

old translation, Solomon is made to say that it was "exceedingly magnificent." In all his glory, in all his vast conceptions, the temple was one of the grandest and greatest; and around it gathered the joy, the faith and hope and love of the people. That temple had been finished; its appointments were all made; the Ark of the Covenant had been carried from Mount Zion across into the temple. And when finished, there came down on the temple a cloud of glory. We can scarcely fancy what that was: there was some darkness, some glory, something which indicated the divine presence, the divine acceptance of the offering. The priests could not minister in the temple because of that glory: and yet, with that glory abiding around it, on the platform made for the purpose, Solomon led the devotions of the people, and kneeling down spread out his hands before God and made the wonderful prayer of which these words are a part. There were before him and about him indications of the divine presence. His own heart felt a wonderful joy, and a spiritual influence. There was no question but that God was there. The people could behold a cloud of glory; and though there was no special form, yet there was an indication of God's approval. And then the answer that followed was wonderful. The sacrifices had been placed on the altar, and when Solomon had finished his prayer, there came down from heaven, in the sight of the people, fire which consumed the sacrifices, and the whole vast assembly bowed themselves and cried out, "The Lord is good; his mercy endureth forever." They joined in one of the great Psalms of jubilee which had been prepared to be sung; they adored God as they recognized His presence, and the answer was given. God indeed dwelt in that temple and among men.

And see the effect on Solomon's own heart, and on that vast assembly. It is said that the king and all the people offered sacrifices before God. Think of the millions already spent in the erection of the temple! All is finished, but now they offered sacrifices. And think

of the extent of those sacrifices. Solomon made his offering of 22,000 oxen and 120,000 sheep! Suppose each ox were estimated at \$20, and you have \$440,000. And 120,000 sheep: estimate each one at two dollars and you have \$240,000. So that you have in Solomon's own offering, at a low estimate, nearly three-quarters of a million of dollars. And it was not for the house, for that was finished: nor for the appointments, for they were all made: but an expression of gratitude to God. And did the offering impair his resources? Was he exhausted by such an offering? He became the richest man, probably, on earth; he made silver, it is said, to be like the stones of the ground in Jerusalem. God poured in upon him riches, and after he had offered to God so abundantly out of what God gave him, God poured back into his treasure almost more than man could compute. It is thus that God deals with men on earth in His government, in His providences, in His gracious care over those who put their trust in Him and do His will.

It is not only by such an answer, which had something of the visible in it, and such immediate results, that we see the presence of God in His providence; but in the whole history of revelation we have answers to this question, "Will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth?" The Incarnation of Christ, His coming to be with men, was the greatest answer. He came to dwell upon our earth, to be a man among men. He should be called Emanuel, it was said, which is, being interpreted, "God with us," God about us, God around us. And how beautifully was God revealed in Christ! He came with all the attributes of divinity, came with all the powers of the Godhead, and yet identified Himself so with man as to be beside the lowliest, to throw no awe over the poorest! He came not vested as a monarch, though all things were made by Him and for Him, but He came as a babe in the manger, for whom there was no room in the inn; He came to be among the poorest of the