

third the rules of discipline for priests and teachers. With the sword of the Moslem Buddhism was driven from India, and only in Ceylon and in the far south do we meet with it to any extent, but it did not depart without leaving its mark on Brahminism, which, recognizing the wisdom of concession, yielded greatly, and with the victorious and unbending followers of the prophet at their doors, mutual toleration and concession brought back many of the schismatic Buddhists to the shelter of the Brahmin fold. A portion, however, would neither accept concession nor yield. They are still distinct and make up a goodly portion of the population of our city of Indore. They are called Jains, and are mostly workers in metals. Orderly, law-abiding citizens, they wield a wide influence in a quiet way. Most eagerly do they receive and read our Gospel booklets whenever offered for distribution among them, especially the young men of from fifteen to thirty years of age.

In the common bazaars and streets, and homes of Indore city we meet and talk with and teach these mixed masses of dissenting religionists. Can it be called an easy task? Is it a wonder the Christian missionary falters and grows discouraged with so much against him? Always associated with inferiors, without the safe-guard of Christian public opinion, in a land of no Christ, no Gospel, no Sabbath, no prayer, is it a wonder that we sometimes grow weary by the way? Yet it is not all dark, we have our encouragements too. When all outward help fails and there is nothing in our surroundings to praise and re-inspire it is then we turn, and one long, earnest, truthful look into the face of "Our Father who art in heaven" repays for all, and more.

M. FAIRWEATHER.

GOD DWELLING WITH MEN.

A SERMON PREACHED IN WEST CHURCH, TORONTO, APRIL 1880. BY THE REV. WM. COCHRANE, D.D., BRANTFORD.

"But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee, how much less this house which I have built!"

The condescension of God in dwelling with men upon the earth, is one of the most amazing, and at the same time comforting, truths of Scripture. When we take into account Jehovah's entire independence of the creature—His majesty and glory—His absolute and infinite greatness and holiness; and contrast all this with the weakness, the sinfulness, the ignorance and degradation of fallen humanity, it seems impossible to entertain such a thought. There is really nothing in man to attract the notice or regard of his Maker. To a holy being there is rather everything to repel, in our guilty and polluted world. The original purity and innocence, which for a brief period brought heaven and earth into friendly contact, no longer exists. And yet, marvellous though it be, it is none the less true, that God delights to dwell with man upon the earth. The pure society and rapturous adoration of heaven are not more pleasing to Him than the praises and reverential worship of dependent mortals. He not only bends a listening ear to their cries, and accepts their sacrifices, but, in a more than merely figurative sense, dwells among them, giving the most satisfactory and conclusive evidences of His presence to the eye of faith. "The Lord loveth the gates of Zion, more than all the dwellings of Jacob."

It was this thought that filled the mind of Solomon when he gave utterance to the words of the text. It was no ordinary occasion when, as the representative of the assembled Israelites, he offered up this prayer, and led the devotions of the people. It was a day long looked forward to, with joyful anticipations, and long afterwards remembered by the pious Jew. The tabernacle that had accompanied the Israelites in their wanderings for forty years was now folded past. The trials and hardships of the journey were ended. Canaan was possessed and the enemies of Israel subdued on every hand. Peace was now established throughout the land, happiness beamed in every eye, and thankfulness thrilled every heart. "Over all the Holy Land there rested a blissful serenity, the calm which follows when successful war is crowned with conquest, a calm which was only stirred by the proud joy of possession, and then hallowed and intensified again by the sense of Jehovah's favour." Only one thing remained to consummate the glory of the commonwealth, the completion of the temple, and its dedication to the worship of Jehovah. Many years before this King David had

purposed in his heart to build a house for the Lord God of Israel, in Jerusalem. "Surely I will not come into the tabernacle of my house, nor go up into my bed; I will not give sleep to mine eyes, or slumber to mine eyelids, until I find out a place for the Lord, an habitation for the mighty God of Jacob." But although the intention was approved, the honour was reserved for Solomon. "Thou shalt not build Me an house to dwell in," said the prophet to the king, "but it shall come to pass, when thy days be expired that thou must go to thy fathers, that I will raise up thy seed after thee, which shall be of thy sons. He shall build Me an house and I will establish his throne forever." The time had now arrived for the fulfilment of the promise. After seven years had been spent in building the sacred edifice, it now stood forth, the grandest and costliest of earthly temples ever seen by the eye of man!

Conceive, if you can, the gorgeous spectacle that presented itself to the congregation of Israel. The elders have brought up the ark of the covenant, accompanied with innumerable sacrifices and burnt offerings, for its permanent location in the temple, under the wings of the cherubim and in the most holy place. The priests and Levites, specially sanctified for the work before them, and the singers of the congregation, arrayed in white linen, having cymbals and psalteries and harps, stand at the east end of the altar, and with them one hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets. And now as the procession passes on, high above the noise of musical instruments, is heard the song of praise, "The Lord is good, His mercy endureth forever," while in token of God's acceptance of the offered worship we are told the house was filled "with the glory of the Lord." What that glory must have been we can but faintly conceive. The effect upon the assembled congregation was so awful that the priests were unable to continue their ministrations. So overwhelming was the impression, and so universal and real the feeling that the Lord was there, that the services were for a time suspended. The priests could not stand to minister, by reason of the cloud. This cloud was the visible manifestation of Him who dwells in light inaccessible and full of glory. In this way He took possession of the building erected for His worship and declared His willingness to dwell among them, accepting their gifts and imparting His blessings.

