

Ghost can touch but the outskirts of the reality. Through the gift of rich and effective grace the believer may reach high stages towards the summit of the hill of holiness up which he is climbing heavenward. Faith's vision may be rendered strong and far-reaching, and the spiritual atmosphere around him may be clear and most favorable for his look upward; yet after all, it is only a view, glimpses shall we say? of what is still far distant that he can obtain—as far distant as heaven, into which nothing that is imperfect can enter, is from the partial attainments he has been enabled to make. At the best he knows only in part. At the time of clearest vision he sees but through a glass darkly. Yet has he some knowledge. Yet has he some vision. God is enriching him with those bestowals of love and mercy which not only support and comfort, enable him to triumph over Satan, the world and the flesh, bid away from him doubt and discouragement, restore him when he falls, and cheer him when he is in danger of falling into despondency, but also bring him near to the things which are above, elevate his affections towards them and fix them upon them with increasing intensity, and give a deeper and more influential experience of their beauty and excellency, accompanied with the assurance of His personal interest in them. In this way does God endow him with the gifts of His grace, and make him rich in their possession, and with the foretokens and foretastes of that glory for whose full possession he is being rendered meet.

3. God is in the midst of the Church, her glory, for the purpose of assimilation. In the Church as His new creation there is the restoration and the progressive outbraving of His image—that image with which man was adorned when he was called into being, but which was effaced when sin entered his soul. By the existence of that image he was an object of complacency and delight to his Creator as no other being on earth was. He saw in him the reflection of His own moral character, and was drawn towards him and rested in him with unspeakable satisfaction. So is He drawn to the Church, every member of which is created anew in Christ Jesus, beautified with the Divine Image, and made a partaker of the Divine nature. And the design—the effect—of His being in the midst of her, her glory, is that each believer, and the whole body of believers, each in his own place and generation, and the whole in its continuance from age to age, may have that likeness traced out in bolder and more distinct lines in the midst of the moral imperfections with which it is surrounded till its glory spreads itself over the chambers of the soul. The presence of this glory, and the contemplation of it by the believer has this expanding, unfolding and assimilating energy. This fact is distinctly asserted in 2 Cor. iii, 18: "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,"—"from glory" as the cause or source—"to glory" as the effect or result. "Even as by the Spirit of the Lord." His glory then is in the midst of the Church, it is beheld by the Church, and the view has a transforming power.

4. He is the glory in the midst of the Church for the joyment and happiness of her saints. He would have them partakers of a present bliss for its own sake, and as a pledge and preparation for future bliss. He does not stop at providing them an inheritance in reserve, but gives them a portion in possession, for while the greater and better belong to the time to come the earnest and foretastes are bestowed under the manifestations of His glory that He now makes to their faith. Such have been the expectation and experience of His people in past ages. In that heart-touching outburst of pious feeling, and of holy courage and assurance to which the Psalmist was led by the Holy Ghost—for it is an inspired effusion of devout affection and confidence—he declares "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord and inquire in His temple." Again in Ps. xliii, 4, "O send out thy light and thy truth, let them lead me, and let them bring me to thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles. Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God exceeding joy." So again in Ps. xlv, 4, "There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacle of the most high. God is in the midst of her: she shall not be moved; God shall help her: and that right early." And in Ps. lxxxv, "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord, how long thy soul longeth, yea, crieth out for the living God. Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee, For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I

had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord will give grace and glory."

There is, then, the enjoyment of great good from the presence of God in His Church, and the vision of His glory to which His people are admitted. And that vision is strengthening and enlarging their meekness for entering into the presence of that glory of God and the Lamb which fills the temple in heaven, the vision and fruition of which are to be their heritage to the remoteness of eternal ages.

IV. Lessons to be learned from the fact of the Divine Presence as the glory in the midst of the Church.

1. Worshipers should come with reverence, expectation and gratitude. "Ye shall keep my Sabbaths and reverence my sanctuary, I am the Lord," is an instruction to which we do well to take heed, for it is of the highest authority, and perpetual obligation. When Moses saw that it was the glory of the Lord that appeared to him in the bush that burned and was not consumed, he hid his face and was afraid to look upon God. With expectation, for He has promised to come to His people in all places where He records His name and to bless them. With gratitude, for His presence will comfort, gladden, and strengthen; bringing into fuller development the lineaments of His own likeness on the heart, so as to fit for more intimate and soul-satisfying communion with Him, and nourishing aspirations towards the place in which He is seen enthroned in infinite majesty, and which is constantly lighted up with the outshining of His glorious attributes. Heavenly blessedness consists in the immediate vision and full enjoying of God in His glory, and its possession will be a well-spring of never-ceasing thankfulness. It has its beginning—its first-fruits, its earnest, its foretokens, in those discoveries of His glory to which He now admits His people, and these should awaken grateful feelings and lead to grateful acknowledgments.

2. Let His worshippers learn to guard against everything that would prevent or hinder the display and enjoyment of His glory in the midst of His Church. Let us not think that this may not and cannot be done. We believe firmly in the faithfulness of His promise as here given. We believe as firmly that He can make the presence and power of His glory felt despite all obstacles. Yet let it not be forgotten that the glory which lighted up the moral nature of man in his first creation, and which consisted in the Divine Image in which he was made, was driven away when he surrendered himself to the temptation of Satan. Neither let it be forgotten that the visible symbol of His glory was, according to the representations in the visions of Ezekiel, aimed out of the temple by the corrupt practices of those who had the management of its services, rising from the cherubim and settling over the threshold, rising again from the midst of the city, and standing upon the mountain on the east side—thus departing no more to return. Is it only the saint, and not also the Church, that is called to hearken to those solemn admonitions, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." "Quench not the Spirit."

