

"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 have mine hand made, and all 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 v 1-2.

It commences with that highest authority, "Thus saith the Lord" and everything that has not this divine authority stamped upon it, is to no purpose, of no use. Not all our religion and every part of our experience, not all our preaching, nothing is of any authority except it has this stamped upon and made manifest in it, "Thus saith the Lord". And some of you need to feel that stamped upon everything that you hear that it may come into your heart with that heavenly authority. Because you feel the eternal importance of yourself, your soul, your being, which must live eternally and, therefore, it would be to no purpose who speaks if the Lord does not speak.

"Thus saith the Lord, the heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool". This is a declaration of the infinity of Jehovah. He fills immensity. Infinity cannot be contained in space,

"Eternity's His dwelling place,
And ever is His time".

and I do feel that to be given by the Spirit a right conception by faith of this eternal God, is the very basis and foundation of our hope, as we view that infinite Being in Incarnate God in whom is the fullness of the godhead bodily.

"The heayen is my throne". Not the visible heavens, they were His creation, as He says here "For all those things hath my hand made", but that heaven which is spoken of to the Hebrews. "He hath not entered into temples made with hands, but into heaven itself, there to appear before God for us". There have been a few who have been given a wonderful view by faith of that heaven. Stephen was, when he was dying. Blessed deathbed Stephen had. His enemies did not think so. Like his divine master, it did not appear to His enemies to be a very victorious death to see Him hanging apparently helpless upon the accursed tree, but O the victory that was accomplished there! So when they stoned Stephen it looked as though his marvellous defence of Christ and the truth was all defeated when those stones were hurled upon him and doubtless crushed his body. He had a blessed deathbed, he saw the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of Ggd. That is the heaven in the text. "The heaven is my throne" and there is only one throne upon which He can sit, and that is the throne of His own infinite Being, so that

"He sits on no precarious throne,
Nor borrows leave to be".

I believe a sober consideration of this great God will calm our fears and will enable us to be still in the midst of tempestuous motion.

"Thus saith the Lord, the heaven is my throne, the earth is my footstool". He has the earth under His feet. "He hath put all things under His feet", says Paul to the Hebrews, "Though we see not yet all things put under Him," so that all the turmoil and confusion and riots and raging of the heathen are all under His feet. "Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool". And this means something to a poor sinner, it is his confidence. A great mercy to be one of God's people. O the mystery that He Who thus dwells in eternity, in the ineffable light of His own Being, is unapproachable, yet made approachable as that glorious light shines through the Mediator Christ Jesus, to have any hope that He is in heaven on our behalf and that it was the coequal Father's coequal Son that came on our behalf and that we are made partakers of

the divine nature, and to hear His voice, "I go to prepare a place for you" and that place is in heaven. "Absent from the body, present with the Lord". "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him", for them that waiteth for Him. The preparation is in heaven. John had a glimpse of heaven. A blessed revelation he had. He saw those who had washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the lamb. Saw them round the throne of God worshipping day and night in His temple. But there is no temple there. The Lamb in the midst thereof is the temple, glorious Trinity.

"The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool." His divine sovereignty regulates everything here below. He has full control, no confusion with Him. He can never be disturbed. His purposes can never be frustrated. "Heaven is my throne". The earth and everything in it is beneath His feet, under my control. This means something to His people. Everything that is said in the Scriptures is for their comfort, it belongs to them. Even this infinite God Himself - "If children, then heirs, heirs of God". Possessors of God, "Joint heirs with Jesus Christ". So that everything that is beneath His feet is beneath their feet, for that reason "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." The only reason that can be is because, "Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool".

O what a glorious God He is ! Paul so believed in Him that he prayed that he might know the power of that resurrection, the fellowship of Thy sufferings, be made conformable unto Thy death. "Heaven is my throne, the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me". There is not one. There cannot be one built for Him, "He dwelleth not in temples made with hands". The temple was a type of Him. This is speaking of the infinite God. No house can be built for Him, there is no place that we can provide for the rest of Jehovah, and that brings us to this - "But to this man will I look." Although no house can be built for infinity, though there is no place of rest that can be provided for Him, "Yet to this man will I look". Speaking of these other things He says, "All those things hath mine hand made and all those things have been, saith the Lord". They are insufficient, and yet this great God declares that while there can be no house built for Him, neither any place for His rest, "Yet to this man will I look", and with that man will He dwell.

