

THE PENTECOSTAL evangel

NOT BY MIGHT, NOR BY POWER, BUT BY MY SPIRIT SAITH THE LORD

MAY 1968

TEN CENTS

TODAY IS LIGHT-FOR-THE-LOST DAY

INTERNATIONAL EDITION



STREET SCENE IN
SINGAPORE—WHERE \$10,000
WORTH OF LIGHT-FOR-THE-LOST
GOSPEL LITERATURE WILL BE
DISTRIBUTED THIS YEAR

DESIRING SPIRITUAL GIFTS



By WALTER H. BEUTTLER

THE APOSTLE'S EXORTATION, "Desire spiritual gifts" (1 Corinthians 14:1), is as much an authoritative injunction to the Church as is the statement, "Let all things be done decently and in order" (1 Corinthians 14:40).

In anticipation of opposition to his regulations concerning spiritual gifts, and more particularly concerning his instructions as to the conduct of the women in the Corinthian church, the apostle Paul wrote: "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord" (1 Corinthians 14:37). The exhortation to "desire spiritual gifts" cannot be exempted from these "commandments."

It must be admitted that the abuse of spiritual gifts, both in practice of operation and in emphasis of teaching, has done much to dampen the ardor of some to desire spiritual gifts. Such abuse has filled others with prejudice until they have turned away to an attitude of "never mind spiritual gifts." Yet the incontrovertible fact remains that God has set these gifts in the church along with every other ministry-gift. (See 1 Corinthians 12:28.) We therefore have no right to eliminate their scriptural exercise in the church or to discourage individuals from desiring spiritual gifts. There are more important things, to be sure. Yet Paul, when writing concerning the

exercise of spiritual gifts, takes pains to guard against any interpretation that would in any way tend to discourage their proper exercise or to throw any doubt on their genuineness even when improperly exercised. Indeed, in correcting the Corinthians for the disuse of their gifts he directs them to their better use "that the church may receive edifying" (1 Corinthians 14:5).

Note Paul's method of correction. First he recognizes that ignorance of the subject is the underlying cause of the disorders at Corinth (1 Corinthians 12:1). Then he approaches the whole problem through teaching. In chapter 12 he gives them a doctrinal basis as to the diversity and distribution of the gifts of the Spirit. He sets their thinking straight and alludes to their misconceptions only indirectly; e.g., "Are all apostles? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?" (1 Corinthians 12:29, 30).

Having laid the groundwork in chapter 12, Paul proceeds in chapter 13 with another phase of spiritual gifts; namely, motivation. He is now becoming perceptibly bolder. The inferences to their shortcomings are much more direct; e.g., "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity [love], I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal" (1 Corinthians 13:1). Paul is correcting their inverted sense of relative values arising from their childish misconceptions about spiritual things; e.g., "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought [reasoned] as a

child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things" (1 Corinthians 13:11).

Only then does he proceed, in chapter 14, directly and specifically to correct their improper exercise of the gifts by means of teaching, and he does that with remarkable wisdom and skill. He is at once corrective and instructive. He changes their views by building them up in the truth; he corrects their practice by directing their zeal. He builds negative correction upon positive teaching. Oh, that more pastors and teachers would use Paul's method of approach, instead of turning to blind dictatorial reprimands or to church legislation.

While correcting abuses, Paul is ever teaching, ever exhorting, and ever encouraging in the exercise of spiritual gifts. Notice his repeated exhortations: "Desire spiritual gifts." "Covet to prophesy." "Covet earnestly the best [*greater*] gifts." The original words for *desire*, *covet earnestly*, etc., convey the thought of "burning," "white hot," "fervent longing," etc., thus showing that our desire for spiritual gifts should be not a mere pious wish but a passionate desire.

Paul is careful not to quench their zeal for spiritual gifts by speaking derogatorily of them. Instead, he fans and directs their zeal. "Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church" (1 Corinthians 14:12).

In order to guard against the misuse of his corrections, especially in respect to speaking with tongues, Paul specifically states, before closing his section on spiritual gifts, "Forbid not

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to speak with tongues" (1 Corinthians 14:39). Thus he warns against an outright prohibition of the exercise of this gift. The Corinthians had given it *the* place; Paul gave it *a* place; some would give it *no* place. The first attitude he corrected; the last attitude he endeavored to prevent. "Do not prohibit speaking in unknown tongues," is the way one translator puts it.

The major problem concerning spiritual gifts appears different in the church of Thessalonica from that of Corinth. Whereas in the Corinthian church the main difficulty had to do with speaking in other tongues, in Thessalonica it had to do with prophesy.

One gathers from 2 Thessalonians 2:2, in the light of the context, that spurious utterances were given in regard to the time of the coming of the Lord. 1 Thessalonians 5:20 suggests that these utterances were ostensibly prophetic. There were irregularities in prophesyings which brought the genuine gift of prophecy into disrepute. For this reason Paul felt obliged to write, "Despise not prophesyings." The idea of the word *despise* is "to treat with contempt." People had become contemptuous of this valuable gift; they discredited its manifestation and rejected its message.

In order to correct this regrettable result he admonishes them with the words, "Quench not the Spirit" (1 Thessalonians 5:19). The translation by Phillips reads, "Never damp the fire of the Spirit," and by Williams, "Stop stifling the Spirit"; the marginal note says that this is a "figure of putting out fire by smothering." Abuses in prophesying serve neither as reasons nor as excuses for the suppression of prophecy. And this principle applies to all the gifts of the Spirit. The problem calls, first of all, for judicious discrimination. "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 Thessalonians 5:21).

Of great importance in this respect is qualified spiritual leadership. The genuine is frequently stamped out along with the spurious because of inability to differentiate between the two. The fear of an arising situation which one might not understand, and therefore not be able to handle, easily tempts a leader to resort to arbitrary commands and legislative restrictions. But authoritarianism might well be a cloak for uncertainty, and intolerance

an evidence of weakness. "Quench not the Spirit," says the apostle, but "prove all things." It is not too difficult to evaluate the content of a prophetic utterance in the light of the Word if one knows the Word aright. (However, not all utterances can be so judged. There are utterances which are in complete conformity to the Word as to doctrinal content, yet are nevertheless spurious.)

Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 2:14 finds here one of its applications. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. "The ability to "prove all things" necessitates spiritual discernment. This comes from the anointing of the Spirit, "The anointing which ye have received... teacheth you of all things" (1 John 2:27). What damage has been done by spiritually incompetent leadership! Spiritual things are spiritually discerned. The heavier the leader's anointing, the keener is his discernment, and the greater his certainty. "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." Prophecy is good; hold it fast.