Three lines of thought here open up, to which attention might be called at length, but which we shall merely indicate.

Let worshippers look to their own hearts, life and character when they come into the presence of God's glory in the midst of the Church. Let them prepare themselves for the approach by thought and prayer; let them place themselves under the power of the Holy Ghost for the inebriation of their graces to lively exercise; let them come before the throne of God and the Father, the wardens of them that diligently seek Him, cleansing themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and entreating that He would make all His goodness to pass before them. And let the Church be all glorious within, then shall the King desire her, and lay His hands upon her the expressions of His favor and delight.

In her religious observances and modes of worship let her study conformity to His will and take for her directory His Word. No encroachment should be made upon this, either in spirit or in letter, by the introduction of times and seasons and ordinances which He has not appointed. It is the boast of the Presbyterian Church that its form of government is in fuller harmony with the New Testament Statute Book than any other. It was the aim of our forefathers of the period of the Reformation to restore the simplicity of ecclesiastical polity as set up by the Apostles, acting under the direction of Him who had commissioned them to preach the Gospel to every creature, and promised to be

with them always even unto the end of the world. It was their aim also to bring forth the truth in its purity from the mass of superstition and corruption with which it had been overlaid; and earnestly did they contend for the faith once delivered to the saints. And it was no less their aim to deliver from the yoke of rites and ceremonies, which were the inventions of men, and to convince of the sinfulness of worshiping God by images or any other way not appointed in His Word. May the Church which God blessed then in rearing out of the ruined state in which she lay hold fast not only the doctrines for which they claimed the authority of Scripture, but also the modes of public worship which they brought back from the distance of the ages in which they were introduced by the divinely directed Apostles of the only King and Head of the Church, refusing to borrow or to copy from other branches of His professed followers any form from mere aesthetic taste, or supposed congruity with modern culture and social progress. The altar whose fashion and pattern were sent by Ahaz from Damascus to Uriah the priest might be more beautiful than the one in the house of the Lord, but it was a foreign importation; it was not according to the design which had been revealed by the Founder of the Old Testament Church—and its introduction led to changes in other parts of the furniture of the temple. Let the Presbyterian Church in Canada abide in the simplicity of the forms dating from the beginning of the New Testament Church. They commend themselves by their congruity with the entire Christian system. They are hallowed by many sacred memories and associations. They are baptized in blood. They wear the seal of Divine appointment. Let our Church hold fast that no man take her crown, dim the glory of God in the midst of her, and weaken her power among men.

The Assembly was then constituted by prayer, after which the Moderator, in feeling terms, thanked the members for the aid given him during his term of office, and the reading of roll having been dispensed with, then asked for nominations for Moderator. Dr. Bryce, of Winnipeg, Dr. Milligan, of Toronto, and Dr. Campbell, of Renfrew, were duly nominated. The vote resulted in the election of Dr. Campbell. After the transaction of routine business the Assembly closed with the benediction.

#### Melville Church, Fergus.

The corner stone of the new Melville Church, Fergus, of which Rev. J. H. MacVicar, B.A., is pastor, was laid on Thursday, the 8th inst., in the presence of a very large assembly. The usual deposits were placed in the stone, and the ceremony was gracefully performed, in her 30th year, by Mrs. Smellie, the widow of the first pastor of the congregation, who had ministered there for forty-four years. Not a little of the interest of the occasion arose from the fact that over fifty years ago the foundation stone of the old building had been laid by a child of Mrs. Smellie's, aged two years, who died before the building was completed and was buried beneath the floor. The proceedings began with the singing of a special hymn composed by Rev. J. B. Gillan, pastor of one of the neighboring congregations, and after a beautiful silver trowel had been presented and the ceremony had been performed, Mr. Robert Smellie, of Toronto, on behalf of his aged mother, declared the stone well and truly laid. Rev. Dr. Torrance, the retiring Moderator of the General Assembly, who had been deputed by the Presbytery of Guelph to attend, led in prayer. The meeting then adjourned to the Town Hall, where, after a sumptuous tea, addresses were delivered, interspersed by music from the choir. Among the speakers were Revs. Dr. Torrance, the Principal, and Messrs. B. Mullin, Mr. Robert Smellie, and others. The pastor reported donations of money that had been sent through Mrs. Smellie from Mr. James McMullen, M.P.; Rev. Dr. McMullen, of Woodstock, and four others—"old Fergus boys"—all of whom were warmly thanked. An offer was received from Mr. Cattanach and Mrs. C. K. McGregor, of Brantford, to place a window in the church to the memory of James Cattanach, and permission had also been granted to mention a proposition to erect a memorial pulpit, though in the meantime no name or detail could be divulged. Finally a generous proposition was announced from an elder of the congregation, Robert Phillips, Esq., who offered to increase his subscription to a certain sum on the condition that a given number of others would do the same, with a view of raising a sum which might make practicable to open the church to new debt. Those who know the Melville people best do not believe that they will let an offer like this fall to the ground.