

VICTORY THROUGH THE INDWELLING CHRIST

We have already seen that the Christian is set free from the bondage of the old nature by the implanting of a new nature, when Christ comes to indwell him, at the time of salvation. It is the possession of this holy nature that makes one a true child of God, but we have distinguished between the **possession** of this nature and the **surrender** to it. The former is **who** we are while the latter affects what we **do**.

Since the Christian is free to choose between his natures... and to, thereby, determine which will control him for any given moment...he lives in a "*valley of decision*." While it might appear at first...as we study God's Word...that the matter of a God-controlled life is simply an act of one's will, when we are faced with real life situations that require that we make real life choices, this "*simple act*" of one's will can often prove to be an impossibility in the moment of decision. Our lives bare loud testimony to the fact that more than an intellectual making up of one's mind is required if he is to have a Spirit-led life.

THE STRUGGLE OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

The Christian life is far more rugged than most care to admit because it is a building process that is carefully calculated to bring stress to the soul, which means, therefore, that the Christian life can never be a "*bed of roses*". Those expecting an easy time in life because they are now united with the Creator are in for a rude awakening!

WHAT WOULD BE THE SPIRITUAL GAIN OF A LIFE THAT "AUTOMATICALLY" ALLOWED MEN TO ENJOY THE RICHNESS...AND FRUIT...OF SELF-CONTROL?

If fruit bearing came automatically, after one came to God, there could be no growth of the soul. Having Christ does **not guarantee** that a person's life **will** change at all...it guarantees only that one's life **can** change!!!

THERE IS NO AUTOMATIC FRUIT-BEARING AFTER ONE COMES TO GOD!

One's life remains the "*stewardship*" of the individual because he is responsible for any changes that occur. God's will for one's life can never, at any point, override the Christian's free will because, without the sovereignty of man's free will, there could be no obedience.

God provides the Christian with a life of stress so that he can grow into the likeness of Christ. God allows...even manipulates...external circumstances so that the believer is perpetually faced with making choices because it is this constant choosing, in each situation, that exercises the soul. Just as body muscles need exercise for development, so do our souls need exercise for development. "*Soul exercise*" produces the maturity that God desires in His children and this is the way that God prepares them for future fellowship with Himself.

A person must work hard to develop a well muscle-toned body because it takes

discipline and determination to build a strong, healthy, body. It is no less easy to develop the soul into the likeness of Christ because it takes a lot of self-denial and watching out for Satan's deives. It takes Spiritual power...or strength... to tame the tongue...and to sacrifice the things of the world...in one's endeavor to become like Jesus. The man who wants to be like Jesus must deny himself many things which are all right for other people, but which are damaging for one who is about building up the new man.

The Christian's two natures are opposites...one is spiritual while the other is carnal. The chief difference between these two natures is their respective appetites...one hungers for the things of God while the other hungers for the material things... and pleasures...of earth. The "new nature" seeks to please God while the "old nature" seeks to satisfy the fleshly instincts and impulses of man as an earth-bound creature.

Were the two natures alike, there would be no contest for the believer because his soul would have no problem deciding which nature should control him.

If, for example, both natures hungered for power and fame, why should the believer care which nature directed his steps in the pursuit of this goal? If both natures sought for money... or sexual pleasure...there would be no struggle...but, there would be no spiritual growth either. And if, on the other hand, both natures longed for prayer and fellowship with the Father and had an insatiable thirst for the Bible...again...why should the believer care which nature directed this goal?

The Christian's two natures are **not** alike and, therefore, he must decide, in every instance, which nature shall have control. He must decide which appetite is to have the satisfaction that he is able to obtain for it and which appetite will motivate his actions in attempting to reach satisfying goals. Thus, as long as the Christian is in the body...and possesses two natures...he must make never-ending choices because *this is the way that God ordained that he grow...and mature!*

If the Christian life were just a matter of mental assent to the pleas of the Holy Spirit, there would be no question of one's choice of obedience to these pleas because one would certainly, with his head, choose to please Christ every time. However, because Christians do **not** always choose to obey God's Word, it is evident that the resolution of the struggle between their contrary natures requires more than just "head-nodding" choices.