In Paul's letters to Timothy we get additional light on this subject. "Neglect not the gift that is in thee" (1 Timothy 4:14). Whatever the exact nature of this gift might have been, the principle applies. This is one of Paul's four negatives concerning spiritual gifts. They are: "forbid not," "despise not," "quench not," and "neglect not." The word *neglect* means "to fail to treat with attention." Timothy's gift lay dormant due to negligence. All forms of ministry-gifts need diligent attention or they deteriorate. Sometimes utterances which in themselves are genuine are discredited because they carry so little anointing as to make them practically useless. This is frequently caused by the individual's carelessness in his devotional life and general relation to God.

In the case of Timothy the negligence seems to have been due to fear, particularly the fear of persecution and ridicule. (See 2 Timothy 1:6-8.) He was exhorted to "stir up the gift of God." Both Phillips and Williams use again the figure of a fire. "Stir up that inner fire which God gave you" (Phillips). "Rekindle and keep burning the fire of the divine

(Continued on page 11)

THE PENTECOSTAL evangel

May 5, 1968

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WE BELIEVE the Bible to be the inspired and only infallible and authoritative Word of God. WE BELIEVE that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. WE BELIEVE in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal future return to this earth in power and glory to rule a thousand years. WE BELIEVE in the Blessed Hope, which is the Rapture of the Church at Christ's coming. WE BELIEVE that the only means of being cleansed from sin is through repentance and faith in the precious blood of Christ. WE BELIEVE that regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential for personal salvation. WE BELIEVE that the redemptive work of Christ on the cross provides healing of the human body in answer to believing prayer. WE BELIEVE that the baptism of the Holy Spirit, according to Acts 2:4, is given to believers, who ask for it. WE BELIEVE in the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a holy life. WE BELIEVE in the resurrection of both the saved, and the lost, the one to everlasting life and the other to everlasting damnation.

RIVERS OF LIVING WATER

A GREAT FEAST, lasting eight days, was held each year in Israel. It was in memory of water miraculously provided from the rock of Horeb during those wilderness wanderings when Moses struck the rock at the command of God.

Every year crowds gathered in Jerusalem for the feast. On each of the first seven days water was drawn from the pool in the precincts of the temple and poured from the sacred vessels onto the altar. Praise and thanksgiving were offered to God for the miracle of the water He had so miraculously provided for their fathers.

But the eighth day of this feast was a waterless day, with no ceremony of drawing out and pouring water on the altar.

It was on this last day—this waterless day—of the feast that Jesus stood in the temple and cried: “If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his [innermost being] shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)” (John 7:37-39).

Three interesting facts emerge from a close examination of this passage of Scripture and the others related to it.

THE HOLY SPIRIT WAS NOT GIVEN UNTIL JESUS HAD BEEN GLORIFIED

God’s purpose was that the oft-repeated promise of the Spirit should become available to all the seed of Abraham—including those whose faith would be, as was his, counted unto them for righteousness. Because of the weakness of the law, no one had merited the fullness of the Spirit; for while providing plenty of evidence for condemnation because of human failure, the law could never provide a way of escape from the thralldom of sin.

But in the fullness of time Jesus came. His perfect and righteous life was offered up as an atonement for sin to secure for all believers an eternal salvation. “Who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God” (Hebrews 9:14). “By his own blood he entered

in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us” (Hebrews 9:12).

This is the fact here stated by John in his record. His perfect sacrifice and perfect atonement, His perfect resurrection and perfect salvation for us were the essential prerequisites to His ascension into heaven to qualify Him to receive the fullness of the promised Spirit from the Father. As the writer to the Hebrews says: “Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows” (Hebrews 1:8,9).

To get a vision of that holy anointing of our great High Priest, read again Psalm 133: “Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron’s beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments.”

What a wonderful prophetic picture this is of our Lord Jesus as He enters heaven to begin His high-priestly ministry. He is anointed with the heavenly anointing oil—the Holy Spirit Himself—the only Man who was worthy to receive this fullness. With His heavenly anointing comes the overflow *down to the skirts of His garment* when the whole mystical body of Christ—the Church composed of every born-again believer—is anointed with the overflow from His anointing. As John again says: “But ye have an unction from the Holy One,” and “But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man should teach you” (1 John 2:20,27).

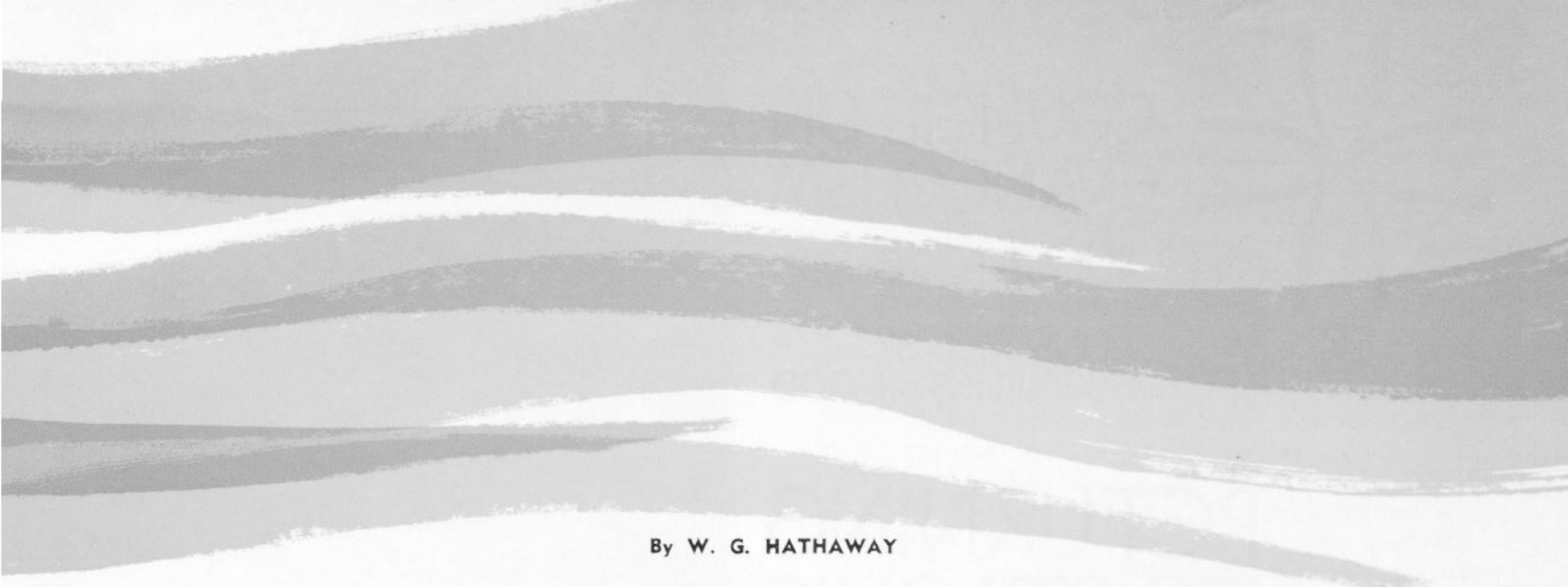
Here we come to the second fact in our study:

THE HOLY SPIRIT COMES ONLY FROM THE HANDS OF JESUS

“If any man thirst” Jesus, the Dispenser of living water, said to the woman at the well: “The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life” (John 4:14).

