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Changed Into Christ's Image

by Andrew Murray

"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 Corinthians 3:18).

Moses had been forty days on the mount in communion with God. When he came down, his face shone with divine glory. He did not know it himself, but Aaron and the people saw it (Exodus 24:30). It was so evidently God's glory that Aaron and the people feared to approach him.

In this we have an image of what takes place in the New Testament. The privilege Moses there alone enjoyed is now the portion of every believer. When we behold the glory of God in Christ, in the glass of the Holy Scriptures, His glory shines upon us, and into us, and fills us, until it shines out from us again. By gazing on His glory the believer is changed through the Spirit into the same image. Beholding Jesus makes us like Him.

It is a law of nature that the eye exercises a mighty influence on mind and character. The education of a child is carried on greatly through the eye. He is molded very much by the manners and habits of those he sees continually. To form and mold our character the Heavenly Father shows us His divine glory in the face of Jesus. He does it in the expectation that it will give us great joy to gaze upon it, and because He knows that, gazing on it, we shall be conformed to the same image. Let every one who desires to be like Jesus note how he can attain to that likeness.

Look continually to the divine glory as seen in Christ. What is the special characteristic of that glory? It is the manifestation of divine perfection in human form. The chief marks of the image of the divine glory in Christ are these two: His humiliation and His love.

The Glory of Christ's Humiliation

When you see how the eternal Son emptied Himself and became man, and how as man He humbled Himself as a servant and was obedient even unto the death of the cross, you have seen the highest glory of God. The glory of God's omnipotence as Creator, and the glory of God's holiness as King, is not so wonderful as the glory of grace which humbled itself as a servant to serve God and man.

We must learn to look upon this humiliation as really glory. To be humbled like Christ must be to us the only thing worthy the name of glory on earth. It must become in our eyes the most beautiful, the most wonderful, the most desirable thing that can be imagined--a very joy to look upon or to think of.

The effect of gazing upon it and admiring it will be that you will not be able to conceive of any glory greater than to be and act like Jesus. You will long to humble yourself even as He did. Gazing on Jesus, admiring and adoring Him, will work in us the same mind that there was in Him, and so we shall be changed into His image.

The Glory of His Love

Inseparable from this is the glory of His love. The humiliation leads you back to the love as its origin and power. It is from love that the humiliation has its beauty. Love is the highest glory of God. But this love was a hidden mystery until it was manifest in Christ Jesus. It is only in His humanity, in His gentle, compassionate, and loving intercourse with men--with foolish, sinful, hostile men, that the glory of divine love was first really seen.

The soul that gets a glimpse of this glory and that understands that to love like Christ is alone worthy the name of glory, will long to become like Christ in this. Beholding this glory of the love of God in Christ, he is changed to the same image.

You would be like Christ? Here is the path. Gaze on the glory of God in Him. In Him, that is to say, do not look only to the words and the thoughts and the graces in which His glory is seen, but look to Himself, the living, loving Christ. Behold Him, look into His very eye, look into His face, as a loving friend, as the living God. Look to Him in adoration. Bow before Him as God. His glory has an almighty living power to impart itself to us, to pass over into us and to fill us.

Look to Him in faith. Exercise the blessed trust that He is yours, that He has given Himself to you, and that you have a claim to all that is in Him. It is His purpose to work out His image in you. Behold Him with the joyful and certain expectation that the glory that I behold in Him is destined for me. He will give it to me. As I gaze and wonder and trust, I become like Christ.

Look to Him with strong desire. Do not yield to the slothfulness of the flesh that is satisfied without the full blessing of conformity to the Lord. Pray God to free you from all carnal content with present attainments, and to fill you with the deep, unquenchable longing for His glory.

Pray most fervently the prayer of Moses, "Show me Thy glory." Let nothing discourage you, not even the apparently slow progress you make, but press onward with ever-growing desire after the blessed prospect that God's Word holds out to you: "We are changed into the same image, from glory to glory."

