

2

The Substance of Authentic Christian Ministry

2 Corinthians 3:1-18

3¹ Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, as some do, letters of recommendation to you, or from you? 2² You yourselves are our letter of recommendation, written on our hearts, to be known and read by all. 3³ And you show that you are a letter from Christ delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

4⁴ Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. 5⁵ Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God, 6⁶ who has made us sufficient to be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

7⁷ Now if the ministry of death, carved in letters on stone, came with such glory that the Israelites could not gaze at Moses' face because of its glory, which was being brought to an end, 8⁸ will not the ministry of the Spirit have even more glory? 9⁹ For if there was glory in the ministry of condemnation, the ministry of righteousness must far exceed it in glory. 10¹⁰ Indeed, in this case, what once had glory has come to have no glory at all, because of the

glory that surpasses it. ¹¹For if what was being brought to an end came with glory, much more will what is permanent have glory.

¹²Since we have such a hope, we are very bold, ¹³not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face so that the Israelites might not gaze at the outcome of what was being brought to an end. ¹⁴But their minds were hardened. For to this day, when they read the old covenant, that same veil remains unlifted, because only through Christ is it taken away. ¹⁵Yes, to this day whenever Moses is read a veil lies over their hearts. ¹⁶But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. ¹⁷Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. ¹⁸And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

2 CORINTHIANS chapter three is the theological heart of the letter. Here Paul spells out the content of authentic Christian ministry, defining its substance. The chapter divides into four parts.

1. Transformation (vv. 1 to 3 and v. 18)

As Paul commends himself from chapter 2 verse 16b to chapter 3 verse 3, he holds up his qualification for the task. Notice the concern in these verses for the adequacy, sufficiency and qualification for ministry.

Paul holds up the lives of the Corinthian Christians as exhibits demonstrating his gospel ministry to be authentic. It is clear that he has something public in mind, when he says the Corinthians are *to be known and read by all*. His expectation of authentic Christian ministry is that whilst being a work on the inside, *in the heart* (5:12), it nonetheless produces radical external change, noticeable to all. Hence he writes here that the Corinthians are *to be known and read by all*. This idea is picked up in chapter 3 verse 18, where Paul says:

And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another.

Furthermore, the verses make clear that real change is taking place in the present: *are being transformed*. It is not something way off in the future. God brings this genuine change. It is transformation that happens to us, and is not something that we produce ourselves. The verb in verse 18 is passive, 'are *being transformed*'. We see this same expectation of change elsewhere in the letter. In chapter 7, Paul speaks of his joy at their repentance. In chapter 12 verse 20 Paul fears he will not find the Corinthians as he wishes. In chapter 13 verse 7 Paul speaks about coming to test them, and the test is whether there has been real restoration. Paul's concern, then, is that what has happened authentically on the inside is matched by something genuine on the outside.

But notice how this change comes in verse 3. Paul's language suggests that he understands himself to be playing the role of postman. Paul sees himself as delivering the Corinthians as his 'letter of recommendation'. They are a letter *from* Christ, written *by* the Holy Spirit. This immediately poses a major challenge to the false teachers. They were clearly men of the Jewish Law, being described in chapter 11 as Hebrews, Israelites and offspring of Abraham. They were super-spiritual men who boasted of their experiences. They were expecting the change to be brought about through the Old Testament covenant, which Moses wrote on tablets of stone. Paul rejects this. Instead he tells us that real Christian change comes from an authentic work of the Spirit, in the heart of an individual.

A careful reading of the whole letter enables something of a pen-portrait of these false leaders to be constructed. Clearly these *peddlers of God's word* (2: 17) were religious and saw Moses and the Old Covenant as key. It seems that they sought accreditation for

their ministry through the religious and ritualistic conduct of their followers. We might say they were ‘super-religious’.

In addition, we learn of their boasting about spiritual experience and oratorical skills. They sought accreditation for their ministry through so-called experiences of the Spirit (5:12-13 connect the erroneous boasting in outward appearances with the ecstatic experience of being ‘beside yourself’.) They were offering a different spirit to the Corinthians than the Spirit that the Corinthians had first received (11: 4). Paul presents himself as being in no way inferior to the peddlers in their experiences (5:13 *if we are beside ourselves*; 12:1 *I will go on to visions and revelations of the Lord*; 12:4 *he heard things that cannot be told, which man may not utter*), but he refuses to use these experiences to commend his ministry. We might say that these peddlers were ‘super-spiritual’.