Here to the multitude in the temple, on this the waterless day of the feast, He extends the promise to become not only a well of water within the believer, but a well overflowing from a bubbling spring within and producing outflowing rivers to the thirsty land around—the Holy Spirit in His fullness. Or consider it, if you wish, the Christian experience at floodtide. Think of the two

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By W. G. HATHAWAY

in their relationship: (1) a well of water within to quench the thirst of the individual believer, and (2) an overflowing well becoming rivers of living water to benefit others.

Now the promise was fulfilled; for when Jesus ascended, He not only became the anointed High Priest who "ever liveth to make intercession for us" and whose fullness overflowed to the 120 on that memorable Day of Pentecost, but He becomes the Dispenser of the Spirit in this dispensation of His fullness.

Joseph, whose life history bears a striking resemblance in prophetic imagery to that of Jesus, had been elevated by Pharaoh in the years of plenty to have charge of the granaries of Egypt. We see him in the years of famine handling the distribution of the corn to all who came. When people from afar came to Pharaoh to buy corn, he said to them: "Go to Joseph!" Joseph was now the sole dispenser of Egypt's corn.

So Jesus in His elevation to the right hand of God becomes the Dispenser of the Holy Spirit to all who ask Him. Referring again to the simile of the water: it is Jesus who dispenses the supply, whether it be the well within to quench the thirst of the individual, or the rivers of living water flowing from within the believer to provide a potent witness of Him to others.

One more fact emerges from a study of this wonder:

THE HOLY SPIRIT PROCEEDS FROM THE FATHER THROUGH THE SON

The old theologians, when they drew up the Westminster Confession, the basis of our Protestant faith, said of the Holy Spirit: "He proceedeth from the Father and from the Son and is eternally proceeding." I do not find this comprehensive enough to describe the relationship of the Spirit to the Father and to the Son. The promise is "the promise of the Father." Jesus Himself indicated this when He said: "Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you; but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49).

In His discourse with the disciples before His death He indicated the relationship of the Spirit to Himself when He said: "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter" (John 14:16). The word used here is *Paracletos*, meaning an advocate. The Holy Spirit is not our advocate with God, but the divine advocate with us. "We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus

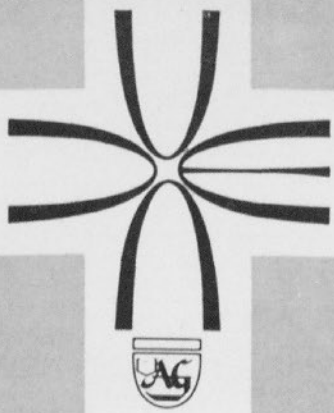
Christ the righteous." Jesus is our Advocate with God. The Holy Spirit is the Advocate of the absent Lord and speaks for Him. He is the Spirit of truth as Jesus Himself is the Truth. He, the Holy Spirit, represents Jesus. Jesus Himself said that "He shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you" (John 14:26 and 16:13, 14). So He bears a special relationship to Jesus. That is why the writers of the New Testament call Him the Spirit of Christ or the Spirit of Jesus.

We find Jesus further indicating the position when He said to the disciples: "Whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me." "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you" (John 15:26; 16:7). So here we see clearly how He proceeds from the Father and from the Son. But to be more precise: He proceeds from the Father to the Son—the Spirit is given to the Son who alone is worthy to receive the fullness of the promise—then He proceeds from the Son to the individual believer.

This is more clearly seen in the statement of Peter on the Day of Pentecost as a comment on that miraculous descent of the Spirit: "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear" (Acts 2:33).

In this dispensation of the Holy Spirit, it is the glorified and exalted Jesus who becomes in the great purpose of God the Dispenser of the Spirit. As John the Baptist had foretold: "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I... he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire" (Matthew 3:11).

There remains only one thing to be said here: "*Rivers of living water!*" Here, from the great Fountainhead, the Lord Jesus, risen, ascended, glorified, Dispenser of the Spirit in this the day of His power, comes first the water of life in salvation, then afterwards the fullness of the Spirit descending again in a second experience from the Lord Jesus to transform the satisfied believer into a satiated and overflowing propagator of the living water, flowing from the bubbling spring within—a living witness to the living Christ. This is what Jesus promised: "*Ye shall be witnesses unto me.*"



COUNCIL ON EVANGELISM

AUGUST 26-29

SPONSORED BY
ASSEMBLIES OF GOD

RETURNING TO ST. LOUIS AFTER 50 YEARS



THE CITY OF ST. LOUIS, where the historic Council on Evangelism will be held this August, holds a very important place in the history of the Assemblies of God; for when the new fellowship was only a year old it moved its headquarters office and publishing house to that city.

For three years (1915-1918) St. Louis continued to be the general headquarters, and five times the General Council convened there (in 1915, 1916, 1917, 1921, and 1923). Some of those Councils were among the most momentous on record.

In a way, the return of the Assemblies of God to St. Louis for the Council on Evangelism is like the return of Jacob to Bethel. For Jacob was very young, inexperienced, and utterly lacking in material resources when he first went to Bethel; but when he returned some 28 years later he was a mature man with a large family and great possessions.

He went off to Padanaram with nothing but a wooden staff and a promise from God. He returned to Canaan a wealthy man with children and grandchildren, maid servants and menservants, flocks and herds, camels and asses. Similarly the Assemblies of God was small and relatively unknown in May 1918 when it moved its offices out of St. Louis, but today it is a sizable fellowship with strong churches in every state and a highly developed program of worldwide evangelism.

Fifty years ago the Assemblies of God had very little of this world's goods but, like Jacob, it had the Word of the Lord to lean upon. The "exceeding great and precious promises" of the Scriptures were its main resource. There were fewer than 700 ministers in a very loose association at that time. Constant prayer was required to meet the printing budget of \$125.00 a week. When at length the

Lord sent in \$3,000 with which to acquire a more adequate office and publishing building in a smaller town, the sum was a minor fortune in the eyes of the officials!

That three-year period in St. Louis was indeed a "day of small things" which cannot be despised. The headquarters and publishing staff consisted of nine to 12 persons, including part-time and seasonal help. The men in charge in 1915 were E. N. Bell, general chairman and editor (later replaced by J. W. Welch), and J. R. Flower, secretary and office editor. For \$31 per month they rented a little shop at 2838 Easton Avenue, St. Louis, formerly used for storage. Here they set up offices and gathered such printing equipment as they could afford, including an ancient Huber press which someone donated. All the machinery and desks were secondhand or thirdhand. The typewriters were bought at \$5 each.

