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## Pentecost

*"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come then were all with one accord in one place"-Acts 2:1*

THE ORIGINAL national festivals established by the Mosaic law were three in number "Three times in the year all thy males shall appear before the Lord thy God in the place which He shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles; and they shall not appear before the Lord empty; every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord thy God which He hath given thee." (Deut. 16:16, 17.) The same three festivals are elsewhere prescribed. (See Exod. 23:14-17; 34:18, 22, 23; Lev. 23.) And although other festivals were added in later times, it is to the deep religious character of these three that we attribute the salutary influence which fostered the spirit of unity amongst the Hebrew people.

The second of these great national festivals was that known to us by the name of the feast of Pentecost. In the law of Moses it is called "the feast of the harvest, the first-fruits of thy labors"; also "the **feast of weeks**"; that is, the feast celebrated the day after the completion of seven weeks from the second day of the Passover, when the sheaf of the first-fruits of the harvest was presented before the Lord (Lev. 23:15); in other words, the feast occurring fifty days after the second day of the Passover. Hence its later Hebrew name, day of **fifty**, which becomes in Greek, day of the **Pentecost** (Greek, "**pentekoste**," fifty). - See Exod. 23:16; Lev. 23:15-21; Num. 28:26-31; Deut. 16:9-12.

The day of Pentecost was properly the celebration of the close of the harvest of wheat and barley. As a sheaf of the ripening harvest had been presented at the sanctuary on the second day of the Passover, as an acknowledgment that it was God's gift, and as such belonged to Him, so now two wave-loaves of fine flour, made from the gathered harvest and baked with leaven, were presented before Jehovah. This was the distinguishing rite of the feast. The loaves were made with leaven because they were not intended for the altar, but were a thanksgiving offering for God's bounty in furnishing food for His people. At the same time the priests were commanded to offer seven lambs of the first year, one bullock, and two rams, as a burnt-offering, with the customary meat

and drink offerings also one kid of the goats for a sin-offering, and two lambs of the first year as a peace-offering. On the same day was a holy convocation, and all servile labor was forbidden. It was a joyous festival to the Lord, every one being enjoined to bring with him a free-will offering, according as God had blessed him, and to eat it at the sanctuary with his children, his servants, the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow.

The Jews also called it "the feast of the joy of the law," as occurring, according to their tradition, on the very day when the law was given from Mount Sinai, the fiftieth of the Exodus, from the night of the first Passover. It must be acknowledged, however, that this cannot be clearly made out from the sacred record, nor is there any reference to such coincidence in the Old Testament. God, however, honored the day in a preeminent manner by choosing it as the time for the gift of the holy spirit, and thus for the inauguration of the Christian dispensation. The Jewish tradition, nevertheless, does beautifully cause the feast of Pentecost to associate the old dispensation of the law with the new dispensation of the Gospel; the organization of the Old Testament church under Moses with a partial ministry of the spirit, with its reorganization under the apostles with the fulness of the holy spirit.

### Waiting for the Promise

It was on this day that we find the disciples, in the words of our text, gathered "with one accord in one place," and thus included probably not only the apostles but also the one hundred and twenty mentioned in Acts 1:15. Ten days before, the apostles had witnessed the ascension of Him whom they loved. During the forty days since His resurrection, through His various manifestations, they had gradually realized His change from human to the divine nature. He was raised from the dead a life-giving spirit-being (1 Cor. 15:45) and was no longer a man, of the earth, earthy. He was no longer human in any sense or degree, but the full implications of His change were as yet unperceived by the disciples, as we note from their question recorded in Acts 1:6. True, He had already breathed on them, saying, "Receive ye the holy spirit." (John 20:22.) We may not speak with certainty as to the meaning of this, but the relationship was incomplete according to the plan and purpose of God, for He soon "commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith He, ye have heard of Me." (Acts 1:4; Luke 24:49.) The "promise of the Father" was of the spirit, but evidently concerning that yet unexperienced ministry of the spirit coming "upon" them for power. With this parting instruction, the Son of God was received from their sight, nevermore to be seen until that happy day, "face-to-face in all His glory."

And now for ten days they had "continued with one accord in prayer and supplication," - awaiting that they knew not. Of the place where they had assembled, nothing is known. "Commentators have been much divided in their conjectures about it. Some have supposed it was in the upper room mentioned (Acts 1:13); others, that it was a room in the temple; others, that it was in a synagogue; others, that it was in the promiscuous multitude that assembled for devotion in the courts of the temple." As to the day, "it has by many been supposed that this took place on the first day of the week, that is, on the Christian Sabbath. But there is a difficulty in establishing this. There was probably a difference among the Jews themselves on this subject. The law said that they should reckon seven Sabbaths, that is, seven weeks **from the morrow** after the **Sabbath**. (Lev. 23:15.) By this Sabbath the Pharisees understood the **second day** of the Passover, on whatever day of the week it occurred, which was kept as a holy assembly, and might be called a Sabbath. But those Jews who insisted on a literal interpretation of the Scriptures, maintained that by the Sabbath here was meant the usual Sabbath, the seventh day of the week. Consequently, with them the clay of Pentecost always occurred on the first day of the week; and if the apostles fell in with their views, the day was fully come on what is now the Christian Sabbath. But if the

views of the Pharisees were followed, and the Lord Jesus had with them kept the Passover on Thursday, as many have supposed, then the day of Pentecost would have occurred on the Jewish Sabbath, that is on Saturday. It is impossible to determine the truth on this subject. Nor is it of much importance." - Barnes' "Notes on Acts."

## The Spirit's Descent

And now while the disciples were thus gathered, having given themselves entirely to the business of devotion, "suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the holy spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the spirit gave them utterance."

It burst upon them at once. Though they were waiting for the descent of the spirit, yet it is not probable that they expected it in this manner. As this was an important event, and one on which the welfare of the Church depended, it was proper that the gift of the holy spirit should take place in some **striking** manner, one which even their physical senses, such as sight or hearing, could attest so as to convince their own minds that the promise was fulfilled, and so as deeply to impress others with the greatness and importance of the event. The sound appeared to rush down from the sky. It was fitted, therefore, to attract their attention no less from the direction from which it came than on account of its suddenness and violence. Wind in the sacred Scriptures is often put as an emblem of a divine influence. It is invisible, yet mighty. In this place the sound as -of a gale was emblematic of the mighty power of the spirit, and of the great effects which its coming would accomplish among men. It does not appear that there was any actual wind; all might have been still; but the sudden sound was **like** such a sweeping tempest. It was the **sound**, and not the **wind**, that filled the house. And it is this which makes the miracle really far more striking than the common supposition makes it to have been. A tempest might have been terrific. A mighty wind might have alarmed them. But there would have been nothing unusual or remarkable in it. Such things often occurred; and the thoughts would have been directed, of course, to the storm as an ordinary, though perhaps alarming occurrence. But when all was still, when there was no storm, no wind, no rain, no thunder, such a rushing sound must have arrested their attention, and directed all minds to so unusual and unaccountable an occurrence.

