

SECOND CORINTHIANS CHAPTER THREE

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“Are we beginning to commend ourselves again?” Thus according to the RSV St. Paul begins the third chapter of his second epistle to the Corinthians. With these words he refers to the closing remarks in chap. 2, which we then must review in order to get the background for our present study.

In v. 14 he compared his past mission work to one glorious triumphal procession. His present epistle was written from Macedonia in the summer of 57. About 10 years of mission activity lay behind him. He had worked in Cyprus and southern Galatia before 51; then in Macedonia and Achaia; then in the Roman province of Asia with Ephesus as his headquarters. Now he was on his way to pay Corinth a third visit. He had met with much opposition, especially on the part of the Jews. He had been maltreated and imprisoned (e.g. in Philippi); he had been stoned (in Lystra). There had occurred the riot of Demetrius in Ephesus. Paul showed in his own person that we must enter into the kingdom of God through much tribulation.

Does this look like a triumphal procession? Yet that is precisely what Paul calls it: “Now thanks be to God which always causeth us to triumph in Christ.”

Carrying out the figure of a triumphal procession Paul makes several applications to his mission work. In a triumphal procession there was a rich sweet odor, coming from numerous garlands of flowers and from burning incense. Paul compares the knowledge of Christ to this “savor,” which was made manifest in every place by his work.

In a triumphal procession leaders of the defeated enemy were dragged through the streets, chained to the victor’s chariot, to be executed at the end of the triumph. The sweet odor of the flowers and of the incense reached also their nostrils; but to them it meant death. It was to them a terrible odor, while to the victors it assured the end of their past troubles and undisturbed security for the future. Paul applies these features to his Gospel work: “For we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish. To the one we are the savor of death unto death; and to the other the savor of life unto life.” (v. 15. 16).

That is a stupendous achievement. So Paul asks the question: “And who is sufficient for these things?” This is a real question, not a rhetorical one, or a thinly veiled exclamation. Paul is inquiring after the source of such work, after the qualification of a man who can achieve such results. Paul answers the question himself with words that merit our closest attention: “For we are not as many, which corrupt the Word of God; but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ” (v. 17).

The word *corrupt* is not a literal translation of the Greek *καπηλευειν*, which is derived from *καπηλος*, an inn keeper; a petty retailer, a huckster, a peddler; and which according to Thayer means: “to be a retailer, to peddle; to make money by selling anything, to get sordid gain by dealing in anything, to do a thing for base gain.”

Paul complains that there are “many” who so abuse the Word of God that their Gospel work may be called a *καπηλευειν*. One is vividly reminded of Schiller’s distich on *Wissenschaft*, saying that, while by some it is considered as an exalted, heavenly goddess, to another it is but

Eine melkende Kuh, die ihn mit Butter versorgt.

Such *καπηλευοντες* were the false apostles who had invaded Corinth. They supposed that godliness is a means of making a gain; and accordingly they resorted to all manner of questionable means for putting their message across and winning the favor of the people. They defamed Paul, whom they considered as their competitor; they added to the Gospel, or subtracted from it, in order to make it more acceptable to the people.—As far as the substance of the matter is concerned, the translation of the King James version is correct: they “corrupted” the Gospel message.

Over against such methods, so Paul maintains, he and his associates are very careful to preach the Gospel ἐξ εὐαγγελιστικῆς from pure motives just as it came to them ἐκ θεοῦ. They preach it, always conscious of the fact that they are standing κατεναντι θεοῦ. And their entire message comes to a head ἐν χριστῷ, and is centered in Him. As their motives are pure, so is their message the unadulterated Word of God.

This is the reason why Paul's work has those stupendous results. They are the fruit of the pure and unadulterated Gospel. But since he makes the emphatic statement that this is the manner and the spirit in which he performs his work, he anticipates that some of his detractors will raise the charge that he thereby in his turn is beginning to "commend" himself, in fact is writing his own letter of recommendation.

v. 1-3

(RSV) Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, as some do, letters of recommendation to you, or from you? (2) You yourselves are our letter of recommendation, written on your (better: *our*) hearts, to be known and read by all men; (3) 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.