In these small dingy quarters two periodicals were published—a four-page paper called *The Weekly Evangel* and a monthly called *Word and Witness*—besides gospel tracts and booklets. The announcement was made: "As soon as we reach 5,000 paid-up subscriptions for the *Evangel*, we expect to begin at once to produce a 16-page weekly." This point was reached at the end of 1915. On this date *Word and Witness* was discontinued and *The Weekly Evangel* was expanded to 16 pages. It was a giant step of faith for the fledgling organization.

In 1916 S. H. Frodsham joined the staff. With his coming there were three families, besides a number of young women employees. Salaries were low and with prices rising due to war it was difficult to live, even with the utmost frugality. Brother Welch decided that if all the workers could be housed in one building, and eat at a common table, some money could be saved, so a 17-room house at 1243 North Garrison Avenue was rented



at \$40 per month. It was called the Evangel Home. Each family had its own apartment and the young women lived in dormitory areas. *Evangel* readers were told that gifts of vegetables, fruit, and other food could be put to good use, so contributions began coming from all over the country. A call went out also for donations of bedding and furniture with which to make spare rooms livable so that visiting ministers could be accommodated while passing through or attending conventions.

Formerly this big house had been used for a Salvation Army orphanage. A colossal amount of coal was required to heat it. Brother Flower and Brother Frodsham, in addition to their editorial and other duties, were the janitors

and they spent many hours shoveling coal into the huge furnace and removing great piles of ashes.

Those were days of hard work, considerable sacrifice, and much prayer. Courageously the staff claimed God's help from day to day, and somehow the bills got paid. With divine guidance they succeeded in laying a solid foundation for a great and growing movement. They had a burden for evangelism, not only in far-off places but in the local community. An Assembly of God was organized at 2929 Montgomery Street, St. Louis, of which J. W. Welch was pastor. In this little brick church called Bethel Chapel a young woman employed in the *Evangel* office was the first person to receive the Baptism.

From his humble office in St. Louis, Brother Flower wrote: "In the early days the Pentecostal movement was characterized largely as a movement of saints Godward, but that day has passed. The movement is now shaping itself into a movement of evangelism, not the popular card-signing kind but with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, in which men and women cry aloud in fear, repent, are baptized, make restitution, and receive the like precious gift with us."

As the Assemblies of God returns to St. Louis in 1968 for the Council on Evangelism, it is to confirm this same conviction and to be challenged more than ever as "a movement of evangelism." Our mission today, as then, is "to carry the glad tidings of great joy to all people." Our calling in 1968, as in 1918, is to be "a strong soul-winning body of men and women, filled with the Holy Ghost and power, fulfilling the last great commission of Christ to preach the gospel to every creature, witnessing to the power of His redemption and the glorious reality of His resurrection and soon coming."

Jacob, as a youth, met God at Bethel. There the Lord revealed Himself to the lonely young pilgrim, giving him a dream of the marvelous ladder connecting his desolate earthly situation with the heavenly storehouse of blessings, and God gave him this promise: "I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." God has not left the Assemblies of God either. He will remain with this movement until He has accomplished the great purpose for which He raised it up.

The certainty of the divine promise was well demonstrated in Jacob, for in all his wanderings God never left him. His patience was severely tried. He learned some spiritual lessons by bitter experiences. At one point he had to wrestle a whole night with an angel of God—a night he never could forget, for he had a limp the rest of his life to remind him of the encounter—but when the night was over he had the blessing of the Lord.

Jacob appreciated all the blessings he received and as he made his way back to Bethel he said: "I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went" (Genesis 35:3). As we return to St. Louis in August, let us likewise give thanks to God. Let all of us build a new altar of sacrifice, and give ourselves to Him again in gratitude for all His mercies.

Fifty years ago it was said the Assemblies of God people were "more concerned for the salvation of a lost soul and the necessity of enlightening believers to the reality of the Baptism in the Holy Ghost, than for anything else in the world." May it be said of us again!

—R. C. C.

READ THE WORD

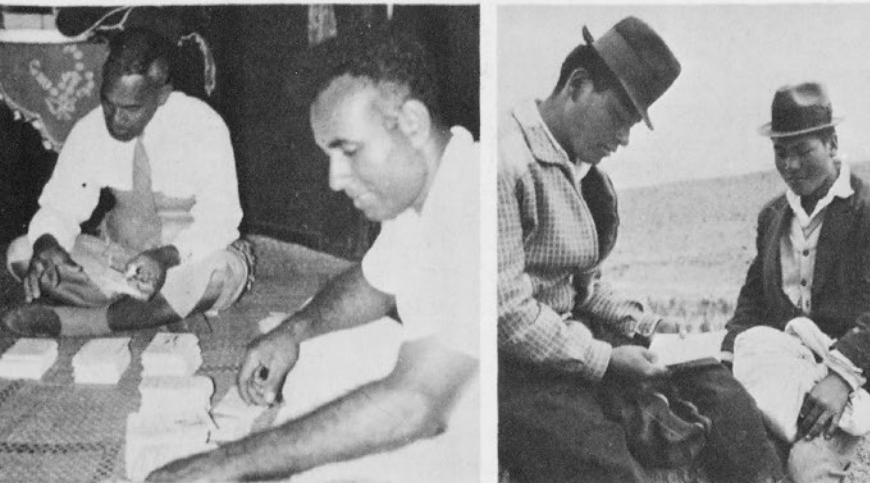
CHAPTERS FOR THE WEEK OF MAY 5-12

Sunday	Mark 5, 6	Thursday	Mark 13, 14
Monday	Mark 7, 8	Friday	Mark 15, 16
Tuesday	Mark 9, 10	Saturday	Luke 1, 2
Wednesday ..	Mark 11, 12	Sunday	Luke 3, 4

"And he said unto them, Go ye all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15).

LIGHT-
FOR-THE-
LOST
PROVIDES

LITERATURE FOR WORLD EVANGELISM



LEFT: Light-for-the-Lost literature is prepared for distribution in Tonga. RIGHT: Aymara Indian youths read a Gospel.

PEOPLE FROM EVERY COUNTRY served by Assemblies of God missions today have been won to Christ through the ministry of Light-for-the-Lost. This ministry is designed to carry the gospel of Christ in the most direct and potent means available—by person-to-person witnessing and literature saturation. This is proving to be one of the most economical, effective, and permanent means of evangelizing today.

In the Far East, Lawrence Larson gives testimony of a small village in Tonga where 53 islanders made decisions to receive Christ through one evangelistic effort. The mayor himself helped Assemblies of God believers prepare Light-for-the-Lost literature for distribution all through Tonga's many lovely islands.

In Monrovia, Liberia, 135,000 tracts were distributed prior to a crusade held in that city by Evangelist Paul Olson. About 3,000 large posters were placed in store buildings and on telephone poles. Large banners were hung on every major street of the city.