Now in the first place it is the Man Christ Jesus, "To this Man will I look". O it is a mystery indeed that this great incomprehensible God of whom we have made a few feeble remarks, that He should dwell in human nature. He would never look upon men were it not that He looked through the Man Christ Jesus, therefore the Psalmist prayed, "Behold, O God, our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed." This is the blessed Man then, in the first place, upon Whom God looks, and we are exhorted to look upon Him too. "Behold my servant, whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth. He looked upon Him. His divine Father looked upon Him when He was baptised. "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased". This is the man of His right hand, the Son of Man whom God made strong for himself. Amazing words concerning the mighty God, the eternal Son, the creator of all that is, that it could be possible to be said of Him, that He was made strong, seeing that He was omnipotent. How can omnipotence be made strong ? O the perfection of His human nature, the perfection of the Person that He condescended into in human nature! And that He was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death. This is the first Man. And when God looks upon Him, He looks upon His people in Him, and they look up unto God through Him.

" 'Tis He instead of me is seen
When I approach to God".

And when the divine Father looks upon His blessed Son, O what complacency, what love ! The Father loves the Son first. His love to the Son is infinite. It makes that an amazing statement of the

Lord Jesus, "As the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you, continue ye in my love". Does not this mean something to you who long for salvation? to realise that God the Father looks upon you through His Son. O blessed medium! blessed Mediator! Here divine justice looks in a way of love and mercy. If He looked upon us out of His Son He would look into us condemnation and destruction.

"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?" But to this man will I look." He looketh upon men and if men say I have sinned and perverted that which was right, then is He merciful unto him. O if the Lord ever looks upon us through His dear Son, it will be a look which will take into it all the virtue of the Lord Jesus in the glory of Emmanuel. I do not wonder that Solomon was brought to an amazement when he had this revelation of both these things in the text, this mighty God and poor men upon the earth. "Will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth?" "Behold the heaven, and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him, how much less this house which I have built?". Yet this is the point that is emphasised in the text, though His infinite Being cannot be contained, yet in the mystery of godliness, God the Son hath taken human nature and through the electing love of God and His infinite foreknowledge through the covenant of grace, where this blessed man was set up from everlasting to be the foundation of all the purpose and councils of God. He will dwell in every humble contrite heart. O the mystery of it! Paul writing to the Colossians says, this is the mystery, "God in you the hope of glory".

"But to this man will I look". And there is another way in which God looks to the man Christ Jesus, He looks to Him for satisfaction. He was His servant; an amazing thing, "Behold my servant". He came to serve, to accomplish a specific work given Him to do, and that work was the redemption of the church from all their sins, to deliver them from the power of darkness, from the power of satan, and translate them into the kingdom of God's dear Son, and so that really He was not only the Lord's servant, but He was the servant of the church, and therefore, this glorious One, heaven's highest glory, He was your servant if you belong to Him. O this is amazing to a sinner; who sees and feels his sinful insignificance. I have felt it, felt it lately, a nit, a speck, a sinful worm. O the two extremes are wonderful!

But He looks to this Man, Christ Jesus, for perfection. He prepared Him a body. You look at this - "Where is the house that ye build unto me?" says the Lord Jesus, "A body hast thou prepared me". Not a person. It was not a person that was born of the Virgin Mary, it was a nature. A thing. It was called a thing, a nature. And the eternal Son of God, He took into union with His divine Person a nature, a human nature. God contracted to a span. O the beauty, the glory of it! and in this nature he became a servant, the Lord's servant, the servant of the church! He said to His disciples, "I am among you as one that serveth". O sinner, if ever you get a sight of this glorious One as your servant, O it will indeed break your heart. It will give you to hate evil as you see the necessity of such a ransom, such a Mediator, such a Redeemer!

"But to this man will I look". And so, through the Redeemer, He looks upon His people. I wish I could speak of it as I ought. All the streams of salvation flow through the Person of Jesus Christ, and as they flow through Him so they partake of the merits both of His person and the efficacy and perfection of His work. They partake of the virtue of a fulfilled, honoured and satisfied law, so that when those streams reach a sinners heart, it reaches him full of Christ; all the properties of righteousness and holiness and infinite mercy and merit flow into the heart of a sinner when God looks upon Him through His beloved Son. And in the first place, the question is asked, "Where is the place of my rest?". Zephaniah takes this up really, "The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty, He will save, He will rejoice over thee with singing; He will rest in His love.". No place can be found for Him to rest in., but He rests in His people's hearts, He rests in His love, and this is spoken to of Zion, "this is my rest for ever, here will I dwell, for I have desired it". So here we see the