The "cloven tongues like as of fire" were first seen by them in the room before they rested on the heads of the disciples. Perhaps the fire appeared at first as scintillations of flame, of slender and pointed appearance, moving irregularly around the room until it became fixed on their heads. The word "tongue" occurs often in the Scriptures to denote the member which is the instrument of taste and speech, and also to denote language or speech itself. The common opinion is that these tongues, or flames, were, each -one of them, split, or forked, or cloven. But this is not the sense of the expression. It means that they were separated or divided one from another; not one great flame, but broken up, or cloven into many parts; and probably moving without order in the room. lithe Syriac it is: "And there appeared unto them tongues which divided themselves, like fire, and sat upon each of them." The old Ethiopic version reads it: "And fire, as it were, appeared to them, and sat on them." The fire, in the form of a gentle flame, rested upon the head of each one. This evinced that the prodigy was directed to **them**, and was a very significant emblem of the promised descent of the holy spirit. After the rushing sound, and the appearance of the flames, they could not doubt that here was some remarkable interposition of God. The appearance of fire, or flame, has always been regarded as a most striking emblem of the Divinity, and was thus used on several occasions, as recorded in the Old Testament. And now to the disciples, the tongues would be emblematic of: first, God's presence and power; and second, of the diversity of languages which they were about to be able to utter.

## **"They Were Filled with the Holy Spirit"**

To be filled with any thing is a phrase denoting that all the faculties are pervaded by it, engaged in it, or under its influence. Acts 3:10, "were filled with wonder and amazement"; Acts 5:17, "filled with indignation"; Acts 13:45, "'filled with envy"; verse 52, "filled with joy and the holy spirit." The disciples were entirely under the sacred influence of the power of God, which revealed itself in the miraculous ability to speak languages which they had not before learned. No such outpouring of the divine spirit had ever occurred before as respects the children of Ad-am. Indeed, no such new 'begetting on God's part was possible until first the sin-offering had been made and accepted. The phenomenon itself witnessed the acceptance of the merit of the great antitypical High Priest, who ten days before had ascended into the antitypical Most Holy. (See Heb. 9:24.) It is probable that this great work is referred to in Revelation 8:1-5. - See "The Revelation of Jesus Christ," R. E. Streeter, Volume I, page 367.

The only thing corresponding to this descent of the holy spirit was that upon our Lord at the time of His consecration at baptism in Jordan. He there received the holy spirit in the same sense but "without measure," He being perfect; those who received this holy spirit at Pentecost received it by measure, that is, in limited degree. (John 3:34.) Although they were all "filled" with the spirit, yet, because of weakness and imperfections of their organisms, they could only receive limited measures-these differing one from the other according to natural temperaments, etc. Fifty days previously, the resurrection of Jesus, which revealed His acceptableness to God, occurred on the same day as the offering of the barley sheaf of firstfruits, which typified Christ our Lord, as "the first fruits of them that slept." (1 Cor. 15:20.) And now God manifests His acceptance of the Church, the body of Christ, by this remarkable manifestation of divine approval, by the outpouring of His holy spirit upon the waiting disciples who represented the Church collectively. And this on the very day that the two wave-loaves were offered in the temple, picturing the presenting of the Church before God, "a kind of first-fruits of His creatures" (James 1:18), and its acceptance through the merit of the great High Priest.

## **Various Manifestations of the Spirit**

God's holy spirit had indeed been manifested in various ways previously, but all of them differed from this manifestation. For instance, it was the holy power of God which moved upon the waters in connection with the world's creation. (Gen. 1:2.) Again, as the Apostle Peter declares, "holy men of old spoke and wrote as they were moved by the holy spirit"; mechanically. (2 Pet. 1:21.) He further explains that what they spoke and wrote they did not comprehend, because their utterances and writings were not for themselves but for us of the Gospel Age. We are, therefore, to recognize the fact that the spirit-dispensation had its beginning in Jesus, when He was thirty years of age; but so far as others were concerned, its beginning was in the sanctified ones at Pentecost, as recorded in this lesson. Neither are we to think that this Pentecostal outpouring requires a repetition, for the holy spirit thus once poured upon the Church was to abide, to continue, with the Church, not to be withdrawn and poured out afresh repeatedly. A collective anointing was here indicated, and its authority extends to the last called one of this Gospel Age even "like precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard; that went down to the skirts of his garments." - Psa. 133:2.

It was appropriate, that the giving of the holy spirit should be with a certain outward demonstration and manifestation; not merely to impress and convince the apostles and the early Church, but also for the benefit of those who should subsequently come into relationship with the Church. Faith must have a ground to rest upon, an assurance that there was at the beginning such a direct recognition of the Savior's sacrifice and of the divine acceptance of the consecrated ones

who trusted in Him. The reality and certainty of this miracle of tongues is strongly attested by the early triumphs of the Gospel. That the Gospel was early spread over all the world, and that, too, by the apostles of Jesus Christ, by men of Galilee, is the clear testimony of history. They preached it in Arabia, Greece, Syria, Asia, Persia, Africa, and Rome. Yet how could this have been affected without a miraculous power of speaking the languages used in all those places? It requires the toil of many years to speak in foreign languages; and the recorded success of the Gospel is one of the most striking attestations to the fact of the miracle that could be conceived.

Under the influence of this remarkable power from God, we find Peter, who in fear had denied his Master, now powerfully moved, in the very city of Christ's crucifixion and in the presence of his enemies, to boldly proclaim the Word of truth. Here it was that he used one of the two "keys" entrusted to him (the second at Cornelius' conversion, three and one-half years later, the first of Gentile believers) and moved thousands to acknowledge Christ. And ever since, from its "birthday" at Pentecost, the true Church has continued to manifest God's power and glory. Some have concluded that there were times when the holy spirit was not in the world at all, but this was because they were looking for it in a wrong direction or under wrong conditions. At times the nominal church of outward professors has been so overgrown with the "tare" element that the true "wheat" could not readily be "discerned, yet we are confident that the Lord never left Himself without a witness, and that even in the darkest hour of the Dark Ages there were some of God's true people in the world; some representatives of the body of Christ; some, therefore, possessing the holy spirit; some who therefore constituted the salt of the earth and the lights of the world, even though the darkness was great around them and its influence so powerful that no record of the true Church is to be found, but only the records of the apostasy.

### **Fruits Superior to Gifts**

The fact that the holy spirit upon the disciples was accompanied by miraculous manifestations or gifts, tongues, etc., does not imply any greater favor of God toward the primitive Church, which had those gifts, than toward the Lord's people of a later day, after those gifts had ceased; for, as the apostle points out, it was possible for some to have those gifts without having much of the real spirit of the Lord. He says, "Though I speak with the tongues 'of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. Though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am **nothing**." (1 Cor. 13:1, 2.) We are, therefore, to esteem love for the Lord and for the brethren and for the neighbor-active love, which does, as well as wishes and says-to be the best evidence of an acceptable condition with the Lord, the best evidence of a filling with **His holy spirit**, a far better evidence than the possession, of the "gifts" described. Far greater, far more precious gifts of the spirit. then, are the gifts which the spirit develops in us -- the fruits of the spirit -- joy, peace, faith, love, etc.

