

…but to this man will I look

Isaiah 66:1-2

Isaiah 66:1-2 thus saith the LORD, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? For all those things hath mine hand made, and those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.

**Isaiah 66:1-2**

*Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is My throne*

**The eternal blessedness of the true Israel; the doom of the apostates**

This chapter continues the antithesis that runs through chap.
65., carrying it onward to its eschatological issues. The connection of ideas is frequently extremely difficult to trace, and no two cities are agreed as to where the different sections begin and end. (*Prof. J. Skinner, D. D.*)

**Temple building**

Hitzig thinks (and with him Knobel, Hendewerk) that the author here begins quite abruptly to oppose the purpose of building a temple to Jehovah; the builders are those who meditated remaining behind in Chaldea, and wished also to have a temple, as the Jews in Egypt, at a later time, built one in Leontopolis. (*F. Delitzsch, D. D.*)

**The offerings of the impenitent offensive to God**

The address, directed to the entire body ready to return, says without distinction that Jehovah, the Creator of heaven and earth, needs no house made by men’s hands; then in the entire body distinguishes between the penitent and those alienated from God, rejects all worship and offering at the hand of the latter, and threatens them with just retribution. (*F. Delitzsch, D. D.*)

**The inward and spiritual preferred by God to the outward and material**

[These great words] are a declaration, spoken probably in view of the approaching restoration of the temple (which, in itself, the prophet entirely approves, Isa\_44:28, and expects, Isa\_56:7; Isa\_55:7; Isa\_62:9),reminding the Jews of the truth which a visible temple might readily lead them to forget, that no earthly habitation could be really adequate to Jehovah’s majesty, and that Jehovah’s regard was not to be won by the magnificence of a material temple, but by humility and the devotion of the heart. How needful the warning was history shows. Jeremiah (Jer\_7:1-15) argues at length against those who pointed, with a proud sense of assurance, to the massive pile of buildings that crowned the height of Zion, heedless of the moral duties which loyalty to the King, whose residence it was, implied. And at a yet more critical moment in their history, attachment to the temple, as such, was one of the causes which incapacitated the Jews from appropriating the more spiritual teaching of Christ: the charge brought against Stephen (Act\_6:13-14)is that he ceased not “to speak words against this holy place and the law;” and, the argument of Stephen’s defence (Act\_7:1-60.) is just to show that in the past God’s favour had not been limited to the period during which the temple of Zion existed. Here, then, the prophet seizes the occasion to insist upon the necessity of a spiritual service, passing on (verses 3-5) to denounce, in particular, certain superstitious usages which had apparently, at the time, infected the worship of Jehovah. (*Prof. S. R. Driver, D. D.*)

**The inwardness of religion**

**1.** The tendency to make religion consist in external actions, apart from the inward dispositions which should accompany them, is very common. The reason for this is discovered from the fact that outward actions are easier than inward. It is easier, for instance, to become outwardly poor than to become poor in spirit; easier to adore with the body than to worship with the soul. The tendency is observable in all dispensations. For instance, whatever other differences there may have been between the sacrifices of Cain and Abel, we are expressly told that it was “by faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice ‘ (Heb\_11:4). The outward act was linked with the right inward disposition. So, again, in the time of the Levitical Law, the tendency often manifested itself to put ceremonial above moral obligations (Psa\_1:1-6.). And Isaiah, in his first chapter (verses 11-18), shows how an outward service, without the putting away of evil, is an abomination to God. In the same way our Lord condemned the Pharisees Mat\_15:8).

**2.** This closing prophecy of Isaiah seems to contain a warning against formalism. It is not that the outward is unimportant, for this would be to run from one extreme to the other, but that the outward will not avail. The return of Israel from captivity will be followed by the building of a new temple, as the event has shown; and the warning of the text is twofold—one, to remind the Israelites that Jehovah had no need of a temple; the other, to impress them with a truth they were very apt to forget, that religion must be a matter of the heart.

**I.** A REVELATION OF GOD. “Heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool.”

**1.** These words, or the substance of them, are again and again repeated in Holy Scripture (1Ki\_8:27; Mat\_5:34; Act\_7:49). Repetitions in the Bible show the importance of a truth, or our difficulty in remembering it.

**2.** What is the truth? That God is incomprehensible. He is everywhere and cannot be localized (Jer\_23:24). There is nowhere where Cod’s power and essence and presence do not reach. He knows no limit of space or time, of knowledge or love.

