

MEDITATION

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Meditation is an ancient art which has suddenly become rather fashionable. It has left the monastery and the ashram and has, as it were, invaded the market place.

When I go down the street, I see advertisements in shop windows for free introductory lessons in meditation. In any weekend newspaper experts offer their services for training in meditation as a cure for all sorts of ailments, from stress to cancer, and as a key for success in all sorts of undertakings, from sport to university studies. All kinds of people seem to practise meditation. And they do so for many different reasons. So, even though meditation still has something of a religious aura around it, it is no longer regarded as a religious activity.

This revival of interest in meditation in the eighties and nineties has caught the churches in Australia somewhat unprepared and has left them rather perplexed. Even though most Protestant denominations have traditionally advocated the practice of devotional meditation, most of their modern leaders, apart from some high church Anglicans and evangelical Quakers, have not been initiated into the tradition of meditation as was once practised in their own churches. They, in turn, have not taught this art to their members. Hence Christians who wished to learn how to meditate have often had to turn elsewhere. Unaware of its pitfalls, they have all too naively assumed that all kinds of meditation are mentally and spiritually beneficial, no matter who was the teacher or what was taught. Their ignorance and gullibility have reinforced the suspicion of many faithful Christians who identify meditation almost exclusively with Eastern religions and new age therapists.

Yet there is nothing new about Christian meditation which is as old as the church. It is both Biblical and evangelical. Like prayer, it is something that is done by all Christians whether they know it or not.

Spontaneous Meditation

Everybody meditates, though some meditate more readily than others. Like speaking, imagining and hearing music, meditation is a natural human ability. It is not in itself something spiritual, let alone Christian. A student day-dreaming in a class, a child with its eyes glued on television, a mother worrying about her children, a cricketer getting ready to go out and bat, a woman singing to herself, a girl reading a love letter, an old man remembering his youth - all these are engaged in meditation, even if they would not describe it as such. In each case something occupies a person, and that totally. The person pays attention to one thing and one thing only.

Given the right set of circumstances, we all quite readily slip into meditation. We switch off from our normal self-centred flow of consciousness and focus on something other than ourselves to the exclusion of everything else. In meditation a person shifts from thinking to receiving thoughts, from visualising to receiving pictures, from doing something to being carried along by it. It is a receptive state of being which is as much physical as it is mental. It is, if I may hazard a definition, a relaxed form of concentration, in which a person dwells on something, so that it, in turn, affects him subjectively in some way. By entering into it, we give ourselves to what we see or what we hear. We are mentally at attention. In it we, as it were, step away from the centre of our consciousness and vacate the stage for somebody or something else to occupy that space.

Meditation is much more than merely thinking about or reflecting on something. It involves us entirely. Most of all, it has to do with the heart, the centre of our being, with its passions and desires. We meditate quite naturally and effortlessly on what we desire, what we enjoy

and what we love. If we delight in something, whether it be music or sex, food or money, popularity or success, we spontaneously meditate on it. Martin Luther therefore rightly observes: 'let delight be first sent into the heart as the root, and then meditation will come of its own accord'.

But the opposite is also true. We meditate just as naturally and easily on what we dislike, what we fear and what we hate. Our anxieties and injuries, our pet aversions and phobias all occupy us and demand attention from us. And we dwell on them day and night.

So both our friends and our enemies train us in the art of meditation. Both have a powerful impact on us at all levels of our being. As we meditate on what they have said and done to us, they affect us physically and mentally, emotionally and imaginatively. We receive something from them and have them shape us spiritually. But chiefly, love trains us in meditation. Luther remarks: 'Wherever love goes, there the heart and the body follow ... the desire comes first, for love itself will teach meditation'. And that may explain why the Song of Solomon has been so often used by Jews and Christians as a textbook on meditation.

If it is true that we all, at times, quite spontaneously enter into meditation, the starting point for the deliberate and disciplined practice of it is to discover how we already meditate and to build on what we are already doing. If we wish to avoid unnecessary strain, it is best not to copy other people, because different people meditate differently according to their personality. Their character, their mentality and cast of mind, determine how they most naturally engage in meditation.

