But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. (2 Cor. 3:18)

The Bible teaches that we become like what we worship. That important insight is found in today’s text. Let’s break it down this way:

But we all—that is, all true believers;

with open or unveiled face—sin causes a veil between our faces and the Lord. When we confess and forsake the sin, we have an open or unveiled face;

beholding as in a glass—the glass or mirror is the Word of God, in which we behold

the glory of the Lord—meaning His moral excellence. In the Bible we gaze upon the perfection of His character, the beauty of all His works and ways;

are changed into the same image—we become like Him. We are changed by beholding. The more we are occupied with Him, the more like Him we become.

This change is

from glory to glory—from one degree of glory to another. The change does not take place all at once. It is a process that continues as long as we behold Him. The transformation of our character is effected

even as by the Spirit of the Lord—the Holy Spirit produces likeness to Christ in all those who gaze by faith upon the Savior as He is revealed in the Bible.

In The Tales of Nathaniel Hawthorne, it wasn’t Mr. Gathergold or General Blood and Thunder or Old Stony Phiz or the poet, but Ernest—who, gazing in quiet meditation on the Great Stone Face, eventually came to resemble it.

I heard once of a man who went daily to a Buddhist temple and sat with legs akimbo and arms folded, gazing upon the green statue. It was said that after years of this meditation, he actually came to resemble the Buddha. Whether that is true, I don’t know, but I do know that reverent occupation with the Son of God produces moral resemblance to Him.

The way to holiness is through gazing upon the Lord Jesus. It is not ordinarily possible to think of Christ and of sin at the same time. During those moments when we are taken up with Him, we are most free from sin. Our goal then should be to increase the percentage of our time when we are beholding Him.