Paul counters by raising the question: "Or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you?" Do we really need such letters? Others may need them, but do we? A letter of introduction is in place over against strangers. Paul's question thus really is an appeal to the heart of the Corinthians: Are we strangers? Am I a stranger to you?

His question means more. He does not merely remind them of the fact that they had met him personally, and had made his personal acquaintance some five years ago, his question implies that his work in their city had brought them and him much closer to one another, had united their hearts in Christ. When in the end of the previous chapter he stressed that he preached the Gospel as of sincerity, as of God, in the presence of God, in Christ, he was not revealing any secret to them. That is the very way how they themselves had gotten to know him for 18 months. They knew his work in the Jewish synagogue. They knew the opposition of the Jews, and his separation from them. They knew how he had continued his work in the house of a certain Justus. They knew how he had been hailed, by the Jews, before the court of Gallio. They knew also how Paul in all those days had never asked for any remuneration. Day and night he worked in the shop of Aquila to provide for his own maintenance and for that of his assistants.

Surely, all of these things were not forgotten in Corinth. Those false apostles, it is true, were working hard day and night underhandedly, trying to estrange the Corinthians from Paul. But had things really come to such a pass that he needed a letter of introduction to them? This is an appeal to the heart of the Corinthians, to bring them to their senses.

Paul deepens the thought by adding the question: Or do we need "letters of commendation from you?" Did his work in Corinth remain unnoticed? Were there no fruits in evidence? Was the case this that the Corinthians nominally accepted Christianity, but that otherwise things remained very much the same as they had been before? When the Thessalonians accepted the Gospel, their conversion was talked about everywhere. Did Paul's work in Corinth make less of an impression? Will nobody know about it unless the Corinthians record it in a letter of recommendation for Paul?

Very emphatically Paul makes the statement: "Ye are our epistle." Our letter—why, that is *you*. You yourselves, you in your very person, you are our letter of recommendation.

After thus having identified the Corinthians personally with his letter of introduction, Paul can now borrow his expressions from a reference to a letter of that kind and apply them without further explanation to the Corinthians. They dare not be interpreted literally, but must be understood metaphorically as expressing some truth concerning living persons.

This applies to the very first statement which Paul makes about his letter of recommendation which the Corinthian Christians are. He says: "written in our hearts." Ordinarily the heart must be considered as a very

poor place for a letter of recommendation. What good would such a letter do if written in the bearer's heart? A letter of recommendation is for presentation. By handing it over to some one the bearer identifies and introduces himself. But how can a letter written in the heart serve that purpose?—The difficulty disappears if we remember that Paul is speaking of persons. The Corinthians fill the heart of the apostle. He is always thinking of them, and the deep concern for them motivates all his doings. Thus he can add that because they occupy so prominent a place in his heart, his letter of recommendation is “known and read of all men.”

This is true, not only because out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks, but in an even greater measure because out of the heart are the issues of life. Since the Corinthians are enshrined in the heart of Paul, since they are the object of his interest and his love, this will inevitably manifest itself in his conduct. If Paul's actions show no concern for the welfare of the Corinthians, or only a very small concern, then it will be evident to all that they are not very deeply engraved in his heart. Then the letter of recommendation will not make a very favorable impression. If on the other hand Paul's actions betray a deep concern for the Corinthians, then the writing will stand out in bold relief, so that everybody can read it without glasses—and get to feel its weightiness.

The latter was the case. In chap. 2:12–13, Paul mentioned his visit to Troas. He stopped there to do mission work. The opportunity was excellent. He found a wide-open door. Yet he did not avail himself of the opportunity. Why not? He had expected to meet Titus in Troas, Titus, whom he had sent to Corinth to help the church there to overcome its difficulties and to solve its problems. He was anxiously awaiting a report from Titus. Titus did not reach Troas at the appointed time. Paul's composure was upset. He had no rest in his spirit to exploit the splendid opportunity for Gospel work in Troas. He took his leave and proceeded to Macedonia. Thereby everybody got to feel and to read the letter of recommendation written in the heart of Paul: his deep concern for Corinth.—Does he need a letter of recommendation to Corinth, or even from Corinth? It was plain to everybody how warmly the Corinthians were embraced by the heart of Paul.