Furthermore, in chapter 10 verse 10 and chapter 11 verse 6, we read that perceived oratorical skills were of great importance to them. We might say that they were ‘super-slick’. Paul’s argument, however, is that true gospel ministry is a work of God, in which God has brought real change in the heart of a believer, resulting in genuine transformation. First and foremost, it is not about surface activity. It is a heart matter. Only a changed heart can produce a changed life.

Throughout the history of the church, similar ‘peddlers’ have emerged claiming authenticity through ‘on the face’ experiences. (In 5:12, ‘on the face’ is presented as being the undesirable opposite of true ministry, which brings change ‘on the heart’. ‘On the face’ is our literal translation. The ESV translates the phrase as ‘outward appearance’.) The Toronto Blessing back in the 1990s was such a movement. People falling over, barking like dogs and collapsing in hysterics were claimed to be signs of God’s work. It was a real ‘on the face’, surface-level ministry. One senior Christian leader, when asked about the Toronto Blessing, responded, ‘It’s not so much what

they do when they fall over that I'm concerned about, it's what they do when they stand up.' Authentic Christian ministry will produce radical change.

'On the face' ministries are deeply appealing, because they seem to offer a quick and effective solution to any problems and challenges that a ministry experiences. Paul wants the Corinthians to be more discerning. When considering whether a ministry is genuine, there are a number of things not to be bothered about: attendance at services, the number of people in small-group bible studies, and the oratorical skill of the speaker. The key questions of authenticity are: 'is this the genuine message?' and 'is there real change?' So, says Paul, if you want to know whether there is a genuine ministry, look at: their marriages, their language, how they have controlled their tongue, the way they love each other, how they spend their money, their sexual relationships, the way they treat their colleagues, the way children are cared for when they come into their community and the way they care for their elderly. Is there radical transformation?

Those who have been Christians for a significant length of time may be at risk of not expecting this ministry of transformation to be happening to them anymore, whether from the pulpit, in small groups, or in personal Bible reading. Perhaps it did in the past, but there is no longer that personal expectation and confidence. But Paul knows no such limitations! Transformation is expected to be an ongoing process until glory. There is the very great danger that people will try and create some new 'on the face' or 'silver bullet' solution to see this transformation happen quickly and visibly. But there are no shortcuts. The rest of this chapter shows us how this heart-change happens.

2. Regeneration (vv. 4 to 6)

Verses 1 to 3 raise the issue and spell out the evidence of real change, and we must keep reading to learn how this heart-changing

transformation occurs. Verses 4 to 6 show us that a miraculous, supernatural work of God has taken place.

Paul's repeated use of the Greek word translated as 'sufficient' is striking (twice in verse 5 and once in verse 6, where it is translated as 'competent'). The sufficiency that Paul is pointing to is from God. It is God who brings the believer alive, by the work of His Holy Spirit. Paul is again using the language of life, death and sufficiency also seen in chapter 2 verses 15 to 16. He sees himself in weakness, at the back of the triumphal procession. Yet as he speaks the gospel, so God brings life. This work of God is a key idea throughout the early chapters of the letter. It is found here in chapter 3 verse 6, *the Spirit gives life*. It is also seen in chapter 4 verse 6: *For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness', has shone in our hearts*, and in chapter 5 verse 17, *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation*.

Under the Old Covenant, before the coming of Christ, there could be no bringing of spiritual life to a person's heart. However, the regenerative work of Christ now brings this radical change. God the Father, through the work of God the Son, by the power of God the Holy Spirit, brings life. The change on the outside does not come through the ascetic rigour of rules, regulations and rituals; nor through the surface froth of super-spiritual experience or slick presentation. Instead it comes from a radical new beginning in the heart of a person. This is seen both in verse 3: *not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts*, and at the end of verse 6: *For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life*. This is real Christian work, done by Father, Son and Holy Spirit in peoples' hearts. This work is often referred to as the doctrine of Regeneration, which means bringing new life. A person who is regenerate is no longer dead on the inside, but has been made alive.