Elements of one's personality are brought into conflict and one finds himself strangely **compelled** to do things that are not compatible with his "reason". Sometimes it appears that the struggle between one's two natures is better described as a battle between one's heart and one's head because one's emotions vie with his intellect for the mastery of his will.

Before one is saved, his life is lived exclusively under the control, the

domination, of **one** nature...*the old man*...and, during this time...(which often amounts to years if one has not been saved at an early age)...the flow of one's life is geared to pleasing the depraved nature and to satisfying self-centered demands. One's time, money, energies...in fact, **everything**...is used to feed...and exercise...the Adamic nature so that the old man's growth ...and maturity...comes rapidly. As far as this planet is concerned, man's life is centered around this old Adamic nature because the bulk of human existence is manifestly away from God. The newspapers, radios, movies, pleasures and entertainments are far from Godly because the whole world... filled with self-seeking lost men...ministers to depraved man ...which means that God-seekers certainly are few!

Man is born into this God-opposing life stream and, in a very short time, becomes well-adapted to it because his life adopts a pattern which is shaped and molded before he reaches his teens and his ego drive, sex drive and social drive are fairly well crystallized by the time he reaches physical maturity. His total personality gains momentum with the passing of years and it is directed, of course, by the old nature.

When one accepts Jesus Christ as his personal Savior and acquires a new nature, a whole new life opens up to him...a life that is strange and different...one that is unknown to him. This new life is so completely different from anything that he has ever experienced so far because it has to do with a future that has no **physical** guarantee here on earth. This new life requires him to talk to a God Whom he cannot see or hear...to turn from many things which once brought him delight and satisfactions (temporary though they were) ...and it commands him to speak to the God-opposing world of the Maker's love for all men, encouraging them to follow His example...in abandoning the pursuit of worldly treasure and fame...as they follow the example of One who died on a cross 2000 years ago.

The new life...instead of bringing comforts, pleasures, and a life of ease...promises struggle...even the possibility of being abhorred...for those who will truly dedicate themselves to it...which is why surrender may not be easy under such circumstances. Despite the fact that it is love and grace which makes this new life available to the believer, this new life is, nonetheless, a very mystifying thing because men are not used to living by blind trust in an unseen Spirit and in a miracle-filled Book that promises us that the Christian will be given great rewards after he has died...his earthly rewards being primarily spiritual ones.

The Christian, in spite of the opportunity of the new life before him, cannot always bring himself to follow it. Even though he knows...and is convinced...that this new life is the fulfillment of his destiny...and that any other course is a tragic waste... the decision to follow *this new life is beyond him*. Salvation does open a new God-pleasing channel into which one may pour his life, but the Christian discovers that changing the direction of his life is far from automatic. Salvation has made it **possible** for his life to flow in a new direction, but it does not **make** it do so. The momentum of the old life seems to prohibit any change and the power of the old man (old life) is still very great. We are so accustomed to the old-life routine that the new Bible program takes on

frightening unnaturalness.

While it may appear that the choice to live a Christian life is an easy one to make, it is, in fact, a very difficult one to make because of the unnatural character of Christian living. Not only is participating in church fellowships...extended Bible studies...and prayer sessions...a foreign intrusion upon one's life, but, being told to love one's enemies and give away one's personal possessions is also a foreign intrusion upon one's accustomed way...and "philosophy" ...of life because the average person lives by the old nature...busy seeking all he can get from others...and from life...not the reverse! Because the most natural desire in man is to please self, it seems as if every demand inside one serves to keep him from surrender to the indwelling Christ. Life itself seems arrayed against Christian responsibility, so that yielding to the new man is the hardest job of the soul!

