

# The GLORIOUS SECRET

by

Jessie Penn-Lewis

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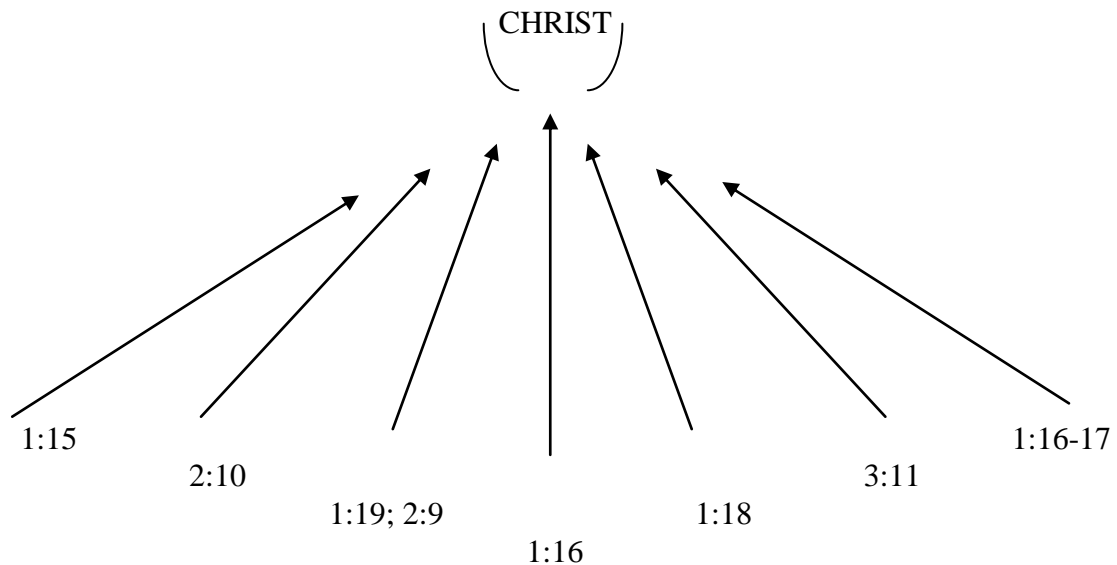
Nugget

Because in Him God was well pleased that all the fullness be permanently at home.  
Colossians 1:19 Wuest

The word “fullness” is *pleroma*. Vincent says: “The word must be taken in its passive sense – that with which a thing is filled, not that which fills. The fullness denotes the sum-total of the divine powers and attributes. In Christ dwelt all the fullness of God as deity.” Lightfoot says: “to *pleroma*, the plenitude, a recognized technical term in theology, denoting the totality of the divine powers and attributes. (Wuest)

**Aspects of Fullness of Christ  
As Revealed in Colossians**

Paul lifts Christ as the center and circumference of all that exists. The incarnate Son of God, He is the exact revelation and representation of the Father (1:15), as well as the embodiment of full deity (1:19, 2:9). He who is Lord in creation (1:16), in the church (1:18), and in salvation (3:11) indwells believers and is their “hope of glory” (1:27). The supreme Creator and Sustainer of all things (1:16-17), is also a sufficient Savior for His people (2:10). (Wuest)



And HE indwells us ... Colossians 1:27

Do you REALLY KNOW it?

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## The Glorious Secret

*It was the good pleasure of the Father that in Him should all the fullness dwell. Colossians 1:19.*

*The riches of the glory of this mystery . . . which is Christ in you. Colossians 1:27*

The word mystery as used in the New Testament is “a sacred secret, long kept hidden, and while so hidden, absolutely impenetrable by man.” What is this secret that the Apostle Paul writes about in his letter to the Colossians? A secret that he seems to have no words to describe, but full of “riches of glory” beyond human conception.

This secret, he tells us, had been hidden from the “ages” preceding the days in which he wrote, but the fullness of time had come, and it was then God’s good pleasure to make it known to His saints - those redeemed by the blood of Christ, and separated unto Him.

The secret so long kept hidden could only be revealed by God Himself, but the Holy Spirit was given that the children of God should know the things freely given to them by God. The Blessed Holy Spirit is sent to reveal the secret, and He is ready to reveal it to all those who truly desire to know it (I Corinthians 2:9-10).