This teaching is once again a direct assault on the false teachers. They were clearly Jewish (see 11: 22) and they wanted to bind people

into the Old Testament law, the Ten Commandments and what is called the Old Covenant. But from Genesis 3 onwards, having rebelled against God, all human beings are dead on the inside. *The wages of sin is death* (Rom. 6:23), and the hearts of all people are dead on the inside, because everyone has rebelled against God. All people are cut-off from God, and are without the life of God on the inside. There is no flicker of life within. The Old Testament consistently points forward to the day when God would do a radical new work. He would change the hearts of His people, by washing them clean and flooding His Holy Spirit into them, by bringing life. The promise in Ezekiel chapter 36 verses 25 to 27 demonstrates this:

I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

The ministry that is on the outside can wag its finger at you and tell you to pull your moral socks up. But that is something that people who are dead on the inside cannot achieve. The ministry that is only froth, glamour and excitement in the big public hall, where people are falling over and people are merely showing off their clever oratorical skills, cannot bring life. Human beings cannot bring life to dead hearts. Paul says that he is qualified, confident and sufficient, because he is speaking about a ministry performed by God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, on the inside. It is performed on the heart of the unbeliever, on what is otherwise a dead, calcified heart of stone. Here is the essence of true Christian ministry.

So this radical transformation that Paul describes does not come from trying harder or shouting louder, or by becoming more extreme.

Nor does it come from more rules and regulations, or from more pull-ups and push-ups in the spiritual gym. Authentic change comes through a genuine work of the Holy Spirit as He brings new life into the heart of the believer. At the centre of authentic gospel ministry is spiritual surgery. God is in the business of heart transplants. When a person becomes a Christian, something goes on quietly, secretly, in their inner being, as God creates a new heart within them. You may not quite remember when it happened to you, or you might be able to name the day. Praise God that He did this work in me on December 18th 1979! God has done this miracle of heart surgery in every Christian, through the gospel. God does not make physical incisions into us; instead His work happens through the proclamation of Jesus Christ. Paul has undertaken this task of proclamation without needing any special qualifications, or letters of recommendation. The Corinthian Christians were his evidence that through hearing the gospel, Father, Son and Holy Spirit had worked a miracle. This work is the concern of every true church.

3. Justification (vv. 7 to 11)

The question of how this Regeneration actually happens must then be considered. We have seen Transformation, happening through Regeneration. Wider Christian circles can suggest various possibilities: that Regeneration is something magical and mystical; that it comes through the sacraments; that it is connected to a particular experience of the Holy Spirit; that it can come through doing a particular course. It is hugely important to be clear on how Regeneration happens, because chapter 11 has shown us that it is possible to proclaim a different Jesus, a different Spirit, and a different gospel. There are plenty of people *peddling* God's word. Paul answers this question in chapter 3 verses 7 to 11. He shows us that the ministry of Transformation comes through the work of Regeneration, which God brings about through the Justification of the believer.

Verses 7 to 11 compare and contrast two glorious ministries. But one is quite definitely more glorious than the other! By way of background, the *letters on stone* are talking about the Law of Moses. The *ministry of condemnation* is referring to Old Covenant ministry. As Moses came down the mountain in Exodus 34, his face was ablaze, because he had been speaking with God Himself. It was a glorious ministry. But the gospel ministry that 2 Corinthians lays out for us is so much more spectacular, that the Old Covenant ministry now no longer seems to shine at all.

This is in no way to downplay the ministry of the Old Covenant. Paul describes it as glorious! It is glorious in its moral perfection. The Ten Commandments are glorious. Just one of them: *you shall not commit adultery*, is a glorious thing. Cultures in which this commandment is treated lightly then quickly experience moral and social disintegration, and head back into the cultural dark ages. *You shall not murder. You shall not covet.* These are also glorious commandments. *You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength.* It is a glorious reality to have one unifying truth of a Creator God, to whom we can submit ourselves!

The ministry of Moses is glorious in its moral perfection. But it is also glorious in its justice. In Exodus chapter 34 verse 7 God declares: *I shall by no means acquit the guilty.* God shows Himself to be a just judge. He will not brush things under the carpet, or pretend that things have never happened. He sees everything. He knows everything. He will judge everything. And He will not acquit the guilty.