Thousands thronged the huge Antoinette Tubman Sports Stadium. Crowds of more than 15,000 in a single meeting listened to the gospel of Christ being preached. The people responded to the call to accept Christ because they had been listening to hundreds testify on the streets about what God had done for them and they had been given Light-for-the-Lost literature to read several

days before the meeting. The result was 5,000 decisions for Christ made the first week! Over 1,500 men came forward in one Sunday evening service!

Kenneth Ware and Melvin Jorgenson report God's blessing on the Light-for-the-Lost literature crusade in Paris, France, with Evangelist Hal Herman. A hundred and thirty Parisians found Jesus Christ as their Saviour on the first night of the crusade.

Prior to the meetings, Light-for-the-Lost literature had been circulated throughout the city. Over 350,000 printed invitations, more than 50,000 Gospels, and over 100,000 tracts were also distributed. On the closing night of the Paris crusade more than 150 people made decisions for Christ.

Latin America has been a fruitful field for evangelism literature crusades for several years. The Pentecostal believers in Bolivia were hungry for a moving of God's Holy Spirit upon their country. The pastors of churches in Santa Cruz and elsewhere gathered for special prayer for revival. Plans were laid for a massive person-to-



person, literature-distribution program coupled with witnessing on the streets. This was developed as a "Total Evangelism" plan throughout all of Bolivia. Light-for-the-Lost supplied thousands of dollars worth of evangelistic literature. Major cities such as Santa Cruz, La Paz, and Cochabamba were saturated with gospel literature. Altogether over 50 campaigns were held in major cities as well as small villages and remote country areas.

God has marvelously blessed in a literature-saturation crusade among the Indians living in the border area of Nagaland, northeast India. Thousands of tracts, Gospels, and leaflets provided by Light-for-the-Lost were distributed and this was followed by a large tent crusade. An outpouring of the Spirit in Nagaland was the result of this combined effort. All along the Burma border God has brought one of the strongest Pentecostal indigenous revivals in Asia.

Light-for-the-Lost provides evangelistic literature for all GOOD NEWS CRUSADES around the world. Since these

People jostle one another to receive Light-for-the-Lost literature in the Philippines.



Light-for-the-Lost literature is given to people resting on the plaza in Bolivia.

crusades began, Light-for-the-Lost has provided over 30,000,000 pieces of gospel literature used in these efforts.

One of the primary reasons why Light-for-the-Lost has been so successful is the realistic approach it is making to evangelism. Our 918 Assemblies of God missionaries working in 78 countries are rejoicing over the results of this effective way of reaching the lost; they know this is just what they have needed to help them make a solid impact for Christ on the unsaved of the world.

Literature is given to high-school youth in capital of Tonga.





THIS PRESENT WORLD

NEWS FROM THE U.S.

Bob Jones Sr. and Charles Fuller "Promoted"

Two great evangelical leaders and preachers have gone to be with the Lord: Bob Jones Sr. on January 16 and Charles E. Fuller on March 19.

During his 84 years, Dr. Bob Jones Sr. preached an estimated 12,000 gospel messages to more than 15 million people. He was the founder and former board chairman of the fundamentalist Bob Jones University, Greenville, South Carolina. BJU, "the world's most unusual university," has an enrollment of 4,000 and a modern campus valued at \$50 million.

Charles E. Fuller, 80, pioneered gospel network broadcasting. He was heard for nearly 43 years on the *Old Fashioned Revival Hour*. His wife Grace was featured on the broadcast until her Homegoing in 1966.

In 1943 Dr. Fuller organized the Fuller Evangelistic Foundation to support established mission agencies and to assist in training gospel workers. He was a cofounder in 1947 of Fuller Theological Seminary.

U. S. Crime Wave Called a "Crisis"

"The crime wave in the U.S. has reached proportions of a crisis; seven million Americans will be in conflict with the law this year alone," according to Hobson Adcock, an agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

A large percentage of crime may be attributed to youngsters, statistics say. More of them are getting arrested every year, at lower ages and for more serious offenses.

In 1966 boys and girls under age 15 accounted for 40 percent of all juvenile arrests in the U.S., according to the FBI. From 1960 to 1966, the number of youngsters aged 10 to 17 increased by less than 20 percent. But juvenile arrests for homicide went up 31.3 percent, for rape 34 percent, for robbery 55 percent, and for aggravated assault 115 percent.

NEWS FROM CANADA

PAOC Slates August General Conference

The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada will meet in Windsor, Ontario, August 22-27 for its 26th biennial general conference.

"The Year of Jubilee" will be the theme of the national meet, marking the action of the Canadian Government in granting the federal charter to the PAOC in 1919.

The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, sister denomination of the U.S. Assemblies of God, has grown from 13 charter members to 730 local churches in Canada and more than 1,400 full-time ministers. The 1921 federal census listed 7,012 Pentecostals as compared to 143,877 in 1961.

NEWS FROM VIETNAM

Captured Missionaries Reported Alive

Two American missionaries who were seized when Viet Cong soldiers overran Banmethuot in south central

South Vietnam recently have been reported alive and well behind enemy lines, according to Nathan Bailey, president of the Christian and Missionary Alliance.

A prisoner released by the Viet Cong said he saw Betty Olsen, Nyack, N. Y., C & MA missionary, and Henry Blood, Portland, Oreg., a worker with Wycliffe Bible Translators.

When six C & MA missionaries were killed at Banmethuot on either January 30 or 31, Henry and Evangeline Blood, their four children, Miss Olsen, besides another C & MA missionary, and three nationals took shelter in a house at a nearby settlement. Miss Olsen, Mr. Blood, and the nationals were led away by the retreating Viet Cong. The other missionaries were later rescued.

Numerous mission buildings used by the C & MA and Wycliffe Bible Translators were demolished or damaged extensively during the fierce "Tet holiday" fighting.



U. S. troops help missionaries working with the Wycliffe Bible Translators board trucks to evacuate Kontum. Allied artillery fire and air bombardment destroyed the Wycliffe Language Center there after the Viet Cong seized it.

Supermarket Has Bible "Special"

A supermarket in Tarrant, Alabama, sold more than 8,000 copies of the American Bible Society's translation, *Good News for Modern Man (Today's English Version)*.

The ABS reports that 16 months after the New Testament version was published, nine million copies have been sold.

Bible Now in 1,326 Languages

At least one complete book of the Bible has now been published in 1,326 languages and dialects around the globe, according to the United Bible Societies. The figure is an increase of 46 over the 1967 count of 1,280.

A UBS library language count shows 242 languages in which the whole Bible has been published, 307 languages that have a whole Testament, and 777 languages with at least one complete book of the Scriptures.

DESIRING SPIRITUAL GIFTS

(Continued from page 3)

gift" (Williams). The idea is "to light up again or kindle the embers." "The metaphor is taken from kindling slumbering ashes into a flame by the bellows," implying "that the embers had gone down from a previous state of candescence or flame" (*Pulpit Commentary*).

