



**A**ND Jesus answered him, *The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: 30 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. 31 And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.* (Mark 12:29-31)

This is an additional Hymn devotion for this week. It is a hymn that has been occupying my thoughts over the past several days and I wanted to write on it before the memory fades. The hymn was writing for a Youth Conference by Purd E. Deitz, Reformed minister in 1935. At the time of writing, Purd was professor at Eden Theological Seminary. The tune is one of the most beautiful ever written, *FINLANDIA*, by Jean Sibelius in 1899, which he conducted at the Norfolk Music Festival in Connecticut in 1914. There are more kinds of walls than those simply made of concrete, steel, or wood. The most critical wall to the Christian is that which must separate him/her from the world. It can be the most porous of walls; but it can also be the most solid if truth is held in high regard. Truth is the surest of all walls to keep one in holy living and service.

### **We would be Building**

We would be building; temples still undone  
O'er crumbling walls their crosses scarcely lift,  
Waiting till love can raise the broken stone,  
And hearts creative bridge the human rift;  
We would be building; Master, let Thy plan  
Reveal the life that God would give to man.

Teach us to build; upon the solid rock  
We set the dream that hardens into deed,  
Ribbed with the steel that time and change doth mock,  
Th'unfailing purpose of our noblest creed;  
Teach us to build; O Master, lend us sight  
To see the towers gleaming in the light.

O keep us building, Master; may our hands  
Ne'er falter when the dream is in our hearts,  
When to our ears there come divine commands  
And all the pride of sinful will departs;  
We build with Thee; O grant enduring worth  
Until the heav'only Kingdom comes on earth.  
Amen.

*We would be building; temples still undone O'er crumbling walls their crosses scarcely lift, Waiting till love can raise the broken stone, And hearts creative bridge the human rift; We would be building; Master, let Thy plan Reveal the life that God would give to man.* There is much in the secular news media today about walls. Some whose morals are lacking in almost every respect have claimed walls are 'immoral'. Of course, we know that immorality cannot be assigned to inanimate objects. Walls are mentioned throughout the Holy Scriptures in connection with the protection of God's Church and people. As this first stanza intimates, our walls of faith and truth are still unfinished and in the process of building. We will not be finished with that building until the Lord comes for His Elect. The cement that holds our Wall of Faith firm is LOVE. Love will withstand every challenge. One truth that is veiled in this stanza is the bridge of passage through that Wall of Faith. The wall of the Church is not different from that of a Castle. It does not constitute a a prison for those within. They are free to depart and return as the inhabitants please; however, those without are not free to enter without a qualifying visa of Faith. The Church is like a ship in the sea. It is made to navigate the sea – to travel therein. As long as the ship is upright in the sea, it serves its purpose. But what if the sea gets into the ship – tragedy follows. This latter circumstance is the state of the modern churches of America. Instead of going out into the world to improve its sense of love by salt and light, the church has admitted the world through its walls without the visa of Faith, and the church is ruined just as would be wholesale immigration for nations.

*Teach us to build; upon the solid rock We set the dream that hardens into deed, Ribbed with the steel that time and change doth mock, Th'unfailing purpose of our noblest creed; Teach us to build; O Master, lend us sight To see the towers gleaming in the light.* The greatest Teacher is not a seminary instructor, or even a preacher in the pulpit – the greatest Teacher is God by means of the Holy Scriptures and the reading of the Bible. Prosperity in the Gospel (spiritual, not material) requires a wall for protection. God has prospered us with His Word, and we must safeguard it against those who would print phony and corrupt counterfeits of His Word. The book publishers have proliferated various versions of modern Bibles that cleverly disguise the sense and meaning of the Word, and even assail the Person and dignity of Jesus Christ and His Holy Spirit. The only wall of protection against such heretical vandals is Truth unadulterated. God will have us build our walls and temples upon that Solid Rock that followed the Children of Israel in the Wilderness. (see 1 Cor 10:4) Every building is preceded by a vision or a dream (a plan). Our first vision of our duty to God was far more blessed than our first labors to enact the vision; but God led us along and we improved upon our failures as we grew in sanctification. The tall towers are brightly

beaming on the forward horizon, and we must 'continue the march' to draw nearer day by day to the Source of those heavenly beams.

*O keep us building, Master; may our hands Ne'er falter when the dream is in our hearts, When to our ears there come divine commands And all the pride of sinful will departs; We build with Thee; O grant enduring worth Until the heav'only Kingdom comes on earth. Amen.* We build walls to shelter our families, to protect our schools and offices, and our churches. Yet we fail to guard our borders against invading drug dealers and illegals – leaving our children to be prospective victims in their own country. The same is true of churches. The walls of protection for a church are those that are Truth. We should not allow false prophets and spiritual charlatans to enter in unless we have grown weary of truth and love.

The walls of churches in America, like the walls of our borders, have broken down through reckless and careless neglect. Every imaginable sin has now received the stamp of approval of many of our mainline churches so that abortion and homosexual marriage have gained a false dignity while they remain murder and abomination. The doctrinal stand of the ancient church has been eroded and dismissed as archaic when truth can never be archaic. As Job has written: *15 Then a spirit passed before my face; the hair of my flesh stood up: 16 It stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof: an image was before mine eyes, there was silence, and I heard a voice, saying, 17 Shall mortal man be more just than God? shall a man be more pure than his maker? 18 Behold, he put no trust in his servants; and his angels he charged with folly: 19 How much less in them that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, which are crushed before the moth? 20 They are destroyed from morning to evening: they perish for ever without any regarding it. 21 Doth not their excellency which is in them go away? they die, even without wisdom.* (Job 4:15-21)

Two stark reasons come to mind when I observe the profligacy of sin in our nation – even in churches:

1. The foundations of faith are eroded – *If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?* Psalms 11:3 (KJV) The foundations of our faith have been eroded and nearly destroyed. The Foundation is Biblical Faith.

The other stark reason:

2. Our people lack knowledge and wisdom for their lives – *My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.* Hosea 4:6 (KJV) Without walls, a home is not a home. Without borders a nation is not a nation, and without spiritual walls, a church is not a church. The walls need mending. Ask your average Harvard student who the President of the US was during the Second World War.

The foundations of American Christianity need solid foundation: *Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.* (Matt 7:24-27)