

Oral Roberts'
LIFE STORY

AS TOLD BY HIMSELF

Illustrations by Eloise Gray

ORAL ROBERTS
Tulsa 1, Oklahoma

WHY I URGED ORAL ROBERTS TO WRITE THIS BOOK

FOUR years ago I heard about a young man from the Southwest whose great faith was beginning to stir America. Learning he was pitching his huge tent in Miami, Florida I boarded an Eastern Airliner and flew to his campaign. When I arrived the great tent was crowded with thousands of people who had come from all over the nation to hear Oral Roberts preach. I was lucky to find one vacant chair at the extreme rear of the tent.

I had decided to myself if I didn't like what I saw I would quietly slip out without anyone knowing I had been there. In a few minutes a young man of about thirty was introduced and I had my first look at the evangelist I had flown down to hear. He was tall, broad-shouldered, black haired and was dressed in a light suit. He strode to the platform with Bible in hand, raised his hands upward and without a word the crowd stood up. He began to lead them in what I later learned was his theme song, "Where the Healing Waters Flow." He had them to shake hands with each other and say, "God Bless You Neighbor" and be seated. Then he announced his text, read it in a quiet, modulated voice, gave his Bible to an associate seated nearby, bowed his head and began to pray. In this prayer he told God he was coming to Him, not in his own name, but in the name of His Son

Jesus Christ of Nazareth. He asked God to bind the forces of evil: sin, disease, and demons that tormented human life and to loose the people and let them go free. Then he spoke to the devil and adjured him to take his hands off God's property, commanding him in the name of the Lord to release his hold upon humanity. As he closed his prayer he thanked God that He had heard him and that he knew God would set the people free that night. Then he said, "Amen."

Immediately following his prayer he took the microphone in his hand and began to preach.

I had been used to preachers starting off rather slow and tediously but Oral Roberts preached from the word, Go. He was a human dynamo charged with God's power. His voice took on a vibrant tone as if it were charged with magnetism. He preached like a man possessed with God. In a few seconds he brought Jesus to that crowd and I am sure every person present saw Jesus so real and close that he could reach out and touch Him.

For the first time in my life I lost sight of time in a religious meeting. The huge crowd sat hushed, fascinated, living the scenes of Bible days the preacher was portraying before them. He made them see, hear, feel and actually experience what he was telling them about God. When he was through, he had no conclusion, he simply quit because he was finished. It seemed he had spoken only a few minutes. I learned later he had preached for an hour and forty minutes!

"Every head bowed," he said and instantly every head in that great audience, including my own, was bowed. He prayed for God to save sinners and not let a one who had heard him preach that night go to hell. Then while all heads remained bowed he asked (or was it a command) every unsaved person in the tent who wanted his prayers to raise their hands, then to stand, then to come down the aisles before him and repeat the sinner's prayer.

When he told the audience to look up and see what God

was doing, I raised my head and saw hundreds of people streaming down the long aisles. About half of them were men. Some were sobbing as they made their way to the front. Without the shadow of a doubt they were convicted of their sins and wanted to be genuinely saved.

I was astonished. I had gone to church all my life but I had never seen such a mass move of sinners toward God before. After praying with these people he sent them to a tent prayer room where personal workers prayed with them further.

He then announced he always put first things first in his meetings. "I never pray for the sick," he said, "until I have led people to Christ to be saved. The saving of a lost soul is God's greatest miracle." Then the healing line was called and he began praying for the healing of the sick. This is when I saw Oral Roberts as he really is. I was sitting two hundred feet from the platform but since it was brilliantly lighted I could see the healing scene real well. The public address system was so perfect I could hear the faintest whisper.

As he prayed for the people he seemed lost in his prayer, completely oblivious of the crowd. His soul was in his voice and the words of his prayer rang with sincerity. He prayed for alcoholics, cripples, blind, deaf and dumb, crossed eyes, goiters, the insane and almost every imaginable affliction. As I saw this scene somehow my mind went back to the days when Jesus was on this earth and laid His hands upon the sick and healed them.

Three hours had passed since I entered the tent. I had gotten off the plane tired and worn. Now I felt refreshed. My chair was no longer hard. I had witnessed with my own eyes the conversion of hundreds of people. I had seen little crippled children walk away healed. I had heard an alcoholic say, "Brother Roberts, what did you do to me?" and he replied, "Nothing, God has healed you, go and serve the Lord." I had seen a young mother clasp her small child in

her arms while her face was wet with tears. Her child's crossed eyes had been pulled together and were now perfectly straight through the prayers of a servant of God.

The next day I met Oral Roberts. I have only one memory of that brief moment spent with him, he made me think of Jesus. I flew back to North Carolina. When I tried to tell my wife and young son, Sherrod Lee, my impressions I almost broke down.

Two months later I took my family to Jacksonville. I wondered if I was just carried away by my emotions. Norma, my wife, Sherrod Lee and my daughter Barbara sat in the meetings and had the same feeling I had. There we saw even larger crowds and often the tent was filled three hours before starting time.

One night following Oral Roberts' sermon on "A Man's Life" I saw one thousand sinners go forward to be saved. I saw a little boy prayed for who was born without a hip socket. Brother Roberts announced he had never prayed for such a case before but would see what the Lord would do. We saw that boy the next night without his crutches walking perfectly normal without a trace of a limp. It seemed like a dream but his mother testified to the entire audience that he was actually healed and his hip fully restored. I had seen the child before and after. I knew his healing was a reality.

From that time I became a changed man. I was president of several corporations and business enterprises, I was on the City Council and was planning to run for Mayor of my city. I was a member of the church and many civic organizations, ordinarily I would not have been impressed with an evangelist in another part of the Nation. But I saw Oral Roberts had God's formula of faith, the message of deliverance for soul, mind and body. He made me want to seek God, to have compassion and faith for the suffering like Jesus, to go out and do something for my generation.

I prevailed upon him to come to Whiteville for one night

and preach at our church. No public announcement was made except once on the radio. Somehow the news got out and by middle of the afternoon our little city of 3800 was the center of interest for miles around. Cars were parked a mile each way from the church. We had to call all the policemen of the city on duty to handle the traffic. By 6:00 P.M. over 4000 people were trying to get in the church which seated only 300!

Since that time I have attended 33 of Oral Roberts campaigns, either whole or part, from coast to coast. I have seen him in his "Glory" when the big tent, seating 12,500, was filled and overflowed with people wanting his prayers, I have seen him when his back was to the wall, like at Amarillo, Texas when the storm ripped the tent to pieces and the critics said he was through. I have seen him when 2200 came forward in one service to be saved in his campaign in Columbia, South Carolina and I have seen him when it seemed no one would be saved. I have seen him cry over little afflicted children as if they were his own and pray until they leaped out of his arms and ran off the platform healed and well. On the other hand when the going was rough and he was opposed on all sides, I have seen him as hard as steel, unrelenting, uncompromising. I have seen Governors, Mayors, Bishops on his platform but his sermon has not changed one iota. In defeat or triumph he never wavers. He believes God has raised him up and he will finish the work and fulfill the cause for which he was born.

I have walked arm in arm with him down the coasts of both oceans washing America's shores and heard him talk of his burdens, his dreams, his mission in life. I have been beside him on horseback as we rode over his farm just outside of Tulsa where his wife and four children live and where he spends his time the few days each month when not engaged in a campaign. I confess he has baffled me. He is so ordinary, so simple, so unassuming in his private life, yet when he gets in the pulpit he becomes another person.

Then I don't see him, invariably I see Jesus. He seems to turn a spotlight on the Savior.

Perhaps this is why I wanted him to write his story with nothing left out. He didn't want to write it. He felt it was not worthy to be put in book form. I knew he had been born a stutterer and, at the age of 17, was bedridden with tuberculosis, that only his mother and father believed he would ever amount to anything. I have talked with his parents in Tulsa and heard them tell how God told them His hand was upon Oral and that he was born to preach the gospel. I had seen people all over America stirred by his ministry, on the air, in the meetings, in his writings. I knew he had risen by faith over his handicaps to become, at age 34, the nation's greatest soul winner, winning over 50,000 souls a year in his meetings. I felt his story should be read by every man, woman and child in America. I was thrilled last month when I flew to his meeting in Portland and he handed me a sheaf of typewritten pages, saying, "Well Lee, you've asked me to write it and here it is. I do not know whether its worth anything or not but it is exactly what happened to me".

I could scarcely wait until I got back to my room. By the time I had read the first three chapters I felt like hugging his neck for he had written it like I hoped he would, with simplicity and clearness, which gift he seems to possess both in his writings and sermons.

I knew part of the story, some of it I had lived with him but as he told of his childhood days and the strange things that had happened to him and the way God had dealt with his soul while he was yet a stammering, stuttering boy, I began to understand some things about him I had wanted to know. When I got to chapter seventeen I couldn't read any further. It brought me to my knees in tears and there in my hotel room I rededicated my life to God and made a new consecration to help take Bible Deliverance to this world. I know little about theology but I am unshaken in my faith

in God and that He had raised up Oral Roberts to reach our generation with the message of Bible Deliverance.

This story will touch the heart strings of every reader. Once you have begun it you will have to finish it. It won't let you alone. It will tug at your heart for many days to come. I envy you for I would like to have again the chance of reading it for the first time.

Lee Braxton

Mayor

Whiteville, North Carolina

CHAPTER 1

THE LAST MILE OF THE WAY

I REACHED the end of the way when I was seventeen. I faced life with a stammering, stuttering tongue and with tuberculosis in both lungs. I had fought a desperate battle and had lost.

When I was sixteen I ran away from home. If I could only get away, I thought, everything would be all right. The end came in less than twelve months. While I was playing in the final game of the Southern Oklahoma basketball tournament, I collapsed and was carried off the gymnasium floor. Blood was spurting from my mouth and I was coughing with every breath. My coach, Mr. Herman Hamilton, picked me up and laid me in the back seat of his car. "You're going home, Oral," he said.

When we got to Ada, Mr. Hamilton knocked on the door. Papa came to the door. "Is this where Oral Roberts' parents live?" he said.

"Yes. Is something wrong?" Papa asked.

"Reverend Roberts, your son has played his last game. I've got him out here in my car," Mr. Hamilton said. "I'll need your help to get him in the house."

They carried me in and I fell across the bed. Looking up at Papa, I said, "Papa, I've gone the last mile of the way."

I lay bedfast one hundred sixty-three days. A thousand

times I cursed the day I was born. My oldest sister, Velma, had died when she was nineteen, an epileptic and with pneumonia. Now the devil was striking at me, the youngest child of Papa's family.

I do not know where people get the idea that sickness is a blessing and is one of the gifts of God to humanity. While I had tuberculosis I was the most miserable person in the world. I coughed and spit up blood and tossed on the bed day and night, not able to sleep more than a few hours at a time. I went as much as forty-eight hours without a wink of sleep. Food lost its taste and I became a pile of skin and bones. My weight dropped from one hundred sixty to one hundred twenty pounds. I was six feet one inch tall, yet weighed only one hundred and twenty pounds.

My friends no longer recognized me, and when they came to see me they said they couldn't stand to look at me. I was put on a diet of sweet milk and raw eggs. For weeks I tried to live on it, but there came a time when I could not even take that.

One day Papa came over to my bed and looked down at me. His chin was quivering. Since the doctor had just been there and given me another examination, I knew Papa knew the verdict. I said, "Papa, what did the doctor say?"

He said, "Son, you are going to be all right."

Something went all over me. I knew by the way he said it that I was not going to be all right.

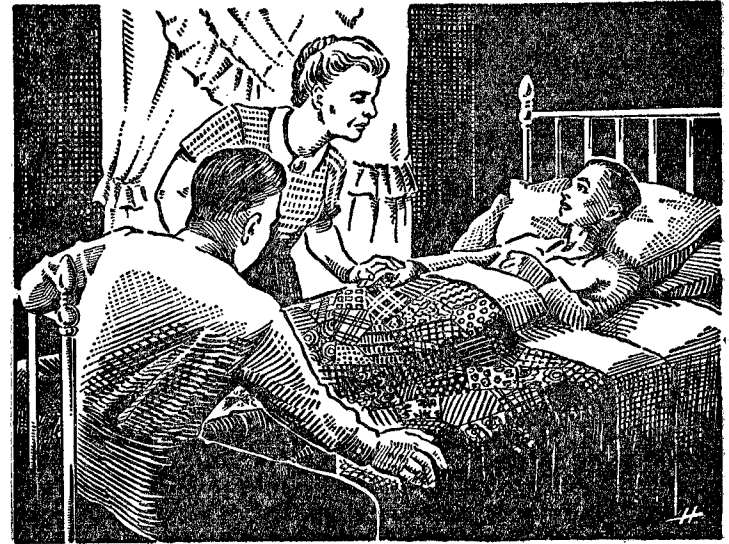
"If I am going to be all right," I said, "why are you crying?"

"Oh, son, you are going to be all right."

"Papa, something is wrong. You are upset. Papa, tell me the truth."

"Son, don't worry yourself. You will get to coughing again. Lie back down now."

"Papa, you've got to tell me. What does this awful pain in my lungs mean? Why do I keep spitting up blood and coughing all the time?"



If I live to be a million years old I will never forget his answer.

"Oral, you have tuberculosis in both lungs."

They had called my brother Vaden, and about that time he ran up on the porch and into the house. I heard him say, "Papa, where is he?"

In a moment he fell across my bed, screaming, "God, put the t.b. on me. I've always been stronger than Oral has. Put it on me, Lord."

I pushed Vaden off my body and told him to stand back. Mama and my sister Jewel came in the room and I saw they were crying. I looked over to the window sill where Papa had my medicine. I reached over, gathered it up in my arms, and said, "Here, Papa, take it."

He said, "What's the matter, Son?"

I said, "Papa, when people take t.b., they don't get well. This medicine isn't going to help me now. If I am going to die, then I will just die."

Papa said, "Son, you've got to take this medicine."

I said, "No, I won't do it."

Mama came over to my bed and held my hand. I looked up at her and remembered that her father had died as a young man and it had been whispered that it was tuberculosis.

"Mama, what did your father die with?"

She shook her head.

"I want you to tell me. Don't put me off now. I want to know."

She said, "Oral, he died with tuberculosis."

I said, "Mama, didn't you say once that one of your sisters died with the same thing that your father died with?"

She said, "Yes, one of my sisters died with tuberculosis too."

I said, "Well, it's in your side of the family then, isn't it?"

She nodded.

It seemed that the whole world came crashing down upon my head. The sun slowly fell from the sky as I faced the end of my dreams. Black despair settled over my soul, and I began to cry. Turning my face to the wall, I let go. I cried so hard I screamed with pain. Papa came over and tried to pull me back across the bed, but I fought him off. I cried until there were no more tears left. My eyes became dry. My lips hard and set. A relative was in the house at this time. When she heard me screaming and crying, she turned and said, "I can't stand it," and ran out of the house.

Every ambition I ever had was crushed in a moment. I felt lost and miserable.

Within a few days I felt death on my body. I wished to die. I didn't want to live. I wanted to die because I didn't want to have t.b. the rest of my life.

During the days that followed, I began to learn some of the queer ideas that people have about God, about religion, about sickness. Nearly everybody who came to see me had a remedy, a philosophy, and a theology. I remember one

day when one of the leading pastors of the city came to visit me. He stayed a few moments and then came over to my bed. He reached down and took my hand in his and said, "Son, be patient. You will just have to be patient with this thing." Then he said a few words of prayer, asking God to make me patient, and went on his way.