Generally speaking, most people fall into one of three groups. There are verbal people who speak to themselves as they reflect on something and so meditate best by listening. They most readily meditate on a gospel story by thinking about what was said in it. There are visual people who picture what they reflect on and so meditate best by imagining. They most readily meditate on a gospel story by envisaging what happened in it. There are practical people who work things out for themselves physically and so meditate best by doing. They most readily meditate on a gospel story by enacting it in some way or by reliving it as they perform some mechanical task.

Christian Meditation

There are many different methods of meditation, all equally valid and suited for different persons. From the process of trial and error, by which we discover what best suits us personally, we all develop our own method of meditation. Each person who meditates soon discovers how best to enter the contemplative state. The time, place, posture and routine, which are all in themselves important, may vary from person to person. The method then is not what is most important. A Christian, a Buddhist, and a secular psychologist may all employ the same method but with entirely different results. On the other hand, Christians may use different methods of meditation with similar results.

The decisive thing is not how we meditate but on what we meditate. The object, the focus of meditation, determines what happens to us in our meditation and as a result of our meditation. It grounds and empowers the meditation. Since this is so, there is great danger in practising unfocused forms of meditation, such as totally emptying our minds or repeating some meaningless syllable to ourselves. If we do that, we may indeed enter a contemplative state. But we may also thereby also open ourselves to evil powers which are in us or in the people around us. We may experience something powerful, but it will not be spiritually beneficial for us.

Christian meditation focuses on Christ and his word. It starts with Jesus and ends with him. He is its be-all and end-all. His word empowers it and determines what happens in it. His word brings life and light, comfort and health to the soul. We meditate on him.

Luke teaches us the elements of Christian meditation with the story of Mary and Martha in 10:38-42. Mary is the model for all those who meditate. She welcomed Jesus into her house, sat at his feet as his disciple and listened to his word. Her eyes were fixed on Jesus; her ears were attentive to him; she was open and receptive to him. Nothing distracted her from Jesus and what he had to say to her.

Martha stands in contrast to her. Whereas Jesus praises Mary, he criticises Martha. He does not criticise her, as some maintain, for busying herself with the preparation of the meal or for failing to sit at his feet like Mary; he chides her for yielding to anxiety and for concentrating in annoyance on her sister Mary as she prepared the meal for him.

Both Mary and Martha were in fact engaged in meditation, Mary by listening to Jesus and Martha by cooking the meal for him. The difference was that Martha lost her focus on Jesus and so missed out on the one thing needful. She was distracted from him by her anxiety and annoyance.

So then, whether we are activists like Martha or contemplatives like Mary, Jesus must be the focus of our meditation. Everything else is distraction.

All Ears and Eyes for Jesus

The book of Kings sums up the business of meditation in a remarkable story. In 1 Kings 3:3-15 we hear how Solomon, after he had been thrust on to the throne unprepared, as the successor of King David, offered sacrifices to God at Gibeon to obtain help from him in consolidating his position and ruling the nation. There God appeared to him in a dream and told him that he could ask for whatever he desired. To God's delight Solomon asked for a 'hearing heart' (3:9) so that he could distinguish good from evil. He asked to be a good hearer, a listener with an open mind and a clear conscience. If he had the gift of a hearing heart, he would be able to discern the character of people and see them as God saw them. He would be able to hear properly without distraction by guilt and fear, anger and anxiety. He would hear the voice of God and discern his will concretely in each set of circumstances.

God granted him that gift and much more. By having a hearing heart, he had access to God's wisdom. This gift meant that he could be totally attentive to whatever was set before him, attentive with the whole of his being, all ears for God and ready to hear his voice.

But meditation also involves seeing. Jean Baptiste Vianney was a Catholic priest who lived in France early last century. After a rather unpromising course of study at a seminary, he was placed in a small village where the church had almost been destroyed by the ravages of the French revolution. On arrival there he discovered that, apart from some old women, the most regular member was a young farmer in his thirties. Jean Baptiste noticed that he would come into the church every morning and sit there for a while in front of the statue of Jesus, before he set out for work. The puzzling thing was that he didn't perform the usual devotional exercises. In fact, it looked as if he was just sitting there, doing nothing. Eventually he plucked up courage and asked the young farmer what he did every morning. He answered: 'Nothing much! I look at Jesus, and he looks at me, and we are happy just to be together'.