The blood-bought children of God need to know this glorious secret. It is in truth an open secret to all who are taught of God, and yet it is veiled to so many who are true believers, and go on living a sad up and down life of “sinning and repenting”, day after day, when the knowledge of the “secret” would admit them into constant victory, unbroken peace, deep satisfaction and rest!

But what is the secret? It is summed up in two brief sentences - In Him all the fullness! “Christ in you . . . glory!” Colossians 1:19, 27.

It simply means that the Father has placed in His Beloved Son all the supply for our need. All light; all love; all power; all patience; all joy; all peace - all we need for “life and god-likeness” (II Peter 1:3), now in this present time (Colossians 2:3, 9-10).

In Him is the Fullness of God. In us - nothing! We have nothing to offer God, but our wills. The willingness to receive His Son as our Savior, and then as our King, enthroned upon the throne of our heart, is all that the Father desires, and asks of us.

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## Nugget

### To Reveal His Son in Me

Does Paul mean here that God called him in order that He might reveal the Lord Jesus to Paul, or that He might reveal the Lord Jesus through Paul to the world? The answer is found in the meaning and usage of the word translated “reveal”, *apokalupto*. We will use the terms subjective revelation and objective revelation in our discussion. A subjective revelation would be one in which God revealed the Lord Jesus to Paul, and an objective revelation, one in which God would reveal Him through Paul to others.

The word *apokalupto* refers to the disclosure of something by the removal of that which hitherto concealed it, and refers especially to a subjective revelation to an individual. A public disclosure of the Lord Jesus through Paul would necessitate the fact that He had been previously hidden from public knowledge, which is not the case, since He had already been preached in the world. But He had been previously hidden from Paul, which points to a subjective revelation of the Lord Jesus to Paul within Paul. Furthermore, if it were an objective revelation through Paul, the Greek would require the preposition *dia* which means through. Again, the entire context has to do, not with how Paul preached the gospel, but how he received it.

Paul makes a distinction between the call and the revelation. The latter cannot then be identified with the previous vision of the Lord Jesus which Paul had on the road to Damascus. That vision was apprehended by the eye. The revelation of which he is speaking here was an inward one, apprehended by the spiritual senses.

Wuest

### The Secret Revealed

*It was the good pleasure of God, Who separated me . . . and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me” Galatians 1:15-16.*

The Apostle Paul did not learn the secret at the feet of Gamaliel. It was wholly sealed to him until God Himself revealed it to him, and then his eyes were opened to see how the Lord had been watching over him from his birth, and had chosen him for His service.

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The glorious secret can only be known by us in the same way. The Holy Spirit must unveil the living Christ as dwelling in us, just as He first of all revealed Him to us as our Savior.

Moreover we shall never know the secret by trying to grasp it with our minds, nor by puzzling over it as to how it can be! The Lord Jesus Himself said of the Holy Spirit, "He shall take of Mine, and shall declare it unto you". But the eternal Spirit can only reveal when our minds are at rest, and we have given up "trying to see," and when we even give up our anxious seeking to know Him, as well as all self-introspection, for many are disposed to look within for an experience, instead of only to the risen Lord.

When we cease from our struggles, and efforts, and tell the Lord we are willing to let Him take His own time, and reveal to us His Son in His own way, then suddenly, as by a brightness above the sun, or perhaps imperceptibly, and possibly wholly apart from our consciousness, Christ is revealed in us - a living bright reality.

We may not be able to tell how, or when, but we know by the witness of the Holy Spirit, that the Lord Jesus reigns within, even as He said to His disciples, "In that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and . . . I in you" (John 14:20).

Nugget
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### ***And they glorified God in me... Galatians 1:24***

The verb presents continuous action, literally, they kept on glorifying. In is from *en*, a preposition which sometimes designates that which constitutes the ground or basis of an action. This meaning comes from that use of the word which denotes the sphere within which the action takes place. Paul means that his example was the cause of the Judean churches glorifying God. They founding Paul an occasion and a reason for glorifying God.