Paul deepens the thought. The content of a letter of recommendation is of the utmost importance. What do the Corinthians show as Paul's letter? Paul still uses the figure of a letter to express what the Corinthians represent, and what it is that makes them so dear to him. He says that they are becoming manifest as a “letter of Christ.” “Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ.” He adds by way of explanation that this letter was “written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God.” There was a new life throbbing in the hearts of the Corinthians, a life which thoroughly revolutionized their outward conduct. To be sure, as Paul complained in his earlier epistle, the conduct of the Corinthians was far from perfect, it showed some alarming weaknesses. Yet it could not be denied that there was a new life, a life which the Spirit of the living God had produced in them. Paul widens the figure, at the same time introducing some terms which will serve as a transition to his next part. He says, this letter is written, not on stone plaques, but on plaques which are human hearts.

Paul's interest in the Corinthians, however, is closer than that of a mere fellow-believer, closer than that of brother to brother, based on the fact that both he and they were reborn by the Spirit of God: Paul had had a hand in the conversion of the Corinthians. They became a letter of Christ through the instrumentality of Paul, *διακονηθεισα ὑφ ἡμῶν*. If Paul had not come to Corinth with the Gospel, they would never have become a letter of Christ; they would still be serving dumb idols. Paul was used by Christ to bring about that change in the lives of the Corinthians. This fact joined his heart still more closely to them and deepened his concern for them.

Paul needs no letter of recommendation to the Corinthians; he does not need any from them. Hence when he mentions the sincerity with which he had proclaimed the Gospel to them and had achieved those extraordinary results, he does so, not in order to commend himself, far from it; he does so to remind the Corinthians of the nature of his work.

v. 4–6

(RSV) Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. (5) Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to claim anything as coming from us; our sufficiency is from God, (6)

who has qualified us to be ministers of a new covenant, not in a written code but in the Spirit; for the written code kills, but the Spirit gives life.

After warding off the misunderstanding of his question concerning the qualification necessary to produce the result: sweet odor to God both in them that are saved, *εκ ζωης εις ζωην*, and in them that perish, *εκ θανατου εις θανατον*, he takes up the main thought concerning that sufficiency. He speaks about his “confidence,” which is indeed a very great and special confidence, *τοιαυτην*. He first states very summarily that it is a confidence which he has through Christ toward God.

Negatively stated, his sufficiency does not spring from himself. He places the *αφ εαυτων* emphatically at the head. Paul was by nature gifted with a keen mind and a strong will, who readily grasped a situation, held to his purpose with vigor and perseverance. He had developed his mind in the schooling which Gamaliel administered and in the opportunities which his home town Tarsus offered. After his conversion he had retired into Arabia. Was it this natural endowment plus thorough training and application that had made him sufficient? Emphatically Paul says, not of ourselves, namely not with ourselves considered as the starting point, as the source. We are not the soil from which such sufficiency will spring.

In eliminating any thought of self-sufficiency Paul adds the infinitive *λογισασθαι*. This verb means to reckon, count, compute, calculate, count over. The RSV is correct in translating: *to claim*. The infinitive is adverbial, showing in what respect or to what extent Paul declines any self-sufficiency. It reaches to the absolute zero point. Paul cannot credit himself with anything, not with the least, as having the source of his strength in himself, *εξ εαυτων*. There is sufficiency, but its source must be sought entirely outside of Paul. Positively stated: “our sufficiency is of God,” *εκ θεου*.

The next verse leads to a climax, *και*, even, *σογαρ*. Yes, God has endowed us with sufficiency to be administrators of the New Testament, *καινης διαθηκης*. The genitive is qualifying: New Testament ministers. We translate: *testament*, not as the RSV has, *covenant*. *διαθηκη* is the LXX translation of the Hebrew *ברית*. But as Gen. 15 already clearly indicates, God’s covenant is very one-sided. God is the only active partner; Abraham and all his fellow-believers are purely receptive. They are the beneficiaries of the blessings which God in His covenant obligates Himself to bestow. This idea of one-sidedness is better expressed by *testament*.—God made Paul sufficient to be a New Testament minister. This testament is one of life-giving Spirit, in contrast to the death-dealing letter of the Old Covenant.