He was practising a kind of meditation which has traditionally been called contemplation. He took time out from his daily routine just to be with Jesus. His desire was to be seen by Jesus, open to him, acknowledged and valued, cherished and loved, noticed and illuminated by him. In his daily devotions he did nothing except enjoy the company of the Lord whom he loved. Christian meditation involves being with Jesus, hearing and seeing him. This seeing goes beyond physical eyesight; this hearing goes beyond the ability to hear words and sounds. It cannot be identified with having visions or hearing voices, though these may just occasionally accompany and confirm it. No, it has to do with faith in Jesus and his word, that word which

the apostles heard and recorded for us in the New Testament. Those who have faith in Jesus see him by hearing his word. Jesus therefore encourages his disciples and us to meditate by saying: 'Blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear' (Matt 13:16; cf. Luke 10:23).

The Power of God's Word

Christian meditation presupposes three very important truths. The first is the mysterious presence of the risen Lord Jesus with his disciples. It rests on the promise given by him in Matthew 28:20: 'I am with you always to the close of the age'. This fact makes it different from these techniques of meditation which either relive past events or visualise a desirable scenario. When we meditate on Jesus, we aren't playing mind games; we don't fantasise and imagine unrealities. We envisage what we know to be true. We interact with Christ who is invisibly present with us, who would be visible and audible to us if we but had eyes to see and ears to hear. When we meditate on a story from the gospels, we are therefore confronted by the risen Lord Jesus who ministers to us, just as he ministered to people when he was visibly and palpably present with them 2,000 years ago.

The second presupposition for Christian meditation is the life-giving power of his word (John 6:63). This truth is the foundation for the teaching and practise of meditation in the Protestant tradition. Unlike human words which accomplish little or nothing, Christ's word is powerful and effective. It does what it says. So, when Jesus speaks of healing and forgiveness, he actually heals and forgives people through his word. He speaks with authority and power. His words are active and performative because they are inspired by and fitted with the Holy Spirit. Through his word Jesus gives his Holy Spirit and grants eternal life to those who trust in him (John 6:63). His Spirit and his word belong together and work together. Through meditation on Christ's word we receive his Holy Spirit and experience the power of the Spirit in our lives.

In his gospel Luke teaches about the importance of meditating on God's word by reporting a puzzling exchange between Jesus and a woman in the crowd of bystanders. In 11:27, 28 we read how a woman congratulated Jesus by exclaiming: 'Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts that you sucked'. To this Jesus replies rather sharply: 'Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it'. In this response Jesus compares those who are born of earthly mothers with those who have been given rebirth through God's word. Babies, who receive physical life in and through their mothers' wombs, are nourished and kept alive by milk from their mothers' breasts. The word of God, spoken by Jesus, is our spiritual womb and our spiritual breasts. By hearing that word, we receive eternal life; by meditating on that word and keeping it in our hearts, we receive nourishment. Like infants we feed on God's word and grow up as children of God.

In keeping with this understanding of meditation medieval pictures rather grotesquely paint breasts on the Scriptures and have people breastfeeding from them. Those who ponder the life-giving word of God are truly blessed, because, by meditating on it and keeping it in their hearts, they let it do its work in them and experience its life-sustaining power.

The third presupposition for the practice of Christian meditation, as taught in the churches of the Reformation, is the doctrine of justification by grace through faith in Christ and his word. The connection between justification by grace and meditation is developed most clearly by Luther in his commentary on Psalm 1. He notes that delight in God's word leads to meditation on it. The problem is that those who lack the assurance of salvation fear and despise his word, because it reveals their guilt and makes them try to justify themselves before God. The righteous, however, who are sure of God's approval and depend on Christ for their salvation, delight in God's word, because it justifies them and brings the blessings of God to them as a free gift. For them meditation is an exercise of their faith in Christ; through it they receive the gifts of God and have him do his work in them. Faith in Christ is therefore the presupposition

for fruitful meditation on God's word. By faith meditation becomes an experience of God's grace rather than a futile attempt at self-justification and spiritual self-advancement.