He didn't offer prayer to God for the healing of my body. He never gave me any hope that a miracle could save me. He never mentioned the power of faith. He never encouraged me to believe. He left me with his little prayer in which he asked God to make me patient in my afflictions.

I remember how bitter I became. I said to myself, "Be patient. And what will that get me? What will patience do for tuberculosis?"

Had I remained patient with tuberculosis, I would either have been in a sanatorium or in my grave today. Patience does not heal tuberculosis.

Some of the religious people who came to see me told me that the Lord had tracked me down and had put this awful disease upon me for a purpose. One Sunday afternoon the house was full of such people. As usual they were discussing my case. They all agreed that God had put it upon me. Then one of them spoke up and said that if somebody had faith and would pray, the Lord could heal me. Another one said, "How do you know it is God's will to heal him?"

Then they fell into a discussion about its not being God's will to heal my body. I had to lie there and listen to all this. Practically every Sunday I went through the same thing. People discussed my case pro and con. Some believed that God could heal me and some believed that God could not. Practically all of them believed that God had afflicted me.

Yet every time, somebody would speak up and tell me I should get saved. I listened to their conversations with great bitterness in my soul. One Sunday afternoon I got mad. The room was crowded with people and they were all trying to get me saved while in the same breath they were

telling me that God had afflicted me. I raised up off the bed and said, "Papa, I am sick and tired of all this. These people say God put tuberculosis upon me and in the same breath they say that God loves me and wants to save me. Papa, I don't believe it. I don't want to hear any more of it. I don't want to get saved, and these people might as well leave me and let me alone."

These pious people exchanged glances, raised their eyebrows a few times, whispered something to one another, and in a few minutes they were all gone.

The following week I lay in bed thinking about the whole thing. I finally decided that the religion these people had was not deliverance at all. To them, religion was a mental acceptance of life's inequalities. Instead of inspiring me to have faith in God for my deliverance, their religious belief was that I should be calm and patient while disease and other life-destroying forces slowly killed me. They talked out of both sides of their mouth. On the one hand they talked of the great love of God for me and on the other they talked of God's putting sickness upon me. According to them, both sickness and salvation came from the Lord and there was nothing I could do about it.

They had come to accept the afflictions of life as the will of God, and they didn't expect the Lord to change things and bring deliverance. If one had enough religion, he could endure. If he didn't, he should get more religion.

I revolted against this wicked idea and cried out, "If God put this on me, I don't want to serve Him."

God always has someone He can trust and someone He sends to help those that lose their way in life. In my case it was my mother. One day she came to my room, sat down on my bed beside me, and began talking. She said that God had spoken to her about me before I was born, that I was His, and that God's hand was upon my life.

I said, "Mama, all these people say God put tuberculosis upon me."

She said, "Oral, God didn't afflict you."

I said, "Well, Mama, if God didn't, who did?"

She said, "The devil did, Son. He is trying to destroy your life."

I said, "Mama, why is he trying to destroy me?"

She said, "When God calls someone, Son, the devil always tries to destroy him, but if you will give your heart to Jesus and have faith in the Lord, He will raise you up from this bed and heal you."

That was the first time I ever had any idea that God would heal my body. Mama was the first person who put that feeling of hope in my heart.

My sister Jewel came to visit us about a week later. She came straight to my bed and looked down on me. She said she had been praying and seeking God. Suddenly, with tears in her eyes, she said, "Oral, I believe God is going to heal you."

I didn't say anything in reply but hope leaped in my heart. I can still feel it right now—that inspiring touch of hope she gave me that day.

From that time on the devil was never able to take away the faith that I found was in my heart.

Papa, Mama, and Jewel had a conference and agreed that God was able to heal me. They believed He was going to heal me. Papa decided to go into action. He wrote letters to people he knew had faith in the Lord's power to heal: churches, preachers, Christian individuals. In all of his letters he would say, "Pray for Oral to be healed."

About midnight one night a car drove up in our front yard and we heard someone say, "Brother Roberts! Brother Roberts! This is the Lindsay saints."

They were from Lindsay, Oklahoma, from the Full Gospel Church there. They were old-time friends of Papa and Mama. When they got out of the car, the men hugged Papa and the women hugged Mama. They stood rejoicing and praising God.



They said, "Where is Oral?"

Papa said, "Right in here."

They all gathered around my bed, and I looked up into their bright faces. Every one of them had a shining countenance. Every one of them stood with hope in his face and every one of them knew how to pray.

I had heard many tall prayers during the weeks I had been sick. Some pastors had come and prayed their little prayers, but they never left anything with me. They never stirred me or inspired my soul. But these people from Lindsay had something. They all gathered around my bed, lifted up their hands, and began to pray. I enjoyed their prayers because they prayed with hope, with joy, and with faith.

I didn't get healed. I know now I could have been, but I was so thrilled with their praying and with the joy that I saw in their faces that I just lay back drinking it all in.

When they left about daybreak, I said, "Papa, when I get religion, I want the kind those people have."

CHAPTER 2

VADEN AND I

VADEN and I were the youngest of five children and since there were only two years between us, we were raised almost like twins. When we were small boys, Papa would go away a lot of the time to hold revival meetings. One summer he was away for several weeks. The people did not support him very well and he had not been able to send money home for Mama to buy groceries. Our meager supply kept dwindling away. One evening Mama came out on the porch and called Vaden and me and said, "Boys, come here a minute." We went up to the porch and she said, "Boys, we don't have anything to eat tonight."

Vaden spoke up and said he thought Papa should come home from his revival and take care of us, but I thought it was wonderful for Papa to be preaching so I took up for him.

Presently Mama said, "Boys, we are going visiting for a while tonight."

We went up the street to visit old Sister Campbell, a widow woman who had several children. We got there just as they were sitting down to supper. Sister Campbell said, "Oh, Sister Roberts, you are just in time to have supper with us." But Mama's pride was too great.

She said, "Oh, no, we are not hungry." It is a good thing

she didn't ask Vaden and me because we would have taken her up.

About nine o'clock Mama said she had to go, and Sister Campbell suggested we have prayer. When they got down to pray, I knew what was coming. Mama got shouting happy and started praising the Lord for being so good to us. About that time Vaden rammed his elbow in my ribs and said, "He ain't been very good to me." I told him he had better hush. On the way home he said, "Mama, why did you pray like that? You know God isn't very good to us. We haven't got anything to eat. Papa is gone off holding a revival and you wouldn't even let us eat at Sister Campbell's tonight."

I turned to Vaden and said, "Now, Vaden, you hush. God will take care of us. You just hush and you will see what the Lord will do."

I was not a Christian, but I didn't have a doubt that God would take care of us. Those words just came right out of my heart. When we got home, Vaden ran up on the porch to open the door. He said, "Mama, there is something behind this door. I can't open it."

I ran up to help him and together we pushed the door open and flipped on the light. We looked down, and there was the biggest box of groceries we had ever seen.

Mama began to shout and rejoice and thank the Lord for being so good to us. She said, "Boys, pick up that box of groceries and put it in here on the kitchen table."

We did. Vaden and I dived in to pull out all those good things to eat. Vaden reached down in the corner of the box and pulled out a great big country ham and held it up for us to see. I pulled out a sack of Irish potatoes and a sack of flour. Pretty soon we had the whole table covered. Mama took one look, reached up, and pulled an apron off the wall and put it on. She got a sharp knife out of the drawer and began to slice ham, peel potatoes, and make bread. Near midnight she said, "Come on, boys, it's ready."

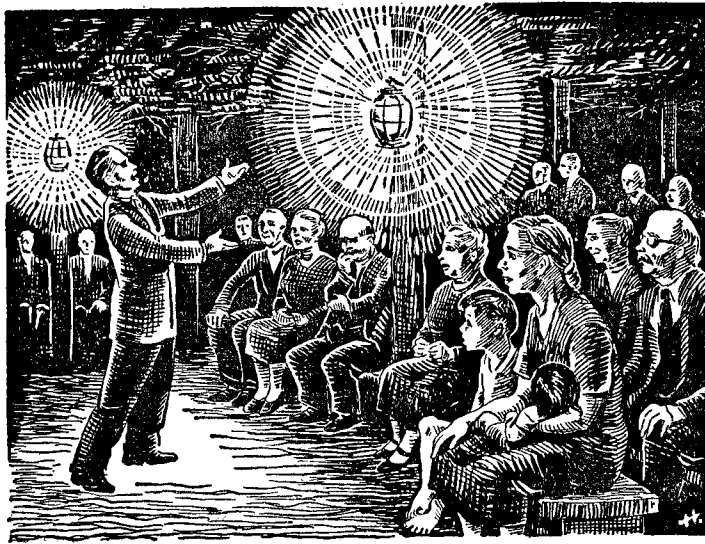
She had a big platter of country ham on the table, a plate of hot biscuits, and a bowl of Irish potatoes. As we began to eat, it seemed like that ham melted in our mouths. The biscuits began to disappear. Right in the middle of it, while I had my mouth full of country ham, I turned and said to Vaden, "See there, Vaden, I told you God would take care of us."

He grinned and said, "Yeah, He sure did, didn't He?"

In the summertime Papa used to take Vaden and me with him when he preached at brush arbor meetings. In those days, people out in the country would build a big brush arbor and announce services, which they called a "protracted" revival meeting. I guess you know what a brush arbor is. They would cut down young trees and trim them up for poles and stand them up in the ground. They would take smaller poles and make a lattice of them on top which they would cover with branches of trees. Then they would take blocks of wood and put planks of lumber on top of them for seats. Kerosene lanterns would be hung up on the posts and there you had a brush arbor. It could be built as big as necessary for the crowds and it cost nothing to build.

People would come from all over the county to these meetings, bringing their whole families with them. In those days they had large families, and the mothers would bring big quilts and make pallets for the children. They called these heavy quilts "comforters." Mama would take a big comforter and spread it out between the benches and tell Vaden and me to lie down, be good, and go to sleep. All over the brush arbor mothers would tell their children to lie down, behave themselves, and go to sleep.

People said that Vaden and I were the meanest children in the county. We were preacher's children and they declared we were mean. Vaden and I never denied this dubious honor, but if we were, we learned all we knew from the deacons' children. They taught us all the tricks of the trade.



One night Papa was up preaching. Vaden and I were on our pallet minding our own business when a little boy reached over, grabbed our pallet, and gave it a yank. It made us mad. We turned around and told him he had better quit doing that. He kept on. After a while Vaden whirled around and said, "You better quit that."

The little boy jerked his hand back, but just as soon as we turned our heads, he yanked our pallet again. Vaden said, "You better quit that." But he kept on tantalizing us.

Papa was preaching away. In a few moments the little boy reached over and gave another big yank at our pallet. Vaden said, "If you touch our pallet again, I will cut your ear off."

The little boy shook his head and whispered, "You haven't got the nerve." He didn't know Vaden like I did.

Vaden and I had just got settled again when we felt the pallet being yanked out from under us. Vaden whirled around, caught the little boy by the wrist, and yanked him

over on our pallet. When Papa heard a new shout in the camp, Vaden had his knife out and was cutting the little boy's right ear off. The little boy was screaming at the top of his voice. Papa stopped his preaching and turned to locate the wild sound. When he saw it was coming from our direction, he knew what had happened. Now I wasn't doing a thing. I was just holding the little boy.

Papa looked over at us and said, "Boys!" Then the roof fell in. When he said "Boys!" I knew the judgment had



dawned. He said, "Boys, get up off that pallet. Come up here and sit on the mourner's bench." Vaden and I got up and walked down the aisle while the other children laughed and snickered at us. We sat down on the altar bench and awaited the verdict of the judge. In a moment he pronounced the sentence. "When I get you two boys home," Papa said, "I will tend to you."

Papa believed in the stars and stripes. He put on the

stripes and Vaden and I saw the stars. When he got us home he took down his big razor strap. It was made in two pieces. When he got through with us, we believed it had a thousand pieces. Vaden is a good boy, though.

One day Papa sawed a big cottonwood tree down in our back yard. He left a nice stump for Vaden and me to play on. The next day as I came around the house I found Vaden driving some nails in the stump. I walked up.

"Whatcha doin'?"

"Cantcha see?"

"Driving some nails, eh?"

"Yeah."

"Let me drive some."

"I just started driving some myself."

"Aw, come on, let me drive some."

"Get away."

"Aw, Vaden, come on. Let me drive a few."

"No, I told you to get away, I just started driving some myself."

"Aw, come on, let me drive just a few."

"Get away!"

"All right. If you don't let me drive any, you can't drive any."

"Get away!"

Putting my hand on the stump where he was driving, I said, "You can't drive any more until you let me drive some."

Looking at me, he said, "If you don't get your hand off, I'll nail you to this stump."

I said, "Go ahead. You haven't got the nerve."

He promptly nailed my right hand to the stump.

When he saw what he had done, he jumped up and down and began to holler. When I saw what he had done, I began to jump up and down and holler. Mama heard us and came running out of the house. When she saw what was done, she began to jump up and down and holler. About that

time one of my father's brothers came riding down the country road in his buggy. He heard us shouting at the top of our voices. He didn't know what was wrong, so he jumped out and ran up and found that I was nailed to the stump. He began to laugh. He laughed so hard I thought he had forgotten me completely. Pretty soon he came to himself and took the hammer and pulled the nail out and turned the victim free. Vaden is a good boy, though.



CHAPTER 3

THE KING AND THE STUTTERER

WHEN I graduated from grade school to Junior High I was elected king of the school. I was to be presented with the queen in the final assembly program at the end of the school term.

I went home and told Papa I had to have some new clothes. He didn't bat an eye. He just gave me that hungry preacher's look, and I knew by that, the offerings from the church that week were too small to buy new clothes for me.

I got a job selling newspapers after school. I would get my roll of papers behind the newspaper plant, run as fast as I could down the streets of Ada crying at the top of my voice: "Ada *Evening News*—three cents!" I sold enough that spring to buy me a completely new wardrobe: a ninety-eight-cent pair of tennis shoes, a sixty-nine-cent pair of overalls, and a forty-nine-cent shirt. On the final morning I walked into my home room with this new outfit on. I said, "Miss Henderson, I'm ready for you to put the crown on my head!"

She took one look at me and said, "Oral, you had better run home and get dressed!"

I said, "Miss Henderson, I'm dressed."

She said, "Oh all right, you'll have to do. Now in a few

minutes you'll hear a little signal. That means you are to meet the queen out in the hall."

Mary Lou White, daughter of a rich family, had been elected queen. I didn't know how she would be dressed. Had I known, it wouldn't have mattered because I had on the best I had. When I got out in the hall and saw her coming toward me, she was dressed in a beautiful white satin evening gown! And me in my overalls!

I gave her my arm, and we marched into the assembly room at the sound of music. We were crowned and presented. After the queen made her bow, I made mine. I was every inch a king.

One of the tragedies of my boyhood was that I was a stutterer. I stammered all my life. It was an awful thing, and yet it had its lighter moments. When I got excited I just couldn't talk at all. However, when I was by myself I could talk real well. When I would fall in love with a little girl, I would go off to myself and make up a nice



speech to say to her, but when I got up to where she was my tongue would freeze and I couldn't talk without stammering and stuttering. Most of the time I would run off in confusion.

