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"Not for that we have done over your faith, but are helpers of your joy." II. Cor. 1: 24.

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THE "HOUSE OF GOD" UNDER THE CHRISTIAN DISPENSATION.

God is a Spirit, and can only be worshiped in spirit and in truth. But it is no infringement of the doctrine of the spirituality of the Divine Being to think of him as having always manifested himself to his feeble, dependent and fallen creatures, in a way adapted to their limited faculties. Though it be true that "he dwelleth not in temples made with hands," so as to be restricted in his presence or limited in his operations: yet there is a sense in which God has dwelt with men on earth. Though he may challenge all the sons of men, and say "What house will ye build for me?" his words to Moses in the mount that burned with fire can never fail to be realized while our world stands: "In all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee."

God *did* dwell with his chosen people in the wilderness, and in Canaan, displaying himself to them in connection with the mystic symbols of the tabernacle and the temple. His "house" was the scene of his most gracious manifestations. There he gave forth his law; caused his name continually to be recorded; listened to the united prayers of the assembled tribes. There the mystic fires of the altar continued to burn day and night; there ministering priests and Levites performed their perpetual round of service; there the great festivals and memorials of the nation were solemnized; there the high-priest entered once a year into the most holy place with the blood of atonement; and there, too, did he come forth to bless the people who waited to receive his official and significant benediction. We can well understand, therefore, how the soul of a devout Jew should "long, yea, even faint, for the courts of the Lord."

This past dispensation we are expressly told was but "a shadow of good things to come." Where, then, under the present dispensation, when these symbols are all withdrawn, are we to look for the great realities which they were intended to prefigure? Is there not a sense in which we are still to search for them in "the house of God"? It is true that the mysteries of redemption are the grand antitypes of the ritual service of the tabernacle and temple; but where are we to learn these mysteries but in those hallowed scenes where the

living teacher stands up to unfold the lessons of the New Testament Church, and of which the omnipresent Redeemer speaks when he says, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them?"

In the highest sense, indeed, the members of the spiritual church "are the temple of the living God"; but there is a sense—a most important one—in which the place of Christian assembly is still to be regarded as "the house of the Lord." True, we have no burdensome ritual to be performed by a Levitical priesthood; but we have instead, "a royal priesthood to offer up the sacrifice of praise to God continually; that is the fruit of their lips giving thanks to his name." We have no blood of bulls and of goats to pour out upon the altar of sacrifice; but we draw near to God by that one offering, by which our great High Priest, hath forever perfected them that are sanctified. The cloud of glory, the mercy seat, and the ark, are no more to be seen in the place of Christian worship; but in the promised and vouchsafed presence of our divine Lord, we have more than all that these mysteries contained. We have no passover feast, in memory of the deliverance from Egyptian bondage; but "Christ our passover is slain for us," and we are to "keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." We have no train of priests of Aaron's line ministering to us by day and by night, but we have "pastors and teachers" given to us "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ?"

The "house of God," then, is still in the midst of us. We recognize it in the scene of fervent united prayer; in the place of Christian instruction; in the hallowed enclosure where the disciples of the cross commemorate the love of their dying Lord. These sacred scenes, wherever realized—whether on the mountain's brow, or in the valley's depth—whether in the gorgeous temple, or the unpretending meeting-house are the habitation or dwelling-place of the Most High. We have no notions of sacerdotal benediction inconsistent with the great canon of the New Testament, that "in every place we may lift up holy hands to God, without wrath or doubting." But we can have no objection to that feeling—nay, we must greatly applaud and commend it—which would hallow every association connected with the Christian sanctuary; and which

would look on it and its appendages of worship, instruction and sacramental service, as "the house of God, and the gate of heaven."

THE POWER OF KINDNESS.

Many stories have been told to illustrate the truth that kindness and love will often prevail where everything else proves worse than useless. We remember reading such a story some time ago, the substance of which was as follows:—A Christian father and mother had two sons—their only children—who had been brought up almost to manhood under their immediate care, yet who were not only destitute of all religion, but bold ringleaders in all iniquity in their neighborhood, and fearless scoffers at sacred things. In the course of time the father died, but no visible effect was produced by this event upon the minds of these wayward sons. But at length, to the astonishment of all who knew them, they both gave evidence of a change of heart, and, from being ringleaders in all wickedness, had become meek, gentle, and consistent disciples and followers of Christ the Saviour.

Christian friends were naturally curious to know what means had been owned of God to effect their conversion. The widowed mother, on being questioned, replied in substance, that she had been led to think that her anxiety for her sons in their unregenerate state, had frequently imparted a warmth to her manner in reproving them which she now believed savored more of fretfulness than of love, and she clearly saw that the effect upon them was wholly injurious. She pondered this thought in her heart, and, retiring to her closet sought the assistance of divine grace, to enable her to entirely change her spirit and manner towards her children. She came forth filled with the spirit of compassion and love. She approached her sons with a heart overflowing with pitying tenderness, and in due time observed a corresponding change in them, and ultimately their hearts yielded to the new spirit of the mother.

Such, very briefly, was the mother's account of the means that proved successful with her almost hopeless sons. We suspect many a parent, many a Sabbath School teacher, and many a minister of the Gospel, might derive from it a useful lesson. We risk nothing in saying that harshness, and bitterness of speech and manner, have caused many a young heart to recoil in disgust from the subject of religion, which might by wiser means have been led to reflection and repentance.

We are reminded here of a circumstance related by the naturalist, Audubon, as occurring within his knowledge, of a certain individual who for many years had led the fell