This understanding of Christ's presence and of faith in his word resulted in a very simple and powerful form of meditation on the gospels in the churches of Reformation. It is described most simply and eloquently by Martin Luther in a pamphlet on *A Brief Instruction on What to Look for and Expect in the Gospels* from 1521. He says:

'When you open the book containing the gospels and read or hear how Christ comes here or there, or how someone is brought to him, you should therein perceive the sermon or the gospel through which he is coming to you, or you are being brought to him. For the preaching of the gospel is nothing else than Christ coming to us, or we being brought to him. When you see how he works, however, and how he helps everyone to whom he comes or who is brought to him, then rest assured that faith is accomplishing this in you and that he is offering your soul exactly the same sort of help and favour through the gospel. If you pause here and let him do you good, that is, if you believe that he benefits and helps you, then you really have it. Then Christ is yours, presented to you as a gift.'

Since the Protestant tradition has always associated christian meditation with Christ and his word, evangelicals have been rightly wary of any free-floating, disincarnate method of meditation, dissociated from the Scriptures, public worship and prayer. It is therefore usual to begin a time of meditation with prayer which acknowledges the presence of the Triune God and seeks guidance from the Holy Spirit. The practice of meditation itself, whatever form it may take, is always governed by the Scriptures. Like a compass they give direction in it; like a touchstone they reveal whether it is genuine or not. Those who invoke the Triune God and rely on his word for guidance are protected against deception by Satan and attack by the powers of darkness. They can be sure that what they do is pleasing to God and wholesome for them.

The Harvest of Meditation

People meditate for all sorts of reasons. Those who teach meditation recommend its practice for the benefits received from it. Broadly speaking, these fall in four categories.

First, meditation is supposed to increase a sense of euphoria and well-being. And some techniques of meditation are designed to achieve just this. People are taught to think positively about themselves by concentrating on a series of self-affirmations or by envisaging themselves in some perfect place. Now it is true that, since meditation involves relaxation, it can produce a sense of well-being. But that is not the purpose of Christian meditation. When we meditate on Christ and his word, we may indeed feel badly about ourselves, since he exposes our guilt and failure as we ponder his word.

Secondly, other forms of meditation are designed to help people solve their personal problems. It is true that meditation can expand out ability to think laterally, imaginatively and creatively, so that we can make sense of our experience and find solutions to the problems which bedevil us. But that is not the purpose of Christian meditation which may, in fact, unsettle us and create new problems for us by sensitising us to God's will for us, Satan's attacks on us and the needs of the people around us.

Thirdly, meditation is espoused as a therapeutic exercise for people to tap their latent spiritual potential. So, for example, people who suffer from cancer or some other sickness are trained in techniques of deep relaxation and visualisation, so that they can heal themselves. This is often coupled with dietary restrictions and fasting. Now it is true that some people have been amazingly healed by employing such therapies. Christians, however, do not meditate in order to draw on their spiritual potential and to heal themselves. They do not hold that all spiritual

powers are good. Some are evil because they come from the evil spirit who can and does perform physical miracles (cf. Mark 13:22; 2 Thess 2:9; Rev 19:20). Through meditation they may even discover how spiritually weak and powerless they are.

Fourthly, some methods of meditation are used, more or less blatantly, for pagan purposes. It is now quite common for people to practise the more advanced levels of yoga and other Hindu techniques of meditation to reach higher levels of consciousness. This can come in many different guises and is often coupled with teaching about astral planes and angel guides. Those who promote these exercises often claim that Christ taught these ways of achieving divine consciousness. This approach is, in fact, as old as the Gnostic heresy which almost destroyed the early church and is once again making inroads into the church. But it has little or nothing in common with Christian meditation which does not culminate in self-illumination and the achievement of divine consciousness but in the dark night of the soul and the knowledge of Christ crucified.

The purpose of Christian meditation is explained by Luke in his account of the parable of the sower in 8:4-15. Luke's teaching on this is evident when we examine how the explanation by Jesus of the good soil in Luke 8:15 diverges from Matthew 13:23 and Mark 4:20. Jesus says:

'And as for that (seed) in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bring forth fruit with patience'.

As indicated by the italics, Luke makes some significant changes to the explanation of what constitutes fruitful hearing. Luke changes the verb for hearing into a participle. In this way he emphasised that hearing is a continuous process rather than a singular or occasional event. Luke also shifts the emphasis from 'understanding' the word in Matthew 13:23, and 'accepting' the word in Mark 4:20, to 'retaining' the word. He therefore connects fruitful hearing with meditation on the word, for by meditation a person does not let the word go in one ear and out the other but rather takes hold of it and keeps it in his heart. The purpose of this is to have God produce his harvest in the life of the disciple.