**II.** THE REFERENCE TO THE EXTERNAL TEMPLE. “Where is the house that ye build unto Me?”

**1.** These words are not intended to deter Israel from building a material temple when they had returned to their own land. The prophet would be contradicting himself (Isa\_56:5-7; Isa\_60:7); and he would be running counter to the solemn injunctions of other prophets, such as Haggai and Zechariah, who were in part raised up by God to further the work of building the temple. What the words are intended to rebuke is the falseness of the ideas that God requires a temple, and that His presence can be restricted to its walls. God does not need a temple, but we do. In heaven there will be no necessity for any temple (Rev\_21:22), where the glory of God and of the Lamb floods with its radiance the whole place.

**2.** Here the church, with its sacred objects and associations, appeals to us and excites our devotion; here in the sacred place there is a distinct promise to prayer; here God acts upon us, and we upon God, through prescribed ordinances; here He promises to be present in some especial manner; here we act upon one another, and kindle fervour, and therefore must not forsake “the assembling of ourselves together” in the house of Heb\_10:25).

**III.** BUT THE TEXT ALLUDES TO THE INTERNAL TEMPLE—THE DISPOSITIONS OF THE SOUL OF THE WORSHIPPER, WHICH ATTRACT THE FAVOUR OF GOD. “To this man will I look,. . . who is poor,. . . contrite, and who trembleth at My word.”

**1.** Poor, not merely outwardly, but poor in spirit (Psa\_138:6). The man who at all realizes the Divine majesty will have a sense of his own nothingness.

**2.** Of a contrite spirit. A perception” of the Divine holiness brings self-humiliation by force of contrast (Job\_42:6).

**3.** “Trembleth at My word. Fear is ever an element of the spirit of worship. A sense of the Divine justice and judgments fills the soul with awe in approaching God. The Word or revelation of God is received, not in the spirit of criticism, but with reverence and godly fear.

**IV.** LESSONS.

**1.** The remembrance of the all-pervading presence of God should be a deterrent from evil, and an incentive to good.

**2.** The obligation of regularity in attendance at Divine worship ought to be insisted upon, both as a recognition of God and our relations with Him, and for the sake of the subjective effects on human character.

**3.** But outward worship is of no avail without inward. There are tests, in the text, of the presence of the spirit of worship—lowliness, contrition, and awe, as products of the realization of God’s presence and perfections. (*The Thinker.*)

**God’s elevation and condescension**

**1.** The subject of remark—God Himself. “Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is My throne, the earth is My footstool.” The attention is turned simply to God—His grandeur, His magnificence, His immensity, His omnipresence. He abides in heaven, He puts the earth under His feet.

**2.** The manner in which the remark about God is conducted, is that of a kind of contrast betwixt Him and men. “Where is the house that ye build unto Me, and where is the place of My rest?” God is unlike man. He challenges any comparison. “The heaven, even the heaven of heavens, cannot contain Him. Ancient kings aimed often to Impress their subjects with an idea of their magnificence, and surrounded themselves with a solemn and salutary awe, by rearing palaces of the most imposing splendour and magnificence. They wished to overawe the multitude. On this ground, God Himself, seems to have ordered the unequalled grandeur of the ancient temple. But in doing it, He took care that its dazzling beauty and stateliness should only be an aid, a stepping-stone, to assist the imagination in its upward reach towards the grandeur of God. In the prayer of the dedication, Solomon’s devotion soars infinitely above the temple.

Here, the majesty of God, and the littleness of man, stand side by side. After mentioning the earth and the heaven, God says, “All these things hath My hand made.”

**3.** But yet, lest dread should too much terrify the worshipper, or a high and just idea of God’s infinite majesty lead the humble into the error of supposing that such an august Being would not regard such an insignificant creature as man, he adds, “To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word.” A turn of thought well worthy of our admiration. A contrite sinner has nothing to fear from God. His very majesty need not terrify him. Indeed, His majesty constitutes the very ground for his encouragement. It can condescend. Just as much does the King of kings and Lord of lords glorify Himself, when He consoles, by the whisperings of His Spirit, the poorest and most unworthy sinner that ever felt the pangs of a bruised heart, as when He thunders in the heavens as the most High, and gives His voice, hail-stones and coals of fire. With this idea, sinners should-approach Him and meditate His grandeur. (*I. S. Spencer, D. D.*)

**The magnificence of God**

**I.** THE STYLE OF THE TEXT. God speaks of Himself. “The heaven is My throne, the earth is My footstool.” This style of religious address is especially common in the Scriptures (

Psa\_137:1-9.; Job\_11:7-8; Job\_26:6-14; Isa\_40:1-31.). These passages all speak of God in a style which we cannot attempt to analyze. Their aim appears to be twofold.