Stir up the flame! Rekindle the gift! Pseudo-gifts will lose their influence where the flame of the Spirit is burning brightly. The contrast is too obvious; the difference is too great. "What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord. Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord: and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" (Jeremiah 23:28, 29). Here are characteristics of utterances of human imagination. The difference between them and Spirit-given utterances is qualitative.

"What is the chaff to the wheat?" Wheat is heavy and feeds; chaff is light and leaves one empty. People who hunger for God will prefer the wheat to the chaff. But they must get the wheat. Offering them the real is the best dissuasion from their accepting the false.

"Is not my word like as a fire?" The word of the pseudo-prophet is cold and leaves the hearers cold, no matter how he may perspire. The brightly burning flame of the Holy Spirit, in whatever form, will do far more to keep people from error in the matter of spiritual gifts than will all the books, tracts, and epithets that could be written (though doctrinal writings have their necessary place).

"Is not my word...like a hammer?" The pseudo-prophet prophesies out of the imagination of his own heart (Jeremiah 23:17). His words lack power and authority because he is moved by his own spirit (Ezekiel 13:3). His words effect nothing of any value to God or man. "But he that prophesieth [by divine inspiration] speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort" (1 Corinthians 14:3). True prophecy is tremendously effective.

The best defense against the unreal is the demonstration of the real. "Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy," and "desire spiritual gifts."

YOUR QUESTIONS



ANSWERED BY ERNEST S. WILLIAMS

I love the Lord, but do not partake of the Communion because I fear I may not, in every way, have walked worthy of the Lord. How do we know when we are worthy?

We partake of the Lord's Supper, not because we are worthy, but because we esteem the worthiness of Christ in our behalf. We acknowledge the fact that He gave Himself a ransom for us. We should examine ourselves before partaking and, if we are conscious of any failure or wrong done, confess it to the Lord. But it is best, when at any time we find we have been at fault, to take it to the Lord without delay and keep our conscience clear. Then at the time of Communion we should review our lives and renew our dedication to "righteousness and true holiness."

Do not the following scriptures place water baptism before salvation, or as a means to salvation: Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:6; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Peter 3:21? If this is not correct, how do you understand these references?

I think it is unfortunate that some teach "baptismal regeneration" and make water baptism a saving ordinance. They emphasize water as the means of salvation, assuming that in this baptism persons are born of the Spirit. The new birth is of primary importance. Jesus said, "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6). He then illustrated this truth by saying, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit" (v. 8). The emphasis is on spiritual birth, in which "the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Romans 8:16). Without a spiritual new birth, water baptism avails nothing. Let us make sure we are born from above.

A minister said we are baptized in water because we are saved, not in order to be saved. How is this?

When the Ethiopian eunuch asked for baptism, Philip said, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest" (Acts 8:37). He wanted to be sure that the eunuch fully believed in Christ before he would baptize him; he baptized him because he believed.

The first instruction given to the Philippian jailer was, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." Then he and all his house were baptized (Acts 16:30-33). Saving faith in Christ came first, then baptism.

In Acts 10:46-50 we are told that Cornelius and his household were filled with the Holy Spirit before they were baptized in water, so salvation came first.

Paul boasted that God sent him "not to baptize, but to preach the gospel" (1 Corinthians 1:17). This was of primary importance. Water baptism is important but secondary.

If you have a spiritual problem or any question about the Bible, you are invited to write to "Your Questions," The Pentecostal Evangel, 1445 Boonville, Springfield, Missouri 65802. Brother Williams will answer if you send a stamped self-addressed envelope.

THOSE PAPERS YOU SENT ME!



**LIGHT-FOR-
THE-LOST
LITERATURE
GOES FROM
THE NATIONAL
ARGENTINE
ASSEMBLIES
OF GOD
OFFICE TO
LOCAL
CHURCHES**



TWENTY-FIVE decisions for Christ recorded in Buenos Aires; six accept Christ in San Justo; 15 added to the church in Billinghamurst, and 15 more in Rio Gallegos; a new church opened in Cordoba with 70 in attendance—this is just a part of a recent report received from Louie Stokes in Argentina.

Assemblies of God believers throughout Argentina, supplied with over 725,000 pieces of Light-for-the-Lost literature, reached over 50,000 homes with the message of salvation. As a result of this literature distribution, churches have reported over 250 decisions to follow Christ. Only about half of the churches participating have notified Mr. Stokes of the results.

He tells the following story of one special case where Light-for-the-Lost literature was an effective witness.

“This afternoon we loaded the trunk

of our Speed-the-Light car with books, tracts, Bibles, and Bible texts. Then we drove some 45 miles to one of our house-churches to teach and preach.

“This congregation was building a new church across the street. Construction of the church was temporarily halted as they were gathering funds to finish the roof and interior. Without any outside aid, they were building this house of worship. Their own sacrifices and labors would always bring them a warm feeling of pride in their modest building.

“Before the preaching, a young man asked for the privilege of reading an interesting letter he had received from a relative in the distant province of Catamarca that borders Northern Chile. With a cheerful voice he read the inspiring words of a work of grace produced by what the letter called, ‘Those papers you sent me.’

“What were those papers? What had they accomplished?”

“The Argentine Assemblies of God had printed and distributed many thousands of copies of *Words of Life* with Light-for-the-Lost funds. One of those papers had traveled over a thousand kilometers and had found a receptive heart.

“The relative, in quaint and familiar dialect—interspersed with ‘send me some more of those papers’—told a simple story of finding the religion he had been searching for through the years. Jesus Christ had satisfied his heart and had restored health to his pain-wracked body. He was deeply grateful and wanted to know more about God.

“It is such miracles of grace and power that encourage the servants of the Lord, for it assures us of God’s constant but oftentimes invisible activities. It gives us a new confidence in the power of the Word that goes forth, and it creates an atmosphere of gratitude toward those who support, sustain, and provide the tools for our labors.

“We thank God for the Light-for-the-Lost program and its far-reaching benefits.”



ON THE STREETS of Sao Joao del Rei—a gold-mining town in southern Brazil—there used to be a drunken bum who always would mutter, “*O’Tá falado.*” Freely translated into English his words meant, “This is it, folks. I’ve said the last word on the subject.”

So often did Jorge Rodrigues use these words to show off his wisdom that the people soon nicknamed him *O’Tá Falado*—the man with the last word. While under the influence of the Brazilian *cachassa* that he drank, Jorge was always ready to state his opinions to anyone who would listen.

Jorge ran away from home when he was 16 years old. At first he was going only as far as Barbacena, but friends aboard the train persuaded him to go on to Rio de Janeiro. And besides, in the crowd on the train was a young girl named Vevina with whom he fell in love.

He arrived in Rio de Janeiro with the equivalent of about four dollars that he had stolen from his father, and he had to find a job. A stint in the Aeronautics Service only brought him dismissal for indiscipline, and then he got a job in a dental laboratory.

His love affair with Vevina did not meet with the approval of either family. He married her, but nothing seemed to go well for them. He drifted from job to job, and the meager earnings he gained were squandered in evil living.