habitation of God on the earth, Zion, not bricks and mortar, but His peoples hearts. He dwells in the whole election of grace by His Spirit. "Here is my rest". Everything terminates in Zion with respect to salvation and it is eternal. All the wonderful works of God in creation must end, they must perish, but there is nothing, nothing whatever in the work of salvation that will perish. The work of salvation is exactly the same as the inheritance; it is incorruptible, undefiled and fadeth not away. Everything of the Holy Ghost in your heart, every effect of that work of the Holy Ghost is imperishable, undefilable and fadeth not away. What a rest. It has found its mark, if I might so speak, the purposes of God rest when they reach the heart of those for whom He died, and it is in that way it is written, "He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied." That satisfaction is a satisfaction of rest, or a rest of satisfaction. O blessed sinner upon whom the Lord looks and sees the work of His Holy Spirit, the effects of His own travail, of His own sufferings, of His own death, sees those effects in the salvation of a poor sinner. He is satisfied, He rests.

He rested really when He cried, "It is finished !" the work is done, salvation is complete, the church of God was redeemed, this is His rest. Nowhere else in the world. O amazing person in whose heart is such a kingdom, for it is a kingdom and when it comes there is a "Thus saith the Lord".

"But to this man will I look". Have not some of you longed for Him to look upon you ? David prayed, look Thou upon me as thou usest to do those that fear thy name". Whenever the Lord does anything it has an abiding effect. Persons can look upon you and it will have no effect. If the Lord looks upon you He will look into you His love, will look into you His mercy. When He looks upon you in trouble He will look deliverance into you. When He looks upon you in your difficulties He will look wisdom into you to direct your way. When He looks, He looks things into His people. When He speaks, what He says is accomplished in your heart, and you will know then the difference between a mere nominal reception of the word of the Gospel, and the power of truth in your heart.

"But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor". Not naturally poor necessarily, but poor in spirit, made poor by divine teaching. It is a character that is outstanding in the Word of God. The greatest preacher was the Lord Jesus Christ, He was anointed to preach and the first word in His sermon was this "Blessed are the poor in spirit" and I have often wondered why He should begin with the poor, but it gives the reason in the same verse, "Theirs is the kingdom of heaven". Do you desire it ? Do you need it ? He said to the Laodæcean church, "Ye think ye are rich, but ye know not that ye are poor, and miserable, and wretched, and blind and naked". Now this condition will be revealed to you those whom He intends to enrich with the kingdom of heaven. He does not come to rich people, He does not come to save righteous people, He comes to enrich the poor and to save the lost. If we are rich we don't need the Gospel, if we are not lost we don't need salvation, "But to this man will I look," a poor man, and if the Lord should call a millionaire by sovereign grace, he would know and feel and confess his poverty.

There is something very beautiful about the poor in spirit because they have a revelation of their need of something entirely different from nature. Are given to realise that if they were possessors of the world and all the gold and silver in it, that it would make no difference whatever to their nature. I do feel that this is a definite point in experience. The thing is, have we been brought to this poverty? that is to say, have we been brought to realise that if we do not possess Christ, if we are not made partakers of Christ, as the word is, that whatever we have we are eternally poor, and can say that there is worse than nothing there. To really be brought to that point that whatever I possess, whatever I attain to naturally, without grace, without salvation, it is worse, worse than nothing, poverty.

"To this man will I look". "Not many mighty, not many noble are called, but He looks to that man; the despised, the weak things,

things that are nought, to bring to nought things that are", this is the man to whom He looks. And there is something very living about this poverty. The whole earth will not satisfy that poverty.

"Give me Christ, or else I die".

It is a wonderful experience. You can look at all the world calls good or great; you may go round the shops, quite a lawful thing to do, look in the shop windows and see everything that attracts the human heart, there may be times, I do not say every time, but you look at all the things that attract nature, and you will find this will come up to the top, "O that I knew where I might find God", you turn your back upon it, you shut your eyes to all the wealth of Brighton and say, "Thou, O Christ, art all I want", without Thee, I am empty poor, miserable, blind and naked.

"To this man will I look". To that man, is there such a man here ? brought to spiritual poverty ? . O how the unsearchable riches of Christ do sparkle in the eyes of faith of a poor man. "He raiseth the poor from the dust, lifteth the beggar from the dunghill, that He may set him among princes, even the princes of His people and cause him to inherit the throne of glory. O Christ is precious !

May He give you that blessed poverty and give us to know a union with Him, for though He was rich yet He became poor that poor sinners might be made rich in Him.

Amen.

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