**1.** To lead us to make the idea of God Himself the leading idea in religion.

**2.** To have this idea, which we are to entertain about God, an idea of the utmost grandeur, of the most amazing magnificence, and solemn sublimity.

**II.** THE DESIGN IN VIEW CANNOT EASILY BE MISTAKEN. They would give us just ideas of God. The impression they aim to make is simply this, that God is incomparably and inconceivably above us—an infinite and awful mystery!

**III.** THE NECESSITY OF THIS MAY EXIST OH DIFFERENT GROUNDS.

**1.** Our littleness. In the nature of the case, there can be no comparison betwixt man and God. All is contrast—an infinite contrast.

**2.** Our sinfulness. Sin never exists aside from the mind’s losing a just impression of the Deity; and wherever it exists, there is a tendency to cleave to low and unworthy ideas of Him.

**3.** Our materiality, the connection of our minds with material and gross bodies. This connection renders it difficult for us to soar beyond matter. We are in danger of introducing the imperfections of our existence into our religion, even into our ideas of God. Consequently, when God speaks to us of Himself, He speaks in a manner designed to guard us from error. He says to us, “The heaven is ,My throne, and the earth is My footstool. Where is the house ye build unto Me? We are limited to the world. We cannot get foothold anywhere else. We are circumscribed within very narrow limits. But God asks, “Where is the place of My rest?” He would elevate our conceptions of Him beyond matter, out of the reach of its bounds.

**4.** The nature of God. Man is only a creature. He owes his existence to a cause without him. That cause still rules him. That cause allows him to know but little, and often drops the veil of an impenetrable darkness before his eyes just at the point, the very point, where he is most desirous to look further, and it drops the veil there, in order to do him the twofold office of convincing him of the grandeur of God and his own littleness, and of compelling him, under the influence of those convictions, to turn back to a light which concerns him more than the darkness beyond the veil can, to a light where are wrapped up the duties and interests of his immortal soul. God would repress his curiosity, and make him use his conscience. Therefore, He makes darkness preach to him.

**IV.** APPLICATION.

**1.** Let us be admonished to approach the study of religion with a solemnity of mind which belongs to it. It is the study of God. The voice comes from the burning bush, “Draw not nigh hither, put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the ground whereon thou standest is holy ground.’ How unlike all other subjects is religion! How differently we should approach it!

**2.** This mode in which God teaches us—this grandeur and magnificence which belong to Him—ought to remove a very common difficulty from our minds, and prepare us to receive in faith, those deep and dark doctrines, whose mystery is so apt to stagger us. What can we expect?

**3.** Since God is so vast a being, how deep should be our humility!

**4.** How deep should be our homage.!

**5.** The greatness of God should gauge the depth of our repentance. Our sin is against Him.

**6.** The greatness of God should invite our faith. “ If God be for us, who can be against us?”

**7.** The magnificence of God should be a motive to our service. He is able to turn our smallest services to an infinite account.

**8.** The greatness of God ought to encourage the timid. Because He is great, His regard reaches to every one of your annoyances. Your enemies cannot hurt you.

**9.** The grandeur of God ought to rebuke our reliance upon creatures. (*I. S. Spencer, D. D.*)

**What God does not, and what He does, regard**

**I.** WHAT THE LORD DOES NOT REGARD. He speaks quite slightingly of this great building. But is it not said elsewhere that “the Lord loved the courts of Zion”? Did He not expressly tell King Solomon when his temple was completed, “Mine eyes and Mine heart shall be on it perpetually”? He did; but in what sense are we to understand those words? Not that He delighted in the grandeur of the house, but in as much of spiritual worship as was rendered there. The temple itself was no otherwise well pleasing to Him than as it was raised in obedience to His orders, and as it served, in its fashion and its furniture, for “an example and a shadow of heavenly things;” but the Lord “loved the gates of Zion” because the prayers of Zion were presented there. He points out to us two things—His throne, and His footstool! and then He leaves it to ourselves to say whether any building man can raise to Him can be considerable in His eyes.

**II.** Hear from the Lord’s own lips THE DESCRIPTION OF THE MAN WHO DRAWS HIS EYE. “To this man,” etc.

**1.** The sort of character described.

**(1)** He is “poor”—humble towards God. He is humble, too, towards his fellow-creatures; carrying himself meekly towards all men, and “in lowliness of mind, esteeming others better than himself.” He is “slow to wrath”—patient under provocation—anxious not to be “overcome of evil” but rather to “overcome evil with good.”