As you behold Him, above all, let the look of love not be wanting. Tell Him continually how He has won your heart, how you do love Him, how entirely you belong to Him. Tell Him that to please Him, the beloved One, is your highest, your only joy. Let the bond of love between you and Him be drawn continually closer. Love unites and makes like. Like Christ! We can be, we shall be, each in our measure.

By the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is the pledge that it shall be. God's Holy Word has said, "We are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." This is the Spirit that was in Jesus, and through whom the divine glory lived and shone on Him. This Spirit is called "the Spirit of glory." This Spirit is in us as in the Lord Jesus. It is His work, in our silent adoring contemplation, to bring over into us and work within us what we see in our Lord Jesus.

Through this Spirit we have already Christ's life in us with all the gifts of His grace. But that life must be stirred up and developed. It must grow up, pass into our whole being, take possession of our entire nature, penetrate and pervade it all. We can count on the Spirit to work this in us if we but yield ourselves to Him and obey Him.

As we gaze on Jesus in the Word, He opens our eyes to see the glory of all that Jesus does and is. He makes us willing to be like Him. He strengthens our faith, that what we behold in Jesus can be in us, because Jesus Himself is ours. He works in us unceasingly the life of abiding in Christ, a wholehearted union and communion with Him.

He does according to the promise: "The Spirit shall glorify Me: for He shall take of Mine and shall show it unto you" (John 16:14). We are changed into the image on which we gaze, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord. Let us only understand that the fullness of the Spirit is given to us, and that he who believingly surrenders himself to be filled with Him will experience how gloriously He accomplishes His work of stamping on our souls and lives the image and likeness of Christ.

Let us not seek to do that work the Spirit must do. Let us simply trust Him to do it. Our duty is to seek the prepared heart, waiting, longing, praying for the likeness; to take our place face to face with Jesus, studying, gazing, loving, worshipping, and believing that the wonderful vision of the Crucified One is the sure promise of what we can be, and then putting aside all that can distract in stillness of soul, silent unto God, just to allow the Blessed Spirit as the Lord of God to do the work. Surely and wonderfully will our souls receive and show the impress of that wonderful likeness.

Beholding Jesus and His glory, you can confidently expect to become like Him. Only trust yourself in quietness and restfulness of soul to the leading of the Spirit. "The Spirit of glory rests upon you." Gaze on and adore the glory of God in Christ. You will be changed with divine power from glory to glory. In the power of the Holy Ghost the mighty transformation will be wrought by which your desires will be fulfilled, and like Christ will be the blessed God-given experience of your life!

A Prayer

O my Lord, I do thank You for the glorious assurance that while I am engaged with You in my work of beholding Your glory, the Holy Spirit is engaged with me in His work of changing me into that image, and of laying of Your glory on me.

Lord, grant me to behold Your glory aright. Moses had been forty days with You when Your glory shone upon Him. I acknowledge that my communion with You has been too short and passing, that I have taken too little time to come under the full impression of what Your image is. Lord, teach me this. Draw me, in these my meditations too, to surrender myself to contemplate and adore, until my soul at every line of that image may exclaim: This is glorious! This is the glory of God! O my God, show me Your glory!

Strengthen my faith, blessed Lord, that even when I am not conscious of any special experience, the Holy Spirit will do His work. Moses knew not that his face shone. Lord, keep me from looking at self. May I be so taken up only with You as to forget and lose myself in You. Lord, it is he who is dead to self who lives in You.

O my Lord, as often as I gaze upon Your image and Your example, I would do it in the faith that Your Holy Spirit will fill me, will take entire possession of me, and so work Your likeness in me, that the world may see in me somewhat of Your glory. In this faith I will venture to take Your precious word, "From glory to glory," as my watchword, to be to me the promise of a grace that grows richer every day, of a blessing that is ever ready to surpass itself, and to make what has been given only the pledge of the better that is to come. Precious Saviour, gazing on You it shall indeed be--"from glory to glory." Amen.