

earliest of the Divine revelations, the knowledge of Divine truth enjoyed by Moses was important and comprehensive. It was, in all respects, admirably accommodated to the condition of that people to whom it was addressed; and while it contained the elements of all highest truth, it formed a suitable preparation for that full and satisfying light destined to burst on the world under the coming dispensation. Admitting its importance, the apostle affirms, that "if that which was done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious." Inasmuch as new privileges are conferred through the Gospel, and there is no veil covering the faces of believers preventing a spiritual discernment of the truth, it is the high prerogative of the Church to declare, "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

In examining the blessings of which the apostle here speaks, I propose to consider, *in the first place*, the peculiar distinction conferred on a believer, inasmuch as he is enabled to "behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord;" and, *in the second place*, the consequences resulting from this distinction,—viz., that he is "changed into the same image from glory to glory."

I. Let it be remarked at the outset, that throughout every step of a believer's sanctification we are required to recognize the unsleeping agency of the Spirit from on high. By His presence, and powerful, yet unseen, agency, He effects at once the understanding and the heart, while, at the same time, surrounding with a peculiar light the various truths to which thoughtful attention may be directed. Whether we render the last clause of the verse, "as by the Spirit of the Lord," or, "as of the Lord the Spirit," we gather from it a confirmation of this important doctrine. The agency of the Spirit is essential. A vast undertaking has been devised and executed. A stupendous and glorious monument has been erected to the Divine holiness and mercy. It is bright throughout, to all highest intelligence, with clear manifestations of interesting truth, and rich discoveries, bearing on the most important subjects of inquiry which it is possible to investigate. But who are the persons by whom the nature of this vast undertaking must be understood? What is the condition of those invited to the privilege of contemplating the manifestations of God in the scheme of redemption? Are they originally gifted with that discernment, which, by the exercise of an inherent power, penetrates into those spiritual treasures that lie enclosed in this glorious scheme? or is it not in accordance with Scripture and observation to affirm, that the very sinfulness which makes redemption precious to man, has also reduced him to a state of blindness to all spiritual truth, which no power less than the operation of Divine grace is able to re-

move. It is never to be forgotten, that they require to be enlightened whose minds the god of this world hath blinded; that in consequence of this having lost that condition in which they were originally formed, they are destitute of the capacity which is needed for the very perception of the Divine holiness; that there hangs an obscurity around all their views of the objects which faith discloses; and that by no native energy can this obscurity be dispelled. There may be many an enlarged and valuable attainment in the regions of merely intellectual research, without the assistance of spiritual agency. Even in his state of sad estrangement, man has not wholly lost the power of tracing the hand of God in His works of visible magnificence. Surveying this vast universe as a temple hung with the greater and the lesser lights—gazing on its massive pillars, and capacious arches, and fields of rich and gorgeous splendor—earnest intelligence in its thoughtful spirit, although the eye has been dimmed by the power of sin, may reach to a clear perception and acknowledgment of the Divine omnipotence. But a discernment of that truth which makes wise unto salvation, demands a clearer vision. It cannot be enjoyed, unless the power of Divine grace has been sent down from heaven. That special gift was early promised. In the very infancy of the Christian Church the pulse of life that throbbed within it was made to beat by the copious outpouring of the Spirit's influence. "Great grace was upon them all." Our Lord ever contemplated the fulfilment of the promise of the Father as the grand and effective agency by which the weak and blinded hearts of His disciples would be strengthened and enlightened. He saw that the enjoyment of this strength and light would secure the extension of His kingdom, inasmuch as His followers would be ever gladdened by more comprehensive views of His person, His offices, and His glorious work. When Christ made to His disciples the perplexing announcement, "it is expedient for you that I go away," he instantly added, in explanation, the assurance, "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come to you;" and of that Comforter He still says to His Church, as He said to them, "He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you."

The necessity, then, of spiritual influence must ever be recognized. Without the cordial admission of this doctrine, it is impossible to approach the examination of the truths of revelation in that state of mind which the apostle describes by the terms, "with open (or uncovered) face." Now, why is this? The truth exists. There never was a time, back in the depths of earliest being, at which it could not have been asserted that God is, and that to Him there belong all glorious attributes in infinite perfection. But in consequence of the natural aversion which sinners feel to the brightest forms of excellence, there