**(2)** Another quality which marks the man to whom the Lord looks is contrition.

**(3)** He “trembleth at My word.” But what kind of trembling is meant? Felix trembled at God’s word; and many a wicked man from his days to the present has trembled at it also. And yet it has been but a momentary pang—a sudden fright that has come over them, but which they have soonlaughed off again. Now it is certainly not this sort of trembling which the Lord regards. The man who *“trembleth”* at God’s word is one who entertains a deep and abiding reverence for every word which hath proceeded from God’s lips.

**2.** What does the Lord mean when He saith, “To this man will I look? He evidently means, “To this man will I look with an eye of notice and regard.” The Lord’s favourable look, be it remembered, is quite another thing from man’s; there is help, and comfort, and support conveyed by it Isa\_57:15). The Lord but looked on Gideon, and Gideon, weak before, was wonderfully strengthened (Jdg\_6:14). (*A. Roberts, M. A.*)

**God’s greater glory**

Here are described two phases of the Divine greatness, one material, and the other moral; the superiority of the latter being clearly implied.

**I.** THE MATERIAL GREATNESS OF GOD. “Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is My throne, and the earth is My footstool.” Here God represents Himself as a mighty potentate, leaving us to infer the measure of His kingly glory and the extent of His dominion from these two things—His throne and His footstool. Thus the glory of the whole is indicated by the glory of the part.

**1.** The throne. We must note carefully the full extent and purport of the figure, “The heaven is My throne. It is not that the heaven is the place of His throne, but that the heaven is itself the throne. The conception, bold as it is, strikingly agrees with another figure used by inspiration to set forth the transcendent majesty of God, “Behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee.” The figure is a bold one. The human imagination, daring as its flights often are, could never have conceived it. It is purely a Divine conception, and the text is careful to say so, “Thus saith the Lord.”

**2.** His footstool. “The earth. ‘ We know very little of the heaven. We know a great deal about the earth. Men have taken its dimensions, explored its resources, and discovered its glories. Yet this magnificent object is but His footstool. The footstool is the humblest article of furniture in the household; so needless is it deemed that thousands of houses dispense with it altogether. Others easily convert the thing nearest to hand into a footstool, as occasion may require. Nevertheless, some have expended no little skill and expense upon the construction even of footstools. There is preserved as a relic in Windsor Castle such an article, once belonging to the renowned Hindoo prince, Tippoo Sahib. It is in the form of a bear’s head, carved in ivory, with a tongue of gold, teeth of crystal, and its eyes a pair of rubies. This article is adjudged worth £10,000. It is after all but a footstool. If Tippoo Sahib’s footstool were so magnificent, what must have been the splendour of his throne! Yet, were all the thrones of the world collected together into one vast pile, they would form but a heap of rubbish as compared with God’s footstool.

**II.** THE TEXT PRESENTS US WITH ANOTHER PHASE OF HIS GLORY—THE MORAL, WHICH IS ALSO HIS GREATER GLORY. “But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word.” What a contrast we have presented to us here. God, the Mighty Potentate, from the height of His heavenly throne, looking down with yearning, compassionate regard upon such objects as are here described, the very dust of His footstool. There is a moral grandeur in this far transcending the power of language to describe. In order to appreciate fully the beauty and glory of this act, we must notice particularly the characters which are its special objects. They are described as those who are “poor” and are “of a contrite spirit,” and that “tremble at His word.” These several expressions do not describe one and the same condition. They indicate three distinct and progressive stages of spiritual experience.

**1.** Destitution. *“Poor.”* It is not physical poverty that is meant, for the wealthiest, those who abound most in worldly possessions, are equally with the most destitute in the condition here indicated by the term “poor. It describes a spiritual condition—the spiritual poverty into which all men are reduced through sin—the wretched, the miserable, the oppressed of sin and guilt—the poor in the sense of being without hope, destitute of true peace and happiness.

**2.** The second stage indicated is one of conviction—the misery becoming a felt fact. “ And of a contrite spirit.” In these words we have indicated that condition of the mind when the all-crushing fact of its poverty and wretchedness has come home with overwhelming conviction.

