

Beryl Johnson  
**A Spiritual Pilgrimage**  
***A Personal Testimony to the Living God.***  
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As this is a book of poems, I must begin by saying that I am no poet, nor am I a judge of poetry; but Beryl Johnson's title informs us that her verses are the medium for the personal testimony which her subtitle offers.

She calls it a spiritual pilgrimage, and some of us know we are there too and can find in these writings insights which the author has of hers. All art forms allow the expression of what is difficult, even impossible, to state in 'plain' words, but pilgrimage suggests a definite quest and that is here. As the second poem in this little collection says, "Can words take wing and free the soul's yearning?"

Beryl's journey takes her initially through finding the love of God in nature - dawn, pale pink petals, darkness; and she praises God in a harvest poem. Later she moves to meditation on scripture and to the more intimate relationship of communion. We find evidence of the recognition of sinfulness and littleness before God, and also of the means to blessing and fullness of life - all a testimony to God's grace.

The book is divided into a first section of thirty-six poems on various themes, followed by two short groups written during her times of living in Eastbourne and then in Cambridge. Finally, she gives us two longer groups of poems written as a member of the Cambridge poetry group which show her writing progressing with this support. These latter indicate a maturing in faith and engagement with scripture as she works with some of the deeper issues of Christian life, and shares some of the anguish of her encounters with others as a Reader in the Church. The poems merit repeated reading.

***Elizabeth CSF***