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SERMONIC.

WILL GOD DWELL WITH MEN?

By BISHOP MATTHEW SIMPSON, IN MADISON AVENUE M. E. CHURCH, NEW YORK.

But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth?—2 Chron. vi: 18.

THE human soul in its better moments longs for the knowledge and friendship of God; and to many a heart the question comes as it did to Solomon: "Will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth?" Will He come to *my* heart; shall I know Him in His presence and in the fullness of His power? There are times of prosperity, of health, with friends around us, with our usual wants supplied, when we think little of God, and the soul does not feel so much that there is need of Him. But to every one of us there has come, or will come, moments of anxiety, moments of sorrow, moments when we shall feel that there is no human friend that can supply for us that which we need. There will come a time when the soul is about to quit its abode in this earthly tabernacle and to go out alone into eternity; and then, when all human help is felt to fail, the soul cries out for God. Will He come near; will He befriend and be with us in those moments? The Psalmist de-

scribes this longing for God, as like the thirst experienced in a dry land, where no water is, the unsatisfied, the constant, parching feeling of thirst; so the soul cries out for God, even for the living God.

I do not suppose that, in this question asked by Solomon, he had any doubt. It is put in a form to impress itself: "Will God in very deed" dwell with men on the earth; will He so dwell that we shall know of His presence? The question appears to have been answered by his own soul, for immediately he asks that God will look with favor on the enterprise of opening that temple, and be with the people, and with confidence he asks for the abiding presence of God with them. So that I understand the question to have its own answer, and that answer to be: "God will indeed, most assuredly, dwell with men on the earth."

The circumstances under which the words were spoken are full of interest. The temple had been built—a temple which had occupied more than seven years in building, on which had been expended millions of money, which was one of the finest edifices ever reared on earth. In the quaint language of the

[The first several sermons are reported in full; the remainder are given in condensed form. Every care is taken to make these reports correct; yet our readers must not forget that it would be unfair to hold a speaker responsible for what may appear in a condensation, made by another, of his discourse.]