Christianity is far more than just belonging to a church and learning the Bible. Bible knowledge is vital, but Christianity is a LIFE, not just Biblical theory. Christianity has to do with CHANGES in a person and one must not be the same today as he was yesterday. God uses CIRCUMSTANCES to pressure Christians into Christ-like changes, and because of this, Christianity has to do with bad working conditions, sassy children, relatives ... and people...who are difficult to get along with, mean neighbors, sickness, and tragedy. God watches for our reactions in the midst of life's trials...are we becoming more patient today...are we sweeter to our spouse...are we paying our bills more promptly...are we more consistent in lovingly disciplining our children...are we driving our car in a more Christ-like manner...are we speaking more kindly of others?...etc. Have we decided to forsake every- thing of this world...its fame and fortune...because it has no value where we are going? In a nutshell, the question that God poses to each one of us is..."Do you want to make it big in `heaven' or on `earth'?" ...and we answer His question by the way we choose to live!

The world about the Christian spins at a mad pace and sweeps men into its whirlpool of busy routine. People are sucked into the endless...busy, busy, busy...cycle of job, family, dishes, car, trips, T.V. etc., spending the vast energies of their human personality just to survive. Even the Christian, though possessed of the new nature that can take him out of this whirling bog, scarcely has time to consider what God has done for him. Many are caught in the revolving-door-life that the "old man" has created and they are like one who has a million dollars in the bank, but is too busy to write even one check.

VICTORY IN LIFE THROUGH SURRENDER

What a tragedy it is when one, who has Christ's victorious nature within him, finds himself unwilling to yield to it! Yes, how tragic indeed because surrendering to Christ's nature within makes all the difference in the world...and, to surrender, all one has to do is simply decide...by an act of his God-given free will...to live a victorious life in Christ. It is this decision ...to live a victorious life in Christ...that will transform everything in the Christian's life because it is this decision that will bring God's power into one's life! The moment one makes the decision to live the victorious Christian life all the resources of heaven will come into action to overcome the "gravity-pull" of the old

life. Like throwing a "reverse switch" on an electric motor, the enormous power of the Holy One energizes the personality in a God-pleasing direction so that the victory of Christ is manifested in the believer's walk.

The phenomenon of what happens when man surrenders his will to God's will... and God's then supplying him with power...can be likened to a tornado phenomenon which was reported by a national magazine: To help convey the scene of the tornado, a picture accompanied the magazine article which showed a piece of straw driven through a telephone pole. The straw, so weak by itself, was "surrendered" to the wind...a surrender which made the power of the wind the power of the straw. Likewise, our surrender to the indwelling Christ makes His power our power.

We are so weak because we have no power within ourselves... which is why...**in** and **of** ourselves...we can neither fight, nor reform, ourselves, and if we are honest **with** ourselves, we will acknowledge that we **prefer** the things of the old life...and, certainly, our life investments seems to indicate the truth of that. We really haven't a chance against Satan's wiles, which is why we desperately need our Savior's mighty delivering hand. Our heads tell us that we must yield to Christ while our emotions tell us not to. However, if we **do** decide to surrender to Christ, the very moment that we decide to do so, Christ's victory...(that same victory that has conquered everything that this life can hurl against a person)...becomes instantly...and automatically... operative! We must remind ourselves that the decision to surrender to Christ is not a once-for-all decision, but is, rather, a moment-by-moment decision to walk with Him. If, on the other hand, we do **not** decide to live for Jesus Christ, the victorious life is **not** operating within us because we have made the choice that it not do so!

