scriptures, and attempt to balance it with anything else, is to take the power out of the truth. This however, is common in today's ministries. I think this is so to bring a bit of self-intelligence to what the speaker or writer is attempting to do (2 Cor. 4:5). To me it is an obvious fact that those who do this are weak in the knowledge of their subject or are just playing with words.

Most of the time when people want a ministry to be balanced they do not like some part of what the ministry is saying and want the ministry to balance their subject with what they believe. To do

this is to water down truth until Bible-truth becomes cold doctrine, organized by man. This excludes an important point of what truth is. The Bible says Christ is the truth. This cannot be balanced. He is truth or He is not truth. The idea cannot be balanced, nor does it need to be analyzed.

Many direct statements from Paul show that he never made an attempt to balance Christ with anything or anyone else. One of the clearest statements Paul makes showing this is in 1 Corinthians 2:1-2. Here his bold declaration is to know nothing else other than Christ crucified. Then in 1 Corinthians 1:23, he says those who do not understand Christ as the truth, such as Jews and Greeks, are as stumbling blocks and the foolish.

In the Christ-life ministry, our objective is to always purely and boldly present Christ as the Father's only intended life for humans. God never intended for humans to maintain a natural life, a religious life or a sinful life.

The reason Christ died on the cross was that humans needed another life. God saw that trying to clean up the old Adamic life would never work. A new life for the human was needed. Christ made this possible on the cross, and Paul's message explained how it works (Gal. 2:20). God would birth a new life, Christ-life, in every believing sinner. This was simple and it needed no other explanation to make it work. All humans must be born again.

Yet in the religious world today, the simplicity of this gospel has been totally overwhelmed by humans thinking their plan or doctrine is better than Paul's message. By the time such ministries attempt to balance the truth of Christ in humans, the message is completely lost. As a result, such ministries that do this have kept the Christ-truth from dying souls who never had a chance to hear the true gospel. The religious powers today have so broken the truth to splinters that humanity does not believe

the Bible anymore; to most it's just another book. Further, they allow anyone to say and do with the Bible anything they want, even to the extent that Christ was married and had children, or another view says that Christ was a homosexual. I speak a warning to religion that demands that everything be balanced. It will lose the Christ-truth and their adherents will find no spirit salvation.

There are many things that are being balanced by modern religion I should make mention of.

1. The attempt to balance law and grace—

Balancing law and grace is like mixing two unrelated chemicals together, creating a poison. A friend of mine explained his belief of balancing like this: "We must have a balance between law and grace to constantly remind people of the laws of God, that when they are broken people can go to hell. On the other hand when grace is preached too many people use it as consent to their continual sinning." This borders heresy. The Scriptures are clear that the law died at the Cross (Gal. 3:13). The Scriptures also say that the only salvation there is comes by grace (Eph. 2:8). The way people live after they accept Christ as their Savior has no bearing on the fact that all sinners are saved by grace and nothing else (Eph. 2:8). In my life-

time, I preached both law and grace, but the revelation of Christ as my life drew me to preaching nothing but grace. I have yet to see any difference in the way people live righteously after they are saved whether they live by law or grace. If a believer does not love the Lord more than he loves himself then neither law nor grace will make any difference, and balancing the two together will make it worse. Christianity is a love affair, not a law affair.

2. The attempt to balance the Old Testament commandments and the New Testament commandments—

The commandments in the Old Testament were given to people who never had a spirit salvation given to them. Their entire program of salvation was soul salvation. When God deals with the soul of man, He waits for man to do something within himself to make it work. This why there are so many commandments in the Old Testament. Salvation is actually based on however man responds to what God says. In the New Testament, after the death of Christ on the cross, salvation was no longer based on commandments but on the finished work of Christ on the cross. Following this, God raised up the Apostle Paul and gave him the final gospel. In the final gospel Paul wrote, there are plenty of commands, over 377 of

them, but they are love commandments.

This means there is no judgment attached to any of the love commands, like if you do not do this or that you will go to hell. Of course, this applies only to those who are born again. This means if you are saved by grace you are kept saved by grace. Never at any time does self-works enter into the believer's salvation.

This should plainly show that it is impossible to mix or balance the commandments under the law with the love commandments under grace, yet possibly ninety percent of born-again believers do this.

3. The attempt to balance trust and works—

Hardly anyone who becomes a Christian fails to have this conflict. Actually, the conflict is over works that the believer enters into. The pastor, or the denomination, often sets out a program showing the necessity of the program and what will happen if the program's needs are not met. Meeting these needs can become so burdensome to a believer, especially a new convert. Often they feel that they are a failure at being a Christian, or perhaps feel they are not really saved at all. It is at this point that works and trusting the Father to work out all things come in conflict. It is also at this point religion puts to bear on the worker that failing the program means failing God. This attempt to balance a believ-

BELIEVERS WITHOUT A REVELATION OF CHRIST AS THEIR LIFE GO BACK INTO THE OLD TESTAMENT HOPING TO FIND HELP FOR THEIR TROUBLED LIFE.

er's works with his salvation is unnecessary. When this happens it is because the true gospel of grace is not preached. Where grace is the gospel believers will always ask what they can do to work for the Lord. In fact, you cannot stop them from working for their Lord, but it will never enter their minds that any work they do for the Lord will affect their salvation or their stand in Christ. Works and trust in the Lord never need to be balanced. Works flow out of a redeemed believer without any pressure.