**3.** The third stage is one of hope. “Trembleth at My word.” God, out of the infinite depth of His compassion, hath spoken to this poor, wretched, sin-convicted creature, and the word spoken is a word of hope. The “trembling” at the word does not mean regarding it with fear, terror, or dismay, but solemnly, feelingly, and trustingly. It is the trembling of gratitude and of an awakened hope—an exquisite thrill of gratitude piercing the whole soul, causing it to vibrate with responsive joy to the message of hope. This wonderful condescension of God in relation to sinful men is His greater glory, it redounds to His honour far more than His conversion of the heavens into His throne and of the earth into His footstool. (*A. J. Parry.*)

**Worship and ritual**

The desire for Divine communion has ever been strong in man. This desire was originated by God Himself. If not from God, whence could it come? We have no right to suppose it to be self-originated. That finite man should conceive an infinite Deity is an incredible supposition, for, to use the words of Pascal, “the infinite God is infinitely inconceivable.” The manner in which God has thus revealed Himself in response to the passionate desire which He originated in man is a study fraught with a singular interest. He made Himself known to our first parents in Eden’s garden, and in our first Scriptures we have several examples recorded of revelations made by Him after the banishment to the fathers of our race. By tradition these revelations were spread throughout the earth, and so we find the earliest religious faiths of our world abounding in sublime truths. But He specially revealed Himself to a chosen people. Israel lived under the very shadow of Jehovah, for God dwelt in that temple ann specially manifested His presence in it. But that presence did not restrain the people from rebellion. When not open followers of the idolatries of the surrounding nations, they left worship for ritual and forsook God for observances, and so made that temple to be at once their glory and their shame. It was at such time as this that the words of our text were uttered. Thus are we taught that Divine worship is *not* material, but spiritual, and that the habitation of God is not the building, but the soul.

**I.** THE NATURE OF THE BEING WHOM WE WORSHIP. Our text brings before as His omnipresence. He is in heaven, and He is on earth. We have a revelation also of the Divine omnipotence. Not only is He in heaven, not’ only is He on earth, but He has a throne. Of course the one includes the other. If He be the omnipresent One, He is also the omnipotent One. That which is Infinite must be Absolute. We, however, distinguish, so as to obtain clearer conceptions. We are in danger of supposing that amidst all this vastness we can be but of little consequence. But mind is greater than matter, and such ideas immediately vanish when we remember that the vastest material substance can never outweigh a holy thought, a feeling of devotion, a thrill of love. The man who can tell the motions of the stars is greater than the stars. And thus looking at the question, what shall we say of that man in whom God dwells? He who lives in a palace is greater than the palace, no matter how gorgeous it may be; and in the presence of a holy man the whole material creation is dwarfed into nothingness.

**II.** THE NATURE OF THAT WORSHIP WHICH THIS GREAT GOD REQUIRES. It must be something more than outward. Of all ceremonialism the Jewish was the most gorgeous. It was also of Divine appointing. The temple was built according to Divine plan and under Divine direction. The services were divinely commanded. The priests belonged to a Divinely set apart; tribe. Tokens of the Divine presence were given. But although this ceremonial was thus gorgeous, and of Divine appointment, yet God rejected it so soon as it lost its spiritual significance. All true religion begins in poverty of spirit. There must be a sense of natural defect and a consciousness of our own inability either to atone for the past or to deliver in the future. And with this poverty of spirit there must be contriteness. The heart needs to be broken before it can be bound up. (*Allan Rees.*)

**A transcendent existence and a transcendent doctrine**

**I.** AN EXISTENCE THAT STANDS IN CONTRAST WITH ALL THAT IS CREATED.

**1.** Here is an omnipresent Existence. One whose throne is heaven, whose footstool is earth, and to whom all places are alike. One who fills heaven and earth, not merely with His influence, but with His actual presence, as much at all times in one point of space as in another. The incommensurable One, not only everywhere, as the pantheists teach, as a substance, but everywhere as a Personality, free, conscious, active. All created existences are limited by the laws of space, and those that occupy the largest space are mere specks in immensity. Concerning the stupendous fact of God’s Omnipresence, observe—

**(1)** This fact is agreeable to reason. The denial of it would involve a contradiction. It enters into our very conception of God. A limited God would in truth be no God.

**(2)** This fact is essential to worship. It is essential to the spirit of worship. Worship implies mystery. It is essential to constancy of worship. True worship is not an occasional or specific service confined to times and places, it is an abiding attitude of the soul. “God is a Spirit,” etc.

**(3)** This fact is promotive of holiness. Let men realize the constant presence of God, and how strongly will they feel restraint from sin and stimulation to virtue and holiness.