The idea of the guilty getting away with it greatly concerns us as a culture, and new investigations are regularly launched. Paedophile scandals, hospital care and FIFA are among the areas and institutions under scrutiny at the time of writing. Time may forget some of these examples, but our culture hates injustice so much that a quick glance

at the news headlines will likely deliver several alternative cases. There are no such fears of injustice with God.

The ministry of the Old Covenant is glorious, because the Covenant has both moral and judicial perfection. However, this leads Paul to describe the ministry of the Old Covenant as a ministry of death, and condemnation. Condemnation, because as the Ten Commandments are held up, our guilt is undeniable. The person who thinks that they have never murdered anyone, then hears the teaching of Jesus in Matthew 5: *You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.'* But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment (vv. 21 and 22). The Law condemns us. We are murderers. *Everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.* The Law condemns us. We are adulterers. There are things which we have done that we should not have. There are also things which we should have done, which we have not. And the most important commandment says, *You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength* (Mark 12:30). The worst sin, then, is *not* to love the Lord with all my heart, all my soul, all my mind and all my strength. No-one can say that they have done that. Even today – *all your mind, all your heart, all your strength?* The Law condemns us. We have committed the worst sin in the book. And worse than that, because God is a God of perfect justice (and thank God that He is!), we face the penalty, and *the wages of sin is death* (Rom. 6:23). And so this glorious ministry of the Old Covenant, of the Law, of moral and judicial perfection, is a ministry of death and condemnation.

All religion leaves people dead and condemned. That is the case whether it is Islam and the five pillars, or Hinduism, or something else. No human religion enables us to meet God's moral and judicial

perfection. Above all, that is true for the glorious ministry delivered by God, apart from Jesus. Our culture has abandoned the first four commandments, and has tailored the second six to suit our own bankrupt and compromised morality. But God *will by no means acquit the guilty* (Exod. 34:7).

The word translated *righteousness* in verse 9 is the same word as that used for 'justification'. They come from the same root in Greek. It is the language of the court room, and means 'to declare to be right'. The Spirit of God, because of the finished work of the Son of God, Jesus, on the cross, brings to the heart of the believer the status of being justified. When someone is justified, they are declared to be in the right. It is not solely a declaration that they have done nothing wrong. As we have seen, God's Law demands that people do lots of things right. When someone is justified, they are credited with and are given, the perfect life that Jesus Christ lived. The life visible on the pages of the Gospels, is reckoned to us. Jesus is the only one who has always loved God with all His heart, soul, mind and strength. Jesus is the only one who has never murdered, or committed adultery. And justification counts that perfect life, to me. As one preacher helpfully put it, 'Did you know that because of the finished work of Jesus on the cross, if you trust in Jesus, God sees you today as perfect?'

This is the doctrine of Justification. There is nothing more exciting! It is important to be clear that whilst this work is achieved at the cross through the substitutionary sacrificial death of Jesus, it is applied to the believer's heart by the Holy Spirit. Thus, at the core of the marvellous, miraculous, majestic work of God the Holy Spirit, is this work of bringing to a believer the righteous, justified status. Those who look for the 'on the face' and at 'outward appearance' are always looking for something human, that seems more important, or more wonderful than Justification.

On one occasion a Christian minister preached on the cross, and there was a man in the congregation who was looking for something ‘on the face’, a different sort of ministry. It was a fantastic talk. On being asked what he thought of the sermon, the man replied, ‘Oh, I prefer something more spiritual.’ His comment showed that he did not have the first idea about the ministry of the Spirit. He had completely missed the point. There can be nothing more spiritual, more supernatural, more marvellous, or more magnificent than God the Holy Spirit bringing Regeneration to bear in the life of a believer, through declaring the Justification that God achieves in the heart of a believer, through the finished work of Jesus on the cross.

Some people find greatest spiritual excitement in being served by impressive people in particular clothes performing routines and rituals. Such a preference, over hearing the gospel and seeing that work of Regeneration, shows that they have not understood the Christian gospel properly. They are thinking like the Corinthians in this letter. The Apostle Paul would say, *but I am afraid that as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your thoughts will be led astray from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. For if someone comes and proclaims another Jesus than the one we proclaimed, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or if you accept a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it readily enough.* (11:3-4).