*Galatians 2:8: For He that wrought effectually ...*

*Energeo*: to be active and energetic, to effect, prove oneself strong (Matthew 14:2; Mark 6:14; I Corinthians 12:6, 11; Ephesians 1:11, 20; Ephesians 2:2). In James 5:16 it seems to denote the inspired prayer or the prayer of a righteous man wrought by the operation of the Holy Spirit (cf Romans 8:26-27). To be in action, to be acting (II Thessalonians 2:7).

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## The Secret Manifested

*It was the good pleasure of God . . . to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him . . . and they glorified God in me. Galatians 1:15-16, 24*

When the churches in Judea heard what had happened to the Apostle Paul, and how he preached the faith of which he once made havoc, he says “they glorified God in me”. This is always the result of Christ’s indwelling! When He is revealed in us, others glorify God, and not the earthen vessel He makes His temple. They do not say “what a wonderful Christian”, but “what a wonderful God.”

Moreover, when Christ is revealed in us, we cannot help preaching Him by word and life. It is used to be I know what I have believed, but now it is Whom I have believed. When Christ is revealed in us, and we have learned the glorious secret, we may be sure that the “secret will get out!” There is not much need to question, Shall I confess it? For others will see Him working through us, and come and ask us how they may learn the secret too.

After the revelation of Christ in the Apostle Paul, and the manifestation to others, we read of the energizing power of this wondrous secret. The Apostle writes “He that wrought effectually in Peter the same was mighty in me” Galatians 2:8 A.V.

The Lord wrought in Paul as effectually as He wrought in Peter on the day of Pentecost, when Peter was changed from being the coward he was in the judgment hall, and became a bold, fearless witness to the crucified and risen Lord. Even so the risen Christ dwelling in the Apostle Paul wrought through him mightily, doing “mighty signs and wonders” by him, working in him both to “will and to work, for His good pleasure.”

“He that wrought effectually in Peter was mighty in me,” said the Apostle. Paul had proved that God could energize him as well as Peter, although he was not one of those filled with the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost. Oh, that each child of God might be shown by the Holy Spirit that the same Lord is Lord of all, and is rich unto all them that call upon Him. It is possible for each blood-bought child of God today to say likewise, “He that wrought effectually in Paul, is mighty in me.”

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Nugget
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### I am Crucified with Christ

The verb is in the perfect tense which speaks of a past completed action having present finished results. Paul uses it to show that his identification with Christ at the Cross was a past fact, and that the spiritual benefits that have come to him through his identification are present realities with him. By this statement he also shows how he died to the law, namely by dying with Christ who died under its penalty. The law's demands were satisfied and therefore have no more hold on Paul. But thus being crucified with Christ, meant also to Paul, death to self. When Paul died with Christ, it was the Pharisee Saul who died. When he was and did up to that time passed away so far as he was concerned. Saul was buried, and the old life with him. The dominating control of the Adamic nature had its power over him broken.

Nevertheless I live. Saul the self-righteous Pharisee, died, but Paul the great apostle, lives. The ego remained.

Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. It is no longer a self-centered life that he lives, but a Christ-centered one. His new life is a Person, the Lord Jesus living in Paul. And through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, the Lord Jesus is manifest in his life. The new life is no longer, like the former one, dependent upon the ineffectual efforts of a man attempting to draw near to God in his own righteousness. **The new life is a Person within a person, living out His life in that person.** Instead of attempting to live his life in obedience to a set of rules in the form of the legal enactments of the Mosaic law, Paul now yields to the indwelling Holy Spirit and cooperates with Him in the production of a life pleasing to God, energized by the divine life resident in him through the regenerating work of the Spirit. Instead of a sinner with a totally depraved nature attempting to find acceptance with God by attempted obedience to a set of outward laws, it is now the saint living his life on a new principle, that of the indwelling Holy Spirit manifesting forth the Lord Jesus. That is what Paul means when he says: "And life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

Wuest

### Step-by-Step

Oh, beloved, who have received the fullness of the Holy Spirit, it is you who have to go down into His death. Now I know that in a sense we took all that by faith when we consecrated ourselves to Christ, and we count it all real and God counts it all real; but, my dear friends, we have to go through it step by step. I know God treats the believer as though it was accomplished, as though he were sitting yonder on the throne. But he must go through the narrow passage and the secret places of the stairs. There must be no fooling here. One may count it all done; but step-by-step it must be written on the records of the heart.