Once I fell in love with the daughter of the banker and I wrote her a note. I didn't stutter in my note. She got the note, and I made an arrangement to come to her house to take her to a party. All the way over to her house that evening I walked with my chest stuck out saying a little speech I was going to say when I got to the door. I could say it without a bobble. I walked up to the porch, straightened my tie, threw out my chest, and knocked on the door. Pretty soon I heard the doorknob turn. The door opened and there stood her father. When I saw him, I forgot my speech. I couldn't say a word. My throat just froze up.

He said, "Well, Son?"

I tried to talk. My Adam's apple began to go up and down the elevator about ninety miles an hour, and I couldn't say a word.

"He said, 'What do you want, Son?'"

I tried to tell him, but the more I tried to talk the less I could say. With my face as red as a beet, I turned and ran off the porch. As I ran off, I heard him say, "That's the strangest boy I ever saw."

One night at a party we boys made it up that we were going to ask the girls if we could take them home. We all lined up on the porch as they came out and each boy was to ask the girl as she came by. I stood at the tail end of the line so that I could get enough nerve up to talk without stuttering. Each boy in front of me asked his girl. She would say, "Yes," and take his arm. Away they would go. Pretty soon it got down to me, and I saw my girl coming. When she got close I started to ask her, but I couldn't say a word. I froze on the spot. She just kept going. She passed right out of my life.

But after I was healed of stuttering and God let me talk

again, it was a wonderful thing to find I was able to talk. It was a great pleasure to be able to express myself. I remember when I proposed to the girl who is now my wife. She was teaching school in Texas and I went down to see her. Evelyn and I promptly fell in love.

That evening she got off from school and we drove down to the Gulf of Mexico. The following day we went fishing. We fished all day and never caught anything but each other. That evening on the way back I drove my car up on a sandbar and stopped. Putting my arms around her, I said this proposal. As I give this proposal, you will see how wonderfully healed I was, for I said each word very fast just as it appears here.

"Evelyn, my huge, happy, hilarious heart is throbbing tumultuously, tremendously, triumphantly with a lingering, lasting, long-lived love for you. As I gaze into your bewildering, beauteous, bounteous, beaming eyes, I am literally lonesomely lost in a dazzling, daring, delightful dream in



which your fair, felicious, fancy-filled face is ever present like a colossal, comprehensive constellation. Will you be my sweet, smiling, soulful, satisfied spouse?"

She said, "Listen here, boy, if you are trying to propose to me, talk in the English language."

I found out I could talk. My tongue was free.

Then I proposed to her in the old-fashioned way and was accepted.

In November 1949 we were holding a great tent campaign in Mobile, Alabama, and there I told my life story one Friday night and gave my proposal. While on the way out of the tent at the close of the service, a little ten-year-old boy stopped me. He said, "Wait a minute, preachah."

I said, "What do you want, Son?"

He said, "Preachah, will you write that thing down for me?"

CHAPTER 4

THE BOY NOBODY BELIEVED IN

MAMA and Papa always had family prayer at our house each night. They would include us children in their prayers and never failed to call our names to the Lord.

Papa would pray something like this, "And now, dear Lord, bless Elmer, bless Jewel, bless Vaden, and bless Oral. Keep them from all harm, accident, and danger. Keep them from the devil's power and keep your hand upon their lives."

Mama's prayer would go something like this, "Dear Jesus, I gave you these children when they were born. I laid them on the altar and consecrated them to your service. Bless Elmer and Jewel, Vaden and Oral. Make men and women out of them that will stir the world."

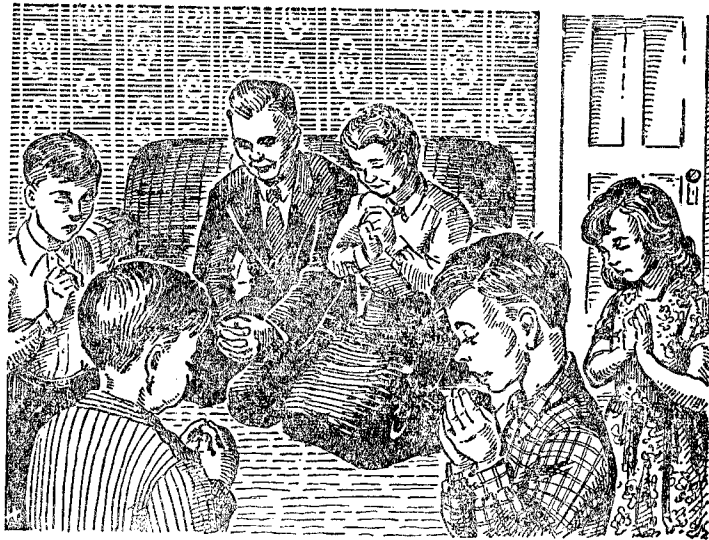
If they failed to call my name, I would get right up, walk over, and say, "Papa, you didn't call my name to Jesus." Or if it was Mama, I would say, "Mama, you forgot to call my name." They would stop, get back down on their knees, and mention my name. And as if to make up for what they had failed to do, they would take a little extra time to pray for me and tell the Lord what they wanted Him to do for me.

Something like electricity would go all through me and I would tingle all over when I heard them call my name. Papa and Mama believed their children were something special to God and they wanted Him to put His hand upon

us and to watch over us, and that someday through His help we would be a blessing to the world.

Soon after I was big enough to understand, Mama told me a strange story. She said, "Oral, while you were yet in my womb the Lord told me you were His. He said His hand would be on your life even before you were born and as long as you lived. Son, you belong to God. You are His."

One day Papa came to me with a prophecy about my life.



I remember his words today as though he gave them to me yesterday. Looking into my eyes, he said, "Oral, someday you will be a preacher. God will give you the largest meetings of your day. They will be so large others will go before you and prepare the way. All you will have to do is go preach and minister to the people."

I remember I said, "Papa, what in the world are you talking about?"

He said, "Son, I am talking about you. The hand of God

is upon your life and you will see these things come to pass."

I said, "Papa, I can't even talk. I stutter and stammer so bad that I wish I didn't even have to go to school, and yet you say all this."

Papa said, "Son, mark my word. It will come to pass."

People would often look at us children and say, "Here is the one who is going to make his mark." My brother Vaden has always had a wonderful personality and people loved him. He was the favorite of all our kinfolks. He was also my favorite.

I was right the opposite of Vaden. I was always frail in my body. I stuttered when I talked and nobody wanted to be around me. When Vaden and I got into some sort of a little jam, it was he who would always talk us out of it. If we wanted something from Mama and Papa, Vaden always asked for it. When we were around people, they would always talk to Vaden. If I tried to talk, they would laugh at me and make fun of me. I guess my stuttering was funny to them, but it certainly wasn't funny to me. Many a time I have run off to hide behind the house where they couldn't find me.

I would look on Vaden's strong body, listen to him talk, see his wonderful personality, and I would say, "Oh, I wish I could be like Vaden." Vaden always took up for me and never laughed at me. It wasn't his fault that people didn't care for me.

One Sunday some people were at our house and were having a lot of fun out of me. They just loved to hear me stutter. They kept tantalizing me, so I ran behind the house and hid on the back porch. When nobody came around to find me, I walked to the edge of the porch, put my hands in the back pockets of my overalls, and looked out toward the hills and wondered if I would ever amount to anything and would ever see what was on the other side of those hills.

One fall Vaden and I had to stay out of school for the first six weeks to pick cotton so we could buy our clothes to go to school. We had worn short pants all our lives when we went anywhere and we dreamed of the day when we could have a long suit. We got up enough money and went to town and bought our first long suit. We were about the two proudest boys who ever hit the earth. We came back



out in the country to our little log house and dressed up in our suits. We just walked and strutted around over the front yard hoping somebody would come to see us. Pretty soon my uncle came to see us. He brought two of his girls with him. We walked up and showed them our long trousers and they began to take on over Vaden. They said he had on the prettiest suit of clothes they had ever seen in their lives. Since they hadn't noticed me I walked up real close so they could see me. They took one look and began to laugh. One of the girls said, "Isn't he the funniest-looking

thing you ever saw." The other one said, "Oral, where are your short pants?" And they all just died laughing.

In a few days Vaden had a birthday, and they came down and invited him up to their house where they had baked a big birthday cake and made some homemade ice cream for him. They didn't invite me. It just broke my heart. In about two hours I decided that I would go anyway. I put on my long suit and walked a half mile down the country road to their house. I sat down on the front porch until they came out and invited me in.

People would come up to Papa and say, "Brother Roberts, Vaden is going to be the preacher."

Papa would say, "Vaden is a good boy and someday he will make his mark, but God has His hand on this little stuttering, stammering child here." He would pull me over to him, pat me on the head and say, "This is the one."

Nobody believed Papa. His oldest brother, Uncle Willis, said, "Why, Ellis, have you lost your mind? Oral can't even talk."

Papa would say, "You just wait, Willis, you will see."

In a world of unfriendly, unbelieving people I would hear Papa say, "You just wait and see. This is the one God has His hand on."

This is one of the reasons I take care of Mama and Papa today. They stood by me all through the years that I was tormented and beaten back. When I was sick, I promised them if I ever got well and God prospered me they would never go hungry and would never be in need again. They had never had a good car to drive or a good home to live in, until God raised me up and began to prosper me. Today they have a good car, a new home, and something every month to live on. As long as I do well, Mama and Papa will prosper just as I do. I made that promise to them while I was on my deathbed and I am keeping it today.

I was never able to shake off what my kinfolks said about me when I was growing up. They never believed in me nor

took time with me. They tantalized and tormented me. Perhaps they didn't mean any harm by it but it left an awful mark upon my life.

The huge "Tent Cathedral" we use for our meeting has such an immense seating capacity we usually take it to large cities, but I wanted to take the tent back to the town where I was raised, Ada, Oklahoma. I was born twelve miles away from Ada, out in the backwoods, where I lived until I was a good-sized boy. Then Papa moved us to Ada, which is the county seat of Pontotoc County. My grandfather, Mr. Amos P. Roberts, came from Alabama and settled in old Indian Territory before Oklahoma became a state. He was elected to public office and was held in high esteem by the people. The majority of his offspring still live in Pontotoc County. I suppose there are more Roberts in Pontotoc County than any other family.

I took the tent to Ada and stretched it within two blocks of the spot where I was healed of tuberculosis. Lots of my friends said I would never get the tent full in Ada. The population of Ada was only 15,000 people at that time and nobody believed people would fill the tent.

But I had a burning desire to go. From the first night God began to pour out His spirit to deliver the people and they came from everywhere. They packed and jammed the tent with thousands standing around the edge. It was the largest crowd in the history of that city for anything.

My people came in from all over the county. They had known me as a child and now heard I was preaching the gospel and was having great crowds and great meetings. They didn't realize the crowds would be so big. Many of them had to stand. They soon caught on and before the meeting was over, many of the Roberts would come at noon and sit there until the service started at seven-thirty so they would have a good seat. They were carried away with my preaching.

Uncle Willis, who told Papa I would never preach be-

cause I couldn't talk, heard of the meeting and came. He couldn't get a seat, so he had to stand during the services. The first night he was there I preached my sermon on the "Fourth Man" and God really anointed me. I preached for two hours straight without stopping, and the people were held spellbound by the power of God. Uncle Willis had never gone to church much but he stood out there at the edge of the tent with the other people, hanging onto every word I said. He forgot where he was. He got so carried away his mouth fell open. At the close of the service he was still standing there. The crowd was still milling around the tent when Papa came upon Uncle Willis. He found him with his face buried in his hands and tears streaming down his face. Papa said, "Willis, what's the matter?"

Uncle Willis looked up and saw it was Papa. He said, "Ellis, I was just standing here wondering if that was the little stuttering boy that I said would never preach."

Papa said, "Well, what do you think now?"

He said, "Ellis, it is the greatest thing I ever saw. I would give everything I have in this world if I had in my soul what he's got in his."

Just after Papa had moved us from the country into town and I had started to the town school, the boys found out that I stuttered and they would always gather around me during recess and lunch period and start tantalizing me. There is a bully in every crowd, and in this case his name was Brumley. He was a head taller than I was and about three years older. He would laugh and poke fun at me and punch me in the ribs and do everything he could to get me talking. Most of the time I turned and ran to get away from him.

One day they ran me all the way home hollering at the top of their voices. When I started in the house, I fell on the doorstep. Mama heard me and came running out to help me in the house. When they saw her, they ran off. Mama said, "Oral, don't you mind. Don't pay any attention. Some-

day it will be different. Someday you will be able to talk without stuttering and then you will see what those boys do."

I told Mama I would get even with the bully of that crowd if it was the last thing I ever did. I had no idea how I would do it but I knew I would.

In August 1950 we took the big tent to Oklahoma City. Our tent at that time seated 7,000 people and we erected it on the Oklahoma State fairgrounds. People came from all over Oklahoma to the campaign and soon the tent was overflowing with people. We had some of the largest crowds of my ministry. The mayor of the city said that our crowds broke all attendance records of any religious meeting in Oklahoma City. During the last half of the campaign the tent was filled completely two hours before service and by the time we started the service at 7:30 P.M. thousands of people were standing completely around the tent. The crowd on the closing night was estimated at 20,000. More than 5,000 people were saved in that campaign.

One night as I stood at the edge of the tent waiting to be presented to the crowd so I could preach, a big burly fellow walked up, tapped me on the shoulder, and said, "Oral, do you know who this is?"

Turning around, I looked into the face of the bully who had tantalized me when I was a boy. I started to say, "How could I ever forget you?" Instead, I said, "You are the Brumley boy. What are you doing here?"

He said, "Oral, I heard you were here and I came out to see what was going on, and, boy, I have never seen anything like it."

I said, "I've got something in my soul. Since the Lord saved and healed me I can talk."

He said, "Don't I know it. I have been here several nights, and let me tell you, I have never heard any preaching like this before."

He wanted to talk some more, but I heard them calling

me to preach and I left him. When I finished the sermon and made the call for the unsaved to come forward and give their hearts to Jesus Christ, four or five hundred people came down the aisles to be saved. As they raised their hands to repeat the sinner's prayer after me I looked over the group, and there right in the middle stood the Brumley boy. Tears were streaming down his face, and he was saying, "God, be merciful to me a sinner."

I was getting even with him, but it was certainly different to what I had expected.

CHAPTER 5

RUNNING AWAY FROM HOME

WHEN I was sixteen I ran away from home. Papa intercepted me and said, "Oral, I will put every policeman in Oklahoma on your trail." I said, "Papa, go right ahead. As many times as you bring me back I will run away again."

He saw that I meant to leave, and he let me go.

As I was packing my clothes he and Mama came to me and said, "Oral, you may be able to get away from us but you won't be able to get away from our prayers. We want you to remember one thing. Every day that you are gone we will be calling your name to the Lord in prayer and we won't stop praying until the Lord brings you back home."

I was anxious to get away and paid little attention to what they said. I never thought of the heartache and the sorrow I was bringing to them. I stuttered and stammered, and everybody at school laughed at me and mocked me and humiliated me. I couldn't go anywhere without being laughed at. I thought if I could run away, I could get away from all that and start over. If I could get away from Papa and Mama and from the people who knew me, everything would be different. I was gone for nearly a year, but I never got myself off my hands. In reality I had run away from my stuttering tongue, my weak body, my frustrated

life, my inner conflicts, and my tormenting fears. But when I ran away I found these things went with me and I couldn't shake them off.