**(4)** This fact is assurative of retribution. Who can hide himself from the Lord?

**(5)** This fact is illustrative of heaven. There is nothing local or formal in the worship of heaven. “ I saw no temple in heaven, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. He is felt to be everywhere, and He is worshipped everywhere.

**2.** Here is a creative Existence. “For all those things hath Mine hand made,” etc. Because He made all, He owns all. Creatorship implies Eternity, Sovereignty, Almightiness, and Proprietorship.

**II.** A DOCTRINE THAT TRANSCENDS HUMAN DISCOVERY. “To this man will I look,” etc. The doctrine is this,—that this Infinite Being, who is everywhere, who created the universe and owns it, feels a profound interest in the individual man whose soul is in a humble, contrite, and reverent state. Could reason ever have discovered such a truth as this? Never. Although this doctrine transcends reason it does not contradict it. (*Homilist.*)

**Living temples for the living God**

**I.** GOD’S REJECTION OF ALL MATERIAL TEMPLES. There was a time when it could be said that there was a house of God on earth. That was a time of symbols, when as yet the Church of God was in her childhood. She was being taught her A B C, reading her picture-book, for she could not as yet read the Word of God, as it were in letters. She had need to have pictures put before her, patterns of the heavenly things. Even then, the enlightened amongst the Jews knew well that God did not dwell between curtains, and that it was not possible that He could be encompassed in the most holy place within the veil It was only a symbol of His presence. But the time of symbols is now passed altogether. In that moment when the Saviour bowed His head, and said “It is finished! “ the veil of the temple was rent in twain, so that the mysteries were laid open. So, one reason why God saith He dwelleth not in temples made with hands, is, because He would have us know that the symbolical worship is ended and the reign of the spiritual worship inaugurated at this day (Joh\_4:21; Joh\_4:23). But our text gives,from God’s own mouth, reasons why there can be no house at the present time in which God can dwell; and, indeed, there never was any house of the kind in reality—only in symbol For, say now, where is the place to build God a house? In heaven? It is only His throne, not His house! On earth? What, on His footstool? Will ye put it where He shall put His foot upon it and crush it? Fly through infinite space, and ye shall not find in any place that God is not there. Time cannot contain Him, though it range along its millenniums! Space cannot hold Him, for He that made all things greater than all the things that He has made. Yea, all the things that are do not encompass Him. But then, the Lord seems to put it,—What kind of a house (supposing we had a site on which to erect it) would we build God? Sons of men of what material would ye make a dwelling-place for the Eternal and the Pure? Would ye build of alabaster? The heavens are not clean in His sight, and He charged His angels with folly! Would ye build of gold? Behold, the streets of His metropolitan city are paved therewith, not indeed the dusky gold of earth, but transparent gold, like unto clear glass. And what were gold to Deity? Find diamonds, as massive as the stones whereof Solomon built his house on Zion, and then lay on rubies and jaspers - pile up a house, all of which shall be most precious. What were that to Him? God is a Spirit. He disdaineth your materialism. And yet men think, forsooth, when they have put up their Gothic or their Grecian structures, “This is God’s house.” And then the Lord shows that the earth and the heavens themselves, which may be compared to a temple, are the works of His hand. How often I have felt as if I were compassed with the solemn grandeur of a temple, in the midst of the pine forest, or on the heathery hill, or out at night with the bright stars looking down through the deep heavens, or listening to the thunder, peal on peal, or gazing at the lightning as it lit up the sky! Then one feels as if he were in the temple of God! Afar out on the blue sea, where the ship is rocking up and clown on the waves foam—then it seems as if you were somewhere near to God—amidst the sublimities of nature. But what then? All these objects of nature He has made, and they are not a house for Him.

**II.** GOD’S CHOICE OF SPIRITUAL TEMPLES. “To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word.”

**III.** THOSE THAT ARE OF THIS CHARACTER SECURE A GREAT BLESSING. God says He will “look” to them. That means several things.

**1.** Consideration.

**2.** Approbation.

**3.** Acceptance.

**4.** Affection.

**5.** Benediction. (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)

**The greatness and condescension of God**

That is an excellent answer which was given by a poor man to a sceptic who attempted to ridicule his faith. The scoffer said, “Pray, sir, is your God a great God or a little God? The poor man replied, “Sir, my God is so great that the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him; and yet He condescends to be so little, that He dwells in broken and contrite hearts. Oh, the greatness of God, and the condescension of God! (*C. H. Spurgeon.*)