How wonderful it would be if we could surrender to Christ all of the time because our lives would be filled, continually, with the things of God...we would know His constant presence, and the great passion of our souls would not be for the things of the world, but would be, rather, for God's own person, with the force of our total personalities moving toward Him. What glory that would be! It was true of Jesus that everything in His life was geared **away from** the course of the world and what a miracle it would be if that could also be true of us! Christians who stop attending church for awhile are amazed to note how quickly they drift into the ways of the world...which is why it takes supernatural power to halt our dashing schedules long enough to give us time to hear from God by: (1) reading His word (2) conversing with Him through prayer (3) spending time in private devotions with Jesus Christ

The victorious life in Christ that we seek is illustrated by the story of a man who learned a wonderful Christian lesson from a fig tree that was in his back yard. He had pruned the tree one season and had allowed one of the branches to remain upon the ground for some time. Coming back to the tree, some weeks later, he noticed that the leaves were still attached to the fallen branch. He glanced at the tree and, upon seeing that the leaves were all gone from the other branches, he wondered why they had not fallen from the pruned branch as well. He pulled at the leaves on the branch and was surprised to find that they were still fast and required some effort to be torn loose. It then suddenly dawned upon him that leaves do not "*fall off*" a tree, but rather, they are "*pushed out*" by the indwelling life in order to make room for

The simple observation of this man beautifully highlights the truth of Christ's victory in our lives. It's true that the tree did not have a choice in the fruit it was to bear...it could bear only one kind of fruit because it had but one nature. The Christian, however, unlike the tree, can bear two kinds of fruit because he has two natures and he can choose between the two, thereby choosing what kind of fruit his life will bear. When the Christian decides to live for Christ, surrendering to the indwelling Spirit, like the leaves on the fig tree, sin is pushed out of his life by the life of the indwelling Lord, making room for new growth and "*fruit*"... the fruit of the Spirit. The lesson of the fig tree teaches us that we should get as close to Christ as possible...and be surrendered to Him as much as possible...in order to allow His victory to remove, from us, the dead leaves of the former life...because it is Christ...not we ...Who must deal with the "*sin-leaves*."

Victorious Christian living, then, comes as one gets close to Christ and one must, therefore, make it his business to be aware of Him and fellowship with Him as he goes about the routine matters of each day. However, this is not so easy because the moment a Christian tries to fix his mind on the Lord, he finds he has a fight on his hands with the devil... because the last thing the devil wants is for a Christian to fix his mind on the Lord...and it is **because** the devil doesn't want believers close to Christ that he moves to prevent it.

Satan's attacks do explain the real struggle of the Christian life but...despite the fact that Christians can have no lasting victory in their lives until they learn how to deal with this powerful and persistent enemy...in order to stay focused on "*getting close to the Lord*", I will not...at this time...go into how the Christian is to face, resist, and overcome the devil.

The old man and the new man differ greatly from one another because they are two different kinds...types...of men:

1. One is a man ("*nature*") of **feeling** who walks by sight.

This "*old man*" is no stranger to us because everything about him fills our awareness. He feeds on physical delights and we can please him simply by dipping into the world's supply of goods and pleasures.

2. The other is a man ("*nature*") of **fact** who walks by faith.

The "*new man*", unlike the old man, is virtually a stranger to us. His cravings take us into a different world...a world of unseen things where spiritual delights are appropriated by faith.

There is no power within man to **MAKE** him obey fact. Man does not heartily respond to knowledge because, being an emotional being, the powers within him are

geared mainly to his "feelings", rather than to fact. All of man's appetites, instincts, and passions are directed by how he **FEELS**, rather than by how he **THINKS** and he does what he wants to do many more times than he does what he ought to do because man does pretty much what he feels like doing, when he feels like doing it! He prays only when he gets good and ready to and he doesn't read the Bible unless he wants to. There is no power within man to make him do those things that he knows...with his head... that he should be doing because he is controlled by his drives and his appetites rather **than** by his head...despite the fact that he'd like to think otherwise. And it is because men are emotional beings, rather than intellectual beings, that they find it so difficult to choose surrender to the "fact" of Christ's indwelling presence in their lives. If there is no power within our being to **make us** respond to fact, then there is nothing within us to compel us to respond to Christ, but if we are to have Christ's victory in our lives, we need to discover some way **to** respond to His presence.

CHRISTIAN VICTORY IS FOUND THROUGH DEVELOPING
AN AWARENESS OF CHRIST'S PRESENCE WITHIN !!!