. Jesus has ascended to His Father, but this other "paraklete" (comforter) has come to dwell in His people forever. The holy spirit's work is threefold. First, with reference to Christ's immediate disciples, it was the **revealer-Jesus** had instructed and opened truth to their minds, but their minds were weak, their memories treacherous. The holy spirit comes to bring to mind Jesus' works, to strengthen memory, to fill them with the truth thus spoken in all its vividness and power, and open the true meaning of what was obscure and dark. Nor is this all. There were many things Jesus had for them, which they could not bear, were not able to receive, before His departure. These the spirit should make known to them; these things to come it should unfold to them. This promise is the foundation on which; the, whole New Testament rests as the inspired truth of God. They spoke, they wrote the things pertaining to Christ and His Kingdom, as they were moved by the holy spirit.

The second office is that of the **convictor and** regenerator. It is to convince the world of sin, of righteousness, of judgment; and as it convinces and convicts, it is to renew and lead them to Jesus. On the day of Pentecost this power was demonstrated; thousands were pricked in their hearts: thousands believed in Jesus. Ever since, its presence has been revealed in conviction and conversion. Religion advances; Jesus is received; the Gospel is victorious only as the holy spirit brings the truth home to the hearts of men. And this tremendous power will be recognized in the glorious time near at hand when God shall pour out His spirit upon all flesh, in the times of restitution long promised.

The third office is that of **quickener, guide, and comforter**. To the soul penitent and believing, this blessed spirit comes and quickens it to see and feel the fulness, and richness, and power of the truth as it is in Jesus; stimulates it to sacrifice and labor; excites to prayer; strengthens against temptation; supports and comforts amid trial, sorrow, and death. Jesus sends this divine spirit, in fulfillment of His promise to work in His Church and thus completes the cycle of redemption.

"Our blest Redeemer, ere He breathed  
His tender last farewell,  
A Guide, a Comforter bequeathed  
With us to dwell.

"And every virtue we possess,  
And every victory won,  
And every thought of holiness  
Are' His alone."

## Our Brother Philip the Evangelist

*"And the next day we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea, and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was one of the seven, and abode with him." - Acts 21:8.*

WE, AS Bible Students, have been familiar with the Book of Acts for many years, and yet many of us still think of it as only a record of the doings of the apostles during the time when the Church was being established.

We are filled with astonishment and admiration at their bravery in witnessing a good confession before many. This is all true and proper, but the Book of Acts may be much more than this to the Church if we bear in mind that the people mentioned are **our** brothers and sisters.

As we read the names of many saints recorded by Luke in the Book of Acts and often mention by Paul in his letters to the churches, let us remember that if we are faithful unto death, we shall have the privilege of knowing these personally and shall be with them in glory. We wonder if we forget their names because they are difficult to pronounce or because we have not studied enough for them to really live in our thoughts, **as real as those! in the Church today.**

This does not mean we should spend time reading legendary tales, which have little foundation in truth, but if we piece together the fragmentary sketches we have in God's Word, we may get a fairly clear idea of the personality of some.

Let us consider Philip the Evangelist for a little while and draw what lessons we may from what is recorded of him.

We may divide the record into two parts: one in conspicuous service and one in practical obscurity.

His name would lead us to believe he was not a Palestinian Jew, but had been born in a Gentile land, and that his habits and associations were much like those of the Gentiles. The probability of this is increased as we note the record states in Acts 6:1-6 that the Hellenists, or Grecian Jews, were murmuring that partiality was being shown the Palestinian Jews in the distribution of goods, then practised in the church.

The apostles, much too busy to attend to this dispute, wisely suggested that the church appoint a committee of seven and these were to see that all were fairly dealt with. No doubt, the dissatisfied ones would choose seven whose viewpoint would cause justice to be done the Grecian Jews. We read that six of them **were** Grecian Jews and only one a proselyte of Antioch.

There is a valuable lesson in this for us as to the way in which the organization of the early Church was evolved. A committee was appointed simply as the easiest way of getting over a difficulty and restoring the confidence of a suspicious group in the church. Their office died out, apparently, when the need had passed, which was possibly soon after this time, when the church was scattered after the stoning of Stephen.

Philip, was among those who fled from Jerusalem after Stephen's martyrdom, and finding himself in Samaria, proclaimed unto the Samaritans the Christ, as we read in Acts 8:4-14.



His brethren had appointed him to act as almoner, but now this step is taken spontaneously. Perhaps he remembered the words of his risen Lord when about to ascend to heaven, who said, "Ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in **Samaria**, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth."

Here he was, among his ancestral enemies; and noting their great need of Christianity, he did not wait for the apostles' sanction but planted the Church among them. He has the noble distinction of being the very first Christian to cross the boundary of Judaism and give the light to Samaria. His success in making many converts was so great that Peter and John came to lend their authority as apostles and pray that the holy spirit be given. Now this brings *tip* an intensely interesting point, from which we may again draw a precious lesson.

Just before our Lord's death (Luke 9:51-55) when He was on the way to Jerusalem, He sent His disciples into a village of the Samaritans to make ready for Him. "And they [the Samaritans] did not receive Him, because His face was as though He would go to Jerusalem. And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, 'Lord, wilt Thou that we command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, even as Elias did?'" Here is a still more striking manifestation of the spirit of intolerance. They would invoke the fire of heaven upon those who did not receive Christ. They were quite in earnest, too. The intolerance of the ignorant Samaritans is met by intolerance fiercer than their own.

But He turned and rebuked them and said, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of, for the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." He uttered no reproof or threat to the Samaritans. He bided His time. His Kingdom had not yet come. But as He turned away, grieved by the bigoted sectarian spirit of the Samaritans, grieved still more by the fierce intolerance of His own disciples, did He not find comfort in looking to the time when the Samaritans would receive Him? And now through the ministry of Philip -- "Samaria received the Word of God."

This spirit of intolerance, so familiar in our own age, was positively forbidden by Jesus. The Apostle John told the Master of one who was casting out devils in His name, "and he followeth not with **us**, and we forbade him because he followeth not with us." Men are not content to serve Christ in their own way, but must forbid others. It is not to be borne if one is not of our church, or of our school of interpretation, etc.; it matters nothing that devils **should be** cast out-so long as he is not one of us. Now if **ever** this could have been right, it would have been so in the case of the apostles, for they had been called and sent forth by Christ Himself. If ever any body of men could have been justified in deeming that the truth was not to be found outside their own body, it was the apostles. They thought so too, yet they were wrong. And Jesus said, "Forbid them not." Let us be filled with the spirit of the Master.

But now the angel of the Lord came and said to Philip (Acts 8:26-40), "Go down to Gaza, which is desert." Why should Philip be called to leave a successful work for the Lord, we wonder? But Philip does not question His Lord. Leaving Samaria, he went with sealed orders. What faith and obedience!

