

## A Living Temple

*The Present Truth* – September 12, 1901

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We have had many talks together about the journeyings of the Children of Israel in the wilderness, and the Object Lessons that God gave them there. All His wonderful works were to teach them to know Him, His love, His power, His wisdom, and His tender care for them.

But they were slow to learn the sweet lessons. In Egypt they had worshipped the false gods of the Egyptians, things they could use and handle. The Lord was teaching them to see Him everywhere, and in all things, working out His purposes of love for them; for He fills heaven and earth.

Through the pillar of cloud and fire, He would have them learn to see Him in the firmament and in the light. Through the manna He would have them see Him in the growing grain, and all things that He made to grow for their food. Through the fresh streams of water flowing from the smitten rock, He would teach them to see in every draught of pure water the stream of His own life poured out that they might live.

But though they saw His works, they did not learn His ways. The veil of unbelief was over their hearts, and hid His glory from them.

At last God said to Moses "Let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them." And in obedience to His Word, the Tabernacle was built. In our picture the coverings are removed from the top, so that we can see inside, but in reality the Tabernacle was a large tent. It was set up in the midst of the camp, with the family tents of the people round about it.

Do you think that this was the Lord's own choice—to dwell in a tent separate from the people, though among them? No, for He tells us plainly what the house is that He has chosen: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"

"For God is never so far off  
As even to be near;  
He is within, our Spirit is  
The home He holds most dear."

Yes, we are His dwelling place, for He fills all things. How large, then, is the House of God?—It is as large as the universe,—a living, growing temple.

Hundreds of years afterwards, when the martyr Stephen was speaking of this very Tabernacle that the Children of Israel built, he said: "Howbeit the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet, Heaven is My throne and earth is My footstool; saith the Lord. What house will ye build Me?"

Like the air, which is His breath, the life-giving Spirit of God fills all things. We are surrounded with it; we dwell in it; without it we could not live a single moment; and we are filled with it.

Thus we dwell in God, who is "our dwelling place," in whom "we live, and move, and have our being," and He dwells in us, filling us with His universal Spirit of life.

"To think of Him as by our side  
Is almost as untrue  
As to remove His throne beyond  
Those skies of starry blue."

Why, then was this tabernacle built, that God might dwell among the people? Ah, it was for their sakes, that they might have an Object Lesson to teach them of God's presence with them, and all that this would do for them.

The prophets who looked into heaven and [have] seen "visions of God," have told us of His living temple which they have seen them. In this we see how the will of God is done in heaven, because every part of that temple is controlled and guided by the Spirit of life from God who dwells therein.

This living temple is a sample, an example, of what God would have the whole universe. It shows us what this world of ours will be when our Lord's prayer is fully answered, and God's will is "done on earth, as it is in heaven."

And the Tabernacle built on earth was to be an Object Lesson to the people of this heavenly sanctuary. God let Moses see in the mount the pattern like which it was to be made. Everything in it had most precious lessons, and of these we shall talk together in the weeks to come.

But no man can really build an house for God. God alone build His own house, and He "dwelleth not in temples made with hands." His temple grows, built up and formed by the Spirit of His life who dwells within it.

You are His dwelling place, and how is the temple of your body built?—It grows, because you are alive, because you have life within you. Jesus Christ is "the Life," and so it is He who by His life giving Spirit is building up your body in strength and beauty, to be His dwelling place. The noble trees and beautiful flowers, and all things in which is His life, grow into an holy temple. Every place whereon we tread is holy ground, for it is all the house of God.

God dwells in us because we dwell in Him, just as the air fills us because we dwell in the midst of it. We are always in the Father's house.

This in what He was teaching the Children of Israel in the wilderness. They thought they had no food, but He shows them that in the Father's house there is always an abundance, by preparing a table for them in the wilderness. They were thirsty and had no water, but "there is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the. . . tabernacles of the Most High," and of this He gave them to drink. In the darkness,

"the glory of God did lighten them." There is always food, and water, and light, and joy, in the Father's house. Blessed are they who dwell there.

"One thing have I desired of the Lord, that  
will I seek after;  
That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all  
the days of my life."

Though all are really living in the Father's house, so many, oh, so many, do not know it; so like the Israelites they are troubled, and sad, and anxious, and weary. They do not know that their heavenly Father knows what things they have need of. Can you not make some of them happy by telling them? Here are the words of one man who had not known it, when he found out the joy that he had been missing:—

"So all the while I thought myself  
Homeless, forlorn, and weary,  
Missing my joy, I walked the earth  
*Myself God's sanctuary.*"