After their first baby was born, he would often leave his wife and child in their humble room while he stayed out all hours of the night drinking. By the time two more children came along, there was never enough money for food for the family; but no efforts to reform Jorge did any good.

Then he got the idea of attending the *Macumba* rites, a form of spiritism prevalent in Rio de Janeiro. So adapted did he seem for this strange cult that they soon made him a medium and *pai de santo* (a really powerful witch doctor).

All the while he was sinning more and more. His children were dressed in rags, and for a house they only had a box-board shack on one of Rio’s steep hillsides. His family appealed to the Roman Catholic Church and to the witch doctors to see if they

O’TÁ FALADO

HOW A DRUNKEN WITCH DOCTOR WAS DELIVERED FROM SIN

could break his drink habit, but to no avail.

By the time the family moved back to Sao Joao again, both Jorge and Vevina were scarred from the rough life they lived. Jorge had gotten himself in many brawls, and his body was marked with innumerable scars where he had been stabbed, cut, or hit with a brick.

Vevina once was stabbed near the heart trying to get her husband out of a house of sin. In one fight at their home, Vevina pressed a hot iron on the chest of her drunken husband, branding him for life; and in the ensuing scuffle he broke her arm and knocked out several teeth. Another time she threw a pan of boiling water over him, sending him to the hospital in serious condition.

Thus was the life of Jorge and Vevina. He drank and talked constantly.

But all this has changed since Christ came into their home. When they came back to Sao Joao, they lived near one of our Assemblies of God churches. On hearing that our church was distributing some Alliance for Progress foodstuffs, Vevina came hungry and in rags to ask for help. The pastor’s wife, Angela, met her at the door and told her that they would gladly help her. At the same time she invited her to attend the church services to learn about Christ, who could give her even greater help.

A few days later, both Jorge and Vevina were present in the church when the pastor, Marcos, preached a powerful sermon under the anointing of the Holy Spirit. They were convicted of their sins and accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour.



Now the peace of God reigns in this home that formerly was torn by strife and sin. Jorge now works as a foreman on a mining operation, thus providing well for his family. The liquor habit is gone, and the joy of the Lord now is their lot as they serve Jesus Christ and sing redemption’s song.

O’Tá Falado—the man with the last word—is still giving out his opinions to anyone who will listen, but now his words are testimonies of what Christ has done for him and his family. On the day that he and Vevina were baptized in water he said, “This is the happiest day of our lives!”



PENITENCE AND PARDON

2 SAMUEL 12:1-14; PSALM 51:1-13

Sunday School Lesson for May 12, 1968

BY J. BASHFORD BISHOP

DAVID'S SIN WITH BATH-SHEBA, a terrible blot in an otherwise beautiful life, warns that no Christian, however far advanced spiritually, can claim to be beyond the possibility of falling.

On the other hand, David's cry for forgiveness in Psalm 51 probably represents the purest example of deep, Spirit-inspired repentance recorded in the Bible.

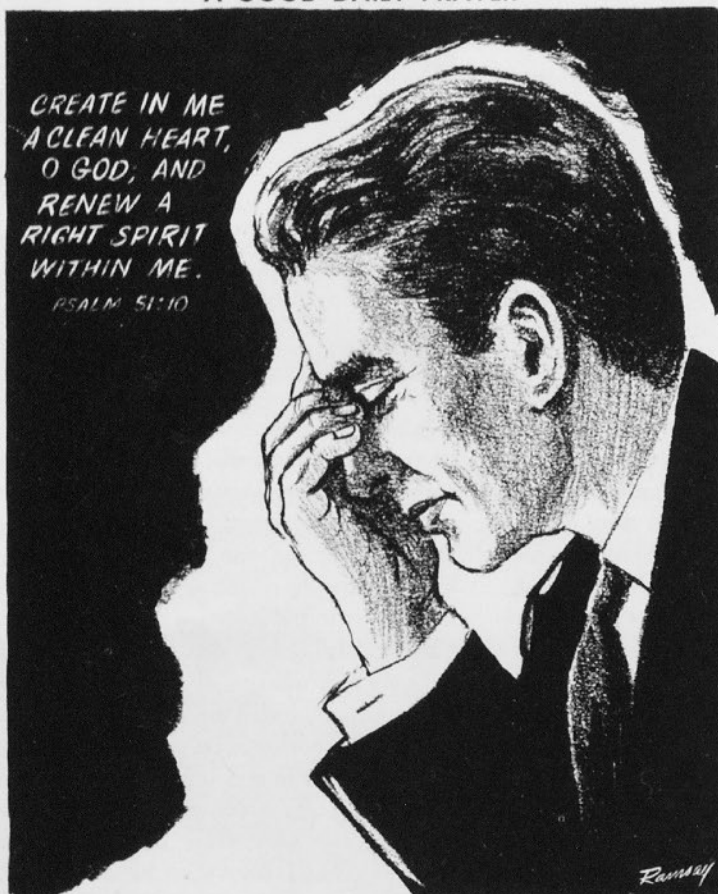
DAVID'S SIN (2 Samuel 12:1-14)

1. *Uncontrolled passion* (vv. 1-4). "There came a traveler unto [a] rich man." Nathan the prophet thus described in a parable how David had opened his mind to an impure thought and inordinate desire. Idleness, leisure, and carelessness had lowered the king's resistance.

2. *Hypocritical anger* (vv. 5, 6). What a revelation of the perversity and deceitfulness of the human heart! How easy it is to do as David did and express so-called "righteous indignation" over the sins of others while refusing to recognize the sin and inconsistencies in our own hearts. (See Romans 2:1-3.)

3. *Sudden exposure* (vv. 7-12). "Thou art the man." Thus through the prophet came the voice of God to

A GOOD DAILY PRAYER



David. It took courage for Nathan to do as he did. And how thankful David could be that God in His mercy did not permit him to go on in his deception and darkness with unconfessed sin in his life!

4. *Complete confession* (v. 13). "I have sinned." Here are three of the most difficult words in the English language to utter. Though David's sin was grievous, he was quick to admit his guilt. And it is clear from Psalm 51 that his sense of guilt was not superficial.

DAVID'S REPENTANCE (Psalm 51)

1. *The cry for mercy* (v. 1). The mercy of God is all any sinner can claim. Forgiveness is never deserved, earned, merited. Awareness of this is a basic ingredient in real repentance. David could not, and dared not, remind God of anything and everything he had ever done for Him.

2. *The consciousness of the sinfulness of sin* (vv. 1-5). David spoke of sin as "transgressions," indicating rebellion against God's will, self-will; as "iniquity," that is, "warped or crooked," as describing conduct; as "sin," which means "missing the mark," that is, coming short of the standard of God's righteousness.