4. Illumination (vv. 12 to 18)

The doctrine of Illumination is the subject of verses 12 to 18 (although the word itself does not appear here). It is only the Holy Spirit who can open our hearts and minds to the glorious truth about Jesus Christ.

The word translated ‘bold’ in verse 12 refers particularly to bold and courageous speech. Since Paul understands that Gospel proclamation is the means by which God changes human hearts, he

is therefore ‘bold *to speak*’. However he might have felt, he declared the Gospel to people. Paul was not like Moses, who put a veil over his face so that the Israelites might not gaze at the outcome of what was being brought to an end.

Paul once again takes us to Moses, because in Corinth the Jewish false teachers were infatuated with the Old Testament. When Moses came down from the mountain in Exodus 34, his face was ablaze. He had been speaking face to face with the living God, and he covered his face from the Israelites until he went in to speak with God again. They could not see the glory of Moses’ ministry, or the temporary, fading nature of it. Paul then speaks of a figurative veil, which prevents the recipients of Old Covenant ministry from ‘beholding the glory of the Lord’. Old Covenant ministry can do nothing to overcome the ‘hardened minds’ and ‘covered hearts’ of people who read the Law. But now, in and through Jesus, we can *behold the glory of the Lord* (v. 18).

Exodus 34 tells us that the Israelites were utterly terrified when they saw Moses, a truly godly person, after he had just met face to face with God. Now however, the Christian, who has been justified, does not need to be frightened of God. Since Jesus has brought this justification to the heart, the Christian can now gaze on the glory of God, in the face of Christ. They can actually look on God without fear of condemnation and death. The veil has been removed. It is a truly remarkable thing. So as the Christian looks on Jesus, and sees a life of *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control* (Gal. 5:22), their new heart is instructed, fed and illumined. And so they are being transformed. God the Holy Spirit is on the inside, working out transformation, as they gaze on the truth of Christ. However, in the Corinthian context, it must be remembered that a ‘transformed’ Christian will not look impressive in the world’s eyes.

Looking at the sun via a mirror illustrates this pattern. Someone can gaze at the sun by using a mirror. And simultaneously, the glory of

the sun reflects back on them by way of the mirror, and they are lit up. Similarly, the glory of God has been made known to us in the person of Christ. Christians have now been made free to gaze on Him, as the veil has been taken away, and they are not condemned. As they gaze on Christ, the Spirit is lighting up their heart. They are being transformed from one degree of glory into another. It is a slow work. It is a painfully difficult work. But it is a work that is not happening through an 'on the surface' razzmatazz. It is happening as the heart is Regenerated, through the Justification of Christ, and as the Justified come to the Scriptures and gaze on the person of Jesus.

Conclusion

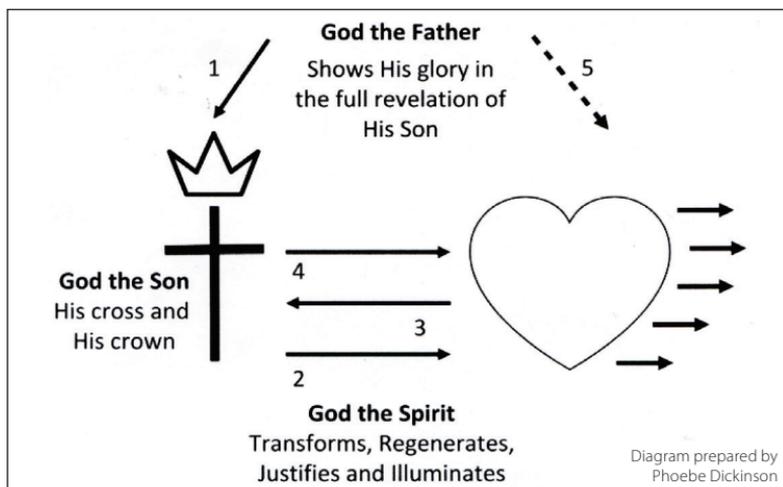
2 Corinthians chapter 3 shows us the theological heart of real Christian ministry. Through such ministry, the Holy Spirit brings real Transformation and change. The contrast is made with false ministries which only bring change on the surface. Such Transformation can only happen when God Regenerates a person's heart, bringing them from death to life. It is Justification that enables this Regeneration – the Spirit of God applying Christ's finished work on the cross to the heart, so that the Christian is declared to be in the right before God. The Holy Spirit then keeps opening the heart and mind to the glorious truth about Jesus. This is Illumination, which in turn brings Transformation.