At salvation, when we invite the Lord Jesus into our hearts, we literally receive a living person into our hearts, the Person of Jesus...**BUT** He is Spirit, which means that there is no physical form for us to detect. Therefore, we have no way of being aware of His presence by means of the senses...that is, we have no way of...**physically**...touching, seeing, or hearing Him. We know that He is in our hearts only because the Bible and the Holy Spirit bear witness to this miracle. We are aware of the **FACT OF HIS PRESENCE**, but we are **not** aware of His "person".

Paul's words, "...that Christ may dwell in your hearts **by faith**," tell us, in clear language, that it is by faith that we understand that Jesus is spiritually united with us. The writer to the Hebrews employs similar thinking when he says..."By faith, we **understand** that the worlds were framed by the Word of God..." (Heb.11:3). By faith we have understanding, says the writer...and from this faith we form our convictions, which we hold in our "heads". The Apostle John also expresses himself similarly when he says..."And we know that the Son of God is come and hath **given us an understanding**" (I John 5:20). It is through this understanding, he says, that we know Christ. Christ's presence within us, therefore, is known only on an **UNDERSTANDING** level. We can "**know**" Him, but we cannot "**feel**" Him.

The **fact** of Christ's presence is a part of one's working knowledge and one is convinced of Christ's indwelling presence on the same level, as he would be convinced of any **fact** from history. Christ's indwelling presence is as truly fact as Columbus' existence five centuries ago, and we hold...in our minds...the truth of Christ's indwelling presence with the same conviction that we hold in our minds the truth of Columbus' existence.

One is able to **comprehend** Christ...receive knowledge of His presence...but one is not able to **apprehend** Him...that is, lay hold of His person! Comprehend and apprehend are two different things. We can learn of Christ, but we may not reach or apprehend His person because **He is Spirit!**

All of men's tools and equipment for life on the earth are physical. Even reason and logic must be considered as belonging to the physical realm because they are limited to space and time. Our senses are physical and, therefore, do not offer us any kind of "equipment" for communication with spirit-beings who are on a spirit...rather than a physical...level. There are those who claim to have access to the spirit world, but it is interesting to note that the "spirit" is reported as having produced some physical phenomenon. He has to rap on a table...or produce something...that can be received by the physical senses because this is all that man...in his finite state...has to work with.

There is no way for Christians to know Christ as they know each other, yet, nonetheless, His presence is every bit as real. If someone very important, such as the nation's president, were to walk into the room where you were, your whole bearing and attitude would suddenly change. You would feel very self-conscious and, after you caught your breath, you would, very carefully, guard your speech and actions and, were he to make his abode in your home, your whole life would be changed...and geared...to the fact of his presence there with you!

Just think of it...the fact of Christ's indwelling presence means that Someone more important than the nation's president has walked through the door of our hearts to take up His abode within us! It is staggering to reflect on the fact that we abide with the very Son of God, and changes in our lives will only occur to the extent that we become truly aware of the reality of this fact.

Spiritual truths are often meaningless and difficult to apprehend without some physical representation, so the Lord instituted the ordinance of communion. When Jesus said, "Do this in remembrance of Me," He was giving His disciples a **visual aid** in helping them to "lay hold" of the concept of receiving His death...and His life...because the partaking of a broken wafer beautifully pictures the reception of His death while the partaking of the cup crystallizes...and makes real...the reception of His life. Through the believers active participation in the communion celebration...by his "getting his teeth", so to speak, into a physical representation of the idea of Christ's death and life... the human senses come into action and allow the spiritual work of what Christ has done for man to take on a new...and living...significance.

Baptism is another ordinance that God gave the church and it serves as a visual aid in helping us to "lay hold" of the spiritual experience of being born again...of dying to sin and receiving new life in Christ. God's genius and wisdom is exalted in His giving of the ordinances to the church because, by dramatizing spiritual truths, they become divine vehicles of communicating these truths...because the reality of these truths is driven home with astonishing clearness as a person's emotions and senses...all the "levels" of his whole being ...participate ...and enter into...the experience of these ordinances.