We are all familiar with the story of the Ethiopian chamberlain, seated in his chariot and reading the prophecy of Isaiah aloud, struggling to understand what it all meant and to whom the glorious prophecies referred. **Now** Philip knew what the Lord wanted of him, and so joined himself to the chariot and preached Jesus, elucidating Isaiah's many references to the Christ.

What does it matter to one who loves Jesus and loves to tell the story whether they are telling it to many Samaritans or one Ethiopian? Doing the Father's will was Philip's great objective, and he was faithful to his privileges.

But now, with no explanation given us, Philip's public ministry seems to be over. We read that he preached the Gospel to all the cities till he came to **Caesarea**. And apparently he settled there, for we hear no more of him for about twenty years. During this time the Church grew and expanded, but just why Philip was left in obscurity and Paul given the privilege of carrying the message to Asia and Europe, we shall not understand this side of heaven.

We wonder why Cornelius was not told to send for Philip, who was in the same city as himself, and why it was needful to bring Peter all the way from Joppa. We wonder why Barnabas at Antioch never thought of going southwards to seek for Philip instead of northwards to Tarsus for a much younger and less tried disciple -- even Paul, upon whom the Church still looked with fear and suspicion?

But Philip leaves no record of resentment or bitterness. His Lord knew best. And does He not? We have one more glimpse of him in Acts 21:8, where Luke speaks of him as the "evangelist." Still a preacher of good tidings, having four daughters who were "prophetesses." Let us all learn the precious lesson Philip exemplified: "willing should He not require us, in silence to wait on Him still."

Our last picture of him is in his own home, now an old man. And Paul and his companions, hurrying to be in time for the feast at Jerusalem, slacken their pace at Caesarea, for they found they had some days to spare and Philip's love and experience would be helpful. How they would talk together! How much Philip could tell Paul of the early days! One of Paul's companions heard all this talk and gathered perhaps much of the material for the first chapters of Acts from the old man. Philip would perhaps never guess that the "beloved physician" was recording his patient, unnoticed toil and pioneer work among the Samaritans for all who should read the account down through the age.

"When the Bride of Christ is gathered  
In that city pure and fair,  
May I be among the number  
To meet my friend and brother there."

- *Contributed.*

## Temples We May Build for God

*"But will God indeed dwell on earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee; how much less this house that I have built." - 1 Kings 8:27.*

MAGNIFICENT of all earthly temples built for the worship of God was the one erected by Solomon, which he was dedicating with the prayer of which our text is a part. The cost of its construction was great, and the beauty of its architecture and furnishings beyond compare. In succeeding generations many and varied have been the temples built wherein it was hoped God would come to dwell and bless His people, and that within these places, of worship devout souls might find comfort and enlightenment amid life's complex problems, struggles, and suffering. Graciously indeed has the One whom the heavens cannot contain condescended to meet His children in the house of praise and prayer. How many can testify that within such dedicated environment "heaven comes down our souls to greet, while glory crowns the mercy-seat."

But though Solomon's temple was man's greatest creation as a house, or dwelling-place, for God among His people, how clearly he recognized that notwithstanding all its wealth of material, and all its equipment for worship, yet all its comeliness must fade before the effulgent glory of the divine presence. With what becoming humility, therefore, is it dedicated to God. Instinctively Solomon -realizes how far beyond his highest ideals and conceptions of beauty in architecture is the glory of the God whose power and greatness comprehends the utmost bounds of eternity, and thus he is made to inquire in humility, "But will God indeed dwell on earth? behold the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee; how much less this temple that I have built." Oh that we too might be made deeply conscious of how far short of God's grace and glory we have come in the temples of thought, viewpoints, and designs we have built around Him whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain. Happy the one whose highest conceptions of God still leave him asking this question of Solomon.

But God did condescend to dwell in the temple Solomon built. The mercy-seat which had long abode in the holy of holies of the wilderness tabernacle, was duly transferred to the place prepared for it in the completed temple, and then it was that "the Lord said unto him, I have heard thy prayer and thy supplication, that thou hast made before Me; I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, to put My name there forever; and Mine eyes and Mine heart shall be there perpetually." - 1 Kings 9:3.

What an auspicious beginning! What sublime grace on the part of the great I AM. What a promise of unending felicity, contingent, of course, on the obedient devotion of king and people. If obedient, then toward this center God's eyes and heart would ever be directed, and out from this hallowed place would flow in full measure all the blessing for which He had been asked by Solomon. Oh the blessings Israel forfeited through unbelief and disobedience. How regrettable that in the history of both the typical and antitypical people of God there are so many long chapters of failure, so many departures from the path of fervent love and obedience, bringing the consequent closing of the windows of heaven's special blessing. How many have begun devoutly energized in heart and mind, with love for God fervently felt and expressed, but alas, "first love" dies out and ardent zeal departs. Well indeed have we been told, "We are made partakers of Christ, **if we hold the beginning** of our confidence **stedfast unto the end.**" - Heb. 3:14.

Every building erected in the thought and character, individual or collective, must sooner or later be tried by fire. "The day shall declare it," says the apostle. How is it, then, with each of us? Have

we been building, ceaselessly building with God? Will we be found walking in pride of heart over a building we have erected, one of religious belief and service in which we boast and trust, or will we have been constantly humbled like Solomon with the realization that God has been worthy of so much more than we have wrought? We have indeed been "workers together with God in a marvelous way, 'gilt aside from His wonderful grace, making our work acceptable through Christ, how ready we are to confess ourselves "unprofitable servants." And when we think of the temples of thought within the limited bounds of which we had environed the God of eternal being and inexpressible glory, how deeply we recognize the inadequate scope of our highest comprehensions. Truly, "as the heavens are high above the earth," so are God's thoughts and ways higher than ours, and yet in His grace He delights to dwell "with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." - Isa. 57:15.

### **A Building that "Groweth into an Holy Temple"**

Every alert mind, active along proper lines, is constantly building mental structures, for "as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." In Christian experience this is profoundly true. Structures of "wood, hay, and stubble," or of "gold, silver, and precious stones" are being built. Builders we are, either progressing upward or gravitating downward. "Where there is no vision, the people perish," is a fact beyond question. Spiritual paralysis and blindness, inability to "see afar off," are inevitable if there be no inner urge to press on and on to a more perfect attainment in both grace and knowledge. The babe in Christ, as a builder of mental conceptions of God, will build around Him such ideas and ideals as comport with his immature powers- of discernment. It will be as Paul has said, "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child. (1 Cor. 13:11.) There will be vision, but immature at best. With the babe in Christ it may well be as with the one whose eyes were opened gradually by Jesus. His first vision was obscure, portraying things all out of proportion so that men appeared "as trees walking." It required the second touch by the hand of Jesus in order that the vision might be made clear. None are as able to appreciate this as a fact in Christian life as those who have gone on in the desire for maturity, "leaving the first principles and going on to perfection." As such look back to earlier years, how very circumscribed now appear conceptions of God at one time considered altogether complete. How crude the earlier part of our building-work now appears to us. The narrow limitations of our thought-temple in which we had environed "the high and lofty One who inhabiteth eternity," how dwarfed they were. How humbly we now look up to God confessing it so true: "The heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee," then how much less the temple of thought I had constructed in my immaturity of mind.