I got a job as a newspaper reporter, but couldn't make enough money to live on. I added several other jobs to this one, but I couldn't make enough to eat on. Many times I didn't have enough to eat or the right place to sleep. Soon I fell in with the wrong kind of crowd and found myself getting only two or three hours of sleep a night. I was going to high school in this town and had made the basketball team. Many times I played when I was so weak I could hardly stand up. I would wake up in the middle of the night with a hot fever, coughing, and spitting up blood. I never thought of going back home. Something had caught me in its mad grip and I was on a wild merry-go-round. I fell deeper and deeper into sin. One night in the State Basketball Tournament I collapsed on the floor. Someone picked me up and carried me into the locker and helped me change into my street clothes. My coach found me and said, "Son, you are going home." He put me in his car and drove me back to Ada. When we got there, he helped me out of the car and took me in the house and said, "Reverend Roberts, I have brought your boy home."

Papa and Mama took one look at me and began to cry. I was deathly ill. They helped me take off my clothes and I fell across the bed. I had gone the last mile of the way.

It seemed someone had a knife and was cutting my lungs to pieces. My breath was being cut off. When I coughed, blood ran out of the sides of my mouth.

A few mornings later I woke up with blood on my pillow and on the bed. It was also spattered on the wall. I had had a hemorrhage in the night. Papa had to repaper the bedroom wall. Papa called in three doctors and they all examined me with great care. My blood, my spittle, my lungs. They all diagnosed it as tuberculosis and advised Papa to

put me in the Eastern Sanatorium for tuberculosis at Tahina, Oklahoma. My world came to an end.

I have always been ambitious and a hard worker. I set my goals pretty high for a boy. I had planned to be a lawyer and the governor of my state. Only God knows whether or not I would have reached these goals, for I never had the chance to fulfill my dreams.

One day Mama said, "Son, you've got to pray. You've got to get saved."

I didn't want to get saved. I didn't want to pray. I didn't want anybody bothering me.

In the meantime, Papa and Mama moved to Stratford, Oklahoma, just eighteen miles away from Ada, where Papa was called to pastor a church. I had improved a little and was able to stand a few hours at a time. This didn't last long. When I collapsed the second time, I was bedfast over five months.

During those 163 days, I never had a good day. I never was free from pain or from coughing or from hemorrhages. I grew steadily worse.

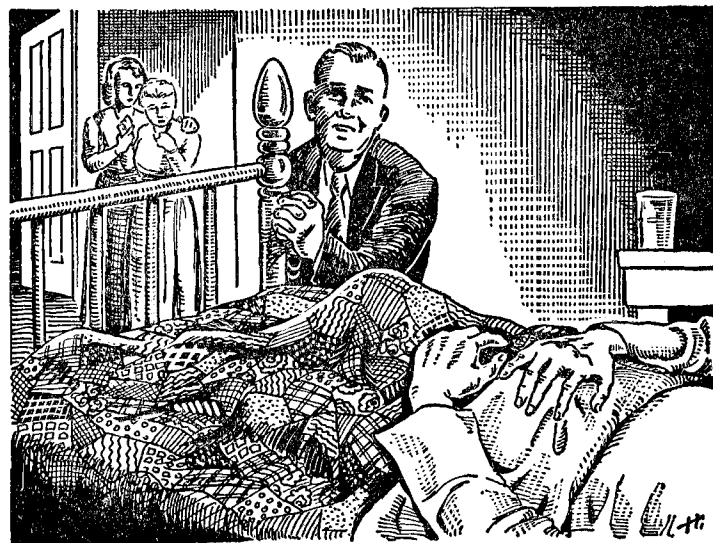
Papa was worried. He would walk the floor praying and calling upon God. He had written everybody he knew who could pray. Some of them, like the Lindsay saints, had come to pray for me. Nothing had availed for my deliverance and I lay dying. One prayer-meeting night he came into my bedroom and said, "Oral, I am not going to prayer meeting tonight. I have asked someone to take the service."

I said, "What's the matter, Papa?"

He said, "Son, I am going to kneel by your bed tonight and pray. I am not going to get off my knees until you get saved and give your heart to God."

He called Mama and the nurse in and they all began to pray. In a few minutes Mama and the nurse finished their prayers and got up and sat down, but Papa had just got started.

I found myself listening to Papa's prayer. Pretty soon I



began to feel something going all through me. I looked up and saw his face, and when I did, I guess I must have had a vision, for there just as clear as anything I saw the face of Jesus in Papa's face. Now, I had never wanted to be saved before. I hadn't wanted Jesus. What they told me about Him hadn't appealed to me. But now when I saw His face in Papa's countenance, I began to cry. I couldn't help it. My heart was broken into a thousand pieces, and pretty soon I was asking God to save my soul.

As I was praying to get saved my past life came up before me. While I had been away I had taken some lawbooks that belonged to a judge. I had begun to study law while I was in high school. I had access to this judge's lawbooks and so I just picked me out several and took them with me. I didn't mean to steal them. I hadn't thought of it like that. Now, as I was trying to get saved, those books came rolling by me and I told the Lord if he would save me and get me up out of that bed I would take those books back. I told

the Lord if He would save me I would give Him my life, what little of it there was left. I said to the Lord, "Jesus, I have nothing to offer you. My health is gone. My body is wrecked. I have nothing left. But if you will save me, I will give you what I have."

It was then that I felt His presence strike my feet. It came slowly up through my legs, and in a moment it was all over me. My face began to shine. I could see the reflection of the light on it, and I cried out to Papa, "Look at this light on my face." I felt as light as a feather and so happy I wanted to shout at the top of my voice. Then the power of God came upon me with such force that it lifted me right up in the bed, and I found myself standing up in the bed with my hands upraised, praising and magnifying God and saying, "I am saved! I am saved! I am saved!"

CHAPTER 6

THE THIRTY-FIVE CENTS THAT CHANGED MY LIFE

GETTING saved made many great changes for me. My fortunes immediately changed for the better and things started happening in my favor. In a few weeks an evangelist brought his big tent to Ada, just eighteen miles from Stratford where Papa was pastoring and where we lived at that time. Elmer, my oldest brother, lived at Ada and went out to hear this man preach. He was astounded at what he saw, for this man's faith wrought many miracles of healing. All Ada was stirred. People brought their sick from all over Oklahoma to this man for his prayers.

Elmer was just a sinner, but all his life he had believed in divine healing because Mama and Papa had taught him. He had seen people healed while he was a child but since he was grown he hadn't seen much.

One night after he got home from the big tent he said to his wife, "Orie, how much money do we have before payday?"

She said, "Elmer, we only have thirty-five cents."

He said, "Let me have it. I am going to borrow a car and go to Stratford tomorrow and get Oral. If I can bring him here to the tent so Brother George Moncey can pray for him, I believe the Lord will heal his body."

The following day he took the last thirty-five cents he had

and bought enough gas to put in the borrowed car and came over after me. That evening we heard a car drive up in front and in a moment Elmer was in the house. He came right straight to my bed and said, "Oral, get up. God is going to heal you!"

I said, "Elmer, is He going to heal me?"

He said, "Yes, He is. Get up out of that bed. I am taking you over to the big tent in Ada and Brother Moncey will pray for you."

I said, "Elmer, I can't get up."

He said, "Then I will carry you."

Mama and Papa came into the room. Papa said, "Elmer, what are you doing here?"

He said, "Papa, there is a big meeting going on in Ada. The man has the gift of healing and I have seen people healed with my own eyes. I have come after Oral. I want you to help me get him dressed."

Mama began to shout and rejoice. She said, "I told you all the time that God was going to heal him and raise him up."

I only had one suit of clothes and it didn't fit me. They dressed me the best they could, and Papa and Elmer picked up the mattress, carried it out and put it in the back seat of the car and put me on it. Elmer, Papa, and Mama got in the front seat and we drove away.

As we rode along I listened to Elmer telling Mama and Papa about the healings he had seen at the tent in Ada. It never occurred to me to doubt what he told, for I believed every word he said. I could see each one as he told it.

Pretty soon I got to thinking about God and about how He was going to heal me. I wondered what I would do after I was healed. What would I be, where would I go, what would I do for the rest of my life?

I had been in bed for over five months. Life had lost its promise and I had almost despaired of ever being well again.

While I lay on the mattress in the back seat of the borrowed car with Mama and Papa and Elmer up front, everything grew very quiet. Suddenly I heard a voice. I didn't know who it was. It was calling my name. "Oral Roberts! Oral Roberts!" It scared me, for I had never heard a voice like it. Then in an instant I knew it was God. I had never heard His voice before. What I knew about God I had learned from Papa and Mama. They had told me many times that His hand was upon me and that He had a special work for me to do. Then, just as clearly as I had heard Elmer speak, I heard God speaking to me. "Son, I am going to heal you," He said, "and you are to take my healing power to your generation."

I felt my flesh tingling as God spoke these words to me. Then I heard no more. All the way to Ada I thought of what God had said. I believed even before He spoke to me that I was going to be healed. Now, for the first time, I knew why I was going to be healed. I was to take God's healing power to my generation.

When we arrived at the tent there was a great crowd. They put me in a rocking chair with pillows to my sides and back. Pretty soon Brother Moncey came to preach. He was a heavy-set man as I remember him. I have not seen him since. I remember him that night as being very friendly toward the people. He preached over an hour, made an altar call, and got people saved. Then he started to pray for the sick. Just before he prayed for me, he came over to where I was sitting. They had told him that a minister's son was there to be healed of tuberculosis. He had heard of my father and came over to say a word to me. He said, "Son, the other night I prayed for a boy about your age with tuberculosis, an Indian boy, and the Lord healed him instantly. You just look up and believe. The Lord will heal you tonight."

I told him I would.

Around eleven o'clock came my turn in the prayer line.

Mama and Papa helped me up and almost carried me to Brother Moncey because I was so weak. Brother Moncey looked at me and told me to be encouraged and to believe while he prayed. I had already made up my mind what was going to happen. As I watched him pray for those sick people, laying his hand upon them, I said to myself that when he put his hand upon me and prayed, the Lord would heal me.

One thing I remember about his prayer is that it was very short. He probably took no longer than ten seconds to pray for me. I had been used to people praying "Oh, Lord, please do this and do that." He didn't pray in that manner. He put his hands on my head and seemed to be speaking to some evil power, for he commanded the tuberculosis to come out of my body in the name of the Lord. I think I can recount his words almost word for word. "Thou cursed disease, I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of this boy's lungs, loose him, and let him go."

It was a short prayer, but there was a lot of power in it. Something struck my lungs, and I began tingling throughout my entire body. A beautiful light engulfed me, and the next thing I knew, I was racing back and forth on the big platform with my hands upraised, shouting at the top of my voice, "I am healed! I am healed! I am healed!"

We had lived a long time in Ada and most of the people in the audience knew my father and mother and knew about my having tuberculosis. Most of them were very sympathetic and anxious that night to see me healed. The power of the Lord struck them about the same time it struck my lungs. When I began racing up and down the platform, that huge crowd leaped to their feet, some ran down the aisles, some waved their handkerchiefs, some fell on their knees and began to pray. Papa later told me that more than one thousand people were on their feet shouting and praising God at the same time. My healing almost broke up the meeting. Brother Moncey came over and got hold of me

and led me to the microphone, put it in my hands, and said, "Son, tell the people what the Lord has done for you."

All my life I had been a stutterer. I had been scared of crowds. I would freeze on the spot. But I took the microphone out of his hands and spoke to that crowd as if I had been spending half of my life on the public platform. My tongue was loose. I could talk. The words poured out of my mouth as I told them how Jesus Christ of Nazareth had healed my lungs, how I could breathe all the way down without biting pain and coughing and hemorrhages. I showed them how I could walk up and down the platform, and I told them that Jesus Christ of Nazareth had done it for me.

They carried me there on a mattress in the back seat of a borrowed car, but when I went home I was sitting up and rejoicing every mile of the way.

My brother Elmer invested thirty-five cents in my poor life and it paid off in one night for the complete healing of my body.

During the next few days I found I was pretty weak and I will always be grateful to Mama for knowing how to advise me. The t.b. was instantly healed, for later, when I had my lungs fluoroscoped at the Sugg Clinic in Ada, Oklahoma, Dr. Morey found them absolutely perfect. I remember he came into my room after the fluoroscopy and said, "Son, just forget you ever had t.b. Your lungs are as sound as a dollar."

However, I didn't understand because I didn't get strong quick. Mama said, "Son, you have been in bed a long time. You completely lost your strength. The Lord has healed you but it will take you a little time to get your strength back. Do a little light work and exercise every day. Do a little more each day and pretty soon you will be strong again."

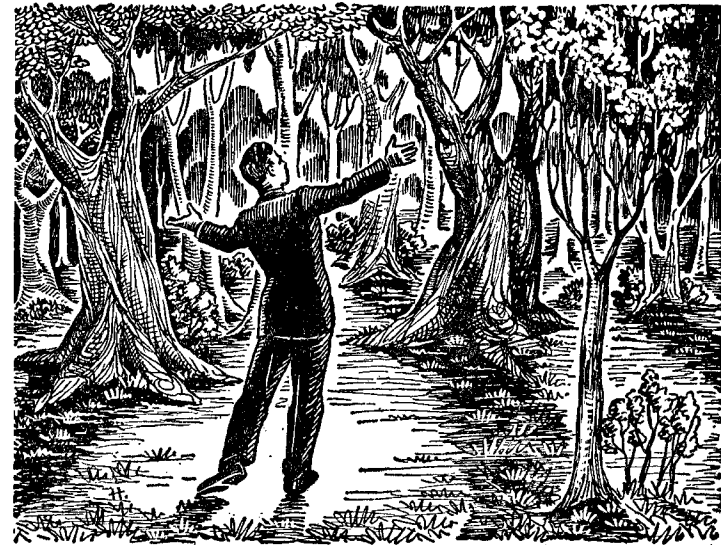
Within two months I was strong enough to start preaching the gospel and help hold a revival meeting.

A small group of young boys from Holmes Bible College

in Greenville, South Carolina, came to Oklahoma to hold some meetings that summer. One of them was Raymond Corvin, a boy who had been saved in one of Papa's revivals in Center, Oklahoma, and who had gone away to school. He brought back two of his friends, Simpson A. Merritt and Albert Barfield. When they heard I had been saved and healed, they invited me to preach with them that summer. Eventually we divided into two parties and they put me with Brother Simpson Merritt. We went four miles east of Ada to Homer schoolhouse to hold our first meeting together. One evening Simpson and I were out in the woods praying and the spirit of God came upon me. Simpson looked up from where he was kneeling and said, "Oral, you are going to preach your first sermon tonight." I was too happy in my soul to get scared, so I told him all right. We had our Bibles with us and I began to turn through mine as fast as I could, hunting a text of scripture. I found a portion of scripture in the fourth chapter of Mark. The story of Jesus asleep on a pillow in a ship during a storm, how His disciples were afraid, how Jesus rose up and said, "Peace, be still," and hushed the sea to sleep.

I told Simpson if he would go on back to the house I would try to prepare to preach. I began to preach to the trees. When I looked at the trees, they began to fade and I could see the people, and for about an hour I stood out there in the woods walking around shaking my hands and pointing at the people and telling them that if they would call on Jesus He would stop the storms in their lives and say, "Peace, be still." When I had practiced on the trees, I felt like I could preach to the people that night.