The heart of the disciple is the seedbed of God's word. By itself the heart cannot produce a harvest. The power to produce the harvest comes from the word. So the purpose of meditation is to let God's word produce a bumper crop in and through the disciple. By meditation the disciple takes in God's word and keeps it in his heart. The life-giving word changes the barren heart of the hearer into a fertile paddock. The word makes the heart receptive to itself and increases its receptivity. The more the heart of the disciple listens to the word and ponders on it, the more fruitful it becomes. So the word produces the act of meditation as well as the fruits of meditation.

But the harvest does not come immediately. Growth is slow and is not always evident, for the roots must go down deep before the stalk springs up tall. We do not immediately experience the results of meditation as soon as we begin to meditate or even while we meditate. Hence Luke stresses the need for 'patience'. I am now reaping the harvest from what I meditated on long ago. I do not usually notice the benefits of my morning meditations while I meditate but only later on in the day as I go through my daily work. The harvest comes from perseverance in meditation on God's word.

So then, when we meditate we are on the receiving end. God is the actor, and we let him operate on us. He speaks, and we listen. We receive from him as he gives of himself to us. As we receive his word into hearts by meditating on it, it does its work in us. It changes us inwardly and gradually permeates everything we think and feel and say and do. It brings the Holy Spirit with it to make us spiritually fruitful and productive.

The parable of the lamp, which comes immediately after the parable of the sower in Luke 8:16-18, explains what is meant by the harvest from meditation. Just as a lamp lights up a dark room, so God's word lights up the heart of the person who keeps it there. Through

persistent meditation those who 'have' the word receive light and enlightenment from it. That light brings life and sight, warmth and energy with it. Just as the light of the sun produces physical life, sight, warmth and energy in our world, so God's word brings life to dead souls, vision to dark minds, warmth to cold hearts and divine power to weak bodies. Through his word the Triune God comes to us, makes his home with us and fills us with radiance of his presence in us (cf. John 14:23).

Through meditation the light of Christ permeates us, drives out the darkness in us and illumines the whole of our being, so that we who are children of the light begin to produce the fruit of light in our lives (cf. Eph 5:8-14).

Learning to Meditate with the Psalms

When people ask me to recommend a good practical book on meditation, I have no hesitation in mentioning the book of Psalms. The Psalter in its present form has been designed to teach people how to meditate. It is the Biblical text book on meditation.

The editors of the Psalter make this quite clear by using psalm 1 to introduce the whole collection of psalms. This psalm speaks about meditation. It contrasts the righteous person, who meditates fruitfully on God's word, with those who meditate fruitlessly on the counsel of the wicked. By meditating on God's word, the righteous are, as it were, watered from God, like a tree by a water canal in the desert. Because they receive daily nourishment from God, they produce much fruit.

By making this the first psalm, the editors of the Psalter imply that the psalms, which have been produced by meditation on God's word, are meant to teach the godly how to meditate on God's word. And they do this in a surprising way. They don't theorise about the subject. Instead they teach the art of meditation by giving the readers a series of meditations and by inviting them to join with them as they meditate out aloud for them.

The psalms help us to link our meditations with three other aspects of our spirituality. First, as we work our way through this collection, we discover that meditation is related to suffering and complaining. In fact, the commonest genre of psalms is the individual lament, such as we find in Psalms 13 and 35. In these people in trouble meditate on the discrepancy between God's promises of help and their experience of trouble. They meditate on their trouble in the light of God's word as well as on God's word in the light of their trouble. And they complain; oh how they complain about their trouble, their enemies who have troubled them, and the failure of God to help them. As is evident from psalm 77, they thereby discover and acknowledge the saving presence of the living God with them in their suffering.

Secondly, the psalms link our meditations with prayer to God. They remind us that Christian meditation is always done in God's presence, even when he seems far from us. So, the speakers in the psalms move quite readily from speaking to God about God, themselves and their enemies to speaking to themselves about all these. And this is how it is and how it should be when we meditate. Meditation begins and ends with prayer. Ultimately it cannot be separated from prayer. In both we respond to God's word and exercise our faith in his word.