This concept of representing intangible realities by tangible ones is applicable to other areas of our existence besides spiritual truths. "Beauty", for instance, is an intangible reality that cannot be beheld apart from the tangible reality of a "beautiful"

color-splashed sunset...a "beautiful" painting...a "beautiful" flower...etc. Love is another intangible reality that cannot be known...or experienced...apart from its demonstration ...or manifestation...in some kind of tangible expression...some kind of tangible action... or deed.

Likewise, it is true that Christ's presence within us is a spiritual...intangible...fact that must take on tangible expression if we are to keep it within our immediate awareness.

The truth of Jesus' precious indwelling is not held before us *without some effort on our part...*so we can say that part of our job is to find ways...and means...of keeping the truth of the Lord's abiding presence within us before our spiritual eyes... because...there can be no life-changing surrender unless we become constantly impressed with...and fully mindful of ...Christ's permanent presence within us, and we should be willing to do whatever it takes to cultivate a life that is geared to the unseen fact that God's dwelling place is in our own hearts.

One who learned to cultivate such a life...who learned to cultivate, within himself, the art of *practicing the presence of Christ...*was a famous monk of centuries ago, who was called brother Lawrence: His was the menial task of caring for the pots and pans in the monastery where he lived...and he hated the job. However, in time, he discovered that talking to the Lord, while he was working, made his task seem lighter. He began to concentrate on being aware of the Savior's presence and soon he reached the place where he could do everything with the Lord. As a result, his hated jobs were converted into feasts of rapturous joy...the drudgery of his menial tasks vanished and great wonder and peace flooded his soul as he developed the art of being conscious of Jesus' nearness. The transformed life of this lowly monk came to be known all over Europe. He attracted Christian royalty, who journeyed great distances to talk with him, in their hope to learn the secret of his radiant peace...and, because his letters to friends are preserved today, he is still influencing lives for his dear Lord.

When Paul tells his readers to, "Pray without ceasing," he does not mean that they should spend their days upon their knees, but, rather, he wants them to live the day in the living awareness of Christ's presence...talking to Him about everything and recognizing Him as the very center of all that occurs around them. To Paul, the "bowed knee" was simply a physical representation of a spiritually bowed heart. Talk to God, says Paul, for prayer is practicing the presence of God.

THE ROUTINE OF THE DAY MUST BE CENTERED AROUND CHRIST

It takes little imagination to develop a life-style geared to the fact of Christ's presence. We are all equipped with imaginations and they ought to be dedicated to this holy task, despite the fact that we use them for every other conceivable, selfish, and lustful purpose. Our imaginations were given to us for blessed and creative functions and they should be surrendered to God along with the other talents we have from Him. We, by the use of this fascinating device of our imaginations, can manifest the spiritual

presence of Christ...that means that He can take form and actually speak within our own minds. Our sacred imagination can become something of a meeting place between the spirit world and the physical world and it can wonderfully provide a great oasis amidst the desert of God-hating civilizations. Because our own drives...and physical appetites... move, too, in a non-spiritual direction, the sanctified imagination is our only haven.

The physical organism resists prayer because it is unnatural to pray...as it is also unnatural to read the Bible. Going to church can become a habit, yes, but going to church is still very unnatural to the old nature. Only when the discipline of making Christ real becomes a serious task will we experience a changed life. We have to impose this discipline upon ourselves and it will involve changing the routine of our lives as well as using every "help device" we can take advantage of:...Christian books ...films... prayer meetings...Bible studies...family altars. These...and a host of other "helps"...are needed if we are to earnestly gear ourselves to the fact of His presence. Habits must be cultivated which will fix the truth of His indwelling presence in our awareness.

