

rendered glass, for the *mirrors** of the women, which were made into the "laver of brass," Exod. xxxviii. 8. The true translation is, "*we see by means of a mirror*," made of polished metal, which reflects objects but indistinctly, "*as in a riddle*," or an enigma. Such is the representation given by inspired authority of our present knowledge, of spiritual and heavenly objects. Let us examine its correctness.

The instruction conveyed to us by the holy Scriptures, relative to the character and dispensations of God, the person and work and glory of Christ, the existence and attributes of angels, and the honour and felicity of the redeemed, is highly important, and adapted to comfort and sustain the mind of the believer whilst passing through this vale of tears. But a little reflection will show that it is necessarily defective. How imperfect, for instance, is all human language as a medium conveying spiritual knowledge! It is, even for earthly purposes, often inadequate. How frequently, when our eyes have seen some splendid production, of nature or of art, and we wish to convey to others the emotions which we ourselves have received, are we at a loss for words. We ransack our vocabulary for epithets, and the chambers of our imagination for figures and comparisons, and at length conclude by saying, what is in itself a complaint against the poverty of language, "to form a just conception of its excellence, or grandeur, you must see it yourself." If this is the case as to earthly objects, how much more as regards those which are heavenly and divine. It would be impossible, through such a medium, to convey any thing but feeble and imperfect representations of the heavenly state. This is plainly admitted by the apostle. See 2 Cor. xii. 4.

It is, moreover, an established law of

the mind, that "knowledge can only be conveyed, through the medium of something already known." Hence the inspired writers, when speaking of the privileges of God's people, the object of their hopes, &c., are ever figurative, and speak by comparison. This figurative style of writing is not to be ascribed to the oriental habits of those "holy men of God," but to the nature and necessity of the case. They are describing things which "eye has not seen," and in order to convey some idea of their excellence, their grandeur, and permanence, they tell us of "crowns," of "thrones," of "kingdoms," of "inheritances," as the reward of those that are "faithful unto death." We are not to conceive that heaven will literally consist in such things, but they are selected as images, as faint and inadequate representations, of the "riches of the glory" "which God hath laid up for them that love him." They also frequently add to these figures, something in an earthly point of view, inconsistent with them. Thus the "crowns" are "crowns of life," the "kingdoms" are such as "cannot be moved," the "inheritances" are "incorruptible, undefiled, and fade not away." But after all, how imperfect is the knowledge they convey of the heavenly state! "We see it by means of a mirror, in a riddle;" an imperfect reflection of a feeble image is all that is presented to our view.

Nor is our spiritual knowledge limited only by the defective medium through which it is conveyed to us. The capacities of the mind for spiritual exercises, are paralyzed by the fall. How often does the Christian complain of the weakness of his intellectual efforts, in reference to spiritual objects! How feeble and interrupted are his thoughts, how treacherous his memory, how languid his imagination, and how short the season during his earthly career, comparatively, which can be devoted