"Against thee, thee only, have I sinned." David realized he had sinned against Bath-sheba, against Uriah her husband, and against the nation over which God had placed him. But he was also aware of something else which is basic in true repentance—that above all, he had sinned against the God who loved him and who had called him to serve the nation as its leader. And indeed this is the chief heinousness of sin, that it not only blights and ruins the lives of others, but it breaks the heart of God!

3. *The prayer for thorough cleansing*. Because of the depth of spirituality found in this Psalm, some have refused to believe it could have come from the lips and pen of David who lived so long before the New Testament era. However, there is no difficulty in believing that the Holy Spirit who was so prominent in the Old Testament could deal so sensitively with David.

David realized there was no merit in performing any ritual as a means of gaining restoration to God's favor. Paying one's tithes will not "buy God off" and incline Him to overlook sin. Again and again David pleaded for complete, entire, and full cleansing. "Blot out . . . wash me thoroughly . . . cleanse me . . . purge me."

4. *The assurance of God's transforming grace*. It has often been said that it takes more faith for a backslider to believe God has restored him than it does for a sinner coming to the Lord for the first time to believe God has saved him. From the human viewpoint this may be true. But it should be noted that though this Psalm contains utterances of a man who was heartbroken over his sins, he was not overwhelmed and despairing.

On the contrary, the Psalm is full of affirmations of faith and confidence in God. "Purge me . . . and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. . . . Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation. . . . Then [indicating faith] will I teach transgressors thy ways. . . . O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall show forth thy praise."

David was indeed conscious of great sin; but He was equally conscious that he had a God of great mercy who had provided a great salvation!

COPENHAGEN TYPESETTER HEALED AFTER FIVE YEARS OF INTENSE SUFFERING

COPENHAGEN, Denmark—Last August we had a week of services in various Mission Covenant and Pentecostal churches in the Copenhagen area with Evangelist E. Howard Anderson of Stamford, Connecticut, USA. I was happy to arrange these services and can report that as many as 15 came forward in a single service to meet the Lord in prayer.



LEFT: H. Kristensen was healed of a serious nervous disorder. **RIGHT:** Part of the crowd at Ronne, Denmark, where E. Howard Anderson preached and many were healed. **BELOW:** V. Birk (left), pastor of Mission Covenant Church, and Evangelist Anderson played duets during the meetings.



Before moving to Copenhagen I was pastor at Ronne, Bornholm. Evangelist Anderson had a campaign at our Mission Covenant church there in 1966 with excellent results (see report in *The Pentecostal Evangel*, January 22, 1967). Many received divine healing from our wonderful Lord at that time, and today they are still testifying and thanking Him for the help they received in the campaign.

Among the many healings from heart diseases, asthma, tumors, etc., I would like to mention two in particular. One is the case of P. Olsen. He had suffered continually with clogged tear channels for 25 years, ever since he was a teen-ager. Mr. Olsen has been perfectly well and active in the Lord's work since his healing.

The other case I would mention here is that of my brother-in-law, H. Kristensen, who lives in Copenhagen. During the campaign with Evangelist Anderson this good Christian man, who is very active in the Salvation Army here, was baptized in the Holy Spirit, and God also healed his body. Praise the Lord! His years of suffering from a serious nervous disorder came to an end. He now can work normally again as a typesetter for a large Copenhagen newspaper. Here is his testimony, given in his own words:

"For five years I suffered with poor nerves, which made it difficult to keep my job. There were times when I had to leave my work in the middle of the day due to depressing thoughts that I would suddenly die or become blind. I had pains around my heart, together with other nervous symptoms.

"I consulted my doctor several times. The various medicines he prescribed had no healing effect. I then received a thorough examination by a nerve specialist; however, he was unable to find the cause for my condition. My shattered nerves and the depressing symptoms troubled me continually.

"While visiting at the home of my brother-in-law, Pastor Vagn Birk, on the island of Bornholm, I met Evangelist E. Howard Anderson. The evangelist laid hands upon me and prayed to the Lord for my healing. Instantly I was aware of a release of pressure from my mind, and the depressing thoughts disappeared. I had experienced the blessed healing touch of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"During the 18 months that have passed, I have been perfectly well every day, and rejoice in the blessing of being a child of God.

"A few days after the healing I attended a service of the campaign. I entered the prayer room and sat upon the chair nearest the entrance doorway. Almost immediately I was baptized in the Holy Spirit. I had no previous understanding of this experience; therefore it came as a blessed surprise when I began to speak with other tongues, without anyone praying with me for this wonderful experience."

We do thank God for those who are receiving the charismatic experience here in Denmark. It seems to me a new spiritual awakening is spreading throughout the world. The Word of God says that in the last days He will pour out of His Spirit upon all flesh. Let us therefore be awake and receive what God has for us.

—by Pastor Vagn Birk, "BETHEL"
MISSION COVENANT CHURCH
COPENHAGEN, DENMARK

WHEN IT COMES, WILL YOU KNOW IT?
WILL YOU BE READY FOR IT?



THE LAST WALK

By ARTHUR H. TOWNSEND
Abbotsford, British Columbia, Canada

H.G. SLAPE of Salmon Arm, British Columbia, walked into the Montebello Hotel for the night. In his 82nd year, he had resided at the hotel for a long time.

Mrs. Amy Topping of Oliver, British Columbia, was passing through the city. She walked across the street from the bus depot and into the same hotel, seeking lodging for the night.

In the early morning hours fire ravaged the frame building and almost levelled the whole city block. Both Mr. Slape and Mrs. Topping perished in the flames.

Several days later, while we watched police probing the debris for the remains, I said: "Neither one knew they were taking their last walk in life that night."

But there were a number of spectacular escapes from the burning building. Men jumped through windows. Firemen rescued others. They said: "The heat was so intense it melted the top of an aluminum ladder." Yet two people—one a resident and the other a transient—never walked out of that building again. They had taken their last walk.

The day will come when each of us will take his last walk. I shall take mine. You will take yours. Perhaps it will be to a hospital bed. Or you may walk from your chair toward your bedroom door—and never reach it. You may walk to your car and die in a head-on collision or in the collapse of a bridge.

In a thousand-and-one ways people have taken a last walk. How will you take yours? How shall I take mine? I do not know.

The convicted murderer being led to the gallows knows he is taking his last walk in life. Most people do not.

Ananias walked into the presence of Peter. He did not know, neither did his wife Sapphira know, that they both were taking their last walk that day (Acts 5:1-11).

But the apostle James knew he was walking to his death. So did Paul. Judas also knew, when he went out to hang himself, that he was going to do it.

However, I am not concerned so much with the *when* or *where* or *how* you will depart this life. The important question is your spiritual condition. God's Word declares, "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27).

When the time for the last walk came, Paul was ready; Ananias and Sapphira were not. James was ready; Judas was not.

The last walk can come so unexpectedly. Will you be ready? You can be. Again God's Word declares: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" (John 3:16, 17).

Christ's death and resurrection provide the way of preparing you for eternity. But it's up to you to accept Him as your personal Saviour and Lord.

Are you ready for your last walk?