Thirdly, the psalms connect private meditation with corporate worship. Many of the psalms, in fact, consist of the hymns and prayers sung by the choir at the temple in Jerusalem. They were part of the sacrificial service which was performed there. By reading, saying and singing these psalms to themselves, the people of God appropriated for themselves what they had experienced corporately there. In this way their corporate worship stimulated their personal spirituality, even as their personal spirituality enriched their corporate worship. In some psalms, such as Psalm 63, the speakers relive the service at the temple imaginatively, so that they still participate in it even when they are far from it. It is like that too for us. We learn to

meditate quite spontaneously as we become involved in corporate worship. Our meditation arises from participation in worship and prepares us for fuller participation in it.

Christians have always meditated on the psalms and have learned how to meditate by reading, saying, and singing the psalms. They are still the best aid for learning this ancient art and for keeping meditation wholesome and fruitful by connecting it with the experience of suffering, the practice of prayer and participation in congregational worship.

A Simple Way of Meditating

If what I have written is true, then it is more important to meditate than to learn about meditation. Like most things we do, we learn to meditate by taking time out to meditate. For myself I've discovered that it's best to follow a very simple, flexible procedure which has been commonly used by Christians throughout the ages. It has become part of my daily devotions and is easy to do.

First, I call on the Triune God in prayer and ask for the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Then I do nothing but relax and make myself totally at ease. I wait silently on the Lord. As I wait, I let my thoughts and feelings come and go as they please, without censuring them or allowing them to claim my attention. Gradually, my mind stops racing about. I become still. When each train of thought has run its course, I focus back on the Father's presence with me and remain with him, knowing that he sees me entirely and is pleased with me. I don't demand anything from him, but adopt a listening stance. Like young Samuel, I say: 'Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening' (1 Sam 3:9).

Then when a sense of stillness has come upon me, I read the psalm set for the week and the passages set for the day in my daily Bible reading schedule. I read slowly, moving my lips, and attentively, alert for when God addresses me personally. When something strikes me in my conscience, I stop there and dwell on it, circling around it, looking at it from all sides, repeating it to myself. I let it speak to me physically, emotionally, imaginatively and intellectually. I chew at it and savour it and react to it. It doesn't worry me, if I don't complete reading what has been set. If nothing strikes me, I go to the end of the readings. Then I pause for a while to let it sink in. Sometimes I go back and concentrate on something I passed over initially. Other times I read other related passages. In all this God's word sets the agenda for me. I follow as I am led.

At any time in all this I pray as I am prompted – in thanksgiving for God's gifts to me, in confession of my sins, in petition for my needs, in intercession for other people, and in adoration of the Triune God. But I don't rush into prayer or pray according to any set scheme. I assume that I don't know how to pray or what to pray for, but I look for guidance from God's word and the Holy Spirit. Praying then comes as a gift rather than a demand. Most often, I respond to what God says to me by turning whatever is given to me into a prayer.

Conclusion

Meditation is a way of paying attention to the Triune God and of waiting on the Triune God. When we meditate, we concentrate on Christ and listen to him as speaks to us through his word. If he seems to be silent for a while, it does not matter to us. Since we don't usually have much time just to be with our Lord, it's good just to be with him and let him set the agenda for us. Everything depends on him; nothing depends on us. Like beggars, we receive everything from him.

Then we discover that he does not withhold himself from us. Our heavenly Father speaks to us through his Son. He assures us that he is with us, even when we don't hear him speaking and notice him acting. He opens our ears, so that we hear his voice and delight in his word.

The Bible ceases to be a dead book, because God speaks to us through it and pours out his Holy Spirit on us as we trust in what he says to us there. As we follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit, praying becomes much easier for us.

But most of all we begin to notice Christ everywhere and in everything. The whole world which so often disappoints and frustrates us, becomes more and more transparent. Our daily routine is no longer confusing and disjointed; things begin to make sense; they cohere. And we become more opened up and open as the light of Christ exposes and banishes the darkness in our hearts. We become more receptive to the world, to the people around us, and to the things which have been given to us. We live as in the Father's presence and see the world as his creation. We see ourselves as we are in Christ and see others as Christ sees them. Because the Holy Spirit opens our eyes to see what is otherwise hidden, we have a vision of God's glory. We are truly blessed, because have eyes that see and ears that hear.