Thank God, these babes are precious in His sight. For them the Good Shepherd has a special love and care. To stumble "one of these little ones" is a very reprehensible thing in the sight of heaven. Yet how much all this tenderness and care must change if so be the minds and hearts of such fail to hunger after God's greatest benefits. Well indeed that they hear and heed the apostle's, warning, "Quench not the spirit," lest they be of such as "receive the grace of God in vain," for the tenor of all Scripture addressed to God's children is: "Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward." (Exod. 14:15.) Therefore, not to keep on building higher in the realms of spiritual life grieves the heart of God. How blest, then, are the ears of those who have "caught the song of saints on higher ground," and are thereby inspired to keep on building upward into the heavenlies in Christ Jesus.

## Temple Windows Looking to Far-stretching Lands

It is a truth to say, "God's promises are His enablings." Certainly a promise made by God' is the best guarantee that the thing promised may be confidently looked for. Was it not so with Abraham? He believed that what God had promised He was abundantly able to perform. Likewise what God has promised us may be taken as a pledge of His enabling us to eventually receive its fulfillment. Then how full of meaning is this promise: "Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty; they shall behold a far stretching land." (Isa. 33:17, R. V.) Faithful ones of a former dispensation must look "afar off" to see their heritage as a future possession. Nevertheless, they did see "a far stretching land," and rejoiced to see it and were made glad thereby. Think, then, how differently it is with us in the hour in which we live today. Never before were the words so true, "The night is far spent the day is at hand." To waiting saints of this sublime hour there is the growing conviction that home is nearly reached. Nearer than it has been before, and of which we sing:

"O! that home of the soul! In my visions and dreams,  
Its bright jasper walls I can see,  
Till I fancy but thinly the veil intervenes  
Between that fair city and me."

When adventurous men dreamed of a continent far away across the wide Atlantic, it was to them "a land very far off," but when, under the undiscouraged spirit of Columbus with his reiterated command, "Sail on, sail on," his ship drew near a continent's shore line, floating debris assured him the land of his dream was thrillingly near. Soon its mighty rivers revealed that he had indeed found "a far stretching land." It is even so with heaven-bound voyagers now. Is the Lord not permitting many signs, many indications particularly intended for His own, by which we may surely believe our eternal homeland is near. Blessed streams of light and joy are these, whereby Zion is now made glad. Every prophetic milestone passed marks a growing nearness to home. And how possible it is in times like these, when prophetic forecasts seem fulfilling so rapidly that not a few important mile-stones have been passed quickly and unnoticed, that we may be even nearer the end than we think. Before us stretch in ever clearer outlines the heavenly land of the far reaching distances. A homeland filled with the most sublime joys of personal intimacy in all that will be the peculiar associations of the divine family of heaven. Ere long we shall enter upon a rapturous ministry which defies our imagination to conceive or our tongue to express. Dim outlines we can indeed sketch by faith, and these, though seen as "in a glass darkly," yet they stir our hearts with ecstasy. And the complete picture who can paint? The half was never told. Thinking on these things, we rear our temple of thought, lifting up higher and higher the meditative structure; and yet God reveals by His spirit that we have still built far lower than the reality will be. What revelations He gives us. What answering witness of His spirit with ours He grants to us even here, ere home is finally gained.

"He lifts me to the golden doors;  
The flashes come and go;  
All heaven bursts her starry floors,  
And strows her lights below,  
And deepens on and up! the gates  
Roll back, and far within  
For me the Heavenly Bridegroom waits,  
To make me pure of sin.  
The sabbaths of eternity,  
One sabbath deep and wide  
A light upon the shining sea  
The Bridegroom with His bride."  
Our Temple of First Love

Within the inner heart of the Christian there must ever be present the whisper of the indwelling Lord, "It is not yours I want, but you." Only when this is recognized by us and our spirit responds to Him saying, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee," only then is the temple of the heart acceptable to Him. And what a wonderful experience this "first love" for Christ is. How good it is to hear the spirit urging us to--

"Fling wide the portals of your heart; Make it a temple set apart From earthly use to heaven's employ, Adorned with prayer, and love, and joy.

"Redeemer, come! I open wide  
My heart to Thee; here, Lord, abide;  
Let me Thy constant presence feel,  
Thy grace and love in me reveal."

A first love temple indeed! But what are its dimensions? "It is love for the Lord Himself -- love for what He has done for us, and love for His own glorious personality which reflects the divine attributes. This, the supreme and highest form of love, finds in Him its full and complete satisfaction. It finds expression in our desires and aims to please Him who first loved us, and 'whom having not seen, we love.'"

But even here progress should not end. Indeed, how could it ever end? Rather it is "richer, fuller, deeper, Jesus' love is sweeter, sweeter as the years go by." Our meditative temple should be filled with an ever increasing adoration. True it is, however much we have visualized of His preciousness to us, and however greatly we have loved our Lord, yet it is ours to confess, "The heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain Thee; how much less this temple that I have built." Oh how comforting the assurance that He understands and knows the mind of the spirit within us in its "groanings which cannot be uttered." "By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name." - Heb. 13:15.

### **"Lord, Lead Thou Me On"**

Clearer vision ever comes to those who "follow on to know the Lord." How sad the life lacking the verification of this fact. Sad beyond expression is a life lived in professed relationship to Christ, and yet there is no experience of fresh, inspirations or new impulses. God did not intend it to be so. He calls us to a life into which there comes those clearer visions of grace, and an experience of sweeter fellowship with Himself, higher, richer than anything known before. Where, if not from His Word, comes the right to sing,

"Let every moment, as it flies,  
*Increase* Thy praise, *enhance* our joys,  
Till we are made to share Thy name,  
As bride of God's anointed Lamb."

Sad indeed is the state of one whose look seems always backward particularly sad at this late hour. Looking back to "good old days," which it would seem held the acme of joy, light, and fellowship for some, now all seems turned into a salty pillar because the look is backward rather than forward. They build far too low who forget that Christ is always leading His people ever forward into green pastures, and where the inexhaustible "still waters" are found. The realm of spiritual vision in which one abides habitually will be large or small according to his nearness or distance from God. He lets us build according to the degree of our hunger for Him and our willingness to delve deeper into His Word. In this aspect of Christian life the rule is: "He that

soweth sparingly shall also reap sparingly." We are left to sail our vessel around in shallow waters and find accordingly, or to launch out into the deep to be overjoyed with the abundant treasure with which the Lord fills our nets. We may live and move within our preferred close girding horizons of service and fellowship, thinking to people heaven with our selection of approved characters, "wheat and tares" though they be; - seeing nothing of service worthy of God's smile other than that performed in our chosen field, and done according to our mode of ministry. Oh, how poor a temple is this frame of mind for Him whom the heaven of heavens can not contain."