Simpson

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## The Secret and Its Conditions

*I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live . . . I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God Galatians 2:20.*

This verse contains the secret of knowing the secret! Let us notice that the words “crucified with Christ,” precede “Christ liveth in me.”

Our eyes are opened to see the fullness in Christ, and then He shows us that the secret of being conformed to His image, and walking as He walked in this present evil world, lies not in our trying to be like Him, but Jesus Himself coming to dwell in us as His temples, and Himself living His own life through us.

It is a great step forward when, as children of God, we see that we have absolutely failed to live like Christ, and give up the trying! The patient Lord has to let us try, that we may find out that it is impossible for human beings to copy the life of the Holy Son of God.

Jesus as we attempted to save ourselves, or make ourselves fit to approach God, and then found after all our striving, that we were “nothing bettered, but rather grew worse”, so, after the matter of our salvation is settled, we again seek to do the very same thing, and think that now our sins have been forgiven, with His help we can succeed in pleasing Him, and working for Him. Again we are allowed to try, and fail, just that we may realize our helplessness.

How many of us also have a dim idea that we have “gifts” to offer God, and expect Him to sanctify the old life, and make something better of us! Someone once said it was a long road to the end of ourselves, and it does seem such a long time before we really honestly are willing to say “in me . . . dwelleth no good thing” (Romans 7:18). Like King Saul we use our own judgment, and are willing to destroy what we consider vile and refuse, but spare what we call “good” to offer to God in service.

The Holy Spirit has to teach us, sometimes very painfully, that we have no best to retain, and that our very comeliness is corruption, for all that is of the old life is under the curse of sin.

The Divine plan is not to improve the old life, but that we should commit it to death - the death of the Cross for it really was crucified with Christ in the sight of God when He died on Calvary. It must not be “I” - even apparently good “I” - trying to please, and work for Christ. We must recognize and accept God’s sentence of death upon “I” in every form, and yield all to the Cross of Calvary.

When our eyes are opened to see our place as crucified with Christ; nailed together with Him to His Cross; and agree to live the crucified life of true self effacement, then



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the Spirit of God will bear witness by revealing Christ within, no longer a dim and distant Lord, but, as one has said, “an inside Savior!” Then He is able to manifest Himself through the earthly house of our bodily frame, and glorify His Father. Then He is able to work through the yielded body, not feebly and intermittently, but with effectual power; no longer hindered by us, but blessedly moving through us as He wills, and we obey Him fully.

“It is no longer I that live, but Christ” - this is the secret of which glory and riches too feebly express the fullness.

We need to remember however that Christ dwelling in the believer will not destroy his individuality. The Apostle writes “Christ liveth in me.”

We see the capital “I” crucified, and the “I” that dethrones and dishonors the Lord, but a “me” that still lives! A “me” that must yield quick and implicit obedience to the tender gracious King dwelling within the heart. Christ, not self on the throne of the heart, the new spring at the center of our being.

Nugget
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#### That the Life Also

In order that. The purport, according to God’s purpose, of this daily dying is to set forth the resurrection-life through Christ in us. Compare Romans 5:10

### **The “Secret” for Others**

*My little children, of whom I am again in travail until Christ be formed in you. Galatians 4:19*

“Oh that Christ might be revealed in them, and fully formed in them,” was the Apostle Paul’s yearning desire for his converts, and to this end he travailed on their behalf. How he watched and prayed, nursed and cared, encouraged and warned them, as he watched the Holy Spirit patiently and tenderly detaching them from the old earth-life. Paul labored among them according to the “working” which was working in him mightily (Colossians 1:29), with one great end ever before him, that Christ might be formed in them, and that he might present every one of them full-grown in Christ in the day of His appearing. (See Colossians 1:28-29)

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This is the Glorious Secret now open to all who consent to the conditions of its unveiling. The redeemed one but an earthen vessel, a fragile body of clay, with the old "I" nailed to the Cross of Christ, and the Living Christ dwelling within. A vessel of clay manifestly not sufficient to thing anything as of itself, that all may glorify God in it. A vessel of clay so yielded to God that He can work through it in unhindered power, whilst it is simply living, moment by moment, in faith upon the Son of God Who reigns within.