And now the king, arrayed in becoming vestments, stands before the altar of the Lord, and having blessed the congregation, spreads forth his hands in prayer. Like a father in the midst of his family—for a time laying aside his kingly authority and rule—he dedicates the temple, and the people of Israel, to the service of Jehovah. He speaks of God's goodness to his father David, in having permitted him to gather the materials for the building, now so happily completed, and supplicates the favour of heaven upon the nation, in all its varied circumstances and future emergencies. The prayer ended, the fire comes down, the burnt offerings and sacrifices are consumed, the glory of the Lord once again fills the house, while the entire congregation bow their faces to the ground and worship, saying, "The Lord is good; His mercy endureth forever." Truly, the grandeur and solemnity of such a scene exceeds all descriptive power.

"Each pillar of the temple rang,
The trumpets sounded loud and keen,
And while the minstrels sang and play'd
The mystic cloud of glory fell,
That shadowy light, that splendid shade,
In which Jehovah pleas'd to dwell.

The king cast off his crown of pride,
And bent him to the ground,
And priest and warrior, side by side,
Knelt humbly all around.

Deep awe fell down on every soul,
Since God was present there,
And not the slightest breathing stole
Upon the still air.

They bow'd them on the spacious floor,
With heaven-averted eye,
And blessed His name who deign'd to pour
His presence from on high."

Now what was the prevailing thought in the mind of Solomon on this grand and solemn occasion? Was he intoxicated with pride on account of his position? Did he say, as did the foolish King of Babylon when he walked in his palace, "Is this not great Babylon that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?" There was much fitted to call forth

other feelings than those of humility. There was much to dazzle the eye and create a feeling of personal satisfaction, as he looked at the magnitude of the building, the grandeur of its fittings, and the vast congregation of devoted subjects that stood reverently before him. But far different were his feelings. The temple was after all but the outward shrine—a goodly house indeed, but nothing more, unless filled by the presence of the Lord. He felt that "Except the Lord build the house they labour in vain that build it," and under this solemn impression his great anxiety was, that in keeping with the outward grandeur, and in the presence of this vast congregation, God's power and glory should be so signally manifested as to leave no room for doubt that the labour of his hands was accepted. "But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? behold heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee, how much less this house which I have built." The words do not imply any doubt that God would meet with His people and hallow their fellowship, but the more he thought of such condescension, on the part of the Infinite, the more he was amazed. Like David, when he contemplated the glory of the starry heavens, and the insignificance of the creature, he felt, "Lord what is man that Thou art mindful of him, and the son of man, that Thou visitest him?"

The promised presence of the Almighty was not exclusively given to the worship of the temple. Long before, when Moses was instructed to erect the tabernacle, God said, "Let them make Me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them, and there will I meet with thee and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat," and when the tabernacle was completed, "the cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle, so that Moses was not able to enter into the tent, because of the cloud that abode thereon," and this cloud by day, and fire by night, remained in the sight of all Israel, throughout their journeyings to the promised land. To us also, as to Moses and Solomon, God's presence is pledged in all the ordinances of His house. "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

Now, when we build and dedicate churches for the worship of Jehovah, our chief anxiety should be that God's presence should be felt in every service. It is praiseworthy and commendable that the highest style of art should be displayed and the greatest comfort obtained. But this may easily be attained without spiritual success. Crowded congregations may assemble, and eloquent sermons be preached, and much outward enthusiasm be manifested, but all is in vain, unless God condescends to dwell with His worshipping people. Our prayer should ever be, "Will God in very deed dwell with men on earth?"

When we speak of God's presence in His earthly temples, what is meant? Not, of course, that He is visible to the senses, nor that by any priestly incantation, the elements of the sacramental table can be changed into His real person. Not that any form of ritualism or swinging of incense-laden censers, or outward display of material excellence, can bring the Deity into loving contact with human souls. Such methods have been, and are still, resorted to in order to produce a sort of mystical, unintelligent, and dreamy consciousness of a present God, but all in vain. It is not thus that Jehovah is to be apprehended. It is not thus that the house of God becomes the gate of heaven, or that we are permitted to wrestle with the Angel of the Covenant. Just in so far as we rise upon the wings of faith, above and beyond the mere outward surroundings of the sanctuary—beyond the symbol to the thing symbolized, beyond the Word that is read and preached, to Him who is the Word itself; beyond ordinances and sacraments, to Him who is the life and vital source of all Christian worship—shall we realize God's presence in His temple, and within our souls.

In different points of view it is true that God dwells with men. He is infinite. His presence is everywhere and illimitable. The heaven of heavens cannot contain Him. Everything in nature calls up His nearness and constant superintendence. His voice is in the thunder and His glance in the lightning. In the cedars as they sway under the fury of the tempest, and the breath which moves the tender leaf, we hear the whispers of His presence. It is no marvel that feelings of reverence possess the soul when standing under the lofty domes of venerable cathedrals, and that sensitive natures should be filled with dread, in