Only those who progress from grace to grace, from initial and immature stages in Christian life, can in the real sense be the temples of the holy spirit God **seeks**. He seeks those who are continually growing into His largeness- of vision, and into Christ's depth of devotion to God's all comprehensive plan of redemption. Are we thus building? Are we following the same divine specifications, tracing out and faithfully conforming ourselves to the same deep, large, and beautiful lines of the perfect blue-print framed in the mind of the infinite God? Are we realizing increasingly new beauties, new and greater conceptions of Him whom the boundless "heavens" cannot contain, and as a result finding ourselves being enlarged thereby? Do, we find our horizons being pushed back again and again, just as the universe continues to expand before the far seeing eye of the modern telescope? This will surely be true of our vision and thus true of our -character-structure also if so be we have followed on to know the Lord. And how important it is that this should be our spiritual state now.

Have we not at last reached the very borderline between a present state where knowing in part is our portion, and that wonderful state where "face-to-face" with our Father we shall know perfectly? The very possibility makes it the more important that we look well to our building lest it be found all too easily swept away because we have built too low or built with unstable material. Let us then more and more cultivate the constructive habits of thought, building upward toward the glorious realities beyond the veil, where, because seated in heavenly places with Christ, all narrow horizons of earth disappear before the sweep of "a far stretching land" into which God leads His own. How vast and near that homeland should seem to us now. Truly we are nearing, not a strange unexplored land, but nearing our homeland. And having now reached its environs and approaching so near to its swinging portals, how we should meditate on these things and seek to live in these sublime purifying realms of holy meditation, building lofty thought temples which more nearly approximate the greatness of God's love and glory, and more fully comprehend our heavenly Bridegroom's preciousness and heaven's blessedness. If habitually we so build upward in a spiritual survey of the land toward which we journey, heaven will indeed "come down our souls to greet" and inspire, while deeper and yet deeper will become the heart's desire and joy to say,

"I want to scale the utmost height,  
And catch a gleam of glory bright;  
But still I'll pray till heaven I've found,  
Lord, lead me on to higher ground."

- Contributed by J. J. Balckburn

## The Deep Things of God

*"Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of Thy waterspouts." - Psa. 42:7.  
"The spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." - 1 Cor. 2:10.*

IN NATURE deep is continually calling unto deep. The depths of the clouds are calling to the depths of the sea; and the sea responds and permits the sun's rays to pick up water from its surface and carry it to the clouds, and thence by the winds to the thirsty land. It is true also when the waterspout strikes the ocean. It is a case of deep calling unto deep.

Then there are deep things in the tree that call to deep things in the soil and in the air. All the cells of the tree must be nourished, and consequently they call out for sustenance.

It is true in the realm of the intellect. The deep things of science call out to him who hath the depth of intelligence to appreciate them. The orbs of space and the vast inter-stellar spaces call out to the astronomer. Various laminated and fossiliferous deposits call out to the geologist. The aligned forces of gravity, heat, and electricity call out to the physicist. Atomic energy appeals to the chemist. The diseases that are deep seated in the human body call out to the pathologist and the therapist. Deep things of the mind invite the attention of the psychologist.

But the deepest of deep things are those things that are spiritually deep, and the deepest capacities are those that enable us to respond to the things of the spirit. "The spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God."

Truth is fact. Such fact may be self-evident, truism, or it may lie deep down. When James Watt saw the steam lifting the lid of the teakettle, he beheld a simple thing, and what millions of persons had seen before him. It took much searching in the realm of thought before the steam engine was invented as a result of discovering the expansive power of steam. Then came the further idea that ships might be propelled by steam, and Robert Fulton concentrated all his energies to bringing this to pass.

### Advanced Revelations

It is easy to permit ourselves to think that we have been given the last word of truth and that there is nothing else to be found out. This of course is a colossal mistake. Yet there are those who resent all advanced revelations. If one enjoys such revelations and is living close to the Lord, he will become a target for shafts of obloquy even from some whom he deemed were his friends. This is especially true if he is thoroughly honest and outspoken. It is not always wise to tell all that one knows. Jesus said, "I have many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now." There are occasions when it is good to be silent. Advanced truth can be received only by those whose minds have been prepared to receive it. If soil be not soft and porous, it will not absorb the rain. Truth cannot be forced on any one.

Sooner or later people will find their true level. The jackdaw in the peacock's feathers was only a jackdaw after all. Tares in the garb of wheat are still tares; and wolves in sheep's clothing are still wolves. The frog need not pretend that he can fly like the eagle; yet he is all right in the pond, which is where he belongs. That is a fact which he must see in order to be true to himself. At least, he must not desire to be elsewhere. Unless one has clear vision, he misses many things as he goes through life. "To be able to see that what is true is true, and what is false is false, is a



wonderful faculty to possess, and is one possessed by but few persons. This thought is expressed in Hebrews 5:14: "But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both [the real] good and [the real] evil." As, for instance, between sectarianism, and brotherly love and tolerance. By the majority of men truth is perceived when it is superficial and obvious, not that which is deep and hidden. Such recognize it when it is a fruit that hangs conspicuously on the bough; whereas the real truth seeker looks deeper. He knows that the most precious truth lies inside the nut, and that the nut has to be cracked before the kernel can be secured. The parables of Jesus usually have superficial meanings of moral and ethical worth, but contain hidden truths of still greater value, packed, like the kernel of a nut, inside the shell. "All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables, and without a parable spake He not unto them, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world." (Matt. 13:34, 35.) The deep things of God called to the deeps of the mind of our Lord; and His words have been calling to the deeps of the minds of His people throughout the age.

Some day, the deeps below calling to the deeps above, the ocean of divine love will roll over the world. But during the present time, that love has touched only certain individual lives, and this because there has been a calling and a response. "No man cometh unto Me except the Father which sent Me draw him," said the Master. But He also said, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls, for My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

### **The Call of God**

How different has been the call of God from every other call. He calls upon faith in the hearer to accept the evidences of faith upon His part, to step beyond the threshold of tangible and visible things, to recognize the fact that "things that are seen are temporal, but things that are not seen are eternal." Faith, therefore, is connected with the deep things of God. Love is another of the deep things of God. Has any one ever reached down to measure the depths of divine love? The cross of Jesus came the nearest to measuring this love.

"Measure the stars in the azure sky,  
Measure the boundless sea,  
But only Christ upon the cross  
Can measure God's love for thee."

### **If Jesus of Nazareth Came Today**

Jesus in person manifested divine love in its various elements. In the exercise of love He was humble, devout, simple, strong, calm, pure, synthetic, analytic, patient, poised, denunciatory of hypocrisy and sham. Had the world received the words of love that fell from the lips of Jesus, we should have had a new world ere this. But jealousy got the upper hand of love. And if Jesus were here to day, He would be as surely rejected as He was over nineteen centuries ago.