Thus walking hour by hour under the power of the cleansing blood, the God-possessed soul is ever being brought into fuller conformity to the death of Christ "Always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested. Always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh" (II Corinthians 4:10-11).

Nugget
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#### The Fullness of God Bodily

"In order that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God."  
"With" is *eis* in the Greek text, which is better rendered "to" or "unto," "to the measure or standard of," Vincent says: "Fullness of God is the fullness which God imparts through the dwelling of Christ in the heart: Christ, in whom the Father was pleased that all the fullness should dwell (Colossians 1:19), and in whom dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead (Colossians 2:9)."

Wuest

### **The Timeless Power of the "Secret"**

And the key to it all is Faith - faith in the working of God.

*For this cause," wrote Paul to the Ephesians, "I bow my knees unto the Father . . . that ye may be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inward man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith (and) that ye may be filled unto all the fullness of God.  
Ephesians 3:14-19*

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God in heaven hath a treasure,  
Riches none may count or tell,  
Hath a deep eternal pleasure,  
Christ the Son He loveth well.  
God hath here on earth a treasure  
None but He its price may know,  
Deep unfathomable pleasure;  
Christ revealed in saints below.

-Jessie Penn-Lewis

## For Further Reflection

### **Recognizing His Presence**

By A. B. Simpson

Again, if you would abide in Christ (experience the indwelling Christ) you must cultivate the habit of always recognizing Him as near, in your heart of hearts, so that you need not try to find Him, reaching out to the distant heavens and wondering where He has gone. He is right here; His throne is in your heart; His resources are at hand. There may be no sense of God's presence but just accept the fact that the Spirit is in your heart and act accordingly. Bring everything to Him and soon the consciousness will become real and delightful. Do not begin with feeling – begin with acting as though He were here. So, if you would abide in Christ, treat Him as if He were in you and you in Him; and He will respond to your trust and honor your confidence.

Let us bow very low in submission to His leading, waiting for His teaching, reverently honoring His holy presence within us, even when we cannot see or feel, "Said I not unto thee, that, if thou believest, thou shouldest see the glory of God?"

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# The Pursuit of God

By A. W. Tozer

This Flame of the Presence was the beating heart of the Levitical order. Without it all the appointments of the tabernacle were characters of some unknown language; they had no meaning for Israel or for us. The greatest fact of the tabernacle was that Jehovah was there; a Presence was waiting within the veil. Similarly the presence of God is the central fact of Christianity. At the heart of the Christian message is God Himself waiting for His redeemed children to push in to conscious awareness of His Presence. That type of Christianity which happens now to be the vogue knows this Presence only in theory. It fails to stress the Christian's privilege of present realization. According to its teachings we are in the Presence of God positionally, and nothing is said about the need to experience that Presence actually. The fiery urge that drove men like McCheyne is wholly missing. And the present generation of Christians measures itself by this imperfect rule. Ignoble contentment takes the place of burning zeal. We are satisfied to rest in our judicial possessions and for the most part we bother ourselves very little about the absence of personal experience.

Who is this within the veil who dwells in fiery manifestations? It is none other than God Himself, "One God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and all of things visible and invisible," and "One Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten son of God; begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God; begotten, not made; being of one substance with the Father," and "the Holy Ghost, and Lord and Giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, Who with the Father and Son together is worshipped and glorified." Yet this holy Trinity is One God, for "we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; neither confounding the Persons, nor dividing the Substance. For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one: the glory equal and the majesty co-eternal." So in part run the ancient creeds, and so the inspired Word declares.

Behind the veil is God, that God after Whom the world, with strange inconsistency has felt, "if haply they might find Him." He has discovered Himself to some extent in nature, but more perfectly in the Incarnation; now He waits to show Himself in ravishing fullness to the humble of soul and the pure in heart.

The world is perishing for lack of the knowledge of God and the Church is famishing for want of His Presence. The instant cure of most of our religious ills would be to enter the Presence in spiritual experience, to become suddenly aware that we are in God and that God is in us. This would lift us out of our pitiful narrowness and cause our hearts to be enlarged. This would burn away the impurities from our lives as the bugs and fungi were burned away by the fire that dwelt in the bush.