4. The attempt to balance Israel and the Church—I preached the gospel for many years before I ever heard of anyone attempting to combine Israel with the Church. Even in my ignorance of Judaism I never in all my study even had the thought that there was a relationship between the two.

My simplicity of understanding the Scriptures was that at the Cross Christ died for both Jew and Gentile and a new program was established which saved both the same way and no other plan from the Old Testament was involved, except historically (Col. 2:13–15). The new life was in the Son, and no longer was there any need for the legalism, ceremonies, observance of days or rituals that were a part of the soul salvation of Old Testament saints. The Church is a new body of

believers, and outer things—such as Israel's practices for its soul salvation—are no longer necessary in grace. Grace produces a spirit salvation where none of these self-effort things make a difference in the life of the new creation believer (1 Cor. 6:17). Israel never had a spirit salvation. In God's plan it was His intention that Christ be the life of humans (Eph. 1:4; Gal. 2:20).



Today there are many believers who have never heard the final gospel of Paul who are attempting to return to some parts of Judaism in the hope of finding some refuge for their weary souls. This is sad. Never before has grace become more powerful than it is today, but believers without a revelation of Christ as their life go back into the Old Testament hoping to find help for their troubled life. This is an attempt to balance, in their mind, Israel and the Church. It is error and places such believers as enemies of the Cross (Phil. 3:18). Some are even advocating a Messianic Church. Some long for the pageantry, the candles and even a return to the Old Testament priesthood. The sadness of this is that many of these

dear souls have Christ living in them as their spirit salvation, but go outside of Him to feed their vanity and ego. The Church is the Body of Christ and the believer is placed in Christ the moment he is saved (1 Cor. 12:13). There can be no greater work God could do for a human than to give him a new life, the Christ-life. But religion has never been drawn to the fullness of God's plan. It always offers something alluring, and ego-satisfying, coupled in parts with Christ as Savior, but never does it come right out and say, *We are not telling the whole truth.* We thank God for the Holy Spirit because when we listen to Him, He will straighten out everything.

In it all, this business of attempting to balance things in Christianity, or things in the Bible, will fall flat. God has a perfect plan and it will prevail. I consider believer's are wasting their time trying to do something that feeds the soulish part of humanity. On the other hand, believers who know they are in Christ must not fail to stand fast in the liberty that God has given us. We don't need to balance anything; we need only to state the truth as Paul gives it in his epistles and everyone, both Jew and Gentile, will have the life God intended them to have—a Christian life. †

for more than thirty years from filthy fellows and murderous minds, which ultimately meant His torture and death, all of this and more was futile. However, just because someone, indeed anyone, doesn't believe that Christ fulfilled the requirements of God according to His righteousness in the Salvation which came by Christ doesn't change the fact that He did the perfect will of the Father, and it stands on its merits regardless of religious opinion, or any other opinion for that matter.

When the day of my salvation came, and the same holds true for the day of your salvation as well, there came with that salvation the faith of Christ that quickened our spirit to believe. His faith did such a mysterious work in that because you and I were never in possession of such a faith so as to believe in that mysterious work, His faith was imparted to us. Fact is, His faith came as

prelude to our accepting Him in order that we would be acceptable to the Father, whether we understood the final outcome of our redemption or not. The Father was fully aware of the faith of His Son, just as the Son was fully aware of the faith of the Father. That faith came out of the realms of eternal glory and was mysteriously woven into the fullness of the plan of salvation. It is that eternal faith which not only got us saved, but also, and just as mysteriously, keeps us saved. Don't ever think for one moment that anyone has the ability to remain saved even though we are in possession of His faith. We can no more keep ourselves saved than we were capable of saving ourselves in the first place.

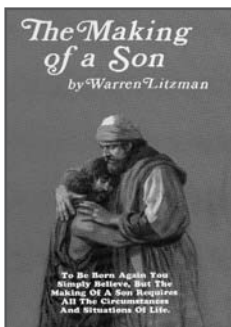
To the Colossians, Paul speaks about the mystery that accompanies this salvation in Christ:

"Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body, which is the church, in fill-

ing up that which is lacking in Christ's afflictions. Of this church I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit, that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God, that is, the mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations; but has now been manifested to His saints, to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:24-26).

No other writer in all of the Bible spoke with such clarity and assurance. That which was once hid from the heart and mind of man was now revealed clearly in Christ Jesus and His blessed atonement and death on the cross. He came, and with His coming He brought the salvation message from the throne and heart of God to all who would believe and trust in that mighty and mysterious final work. †

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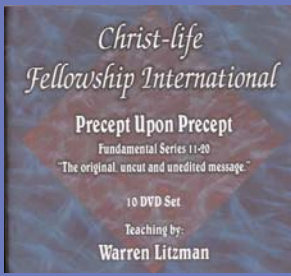
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