In using physical representations to help us visualize the unseen Lord, *we must avoid the error of some who would substitute a visual aid (like statues) for the One we are to worship.* The family altar...or even the Bible, for that matter...is but a tool that we use to give reality to Christ's presence in our lives. When we allow an aid to worship to assume a dominant place *"BETWEEN"* us and Jesus, *it becomes an abomination* in the eyes of God! Even church-going can be idolatrous when it *takes the place of* intimate fellowship with Jesus.

When we arise in the morning, with the sunlight streaming in the window, those sunbeams should instantly remind us that Jesus is the Light of the World. Within the cloistered sanctuary of our imagination we can say to Him, "Good morning, Lord. I pray my life may shine for You this day, even as the sun rays brighten this room." When we slip into our clothes, we can say to Him, "I thank You, my Savior, that I wear Your righteousness." ...Even washing our hands can become a devotional experience because, as the water of the faucet rinses away the uncleanness, we can tell Jesus, "Oh, how I praise You, Lord, that Your blood has washed away my guilt of sin." Were someone else to hear us they'd laugh, but we know that, when **He** hears us, it delights His heart! The fact that we are **learning to imagine** His presence does not lessen the truth that the reality of His presence is unquestioned because the Holy Spirit's testimony settles that. We seek only to come into a living awareness of the reality of His presence that will change our lives.

Sitting at the breakfast table signals the need to fill our stomachs with food, but we are now also mindful of the fact that we must feed more than one man...because the new man is hungry, too...he longs for a different kind of bread so that, besides filling our stomachs with food, we must also fill our hearts with God's Word. Driving to work

in the car can become another spiritual delight because, if we are alone with Him, then others won't be disturbed if we pray aloud, or if we sing together with Him...this can be a wonderful time to talk to the Lord about the things that we wish to do together with Him that day...or, to discuss, with Him, the needs of some of our dear Christian brothers.

The work done at the shop...or at the office...can, likewise, be done in the presence of Jesus...in fact, others will be greatly impressed with the obvious joy...and delight...shown by the "*Christ-aware Christian*"...These disciplines make talking to Jesus a part of normal, everyday life...and that's what it **should** be! Talking to Jesus is really practicing the presence of Christ and it should be the norm for the man living in God's power.

A life routine that incorporates practicing the presence of Jesus makes the "*new man*" as real as the "*old man*", and one becomes as much aware of the "*fact man*" as he is of the "*feeling man*". It is not easy to surrender to a Christ that seems unreal because, to most Christians, Jesus is seated on a throne somewhere out in the blue sky and His literal existence within them is scarcely known to them. A "**distant**" Christ may not seem to matter too much, but an "**indwelling**" Son of God certainly **will**, if His presence **is recognized**! The recognition of the indwelling Christ becomes the **SECRET** of the Christian's victory in Christ...a secret whose key words are **IMAGINATION** and **DISCIPLINE**.

How it must hurt Jesus when so many of His own live as though He did not exist ...and how it must delight his heart when any one of us learn to practice His presence!

One day, our earthly lives will all be over and we will no longer have to gear a physical life to a spiritual person...because, **on** that day, we will know Jesus as we know each other now...we will then "know even as we are also known". As longingly as we look toward that day, we are now living a life that requires us to walk with our God by faith...a walk that requires us to choose between two opposing natures. Victory is found only as Christ...and our new nature...become as real to us as our old nature is to us...and a day filled with the decision to allow ourselves to be controlled by the new nature, rather than by the old one...to please God, rather than "self"...is, indeed, a day of victory for the Christian because **VICTORY** is found only as Christ...and the new nature...become as real...and more important than..."self" and the old nature!

"I am crucified with Christ:

(That is...my `old selfish nature' ...denied daily...is reckoned dead because it was nailed to Christ's cross)

*nevertheless I live; yet not I, but
Christ liveth in me: and the life
 which I now live in the flesh,
 I live by the faith of Son of God,
 who loved me, and gave Himself for me!"*

- Galatians 2:20