With the words *Spirit* and *letter* Paul is not referring to two ways of approaching the same testament, two ways of handling it, one superficial and mechanical, the other truly spiritual; no, he is speaking of two distinct testaments, as is clearly seen from the characterization given of both in the following section, v. 7–11.—The RSV rather beclouds the issue by substituting *written code* for *letter*.

When Paul speaks about the stupendous results which he achieved in his ministry, he is not doing so in order to commend himself to the Corinthians, much less to elicit a letter of recommendation from them: they by their faith in the Lord Jesus, by the radical change in their attitude and conduct as a result of Paul’s work among them, they are a living monument to the dynamic of his work. They are his letter of recommendation. But do they realize to what ministry and to what sufficiency they are bearing testimony? It is the ministry of God’s New Testament.

v. 7–11

(RSV) Now if the dispensation of death, carved in letters on stone, came with such splendor that the Israelites could not look at Moses’ face because of its brightness, fading as it was, (8) why should not the dispensation of the Spirit be attended with greater splendor? (9) For if there was splendor in the dispensation of condemnation, the dispensation of righteousness must far exceed in splendor. (10) Indeed, in this case, what once had splendor has come to have no splendor at all, because of the splendor that surpasses it. (11) For if what faded away came with splendor, what is permanent must have much more splendor.

The two parts treated so far, v. 1–3, and v. 4–6, belong together very closely, the two really forming only a single unit. The part which we begin now cannot so be subdivided. It is a closely knit entity. Paul compares, contrasts the two testaments which he briefly introduced in v. 6.

They have one thing in common, they are *glorious*. And yet, how vastly different even on this score!

Paul leaves no room for doubt to which *διαθηκη* he is referring in contradistinction to the New Testament. It is not the promise given by God to Noah, or to Abraham. It is the one *εν γραμμασιν εντετυπωμενη λιθοις*. This description points to the Law of Moses. This testament is not that portion of the Bible which we call the Old Testament, nor does it mean the condition in which the Old Testament people stood in relation to their God. The *letter* simply does not affect the promise given to Abraham. The *letter* is that thing which was added 430 years later because of sin, the thing which was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. It was the *διαθηκη* engraved in letters on stone tablets. The administration of this *διαθηκη* Paul calls an administration of death. By way of contrast he calls the New Testament an administration of the Spirit. While the one inflicts death, the other conveys the Spirit. That is the Spirit whom he had mentioned before, the life-giving Spirit of the living God. By phrasing the contrast in this way, substituting the word Spirit for life, Paul at once indicates that he is not referring to physical life and death, nor to a condition of our natural mental faculties: he is speaking about our relation to our God whether we are united with the Fountain of Life, or are separated from Him. Without going into details Paul simply states that the Law of Moses with all its demands, its threats, its promises cannot bring us a hair's breadth closer to God; rather, it has only the opposite effect, it kills. The conditions which the Law imposes are impossible of fulfillment for a sinner. No letter of recommendation which a preacher of the Law may carry can change the matter.

Before taking up the question of the glory connected with both testaments we briefly consider a second difference which Paul points out. The Law is the administration of *κατακρισις*, the New Testament is the administration of *δικαιοσυνη* *κατακρισις* is the act of condemning. It is the function of the Law to condemn. It may also acquit, declare innocent and righteous, but only in the case of one who has perfectly kept all commandments. Among sinners there is not one found who can qualify. All have come short of the glory of God. So the Law condemns.

By way of contrast, the New Testament administers *δικαιοσυνη*. A direct opposite to the verbal noun *κατακρισις* would be *δικαιωσις*, the act of declaring righteous. But Paul at once goes deeper. A few chapters later he will tell us what *δικαιοσυνη* means. God “hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the *δικαιοσυνη* of God in him” (ch. 5:21). *δικαιοσυνη* is a righteousness prepared for us by Christ, and credited to us by God, in the death and resurrection of Christ. In the administration of the New Testament this *δικαιοσυνη* is announced to us for our appropriation and enjoyment.