I got up and preached for twenty minutes, and two people came forward to give their hearts to Jesus Christ. Those were the first converts of the meeting. Simpson and I conducted the meeting at the schoolhouse for two weeks. Sometimes we had to sleep on the floor. But we did the best we could and felt like we were doing the Lord's will. At



the end of the two weeks one old brother got up and said he guessed they had better give us two young preachers an offering. He said if the folks there had a few nickels and dimes they could spare, he would pass the collection plate around. He gave the entire collection to us. Simpson counted it and gave me my half. It was exactly eighty-three cents.

CHAPTER 7

YOUNG PREACHER

I BEGAN preaching within two months after I was healed, but twelve years passed before God's power to heal came into my life. Many people have asked me why I waited so long before I began my healing ministry. The answer is simple. I could not heal the sick without the anointing of God. I am frank to say I did not have that power.

I had it at times, but not very long at a time, and I did not have enough of it to overcome my fears of facing the sick and demon-possessed.

Few people know the feelings a young preacher has. He wants to please. He wants to find favor with his elders and to be accepted by his denomination. Although he may have a deep feeling that he should carry out a certain ministry, yet he is very reluctant to do it unless his elders approve. Then, too, his youth is against him. In a way I am glad the Lord withheld His power from me until I was old enough to realize what responsibility is and how to conduct myself before the Lord.

During those years I longed for God's power but there was no one to set the pattern for me, and I was afraid to try to go beyond what other preachers were doing.

I patterned the style of my preaching after theirs and conducted my services according to the pattern set by my

church. I preached in a general manner that God could heal the sick and that He had healed me of tuberculosis. There seemed an apathy among the people I ministered to concerning the ministry of healing. We never heard many testimonies of healing except from some of the older saints who still had a deep love for what the Lord had done for them years before.

I was extremely unhappy during these twelve years and my heart was full of many questions. The Lord had told me that I was to take His healing message to my generation, but I did not have the urge at that time to do it. No one in my denomination was excited about taking God's healing power to this generation. They knew how to preach our doctrine but they did not have the vision for the deliverance of suffering people. My heart was crying out for God's power to deliver. I was also seeking to find this power among my own people. I found it neither in my heart nor in theirs.

I went to some of my church leaders and expressed my feelings. I told them that I believed God was going to pour out a great revival before the end of time. There was a small group in the church who believed that the days of revivals were over and that no one should go out and expect great revivals.

One day Papa came to visit me where I was pastoring a little church. I said, "Papa, let's take some chairs and go around to the back of the house and talk."

We were seated in two cane-bottomed chairs which we had leaned up against the back of the house. I said, "Papa, why don't our preachers heal the sick like they did in Bible times?"

He said, "Son, I don't know."

I said, "Well, Papa, are we supposed to have the same commission to heal the sick in our day as the Lord gave His disciples back there?"



He said, "Yes, I believe we are supposed to do just like they did back there."

I said, "Papa, do you believe that before Jesus comes He will pour out another great healing revival such as they had in the days of the early church?"

He said, "Oral, I have believed for thirty years that before Jesus comes there will be a world-wide revival. I believe it now stronger than ever. I believe God will raise up men and give them power to raise the dead, to heal blind eyes, to cast out devils, and when that is done, I believe Jesus will come."

After that when Papa came to see me or I went to see him, we always talked about the world-wide revival that we both believed would someday come to the earth. Each time Papa would tell me that he believed I had been born and called of God to have a part in this revival. He said that I would see the day when I would have the largest meetings of my generation and that God would greatly use me to help get people ready for the coming of Jesus.

I cannot say that I did not have some miraculous experiences during these twelve years. There were some outstanding miracles of healing wrought through my hands by faith in God. Usually they came without any premeditation or thought on my part. They just seemed to spring out of nowhere.

While I was pastoring the Pentecostal Holiness Church in Toccoa, Georgia, one of our deacons, Clyde Lawson, had met with an accident and I was called to pray for him. Brother Bill Lee was with me when I got the call and he went with me. When we got there, Clyde was down on the ground holding his right foot in his hands. He had dropped a heavy motor on his foot. The toes of his foot had been crushed and blood was running out. Clyde was in such pain that he was screaming at the top of his voice. All he could do was to point at his crushed foot, signifying he wanted us to pray.

As I looked down at him holding his foot, a sudden compassion came over me. Without thinking I knelt down and touched the end of his shoe with my hand. I said a few words of earnest prayer and straightened up. The moment I straightened up, Clyde Lawson quit screaming. He tried to move his toes in the shoe and found that he could do so. The pain was gone. Jumping to his feet, he stomped his foot on the floor and said, "Brother Roberts, what did you do to me?"

I said, "Clyde, I didn't do a thing."

He said, "Yes, you did. The pain is gone. My foot is healed."

I was amazed. While I watched him, he stooped down, tore off his shoe, and showed us his foot. It was perfectly normal. I could not deny that a miracle had been wrought.

When we left, Bill Lee said, "Brother Roberts, do you have that kind of power all the time?"

I said, "Bill, I wish I did."

He said, "If you had that kind of power all the time, you could bring a revival to this world."

I thought a lot about what Bill said. If I had that kind of power all the time I could bring a revival to this world. Bill Lee was right. When the power of the Lord comes upon a man to deliver the people, he brings a revival to mankind.

Not long after that I left Toccoa and returned to Oklahoma where I re-entered Oklahoma Baptist University at Shawnee, Oklahoma. The following year I was called to pastor the church at Enid, Oklahoma, where I entered Phillips University.

It was in Enid that God spoke to me the second time.

Some of the best people in the world were members of the Enid church and they loved me as they did their son. For eleven months I had a wonderful ministry among them. About fifty new people joined the church during this time and it looked as if I was going to have the best ministry of my life there.

It was about this time that I began to be haunted by the voice of God which I had heard twelve years before. I would start to get up and preach at the church when I would hear the Lord say, "Son, I am going to heal you and you are to take my healing power to your generation."

I would be sitting in the classroom and I would hear God say, "Son, I am going to heal you and you are to take my healing power to your generation."

I would be out with a group of the church men hunting or fishing and God would say, "Son, I am going to heal you and you are to take my healing power to your generation."

I would be studying my Bible to preach when I would hear God say, "Son, I am going to heal you and you are to take my healing power to your generation."

His voice to me was something I could not get away from. For twelve years I had wanted the anointing of God. I had more of it at Enid than I had ever had before. As a result, when sinners came to the church many of them would get

saved, and we had a very healthy increase in the membership. But there was one thing I could not accomplish, and that was to draw large crowds. We had about 175 to 200 in Sunday school, about 150 to 200 on Sunday night, about 40 or 50 on prayer-meeting night. I didn't have enough of God's power and the crowds just didn't increase.

I used to drive up to the church during the week, look at the beautiful building, and say, "Lord, why is it that my ministry will not fill this church?" Each time I would say it, His voice would ring in my ears, "Son, I am going to heal you and you are to take my healing power to your generation." Then it came to me very clearly: I was preaching, but the Word of God was not confirmed "with signs following." It struck me with great force that when they preached in the early church, their preaching was confirmed with signs following. One of those signs is the healing of the sick, and the sick were not being healed through my ministry because I was not emphasizing it, nor did I have the anointing to do it. I remembered the scripture where Mark said, "And they went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them confirming the Word with signs following." I remembered the prayer of the disciples of the early church after the lame man at the beautiful gate was healed. They prayed, "And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants that with all boldness they may speak thy word, by stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and they spake the word of God with boldness."

I also remembered the scripture where it said, "Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people." I had read where it said, "Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ unto them, and the people with one accord gave heed unto those

things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them, and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed, and there was great joy in that city."

I knew that the answer to my question was that I lacked the power of God in my life. I had some of God's power and some of His anointing but I didn't have that great faith and that great boldness as they did in Bible times.

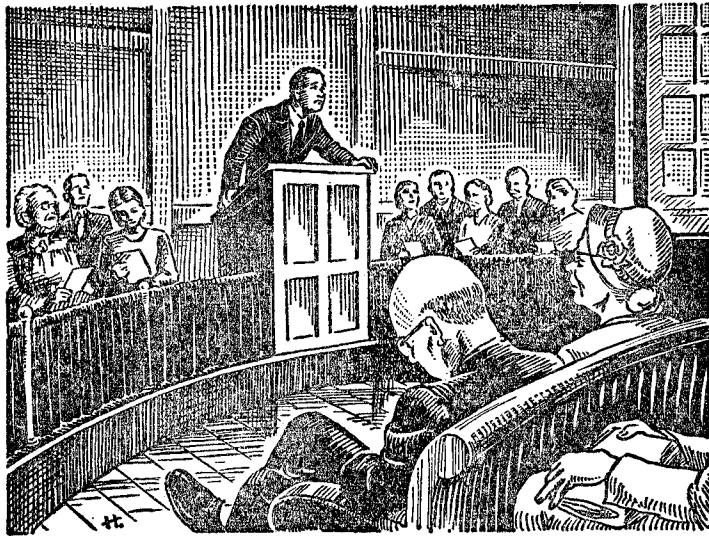
CHAPTER 8

THE DISSATISFACTION THAT DROVE ME TO GOD

IT WAS during this time in Enid that I became greatly dissatisfied. I found that going to church just for the sake of going to church is the dumbest thing a person can do. When the anointing of God is not upon the people, and His presence is not there, there is nothing to interest the soul of man. Many times during such occasions I wished I was somewhere else.

My people would listen to me preach. As I told them about the great miracles of Bible days and of the great hunger in my heart for that power, they would give me a decent hearing and get up and go home. But they were more concerned with their wheat crops, their jobs, their in-laws, and the common little problems of life than they were about seeking God for His great power. They were loyal to the church, paid their tithes, came to the services, and lived good lives. I loved them and they loved me. But that was about the sum total of their religion. I didn't have enough power to change their believing, so that they could believe for God's power today as the early church believed for it back there.

Although I did not have God's power upon my life to heal the sick, I was desperately hungry for it, and I was seeking God almost day and night. I was struck with the absence of



feeling on the part of my people for signs and wonders. They simply were not very much concerned whether or not the sick got healed or demons were cast out. They were not on fire for God, but they weren't alarmed about it. Their pastor was not able to perform signs and wonders to deliver the people, but they were happy with me as I was. Had I not changed I probably could have remained at that church for the next ten or twenty years. As long as I visited them, buried their dead, married their living, preached at the church, stood ready to answer their call, and lived a good Christian life they were well satisfied. They raised my salary to \$55 a week, which was the highest salary they had ever paid any preacher. They were content with things as they were.

I was not content. I was miserable and unhappy. God's voice was ringing in my ears and all I could see was a vision of what God's people did in the early church. When I entered the pulpit to preach, just for the sake of preaching as

my people expected me to, I felt condemned. I had reached the place in my thinking already that I felt that I had no right to preach unless God confirmed His word with signs following. I had a feeling that I was not like those preachers of the early church and it condemned me. When I read the Bible and compared the services of the early church with the services of my church, I was convinced that I was falling short and someday would have to face God because I didn't have His power to set the people free.

Some of my people believed that it was not necessary for us to heal the sick today. Some believed that God put sickness on them. Others believed that it was not God's will to heal all the sick. Still others believed that when God got ready to heal them that they would be healed. It never occurred to them that personal faith plays a definite part in the healing of our bodies. They waited on God and God waited on them. So nothing much ever happened.

Yet all this time I had a feeling of destiny. A miraculous power was at my fingertips. I could feel it. I was frustrated and filled with inner conflicts, but I had the feeling that someday God's power could come into my life and I would deliver humanity. It isn't easy to live with one's frustrations and conflicts and questions. The only way I could drown out the voice of God that came to me about taking His healing power to my generation was to plunge head over heels into work. I was pastoring our church, going to the university, and was teaching one day a week at Southwestern College in Oklahoma City. I was working nearly eighteen hours a day so I didn't have the strength nor the time to think much about it. That way I could have a little peace in my soul, but every time I got to myself and began thinking about my own life compared with the preachers of the early church, I was under condemnation. I would get up and walk the floor, raising my hands and praying, "God, I will do anything in the world if you will give me this power. If you will

anoint me, I will deliver humanity. I will preach with signs following my ministry."

It seemed to me as if I were going in circles. I was hungry for God but could not reach Him. I was so unhappy that I had to plunge into my work so I wouldn't think much about it. Then one day a wonderful thing occurred to me. It came to me that I would never solve this problem by my own thinking or by talking to other people. I decided I would begin a personal, intimate study of the life of Jesus Christ and His apostles. I would go back to the four Gospels and the Book of Acts and study their lives firsthand.

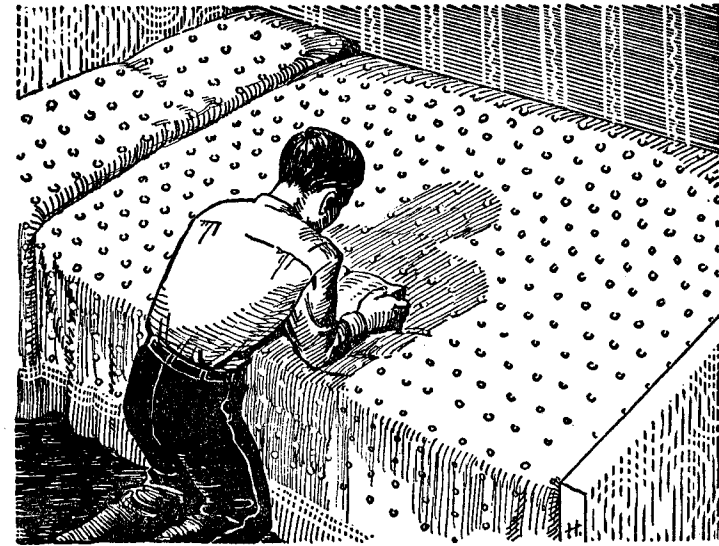
I can say today that if I had not gone back to the four Gospels and the Book of Acts, the original source of information about Jesus and His apostles, I never would have seen the light of Bible deliverance or received an understanding of the ministry God wanted me to do.

I had read the Bible through many times and the New Testament through over one hundred times, but I began reading the four Gospels and the Book of Acts as though I had never read them. I studied them mostly upon my knees. I would go in my room, close the door, get down on my knees by the bed, spread my Bible out before me, and start reading. I would read that way until my knees were so cramped I could scarcely get up. But while I was reading, I had a prayer in my heart, and it is marvelous what happened to my thinking while I read and prayed.

My impressions of Jesus were that He was a man of power; He was a man of compassion; He was a man of action. He was a simple man without any complications. He came to take off of people what the devil had put on them. I discovered He did not come with a life-shortening suggestion but with a life-saving power. He came against four enemies of mankind—sin, demons, disease, and fear.

He was a man's man, strong in body, strong in soul and mind, full of love and tenderness.

He was a healer and miracle-worker. He spent two thirds



of his time healing the sick. He looked on sickness as a criminal power and came against it with all His power. I found that out by reading the Scriptures for myself.

What He did He wanted His disciples to do. He wanted His disciples to have the same faith and compassion for the deliverance of lost and suffering humanity as He had. He transmitted His power and authority to them, and they went forth, casting out devils, healing the sick, preaching the gospel, and getting people saved. He ordained seventy men to do the same thing. He then gave an over-all commission to those who would believe in His name; that as they would lay hands on the sick, the sick would recover, also they would be able to cast out demons through believing in His name.

