

played in leading the children of Israel through the wilderness. But it is said that "The Lord spake to Moses face to face." What does this mean? We can only infer its meaning from a parallel passage. If we turn to Ex. xxxiii. 14, 15, we shall hear the Lord speaking to Moses, and saying to him, "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest;" and we shall hear Moses answering, "If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence." But a critical examination of this passage shows that the word which is translated "presence" in this place is the very same word which is rendered "face" in the 11th verse of the same chapter. Wherever there was the manifested "presence" of God, then men were said to be brought "face to face" with Him.

3. We pass now to the case of Moses, Aaron, Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel. The description of this sublime and awful transaction is recorded in the 24th chapter of Exodus. The occasion was very solemn. The law had been given; God had renewed the covenant with His people Israel which He had made with their fathers; and this was the formal and solemn ratification of the contract which He had been pleased to enter into with them. Sacrifices were offered; the book, or parchment scroll, containing the record of the covenant, was read in the audience of the people; the people solemnly and formally assented to the covenant, saying, "All that the Lord hath said will we do and be obedient;" and the sacrificial blood, the blood of the covenant, which was typical of the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ—the lamb slain, in the purpose of God, from the foundation of the world—was sprinkled on the book and all the people. It was after all this was done, when this solemn transaction was completed, that Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, with the seventy elders, were permitted to see this great sight. But what did they see? Was it the human form in which the divine Being had been pleased to manifest Himself to Jacob; or was it "the cloudy pillar?" We are not particularly informed in respect to this matter, except we are permitted to identify it with what was afterward seen by all the people (ver. 16, 17). What they saw was "*The glory of the Lord like a devouring fire.*" If this view be correct, it was the "glory of the Lord" which was seen, some grand luminous display, which, however dimly it might represent His real glory, was sufficient, nevertheless, to create in the minds of all who saw it a conviction of the actual presence of God.