Now as to the glory. Paul asks the question, since already the administration of death and condemnation manifested itself in glory, if then the administration of righteousness and of the life-giving Spirit would not excel in glory. He presents the matter in two forms: (1) If the one *manifested itself* in glory, will not the other rather *be* in glory? and (2) If the one was with glory, the other will much more *excel* in glory. Concerning the one he merely predicates the presence of glory, while in the case of the other, glory is a part of its essence.

Concerning the glory of the Law there can be no doubt. When Moses came down from Mount Sinai, his face shone with such splendor that the Children of Israel, including even Aaron, were afraid to come near him. He called them, and they had to face as best they could the blinding rays striking them from his face, blinking their eyes or shading them with their hands. This dazzling light was not natural to the face of Moses. His face was glorious because it had been glorified. But just as this glory had come to the face of Moses from without, so it also went away again. It is different with the glory of the New Testament. This is inherent, hence a lasting characteristic. Paul says *και γαρ*, that is, strictly speaking the thing that had been glorified was not actually glorious in this respect, on account of the surpassing splendor of the New Testament.

The next verse has no finite verb. It must be supplied in both members. Lenski insists that the verbs must be taken from the two participles found in the two parallel members of the sentence. He reads: “If the passing thing *κατηργει* ... much more the permanent thing *μενει*. This leads to a difficulty concerning the

preposition $\delta\iota\alpha$. This preposition means *through*, locally, temporally, instrumentally. Lenski maintains that in this instance it must mean *in spite of*: The passing thing passed in spite of its glory. But this meaning of $\delta\iota\alpha$ has not been established; and moreover, the resulting thought veers away from Paul's argument. Paul's point is not that the Law passed away in spite of its glory, but rather the other way around, it had glory although it was only a passing thing. The simplest way is to supply the verbs from v. 7 and 8, thus: For if the passing thing manifested itself through a period of glory, much more will the permanent thing ever be in glory.

Such is the New Testament, a thing of lasting glory. And God has made Paul sufficient to administer this New Testament.

v. 12–18

(RSV) Since we have such a hope, we are very bold, (13) not like Moses, who put a veil over his face so that the Israelites might not see the end of the fading splendor. (14) But 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. (15) Yes, to this day whenever Moses is read a veil lies over their minds; (16) but when a man turns to the Lord the veil is removed. (17) Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. (18) And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

Before entering upon a discussion of this part it will be well to review briefly the events at Mount Sinai to which Paul refers. The RSV is correct in this case, and gives a much clearer picture than does the King James Version, especially in the translation of Ex. 34:33. The KJV says: "*Till* Moses had done speaking with them, he put a veil on his face." According to the Hebrew text the situation was not that Moses wore a veil while delivering God's message, till he had done speaking, but rather, while he was speaking the Children of Israel were forced to look at his uncovered face with all its blinding glory. Only after he had delivered God's message, then he covered his face. The RSV says: "And when Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil on his face." This was repeated every time Moses was called into the presence of God to receive further instructions.

The typical meaning of this procedure Paul now explains to the Corinthians. All that he had said about the operation of the New Testament he now sums up in the one word *hope*: "Seeing them that we have such hope." Then he continues: "We use great plainness of speech, and not as Moses, which put a veil over his face." The KJV has the correct idea, but its expression is cumbersome; the RSV gives a wrong shading to the words. What Paul says is that in administering the New Testament he uses complete frankness, without hiding or covering anything. In this respect he is totally different from Moses, who veiled his face when he was through speaking.

The significance of this procedure is stated in these words: "that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished." The RSV changes this to "might not see," thereby coming closer to the preposition $\pi\rho\sigma$, but losing some of the force of $\alpha\tau\epsilon\nu\iota\sigma\alpha\iota$. The first use of $\pi\rho\sigma$ with an infinitive is to express purpose. Lenski says that the grammarians are reluctant to admit that it ever means result, an interpretation which he favors in our passage. Yet Paul seems to be using $\pi\rho\sigma$ in the primary sense of purpose, as the strongly adversative $\alpha\lambda\lambda\alpha$ in the next verse indicates. The purpose of Moses was one, but the actual result was something altogether different.