The thing about Jesus that stayed with my mind was His power and the use He made of it. His disciples had that power, too, and they used it to bring deliverance to the soul, mind, and body of the people.

It dawned on me that the church today has largely spiritualized the life of Jesus Christ. They have taken away from Him His great physical power over disease and demons. They have only one part of Him they offer to the people—the spiritual. They leave out His ministry of healing the sick. I remember how I wished I had lived back there and could have talked with Him and had Him lay His hands upon me and commission me to heal the sick. I believed if I had had His physical presence with me I could have performed any miracle for His glory.

Then one day I had a revelation from God. I was reading John's gospel where Jesus said, "If I go away, I will not leave you comfortless; I will send you another comforter which is the Holy Ghost." That meant that while Jesus was with them, He was their comforter. They had been able to heal the sick because they had His physical presence. He knew that He could not remain with them in the flesh much longer. He had never planned to do so because if men's faith was built around His physical presence, then only a few people would be able to have His power. He said He would send them "another comforter," which meant the other comforter would be co-equal with him in the Godhead. The other comforter was the Holy Ghost, the third member of the Godhead. And this other comforter would be to them what He had been to them. He would be to them the same as the physical presence of Jesus Christ. When they had the Holy Ghost, it would be the same as having the Lord's physical presence with them.

He commanded them to go to the upper room after his ascension and to tarry until they were baptized with the Holy Ghost. They did, and on the day of Pentecost they were all filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. The coming of the Holy Ghost into their lives was the same as if they had the physical presence of Jesus with them. While they had been with Him in the flesh, they were very bold. Now

on the day of Pentecost, with the Holy Ghost in their lives, they were just as bold. They went forth on the streets of Jerusalem preaching and testifying and from the day of Pentecost on they got people saved and healed. Through the power of the Holy Ghost in them they wrought many great signs and wonders through the name of Jesus Christ.

I had been baptized with the Holy Ghost twelve years before, but I had not understood the full significance of this pentecostal experience. Now, the Lord gave me to understand that the baptism of the Holy Ghost in my heart was the same as if I had the physical presence of Jesus with me. I didn't have to go back there to be with Jesus in the flesh in order to heal the sick. I had received the baptism of the Holy Ghost which was the same as His physical presence, and that great presence of the Holy Spirit in me would enable me to heal the sick and cast out devils.

All this I saw very clearly. I said to myself, "What have I waited for? I have had this power all the time." Jesus had told His disciples, "Ye shall receive power after the Holy Ghost has come upon you." And they had received that power. I had had the same power in my life for twelve years and did not know it.

I then made a study of Jesus Himself, what He said, where He went, what He did, and how He acted toward the people.

I began to study the Book of Acts, the story of the early church in action. The Book of Acts is God's powerhouse. As I read it I could hear the hum of divine machinery. I discovered it had no logical ending. Why? Because it isn't ended yet. The Book of Acts is still being written in the blood, faith, and the toil of the saints of God.

I discovered in the Book of Acts some of the following things.

Peter and John, the leaders of the early church, had power to heal the afflicted.

The shadow of Peter falling upon the sick in Jerusalem brought healing to them.

Even some of the deacons of the early church had miracle-working power—Stephen and Philip.

Paul had such power to heal the sick that even handkerchiefs and aprons sent from his body brought healing to the sick and demon-possessed.

Miracles of healing were not a rarity, but the general thing in the ministry of the preachers of the early church.

The study of the four Gospels and the Book of Acts caused me to turn the searchlight on my own soul and upon the denominational church world. I was struck with the appalling contrast. I found the denominational church world drifting farther and farther away from signs and wonders and getting closer and closer to a material religion, to ritual and ceremony and form.

I saw in the early church it was their common practice to heal the sick and cast out devils and to expect signs and wonders to come through their preaching. I saw in our denominational church world that there was no such expectancy or practice.

I saw that the only thing that would bring a revival to our church today was a repetition of Pentecost, a revival of signs and wonders, a visitation of God's power upon us through the outpouring of the Holy Ghost.

As I saw this truth, my eyes were opened. I found my spirit being set free. I began to determine I would no longer preach unless I could have signs and wonders accompanying my ministry. If I couldn't be like Jesus and His disciples in the early church, I would no longer stand up in the pulpit and be just a denominational echo. I wanted to do something for my church, for my people, and I saw I couldn't do it by being like them. I would have to be like the Saviour and His apostles.

Some of our church leaders thought that my restlessness was a sign of instability, and they told me quite plainly that

I should settle down and be content. How fooled they were. Perhaps they didn't feel a fire shut up in their bones nor did they hear God's voice ringing in their ears nor the haunting cry of lost and suffering humanity in their hearts as I did. It was that restlessness and dissatisfaction that drove me to find an answer to the problem of human suffering and to receive God's power to heal the sick, to cast out demons, and to do something for my generation.

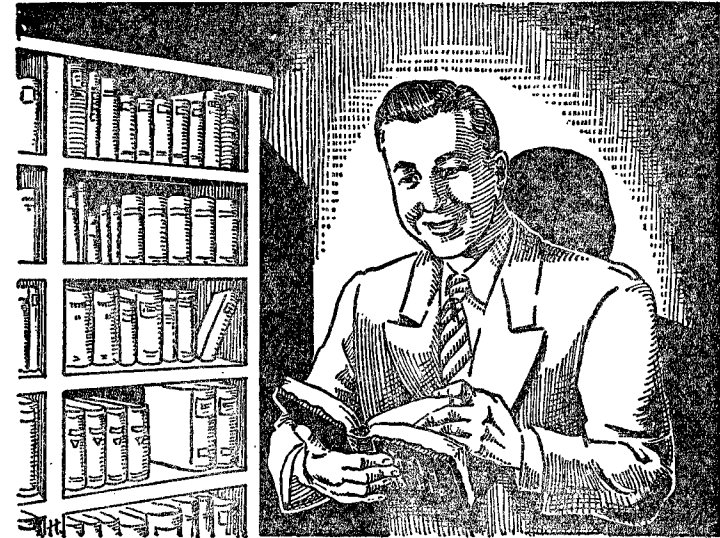
CHAPTER 9

THE GREATEST DISCOVERY I EVER MADE

ONE morning while I was rushing about to make an early class at the university, something happened to me that I could only wish had happened to me a lot sooner. I had been studying the four Gospels and the Book of Acts with religious fervor, but in my morning devotions I had been opening my Bible and reading a portion of scripture wherever it fell open. I barely had time to read a few verses from the Bible before catching the bus. I grabbed up my Bible and opened it at random to read a few verses wherever my eyes fell upon that page. My Bible fell open at the little book of III John. Why? I do not know, unless it was a special act of providence. What I read in that little book that morning changed my life abruptly, completely.

When I came to the second verse of III John and read it, I stopped. The words fairly leaped up to meet my eyes. Here is the verse: "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health even as thy soul prospereth."

These words literally astounded me. I could scarcely believe my eyes. They were beautiful yet they had something more than beauty. They had gripping power. I read the entire book, for it is a short book having only one chapter. Each time I would go back to the second verse because it



kept pulling at me. I must have read it twenty times before stopping. I got so excited I didn't care whether I got to school or not.

This verse was meant for me. I knew it was. It was exactly what I needed to help me in my crisis and to complete my struggle for the power of God. There were still some questions in my mind that were clamoring for an answer and some thoughts about the ministry of healing that had not yet been cleared up. This verse closed the door to the past and opened another through which I saw the hand of Jesus of Nazareth beckoning me to enter.

Evelyn was in the kitchen. I told her to come into the front room a minute. She noticed that I was excited, "What's the matter, Oral?" she said.

Handing her my Bible, I asked her to read III John 2, where I had marked the verse. When she read it, I asked her to read it out loud. She read, "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health even as

thy soul prospereth." As she read, something happened to me. I was tingling all over with the presence of God. I never remembered being affected by scripture like that before. My thoughts were interrupted by Evelyn's voice, "Oral, is this verse in the Bible?"

"Sure it is. You just read it."

"Did you know it was there before this morning?"

"No, I didn't."

"Oral, do you mean to say you have read the Bible all these years and the past few months practically day and night, and yet you didn't know this verse was in the Bible?"

"That's right. I have read it at least a hundred times, but I just didn't see this verse."

"How could you read it so many times and not see it?"

I had no answer to that question for one of the mysteries of life is why people read the Bible and fail to see its real meaning.

We stood there talking about this wonderful verse for several minutes. Already I could see new worlds and new horizons and the door opening for the first time in my life.

I asked Evelyn to read that verse just one more time. She read, "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health even as thy soul prospereth."

I said, "Evelyn, can you explain what God means by that verse?"

She said, "Well, I guess it means what it says."

I said, "Yes, I guess it does."

I sat there examining this verse as if I had it under a microscope. The verse begins with the word, "Beloved." It is a word a man uses for his wife, his mother, his child, or his dear friend. It contains the wish of God. What is that wish? His wish is that we prosper, that we have health even as our soul prospers. True prosperity begins in the soul and springs out into the physical from there. As the soul is strong and healthy, so God wishes our body to be strong and

healthy. As our souls and bodies are strong by God's power, so He wants us to prosper in our daily lives.

That was a revelation to my soul. I had heard one of our greatest preachers say that he wanted to be poor so he could be like Jesus. I had heard countless Christian people say that they believed that God had put sickness on them so they would be better Christians. I had never believed it, and now the word of God substantiated what I believed. I found that there was a true scriptural basis for believing that God wants man to be happy, normal, healthy, strong, and prosperous. I saw that mankind can be delivered in soul, mind, and body.

During the following week I discovered three other great scriptures that helped to complete the change in my thinking and believing.

The second was in Acts 10:38, where Peter said, "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power who went about doing good, healing all who were oppressed of the devil for God was with him."

This verse was an eye opener. It states that Jesus was anointed with the Holy Ghost. I had already come to see that when one is baptized with the Holy Ghost that it is the same as having the physical presence of Christ at his side. Here Peter states that Jesus was anointed by the Holy Ghost.

This verse further states that Jesus went about doing good. This means He did nothing evil or wicked or wrong. He brought no harm to people, no terrible suffering, no torment, no affliction. He went about doing good.

This verse tells what that good was. He went about doing good, healing all who were oppressed of the devil. Healing of the sick was doing good. I began to see that God is a good God, that He is full of goodness, and that He went about doing good. His doing good consisted of healing the people of the oppressions of the devil.

I saw in this verse what Jesus healed the people from. He healed them of the devil's oppression. He did not heal them

of something God put on them. It is very clearly stated that He healed the people of the oppressions of the devil. Sickness, then, is not the gift of God nor the blessing of Heaven but the oppression of a wicked devil.

"For God was with him." That was when my eyes were completely opened. I thought to myself, if God is with Oral Roberts and he has the anointing of the Holy Ghost, he can go about doing good, healing the sick from the oppressions of the devil.

The third great scripture I discovered was Luke 9:56. "For the Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives but to save them." Jesus and His disciples were passing through Samaria. The people were very cool and distant toward the Lord's ministry. The disciples said, "Lord, shall we call fire down from Heaven and destroy them?"

Jesus rebuked the disciples, saying, "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." I eagerly grasped the meaning of this verse. Jesus Christ came not with destroying power or with the purpose of destroying people. He came to save men's lives. The emphasis in this verse is on *lives*. He came to save the lives of men. A man's life is in his soul, mind, and body. Sickness is a destroyer. It is the oppression of the devil. In many places in the Bible it is called a plague, the curse of the law, captivity, and torment. Jesus came to save men's lives.

My fourth discovery was in John 10:10 which I believe is the greatest of all verses in the Bible. Jesus said, "The thief cometh not but for to steal and to kill and to destroy. I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly."

In one statement Jesus declares that the devil is a thief and that he comes into this world to steal and to kill and to destroy. He puts all the blame of the affliction and torment of mankind where it belongs. Upon the devil. On the other hand, he states His own clear purpose for coming into the

world. "I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly."

This showed me that God was a good God and the devil was a bad devil. There is no badness in God and no goodness in the devil. God is totally good and the devil is totally bad.

For the first time in my life I had a real foundation for my faith. My thinking was straightened out. I could come to God and believe Him as He really is. No longer would I be tormented by questions about God's goodness, His love, and His purpose. When I looked upon a suffering man, I would not have to question myself about its being God's will for him to be sick or to be beaten down by the wicked devil. I would know that he was tormented and tortured by the oppression of Satan. I could come up to him in the name of the Lord and command the oppressions to leave his soul or his body or his mind. I could speak in the name of Jesus Christ and, because I believed, I could lay my hands upon him and he would be set free.

I realized that no longer would I have to pray with "Please" and a begging, whining voice, but I could take authority over the torments of mankind in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth and cast them out.

A thrill came in my soul that I still feel. A fire began to burn, and it is burning in my heart right now. I had an understanding of Jesus Christ that would thrill the world. My vision of Him was backed up by the scripture and He would anoint me as I went forth. I had something for those who are sitting in the valley of the shadow and I believed that as I preached and prayed they would rise with new hope in their hearts. From that hour Oral Roberts was a changed man.

CHAPTER 10

HOW I REACHED THE CLIMAX OF MY SEARCH

SHORTLY after I discovered III John 2 God began dealing with me in a manner I had never experienced before. One night I awakened in the back yard under our pear tree. When I came to myself I was sobbing and praying. I had never walked in my sleep in my life, and when I discovered that I was in the back yard I felt strange and went in and went back to bed. This happened to me several times, and one night I found myself in the corner of the bathroom on my knees sobbing and praying. As I came to myself I looked up and saw Evelyn standing there. She touched me on the shoulder and said, "Oral, what in the world are you doing?"

I answered truthfully, "Evelyn, I don't know."

She took me by the arm and led me back into the bedroom where we sat down on the side of the bed.

She said, "Oral, what's the matter with you?"

I said, "Evelyn, I don't know."

She said, "Yes, you do, Oral."

When she said, "Yes, you do, Oral," it seemed that someone turned a light on in my mind. Everything flashed clear to me. I said, "Yes, Evelyn, I do know what is the matter with me. I haven't known until this minute, but now I know. My time to heal the sick is come and I don't have the power of God."



Then I told her something I had never told a human being, not even my mother and father. How that twelve years before, when I was being carried to be healed of tuberculosis and a stuttering tongue, the Lord had spoken to me and said, "Son, I am going to heal you, and you are to take my healing power to your generation." She said, "Oral, I knew it. I've known that this was coming for a long time."

I said, "Evelyn, you knew it?"

She said, "Yes, Oral, I knew it."

I said, "Who told you?"

She said, "Nobody told me, Oral. I just knew it."

I said, "Evelyn, I don't know what to do."

She said, "Oral, yes, you do."

"All right, then, it is now daylight, it is time for breakfast, but don't cook me any meals until I tell you."

As we dressed neither she nor I knew what that decision would mean to our lives.

Fasting had a peculiar effect upon me. I had never fasted

for any length of time before and I did not know how to fast. As I look back I am very happy that I did not know how, for I fasted from my heart and not after some scientific manner. God looks on the heart of a man and deals with him according to what he sees there.

During my fasting I would always spend the same time in prayer as I had in eating. When mealtime came I figured out about how many minutes it would take me to eat and I would spend that time in prayer. If I satisfied my burden of prayer before the time for my eating had elapsed, I would open my Bible and study the Scriptures. I prayed and read the Bible during those times.