The chapter's consistent contrast with Moses and Old Covenant ministry shows that there is a choice to be made. Moses' was a ministry that looked outwardly impressive, but was unable to change the heart. There are *peddlers of God's word* today who are only concerned with how things look on the outside. By exposing the shallowness of such ministries, and showing us the lasting glory of genuine gospel ministry, Paul is urging us to keep our confidence in this New Covenant ministry.

Questions

1. Using the ideas of these verses, write a sentence of not more than 50 words that explains why the Christian Gospel and Gospel ministry is 'glorious' despite appearances.
2. How has what Paul tells us of the Gospel here encouraged you, personally?
3. In what ways does Paul's teaching in these verses give you confidence to be 'very bold' (v. 12) in speaking the Gospel to people you know who are not Christians?
4. How does what Paul says here about the Gospel change what you think both about the Gospel and the nature of true Gospel ministry?
5. In what ways does this passage encourage those who might be feeling worn-down in Christian ministry, and challenge those who are contemplating moving to something that looks more impressive?

The big ideas that we have seen in this chapter are illustrated and summarised in this diagram:



1. God the Father has made His glory known, in an historical, public act of revelation, in God the Son, for all to see. This glory is seen in the full revelation of the Son: in His cross, His crown and kingship, His death, His resurrection, and His enthroning in heaven. Therefore, relying on Moses to see the glory of God, as the Israelites did, is no longer the way. God the Father can now be seen in Jesus Christ and the public revelation in the Scriptures. This revelation was a mystery, but it has now been made known.

2. God the Holy Spirit takes this public truth, of the possibility of Regeneration through Justification, and writes it on the heart of the believer. Therefore Paul's ministry, though not a ministry of dazzling tricks, is of immense supernatural power, because it is written in the heart. Therefore Paul wants us to boast in the ministry that impacts the heart, rather than in ministries that just produce surface change.

3. But now, the one whose heart has been cleansed by the Holy Spirit and His power, by the power of the Spirit is able to gaze back on the glory of God in the face of Christ without fear. The people of Moses' day could not do this. As this is done, the glory of God can be witnessed in His revelation of Jesus Christ.

4. As these things are seen, and as the Jesus of history in the pages of Scripture is contemplated, considered, meditated on and thought about, so the Holy Spirit moves in the heart to bring Transformation. The Christian is being transformed from one degree of glory to another.

Notice how God-centred this is. Talk of transforming the heart is popular today. The key point to remember is that heart-transformation is entirely a work of God, and is therefore not man-centred. God removes the veil, God reveals Himself, God brings a person alive, and God enables a person to gaze on His glory in the face of Christ. And as the glory of God in the face of Christ is gazed on, God brings conviction of sin, and produces Transformation – love,

joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

The key to Transformation from a human point of view is deliberate and dependent meditation on the Scriptures. Such activity anticipates that God will bring Transformation by the power of His Holy Spirit who is living within us. Transformation does not come by following rules and regulations. Nor does it come by following religious rituals, through attending glamorous meetings, or through reading glossy magazines about the Christian life. Rather, Transformation comes through the quiet, unseen ministry of word and prayer, in the power of the Holy Spirit, which produces change in the heart.

5. Do not believe any Bible teacher who says that God the Father works direct through God the Spirit, into the heart. Such teaching is Binitarian theology, not Trinitarian theology. All over the world, and in many different forms of so called Christianity, this theology appears. It looks exciting, but it is surface religion, 'on the face'. It is not true Christianity, which is Christ-ianity. Paul insists that a genuine work of God the Holy Spirit is radically focused on Jesus. Perhaps such ministry does not initially look quite so exciting, but the long-term results are much more impressive.