What was the purpose? That the Children of Israel should not be forced to look intently to the end of the passing thing. $\alpha\tau\epsilon\nu\iota\sigma\alpha\iota$ is difficult to translate. It means to look straight at a thing, to gaze at it. The Children of Israel were forced to look into the brightness of Moses' face while he was delivering God's message to them. But since that brightness was a passing thing anyway, Moses veiled his face even before the glory had faded completely. The Children of Israel were to gather from this that the Law is not the final word of God. It has indeed a definite purpose in God's economy, but its function is solely preparatory. Its glory is a passing thing.

When the Law has struck terror into the consciences, it has done its work. It can do no more. It makes way for the life-giving message of the New Testament. But the Israelites failed to grasp this grand truth. Their hearts and minds were hardened. They had been impressed by the glory of the Law, and they assumed that the Law was to be a permanent institution. They became set in their opinion and did not grasp the meaning of Moses' veil. They may have assumed that it indicated a mitigation of some sort, but they were convinced that the Law itself was permanent and final.

In this respect, Paul says, his ministry differs radically from that of Moses. Moses spoke openly only for a time, then he veiled his face. His message was not final. Paul never uses a veil. He speaks with complete frankness and openness all the time. His ministry is not a passing thing, it is not preparatory. It conveys to the hearer the final verdict of God, the sure mercies of David, the everlasting covenant, the New Testament.

To the present day, Paul says, the hardness of the Jewish mind shows itself in this that the same veil, which symbolized the passing of the glory, and at the same time hid its end from the eyes of the people, remains on the reading of the Old Testament unlifted. They still read the Old Testament as though the Law were God's final word. They do not realize that in Christ the veil has been abolished and "is done away," because the Old Testament with all its laws stands fulfilled in Him. Paul repeats: "But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart." The statement is not really a contrast to the foregoing, it is rather an emphatic repetition. *αλλα* should therefore not be rendered with *but*, rather, as the RSV does, with *yes*.—Paul here does not say that it is the same veil, as he had said in v. 14. That veil has been abolished in Christ. Here he says *a veil*, a veil of their own making, but a veil effectively hiding the truth from their hearts. Is there then no way of removing that veil? Paul says: "Nevertheless, when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away."

Paul now turns back to the starting point. He had called the New Testament the ministration of the *Spirit* (v. 6). In v. 16 he invited Israel to turn to the *Lord*. He now shows that his end and his beginning do not thereby drift apart; they meet, and match beautifully. "Now the Lord is that Spirit." With these words Paul does not identify the person of the Spirit and the Person of the Lord in Sabellian fashion. They are two distinct persons in the deity. But he does emphasize their close connection. This use of the copula is easy to understand. For an example let us look at a word of Jesus. When He says to Martha: "I am the resurrection," he means to say that there is no real resurrection, a resurrection unto life, without Him and His redemptive work. About the Spirit Jesus had said: "If I go not away (into suffering and death) the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you" (Jh. 16:7). On the strength of that statement Paul can say: "The Lord is that Spirit." He adds: "Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty"—liberty from death; liberty from the condemnation of the Law; liberty of access to the Father; liberty of the children of God.

With one grand thought Paul now brings this chapter to a close. "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord." *Open face*, Paul says, no veil interfering. The translation of the RSV is more appropriate, both more literal and more meaningful: with *unveiled face*. The verb translated with *beholding*, *κατοπτριζειν*, has for its original meaning to *reflect*. This thought may well be retained. The Jews bar the truth by putting a veil over their hearts. We permit the glory of the New Testament to shine on us, and we begin to reflect it as does a mirror. However, much more than this happens. The Children of Israel were blinded by the blaze on Moses' face. That glory was but a passing thing and far inferior to the glory of the New Testament. What effect will this superior brightness have on us, if the Children of Israel could not even bear the lesser glory? Paul says: We "are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." The glory of the New Testament does not kill. It has a healing, a vitalizing effect. We are transformed by it. We not merely reflect it; we absorb it and are ourselves made glorious with the same glory that issues from the Lord, into a copy of the Lord. That is the work of the Spirit.

God has made us sufficient to be ministers of this New Testament.