In this manner I increased my prayer life considerably. This helped to focus my attention more sharply upon Jesus. I found He was ever in my thoughts. I developed a burning desire to be like Him.

The thing I remember most about my fasting was the great weakness it produced in my body. During my prayer periods I would tell the Lord how weak I was and that if He didn't help me I couldn't carry on my ministry. It was at this time that it dawned on me that the weakness of my body corresponded to the weakness of my soul. My physical weakness was a picture of my spiritual weakness. As I was doing without food, so had my soul been doing without the Lord's power.

Over and over I beseeched God for His strength, both for body and soul. I had read the scripture where it said, "God's strength shall be made perfect in weakness."

It wasn't easy for me to regiment my life like this. Many demands were made on my time. I had made up my mind to find God and I was willing to submit to anything that would help me do it. I found when a person has a burning desire to do something, he will do it. I wanted the Lord's power more than I wanted anything else in the world and I refused to let anyone or anything deter me from what I was doing.

I lost thirty-two pounds in three months and was weak physically most of that time. I did everything in my power to keep my fasting a secret, for I believe the true reward of fasting is achieved by fasting unto the Lord and not unto man. People have ways of finding out things and when some of them did discover my fastings they were alarmed. Some of them wanted to advise me, but I put off their advice until a later period. While I was fasting I didn't want any human voice in my ear. I wanted the Lord to speak to me.

People knocked on the door while I was praying and studying the Scriptures, and I refused to see them. They thought I was rude, but I felt they were interrupting a conference I was having with God.

In those days I set aside four hours of every day for my praying and studying. I still have that rule in effect. When I'm in my meetings, no one can get to me from two-thirty until the service starts at seven-thirty. That is the only way I can stand before the people with a full heart and a burning message from God.

Fasting induced a great physical weakness in my body. When I felt this weakness, it caused me to be humble. I realized how weak I was without God. I would fall on my knees and beseech Him for His strength, and therein is the secret blessing of fasting. It is not the fast itself that helps a person. If his attitude does not undergo some change, his fasting is a waste of time and merely a physical sacrifice. I gained great strength of soul because I called upon Him in my distress and weakness.

CHAPTER 11

HOW THE DEVIL ALMOST STOPPED ME

WHEN a man makes up his mind to find God and to receive His power to deliver mankind, he finds many forces start converging on his life. These forces are both good and bad.

During my search for God, an evangelist came to Enid for six days of services. He came at a most opportune moment in my life. He had a wonderful understanding of the Scriptures that teach Bible deliverance. He preached that God could deliver soul, mind, and body. While I do not know what he is preaching today, I know he preached Bible deliverance then. I was particularly impressed by his preaching and his boldness in commanding sickness to leave the bodies of people.

His preaching was with power, and it moved the great audiences. I had never heard of this man, but my heart was open to God, and I went to hear him. I was thrilled beyond measure when I heard his dynamic preaching.

I was doing fine until near the close of the meeting. The house was full of people when they got up to take a final offering. They spent nearly an hour in begging people for money, and the way they did it almost broke my heart. It was like a public auction. This is not said to condemn him or any other man for the way they take up offerings,

but it was not my way. The only reason I am mentioning it is because it had an effect upon me at that time and almost stopped me from entering the healing ministry.

After this had gone on until the Spirit of God was a thousand miles away from that place, he got up to preach and spent the same length of time in preaching as he did in taking up an offering. I was pretty sad when I left the building, because it seemed to me they had put money on a par with the preaching of the gospel.

The devil slipped up and began to talk to me. He said, "So that's why you're entering the healing ministry. It's a racket, and you want to get into it."

When I got home I went to my room, closed the door, fell on my knees, and began to pray. I wrestled with this awful feeling. Finally I said, "Lord, you can count me out. I just can't do it. For no matter what the motive of my heart is in preaching deliverance, many people will say, 'It is a racket.'"

The Lord dealt very gently with me, and before I was through praying He had greatly calmed my spirit. It came to me while I was yet on my knees that the Lord had let me see this for a purpose. I was not to pattern my ministry after the ministry of anyone else, nor was I to follow man and adopt his methods. I was not to get upset about the method some other man used. I was to follow the Lord and the Lord would show me how to get every need met in a manner that would bring glory to His name and in a way that people would appreciate.

I wasn't the only one disappointed that day, because it was the talk of my church. Many a person cast his eye on me and thoughts went through his mind about what I intended to do. Some of them were very anxious about me and some could not help but speak to me about it.

A few days later two of my friends cornered me. The devil had put things in their minds against me. I always

hate to tell what they said, but since it had an effect upon me I think it has a place in this story.

They said, "If this is going to be a racket, we want in on it."

I said, "Men, where in the world did you ever get that idea?"

They said, "We saw this other fellow how he took up offerings."

I said, "Well, men, you're looking at a man today who doesn't have that in his heart. If I have to do that to carry on this work, I won't even start. I want you to know this thing has hurt me, too, and I have fallen on my knees and God has shown me what I'm to do. He told me not to worry about it, that He would lead me and He would meet every need in a manner that would honor His name."

They said, "We know why you're in this and we want in on it."

I said, "Men, you are badly mistaken."

They were not convinced. Nothing I could say would change their minds. I was never more sincere, I had never been more sincere in my life, but they had made up their minds and I couldn't change them. It hurt me so bad that I just turned and walked out of the building. I got in my car and started driving toward home. These men doubted me, they didn't understand the real motive of my heart. They didn't know that long before this man had come to town I had been seeking God and God had been seeking me. They didn't realize that this man was just another incident who came by at a time to show me there were some things I must avoid and be careful about. It had never been in my heart to put money on a par with the preaching of the gospel, and when I saw what was done in that meeting I took it as a warning from the Lord. I remember as I drove along the street that I was so low I began to cry. I said, "Lord, I can't do it. I can't go through with it. I'm just going to quit right now."

When I got to the parsonage, I went in and told Evelyn what had happened. She looked me straight in the eye and said, "Oral, it's a trick of the devil."

I said, "How do you mean, Evelyn?"

She said, "The devil must know that you are going to do a great work for God, or he wouldn't be attacking you this early. Oral, the thing that counts is what is in your heart. You can prove to these people that they are wrong and I know you will."

As I look back upon those days I remember how terrible they were. How low and discouraged I would get, and yet now that it's over I think it was good for people to come to me. I'm happy to say that those same men who doubted me then have the greatest confidence in the world in me now. They have been in my meetings and have been convinced time and time again that I have only one desire and that is to bring Bible deliverance to lost and suffering humanity. Many, many times they have mentioned to me how wonderful they think it is that we say so little about the financial needs of our meetings and place our greatest emphasis upon the ministry of deliverance.

People appreciate this and have stood by me so that I have never lacked for any good thing for the work of God. I believe that we have the proof that if you put the gospel first that the Lord will add all these other things to you.

In the meantime, things were rapidly coming to a climax. The same morning I had discovered III John 2 I said to Evelyn, "Do you believe God will give me a new Buick?"

She said, "No, I don't."

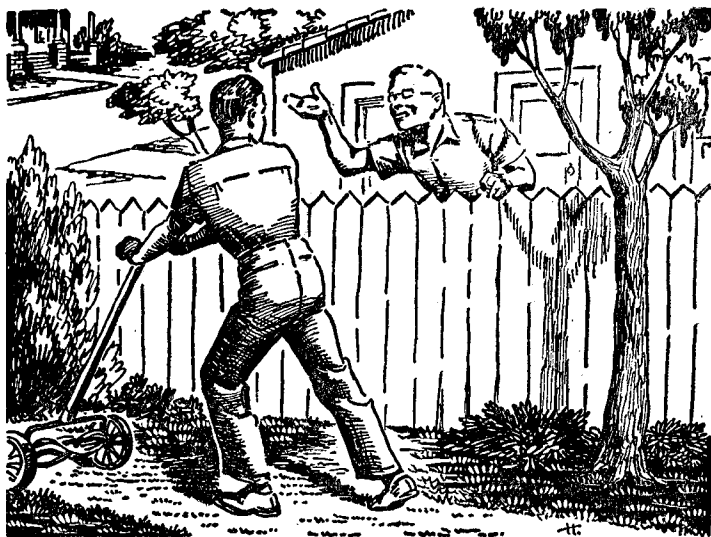
I said, "Well, I do. Evelyn, do you think if I would believe strong enough God would help me get a new Buick?"

She said, "No, I don't."

I said, "Well, I do, and I'm going to do it."

That ended the conversation.

A few evenings later I was mowing my lawn, and my closest neighbor leaned over the fence and said he wanted



to meet me. He started talking, and after a while he said, "Brother Roberts, don't you need a new car pretty bad?"

I said, "Yes, Mr. Gus, I do."

He said, "Son, come down to the office in the morning. I want to talk to you about it." The next morning I went downtown to see him and discovered that he ran a car lot.

He said, "Brother Roberts, I have been listening to you preach and I believe in your ministry. I notice that you are preaching faith. Well, Son, you need your own faith strengthened. I am just a sinner, but I can tell you this, it does a man lots of good when what he believes starts coming to pass. I would like to help you get a new car. I figure that it will strengthen your faith."

I told him I certainly believed that if God helped me get a new car my faith would be strengthened, and if I got the car I would use it for His glory.

He told me that I could take my car and sell it at the high ceiling and he would sell me a new car at his cost.

The difference was comparatively small. The payments were arranged to suit my convenience, so I got the new car.

One morning I was out washing the car when Mr. Gus walked up. He said, "Well, it's pretty, isn't it?"

I said, "Yes, Mr. Gus, it's the nicest car I ever had. I'm really thankful for it."

He said, "Son, this is the beginning of great things for you."

I said, "I hope so."

He said, "I know so. You won't be preaching to small crowds very much longer."

I turned and looked at him, and started to answer, but something made me keep still. He was looking me right in the eye, and he said, "Oral, I am going to tell you something that I think you ought to know. You won't be in Enid many more months. Big crowds are waiting for you. The thing you are beginning to preach is going to do big things for this world—and for you."



I said, "Mr. Gus, what do you know about my preaching?"

He said, "I know more than you think. I slipped into your church three times lately. You didn't see me, but I was there. I have been watching you. I live right here next to you and I have been watching you."

I was amazed. The strange part of it was that at that time this man was not a Christian. Seven months later he was converted in one of my meetings.

He said, "I just have one more thing to say, and I want you to believe what I am saying. I have sold cars for a long time, and I have made a lot of money. That's because I have faith in what I am doing. Son, you have faith in your God, but you can have even more. Believe in your preaching, believe in your message, and above all believe in your God. Someday you are going to be the biggest thing for God this country has ever seen."

He turned and walked away. All the rest of that day I thought about what he had said. I still think about it. What caused him to say it? Why did he go out of his way to befriend me and to encourage me? The Lord knows how very little encouragement I had received from Christian people, but this man—a sinner—saw something that the others did not see, and he was big enough as a man to come and tell me when I needed to hear it.

It was rather funny the way some of my church people took the new car. Some of them were thrilled because they felt it was an answer to prayer, but some of the others weren't quite so generous. They said it would give me a big head and if I didn't watch out I would soon quit preaching.

I remember I said to one of them, "If God can trust me with a new car, surely you can."

My preaching had come to the attention of some of my university professors. Whether they had been out to some of my services I never learned. I had seen several of the

students of the university in my services. One day as I started to leave the classroom, my English professor stopped me. She said, "Mr. Roberts, I understand that you are interested in the possibilities and power of faith."

I nodded and held my peace.

She said, "I am very much interested. Mr. Roberts, would it surprise you if I told you that I think the world hasn't yet discovered the full power of faith, that I believe faith can heal disease, faith can stop wars, faith can heal people's troubles?"

When I didn't reply, she continued: "Mr. Roberts, you have a keen analytical mind. I think you are on the right track. I think it is time preachers started giving people something besides doctrine. People must get their faith back. I think you will be one of the men that will help give it to them. I will be following your ministry with the greatest of interest."

All of these things happened to me in a matter of a few brief weeks. My seeking God and my preaching on faith had begun to stir up a lot of people, in low places and in high places.

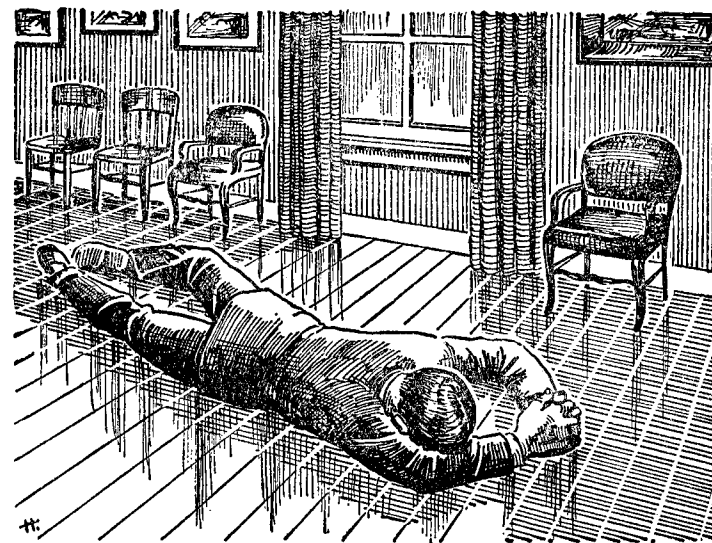
CHAPTER 12

THE POINT OF NO RETURN

IT is a merciful God who clouds the future and puts His hand over tomorrow. Had I been able to look down the road and see all the persecutions, criticisms, false accusations, and hardships that I was to face, I might have made another kind of decision, but God in his mercy let me see only from day to day.

I had reached the point of no return. I intended to have God's power whatever the cost. The feelings of people, both good and bad, were already being shown toward me. They could not let me alone. I knew by this I was on the verge of a great climax of my life.

I made my decision to have it out with God. I went to my study in the Enid Pentecostal Holiness Church where I was pastor. I locked the door and stood before God, talking to Him. I felt I was closer to Him than I was to any human being. For the past few weeks I had actually spent more time in His presence than I had with my family. I said, "Lord, I have made up my mind. I have reached the place in my thinking from which there is no return. This is it, Lord. I have been asking you for many months for your power, I have earnestly prayed to hear your voice, but you have not spoken to me. You told me twelve years ago I was to take your healing power to my generation. I cannot do



that without your anointing. Today is the end of my searching for you. I am going to find you. I will lie down on this floor before you and start praying. I will never rise until you speak to me."

Psychologists say when a man makes up his mind he never changes. Mine was made up. When I told God I would not rise from the floor until He had revealed Himself to me, I meant every word of it. Moving the chairs back, I stretched out on the floor with my face down and began to pray. It was not a prayer in which I told God what I thought He should do, rather it was a beseeching prayer in which I begged Him to reveal Himself to me. I prayed from the heart. As I lay there I felt like a tiny speck in His vast universe. I was one man striving with the Almighty. I felt my soul being poured out before Him like water. How long I lay on the floor praying I do not know. I never looked at a clock, for I was praying by my heart. Time became eternity, and I lost sight of where I was and who I was. Slowly

the old Oral Roberts began to fade, and I felt myself being drawn by a resistless power to another world. A strange power had control of my mind, and I knew that I was praying but could not distinguish all the words.