Over and over we observe that men do not care to think deeply, but prefer to take things at their face value, particularly in religious matters. To wear the spectacles of our grandfathers, or of trusted leaders, is much easier than to fully accept the invitation, "Come, let us reason together, saith Jehovah." "The spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." Ah yes, it is the possession of the spirit, and unreserved yielding to its leadings, that makes all the difference. He

who has the spirit is looking for treasure not to be found on the surface. With pickax, shovel, and spade, he gets off his coat and goes to work in the mines of God to find precious jewels.

### **Divine Knowledge**

How deep and vast must be the **knowledge** possessed by God. The world's knowledge changes. Take the so-called great scientists of past ages, and where do they stand today? Archimedes of Greece, where is he? Hippocrates, where is he? Ptolemy, what do his findings amount to in the scientific realm? "Whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away," said Paul. How true. Old encyclopedias have gone by the board. Their knowledge has been superseded by something more reliable. Nobody wants last week's newspaper. The old-time coach has given place to the automobile. What can we be sure of? Name the thing that will last. We are living in a world of change, and the end is not yet.

God must possess that final, that absolute and ultimate knowledge that does not change. The fact is that God knows the real truth of all things, and the real truth of all things is a fixed, changeless quantity. There was a time when man did not know certain facts about electricity, but God knew all those facts. It may be that electricity will yet be used to cure certain diseases in a manner that is not now known; but if so, God knows all about it. God knows the potency of faith as we do not know it, and Jesus knew it, for He said, "If ye have faith, even as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say to this mountain, Be thou removed and cast into the sea, and it shall be done." And God knows the indomitable power of love. God's love may be compared to the ocean. An earthquake may change the bed of a stream, and the wind and the sun may dry up a shallow pool, but the ocean is still there in all its profound depths. He who possesses the spirit of truth will sooner or later discover how vast is the ocean of truth. He will then probably feel like Sir Isaac Newton, who said he was as a little boy, walking along the shore, and picking up here a bright pebble and there a pretty shell, while the mighty ocean of truth lay all unexplored before him. And now one may even attempt to go into that sea, and to dive down that he may learn something of its mysteries.

### **Unrealized Depths**

Many persons who call themselves Christians are but babes in Christ. They have never penetrated into the deep things of God. With them it is simply a matter of accepting Christ and being saved, or of rejecting Him and being lost. They have never delved down and examined the philosophy of such a proposition. They have never considered the elements that enter into an understanding and an acceptance of anything. The entire matter is much deeper than they realize, for it touches the very springs of human thought and action. Therefore, the natural man says at once, "Why should I receive Christ? Who is Christ? And why should He play a part in my life's affairs? That bugbear of torment after death I do not believe. And how can Christ make my life more of a success than it is?"

The lifting up of Jesus in the Millennial Age will doubtless overcome all adverse argument of the aforesaid nature. It will present the principles that Jesus stood for as the only desirable thing, because they will appear to be the only thing that will insure success. If they could be presented that way now, people would want Christ as their life's partner. Those who have received the Lord and His precious truth realize that truth runs in deep channels. The deeply operating laws of God tell us that in the spiritual, as in the natural realm, to every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. The waves of love that we send out roll back upon our consciousness and make us more lovely than we were. If we send out waves of jealousy, fear, or dislike, they react to our injury. Thus we can never escape from ourselves. If we make friends of ourselves, however, by making

friends of our thoughts, words, and doings, we shall not need to effect such an escape, since we already enjoy liberty in having the spirit of the Lord.

The spirit searcheth to find out how the laws of God are operating in our affairs-how God is dealing with us. That is, we seek to learn the lessons God has for us in our various experiences. That the lesson is there, there can be no doubt. It may be a lesson of faith, as it was with Peter when he got out of the boat. Or it may be a lesson of meekness, or of humility, or of love. We may have to look below the surface to see just what the lesson was intended to be.

"This is life eternal, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." What? Know God? Gain a knowledge of an infinite being? Yes! But how? By gaining a heart-warming and heart-filling conception of the love of God. By realizing in our experiences as well as through divine revelation that God is "too wise to err, too good to be unkind." By searching into all the depths of the various manifestations of love.

### **Christ's Personal Appeal**

When Jesus was on earth He called men to Himself, to know Himself, to follow Himself. He did not say to them, "Will you join My organization?" For at first He had no organization to invite men to join. He did not say to them, "Will you accept these views that I am proclaiming?" For when He first invited men to follow Him, He had as yet proclaimed no views. He asked men to join Him. He did not ask them to join an institution; He did not ask them to believe in His *opinions*; He asked men to join Him and to believe in Him. It was on the personal relation to Himself that He laid all the emphasis; even when years had passed away and Christ's organization had begun to develop and His views had been set before men and He called them into His life, He did not say to them even then, "I wish you would accept these views of Mine; they are the only truths." He did not say to them, "I wish you would join this fellowship of Mine; it is the only fellowship." He still said to them, "Follow Me." At the close of His teaching it was still the thought of being personally united to Himself that He would have understood to be the fundamental thought of His kingdom. "I know My sheep, and My sheep know Me, and they follow Me."

It is worth noting that Jesus Christ is the only one who dares to say to men, "Follow Me." No other founder of a great religion has based his religion on a personal following of himself. Confucianism, as a religion, consists merely in the practice of maxims. Buddhism is a religion of a method. Mohammedanism is the religion of a book and of a formula. Twelve hundred years ago Mohammed wrote it all down, never to be changed while the centuries pass, as the poet has written

### **The Letter and the Spirit**

"While the world rolls on from range to range,  
And realms of thought expand  
The *Letter* stands without a change,  
Stiff as a dead man's hand.

"As the life-blood fills the growing form,  
The *Spirit* Christ has shed  
Flows through the ages, quick and warm,  
More felt than heard or read."

Does the spirit search this essence of Christ, to learn exactly what it means? Surely it does. The spirit finds that Jesus embodied all the grand things of life, the things that are good and true. The follower of Christ acquires perfect confidence in Him as the Way, which He claimed to be.

Setting aside superficialities, and embracing Jesus Christ in all His beauty, we arrive at a well-spring of the deep things of God. At that crystal pure well of truth we are able to drink long and deep -- if we will. Finding this great common center, we are drawn together in common interests, in a unity of faith and love, which is a foretaste of the wonderful joys we shall share together beyond the veil.

"O Christ, He is the fountain,  
The deep, sweet well of love!  
The streams on earth I've tasted  
More deep I'll drink above.  
There to an ocean fulness  
His mercy doth expand;  
And glory, glory dwelleth  
In Immanuel's land."

- *Contributed by Walter Sargeant*

## Letters from Overseas

Dear Brethren:

Your very welcome letter arrived here early in January, and found us all safe and well. We were so delighted with your kind gift that my wife, daughter, and self decided to pass it on to our Forest Gate Church on January 5th; that night our street was bombed and again on the 6th. We are now the only people in this area. The desolation and loneliness would have been very depressing but for the fact that we are the Lord's, and His dear ones are visiting us in a steady stream. We were at home last night, talking over the uses of adversity.

