

with, not indeed the dusky gold of earth, but transparent gold, like unto clear glass. And what were gold to Deity? Men may crave it and adore it, but what careth he for it? Whereas that city, wherein the church shall dwell for ever, hath foundations of chrysolite and sapphire and jasper and all manner of precious stones, will you think to rival that? Take me to imperial Russia, and point me to the meanest hovel of the meanest serf; tell me it is the imperial palace—I might believe it possible; but take me to the most gorgeous pile that human skill has ever reared, and tell me that is God's house!—Impossible! I hold up a snail's shell, and say, "This is as much the angel Gabriel's house as that is the house of the living God." They know not what they speak. Brainless are they, or they would not think so of him who filleth all things!

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! I am sometimes up on the Alps amidst the glories of nature, with the glacier and snow-clad peak; I am in the open, and I breathe the fresh air that comes from the ancient hills, but you tell me I am on "unholy ground!" Stands there, hard by, a little place, painted in all gaudy colours, in honour of a woman—blessed among women—it is true. I step inside, look round, and behold, the place is full of dolls and toys! Am I to be told that this is God's house inside and that outside thereof it is not God's house? It seems monstrous! How can any rational man credit it?

Look into a little shell, full of "holy water." Go outside,—and see the foaming waters sparkling in the cascade or coming down from the clouds, and they say "There is no holiness in that!" It's a wicked notion—wicked, I say,—to think that your four walls make that place holy, and your incantations, and I know not what, consecrate it. But, where God is, outside there, with the storm and the thunder, the rain and the wind, it is not holy. Oh, sirs, I think the outside is the holier of the two! God was with the Covenanters amidst their glens, as gloriously as ever he manifested himself in cathedrals. God has been as earnestly sought, and as verily found in humble cottages where two or three have met to pray, as ever he has been in the largest tabernacle. The sailor's service read on the sea has been as acceptable to God as worship on land; and the gatherings of humble Romans in the Catacombs, or of the hunted fathers in the secluded dells of our own counties, were as much the gatherings of the true Church of God as any well-appointed assemblies can be in these peaceable times. Thus saith the Lord, "Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool. Where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?" Let us shake ourselves clear of all the idolatry and materialism that is so common in the age.

II. Now, secondly, let us muse awhile upon 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." Observe, beloved, that God chooses to dwell in men's hearts. He is a Spirit, and he takes our spirits to be the resting place of his Spirit. Will you note carefully, as respects the choice of hearts in which God would dwell, what is *not* said. It is not said, "I will dwell with men of elevated rank." I never find a single scripture that gives any special privileges to dignity, nobil-