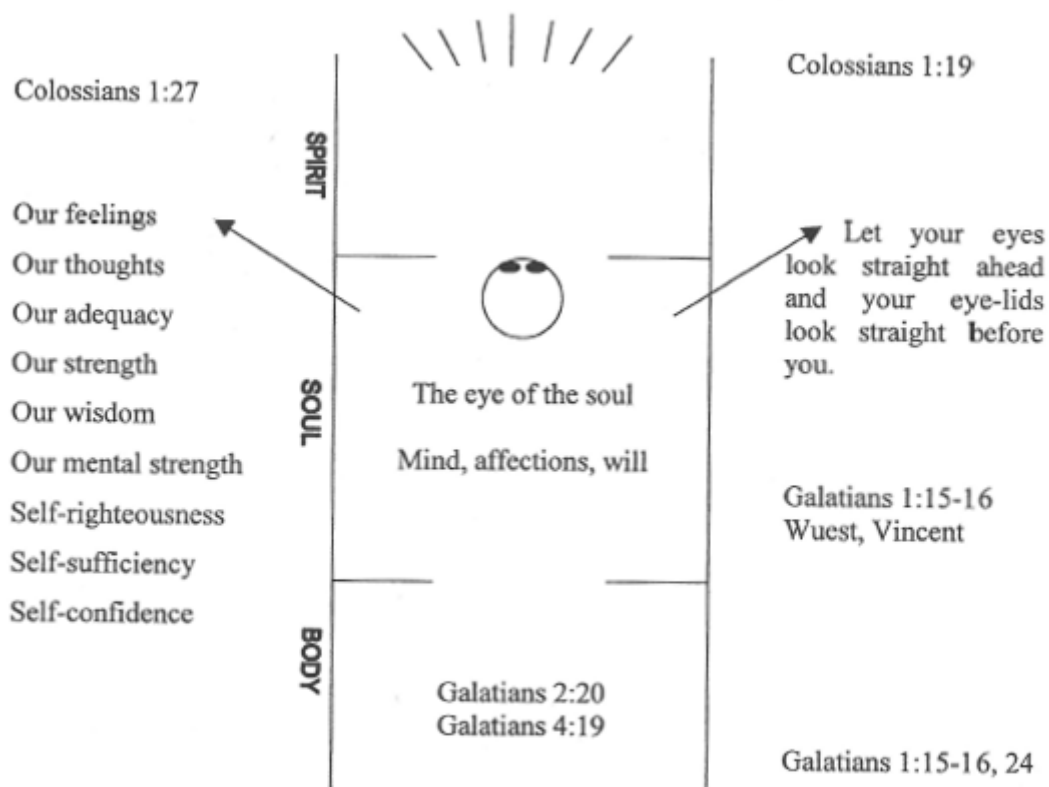
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# The Gaze of the Soul on the Glorified Christ

By A. W. Tozer

Blessed are they “to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery – Christ in you.”

There is an introspection in which the soul looks at its own thoughts, feelings and purposes to find the proof of grace and the ground of peace. This is unhealthy and not of faith; it turns the eye from Christ to self. But there is another turning inwardly which is one of the highest exercises of faith. It is when, closing the eye to all it can see in itself, the soul seeks to realize in faith that there is in its inmost parts a new spirit within which the Spirit of Christ now dwells. In this faith it unreservedly gives itself up to be renewed by the Spirit and yields every faculty of the soul to be sanctified and guided by this Spirit within. Without such consciousness of a temple within and its occupant daily renewed in holy silence, there cannot be the clear believing prayer to the Father to work mightily by His Spirit, or the confidence in Jesus to give the living streams from within. (Note: in the tabernacle and the temple of God dwelt in the darkness; he was there, but behind a veil, to be believed in and feared, but not to be seen.)



The timeless power of the 'secret'. Ephesians 3:14-19 Wuest

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## Suggested Reading

Spirit of Christ by Andrew Murray

Man: The Dwelling Place of God by A.W. Tozer

Christ in Me by A.B. Simpson

The Glorious Secret by Jessie Pen-Lewis

Pursuit of God by A.W. Tozer