Although we are not to do evil that good may come, yet our Father overrules evil for our good. It certainly drives us out of the ruts and makes us understandingly sympathetic with others in this fellowship of suffering. As Milton says:

"The old order changeth  
Yielding place to new,  
And God fulfills Himself  
In many ways  
Lest one good custom  
Should corrupt the world."

We realize, too, that a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things that he hath. This is especially true of the Christian, who in these times alone realizes the actual worth of things spiritual which can never be shaken.

I would not minimize the degree and extent of the evil wrought in our land, but I should certainly be failing in my duty to my fellow countrymen if I did not praise the very wonderful way they are bearing their afflictions, and as to ourselves, we realize and determine that nothing shall separate us from the love of God in Christ our Savior.

Concerning our private needs, we are happy to report that we are so far well provided for.

We have not been able to get news from our brethren in Scandinavia, Finland, or Holland. If I can obtain information I shall not fail to inform you. One thing; if we cannot communicate with them by ordinary means, we can all petition the common center, the Throne of Grace, and He will hear and bless. Miracles still happen, and God can and will do for us what we cannot do for ourselves.

It is gratifying and strengthening to read in your letter that you often pray for us and that "He is faithful that promised."

The Forest Gate Class is in perfect condition spiritually, and has been providentially blessed in a material way, too. Some have suffered like myself, but their reaction has been such as becometh saints. We have a small sum of money put by for urgent necessity on the part of any brethren in our own community or any others in the country.

And now, dear brethren, in closing may I assure you of the grateful love of Sisters S----- (my wife and daughter) and myself for you and all the American brethren. Our combined prayers for you and ourselves is that we may be bright lights for Jesus in this dark hour of earth's history.

Yours in the Master's service,  
J., A. and R. S. -- Eng.

Dear Brother and Sister-----:

It was a great pleasure to receive your recent letter. It is good to know that daily you brethren over there are bearing us before the throne of grace. We would have welcomed you right royally had you come over to us this year-but of course any such thing is quite out of the question now. Maybe though, if the present spasm of trouble passes and there seems to be another short time of quiet before the Kingdom comes in, we shall have the pleasure of waiting for the boat to dock as we did for Brother T----- three years ago, and giving you the welcome to England that we would wish. I am afraid there is going to be a long and hard furrow to plough first, though, and whatever the outcome, it is going to involve much suffering for all concerned. The people here are in the mood for battle, and seem prepared to accept whatever burden is involved in their determination to come out on top. I suppose things are much the same in Germany, and with grim resolution on both sides it does seem as though it will be a fight to a finish.

We who look for "a new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness," have good cause to be much more composed and optimistic over the whole thing than the thousands of poor souls who have in these last few months seen their loved ones perish, their homes destroyed, their livelihood gone, and in bewilderment ask why God allows it all. I can tell you, there is plenty of work for Christians in these days, and that not only in telling them of the better day which is to follow all this, but also in giving a little practical help here and now. One of the most impressive things to my mind is the way in which all elements of the people are banded together in the endeavor to help each other. It is true that a common trouble awakens a fellow-feeling, and today we have many who have never made any profession of Christianity or indeed any kind of altruistic principle who spend their time doing all they can to help their less fortunate fellows. It just proves what I have always believed, that when the work of the Kingdom gets well going, there will be tremendous enthusiasm on the part of many people to help in the glorious work which God will initiate.

It was Isaiah who said, "And it shall be said in that day, 'Lo, this is our God. We have waited for Him, and He will save us.'" Maybe out of the welter of war and anarchy will come the beginnings of a realization that man is meant after all to look after his neighbor first and himself last, and when that is realized in its international aspect, we may say that men are well on the way to understand the Kingdom. But it will without doubt require the divine control to get that into man's heart. We shall have to wait awhile yet before we get to that happy day. In the meantime the "world that now is" rushes on to its inevitable ending.

Well now, like everybody else, my spare time is restricted to a much greater degree than it was before the war, and so I must come to a stop. Remember us to Brother P- when you see him or write to him next. - I am trying to find time to write him, but "time flies." There will come a day when we shall be able to say all we want to each other, and I guess we shall have to save up a lot until then.

Anyway, I will not close without repeating one of our best known and most eloquent watchwords: "Though it tarry, wait for it, For it, will surely come, It will not tarry."

With Christian love,  
Your brother in Christ,  
A. O. H. -- Eng.

Our dear Brethren:  
Loving greetings in the Beloved.

We send you our very warm love and greetings. In these dark days we do not know what the future holds for any one, and we need to constantly keep ourselves in the love of God and thus keep ourselves in His care. We trust that you are well, and we assure you of our continued remembrance of you at the throne of grace. The Father knoweth them that are His and will not fail us in any way. All things are still working together for good, and we know that He will keep us until He has finished the work 'He has commenced in us, and we know that nothing can come our way unless the Lord sees it is necessary for the perfecting of the new creature, and nothing can happen by chance. This is a good thought in these days of darkness and sudden destruction.

We are all safe so far, although of course we have experienced the bombing raids. Some of the brethren have had to leave their homes, but so far as we know all are safe. It is wonderful to realize the staying power granted to us in these trials-for indeed the flesh is but weak and we are but dust. The Lord is merciful and has granted the promised grace to help in every time of need. The truth is a precious gem and indeed an anchor to the soul. How glad we shall be when the Kingdom is fully established and we are with the Lord and all our brethren we have learned to love. We shall meet to be parted no more-what joy there will be.

May God bless and keep you always, is our prayer for you at this time.  
We all join in sending you these greetings and our love in Christ.  
Your brethren in Him,  
The T----- Family. - Eng.

Nahum 1:7.

## **Annual Meeting of the Pastoral Bible Institute**

All lovers of our Lord Jesus and friends of the truth are welcome to attend the Annual Meeting of the Institute to be held at 2 p.m. in the parlor of the Institute at 177 Prospect Place, Bklyn., N. Y.. Saturday, June 7, as announced in our April issue. In addition to the primary business of the election of directors, opportunity will be given for the consideration of such other matters as may properly come before the meeting.

Members of the Institute who are not receiving the "Herald" in their own names, or the name' of a member of the immediate family, but who are readers of the "Herald," should so inform the office at once so that proxy forms may be sent them. Full information will be found on these as to the brethren nominated for office this year.

For reasons there explained, it was stated in the "Herald" of May, 1938, that when persons holding voting memberships in the Institute shall for twenty-four consecutive months continue as non-subscribers the "Herald" (by non-subscriber is meant one whose name does not appear on the subscription list, and has no reference to whether or not payments made for the "Herald"), their names shall be automatically removed from the roll of membership, unless they shall within that time inform the Institute that they are receiving the "Herald" through some one else and reading the same and desire that their names be continued on the roll of membership, in which case their names shall be so retained on the roll.