Somewhere in the prayer I lost contact with the physical and made contact with the spiritual. The last memory I have until later, when God spoke to me, was that suddenly I had the feeling that my struggling and striving was over, that I was with God and He was with me. Had someone found me, he would have thought I was dead, for there was no moving of my physical body, only the wild beating of my heart. I felt something going out of me and something coming into me. Although it must have been several hours, it seemed only a moment.

And then God spoke to me. He spoke like a military commander. His words were clear and crisp. He said, "Get on your feet." Slowly I got up. I stood facing the door, and I started swaying but caught myself by holding the wall. As I stood there, swaying, He spoke and said, "Go get in your car."

As I went down the aisle of the church I was swaying so much I had to catch the ends of the pews on either side to keep myself from falling. I slipped in under the steering wheel of my car and sat there with my hands at my side. God said, "Drive one block and turn right."

I closed the door, started the motor, drove one block, and stopped. I started to turn right when the Lord said, "From this hour you will heal the sick and cast out devils by my power." It seemed as if ten thousand volts of electricity surged through my body and that a thousand pounds were lifted from my shoulders. My head cleared, my voice became vibrant, my body trembled, and I let out a sigh that I shall always remember. I drove right straight to the parsonage, 805 West Randolph Street, leaped out of the car, ran into the house, and shouted, "Evelyn, cook me a meal; the Lord has spoken to me!"

She knew God had revealed Himself to me for she saw it in my face. She said, "Oh, Oral, has He spoken to you?" I said, "Yes, honey, He has spoken to me."

When a man receives a call from God, his battle has just begun. I began to make plans for my first big mass healing service. In the meantime I planned to have two or three regular healing services in the church where I was pastoring. Some of the brethren thought I should hold the mass healing service outside of Enid, where I was not known, so as to get off to a good start. I told them no, I was going to hold it in Enid where everybody knew me, where it was the hardest. I felt if I could do it there, I could do it anywhere.

A downtown auditorium was secured and the services planned for the following Sunday at 2:00 P.M. Once more I began fasting and pleading with God to stand by me. My prayers were pleadings. I was staking everything I had on that one service.

As the week grew on I became so desperate that I made a terrible vow. As I look back upon that vow today I shudder. I now understand why some of my friends acted so strangely when they heard of the vow. They were afraid for me. I would have been afraid, too, had I not reached the point of no return.

I put out three fleeces. First, that God would have 1,000 people present for the service. Second, when the offering was taken the people would contribute what was needed without any embarrassment or pulling. Third, that I would have God's power to heal the sick in such a manner that both the people and I would know that I was called to heal the sick. I told the Lord if He would answer those three fleeces, I would immediately launch forth into a healing ministry. If He did not answer those three fleeces, I would resign my church, return my ordination papers to the conference, stop being a Christian, and return to private life. I went so far in my thinking that I went downtown and spoke to the owner of a clothing store, asking him if he

might have an opening in the near future. When he said he might, I determined if worst came to worst I would get a job in his store to support my family.

It was a desperate vow. I certainly do not recommend such a vow to anybody else. It was a vow only for me, and it shows how far I had committed myself. I meant every word of that vow, and I had determined to live by it regardless of which way things went.

When Sunday came, many of the people in the church were fasting with me. Some of them did not eat a bite at noon. We all sat around in the church talking and praying until two o'clock.

When the time came to go to the auditorium, I got into the car with some of the men and we drove downtown. I was very calm, and the men noticed it. I was beyond the trembling stage. I had made the committal of my life and intended to abide by the decision of God. We had to enter a side door in order to get to the platform. The door was opened by the caretaker. My first question was, "Man, how many people are in the building?" I looked into his face and knew I would soon know the answer to my first fleece. The die was cast, every bridge was burned behind me. Live or die, survive or perish, I was committed, and the first fleece would be answered in a moment.

He said, "Twelve hundred people are already seated in the building."

There was no feeling of elation in my heart. I nodded and entered the auditorium. When I got to the platform, I looked out over the crowd and realized that they had come to hear me preach and to be healed of their afflictions. I had been preaching to a maximum of two hundred people in my church. Now in my own town, where people knew me, six times as many were present. I felt strength coming into my soul.

After the service got under way, an offering was received to pay the rental on the auditorium and incidental expenses.

None of this money was to go to anyone, not even to myself. Just a few brief words were mentioned about what the needs were, prayer was offered, and the offering was taken up. After they had counted it, they brought a slip of paper on which they had written the amount and handed it to me.

The exact amount of the offering was \$163.03. That was \$3.03 over what was needed for the expenses!

Fleece number one had been answered with twelve hundred people present, two hundred more than I had asked for.

Fleece number two was answered with \$3.03 over what was needed to pay the expenses.

I began to preach, and I had not preached more than ten minutes until the anointing of God struck my mortal flesh. I began to tingle from the crown of my head to the soles of my feet with the presence of God. My brain became clear and sharp, the words started rolling out of my mouth like volumes of water. I heard myself saying things I had never dreamed were possible for any man to say. The spirit of prophecy came on me and I began prophesying what God was going to do in the last days, how He was going to raise up men and give them His power to set humanity free from one end of the earth to the other, that He was going to pour out the nine gifts of the spirit to heal the sick body of the bride, and that Jesus Christ was coming soon. The words that flowed from my mouth were by the spirit of prophecy. I told the people that this last worldwide revival would be a revival of signs and wonders and that it would be characterized by a great wave of healing power coming from Heaven upon the sick bodies of mankind.

I had titled the sermon, "If You Need Healing—Do These Things." The last half of the sermon I began telling the people how to turn their faith loose, what to do to get healed—directions which the Lord had given me.

I was just a little over halfway through in this sermon when the anointing of God became so great that I could not stand still. Suddenly I leaped off the high platform down to the lower floor. When I did it, it seemed the audience was swept off its feet. As if by a prearranged signal they leaped up and stood facing me. About two or three hundred of them started to their right and started coming down the aisle toward me. I saw at a glance that I would not get to finish my sermon, that the power of the Lord was present to heal and I must act immediately.

There was shouting and rejoicing all over the audience. Some were crying and weeping. I never learned how that healing line formed, but there was a long line of people coming to my left toward me. I started laying my hands upon them one by one and praying in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth for God to heal them. I laid my hand upon an old German woman who had had a stiff hand for thirty-eight years. Suddenly she screamed at the top of her voice and shouted that she was healed. She raised up her hand and began to open and close it to show the people how God had taken the stiffness away and given her the perfect use of it. Those close by saw this miracle, and it greatly increased their faith. A lot of people were healed that day, for people kept coming in the healing line and I prayed until six o'clock.

When it was all over, I stood there by myself, my clothes were wet, my hair was disheveled, my body was tired, still I felt as strong as a lion. There was a fire burning in my soul, and I believe I could have prayed for twice as many more. My three fleeces had been answered. More than one thousand people had been present, more money had been raised than was asked for, and the people had given it freely. Both the people and I knew I was called of God for we had seen His outstretched hand that day and many, many people had felt His healing power upon their souls and bodies. I doubt whether there was a person who went

out of that building that day who did not believe that he had seen the wonderful works of God. God had met me in my own town. I had started where it was hardest. I felt the whole world was waiting for me and if I could secure my release from the university and help the church get a new pastor, I could go out with God's anointing and set the world on fire.

CHAPTER 13

THE TWENTY-FIVE DOLLARS THAT SAVED THE DAY

SOON after God revealed Himself to me in Enid I had a feeling that someday my ministry would be large and would require a central location in America so I could serve the people. When the church had called a new preacher upon my resignation, Evelyn and I drove over to Tulsa and went to visit the man who was to take my place in Enid. By a coincidence he was moving from Tulsa to Enid while I was moving from Enid to Tulsa. We started looking for a house for us to rent. At that time we had only two children, Rebecca Ann and Ronald David, and I had to find a place quickly for them because Oscar Moore, the new pastor, had to move within a certain length of time and the church needed the parsonage for him.

Oscar had performed our marriage ceremony. I paid him five dollars for driving 200 miles to marry us. This five dollars came from a loan of \$18 secured from brother Moore's bank on which he had made the endorsement. He and Anna had been our dear friends for many years.

They invited us to spend the night with them, after we had spent the entire day searching for a place to rent. That afternoon about four-thirty we drove over to their house tired and discouraged. We had looked the town over and had phoned scores of people. It looked as if there wasn't a house in Tulsa we could rent.

Brother Moore told us that he had sold his house to a man who was coming that evening at six o'clock to close the deal. When he said he had sold his house, something went all over me. I had the funny feeling that I was sitting in the house God wanted me to have. I thought to myself, "How utterly absurd for me to entertain such an idea since he has already sold it."

We had a little time before we ate supper and I felt I should get somewhere and pray. I went in the bedroom to pray, but it seemed too small and I couldn't get anywhere. I told them I would be back in a little while, so I went out and got in my car and began to drive. I parked by the city park and sat there trying to think things through. Things were pretty serious. We had tried to rent a house and none was available. All the money I had was in my pocket, a total of \$25. I had to leave Enid, give up the parsonage, and move somewhere. Tulsa was the place I felt the Lord wanted me to come. I had no place to move. I had no money to buy a house.

The world has never looked so dark to me as it did that evening. God had spoken to me and said, "From this hour you will heal the sick and cast out devils by my power." I had had my first major healing service and God had answered my desperate vow, giving me three fleeces that He was with me. Now I was stranded.

I couldn't think of anybody I could turn to. Mama and Papa had no money, neither did my brothers nor my sister, and I knew in my heart that I wouldn't ask them for it if they had. I never felt so lonely in my life. I didn't know what to do. Finally I just laid my head down on the steering wheel and began to cry. I said, "Lord, I'm at the end of the way again. I don't know which way to turn. I don't have any money. I don't have any place to go. I feel like you want me to come to Tulsa, but every door has closed in my face."

Suddenly the spirit of the Lord came upon me. My flesh

began to tingle with His presence just like it had when He had spoken to me the second time. The words of our theme song, "Where the Healing Waters Flow," came into my mind:

O the joy of sins forgiv'n!
O the bliss the blood-washed know!
O the peace akin to Heav'n,
Where the healing waters flow!

What was I worrying about? My sins were forgiven, I was blood-washed and had the peace akin to Heaven, and God was about to let His healing power flow like water through my life. I felt everything was going to be all right. I turned the car around and drove back to Brother Moore's house just in time for supper.

When six o'clock came, the man who was to purchase Brother Moore's house had not arrived. Seven o'clock came, seven-thirty, and still he did not arrive. We had planned to go to the big revival that night under Steve Pringle's tent. Brother Moore said that he would meet us at the tent later, for he wanted to give the man a little extra time. We had a wonderful service that night. Brother Ray Bridgeman was preaching and he really stirred the people. At the close of the service Steve Pringle came around to me and said that Brother Bridgeman had to close his part of the meeting Sunday and he wanted me to carry on the revival. I agreed I would preach for him six days beginning the following Tuesday. We went back to Brother Moore's house to stay all night.

Brother Moore said that his friend hadn't shown up but he would give him until eight o'clock the next morning. The next morning at eight o'clock the man still hadn't appeared. He said, "That's funny. I thought he had definitely made up his mind to take the house."

A strange look came over his face, and turning to me, he said, "Oral, do you want this house?"

I said, "Oh, I don't know."

"Well, it's a good house."

"Oh, it'll do."

"Well, I don't know of a better house you could buy."

"Well, it's a pretty nice house all right."

You know when you have faith in God and you know the Lord's going to work things out, you have a certain nonchalance, and I had it.

Oscar said, "Oral, do you really want to buy this house?"

"Oh, maybe."

"I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll let you have it for \$6,500."

"You are too high."

"How much will you give me?"

"\$5,500."

And I had only \$25 to my name.

He said, "I can't take \$5,500, but I'll tell you what, I'll split the difference—you can have it for \$6,000."

I said, "Sold."

Evelyn looked over at me as if she thought I had gone out of my head, but she didn't say a word. She knew I had only \$25 and there I was buying a house for \$6,000. Brother Moore said he would run up to the bank and get the papers for me to sign.

While he was gone, I didn't have any uncertainty at all. I felt that everything was going to work out.

When he got back, he said, "Oral, I want \$3,000 down and you can take up the mortgage." He almost took my breath away but I didn't say anything.

We were going through the papers when he stopped and said, "Say, Oral, Anna and I plan to build us a new home next year, and if you pay us the \$3,000 down payment today, we will just have to put it in the bank. How will it suit you to pay the down payment a little later, say half of it in six months and the other half in twelve months?"

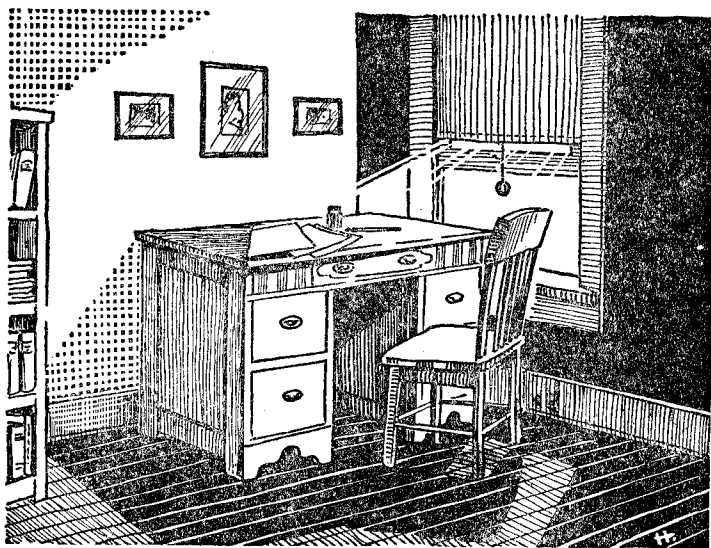
I caught my breath and said, "Oh, just as you say."

That was one of the narrowest escapes my faith ever had.

Brother Moore didn't know until a year later that I had bought that house with only \$25 in my pocket.

Brother Moore had a nice little desk that he sold to us for \$12. It was in the dining room and we left it right where it was. It was on that desk that *Healing Waters* was born. Today that little desk is sitting in a corner of the reception room of the beautiful *Healing Waters* office in Tulsa. On top of it there is a plaque that reads, "Original desk used by Oral Roberts." It is rather bruised and battered, and isn't very big, but it tells the story to all who care to see.

Tulsa had not had a great healing revival since 1922 when Raymond T. Richey had stirred the city. I was just beginning my healing ministry. The following Tuesday I started a six-day meeting for Brother Pringle under his tent. That tent, when compared with the huge tent we use today, was just like a drop in the bucket, but at that time it was the biggest tent I had ever seen in the gospel work. It seated over 1,000 people. We started on a rainy night and the



people didn't know me. The crowd was small that night, but I had something they didn't know I had. I had a fire burning in my soul. God had spoken to me and told me I was to heal the sick and cast out devils. By the time I had gotten through preaching and praying that night the mighty power of the Lord had filled the tent and the people went out of there after dismissal saying that they had seen the wonderful works of God and that God had raised me up and sent me to Tulsa.

The news spread like fire over Tulsa. Within three nights the tent was full. By the following Sunday not only was the tent full but people were standing all over the grounds trying to get in. Brother Pringle came to me and said, "Oral, we can't close this meeting. God's in this thing. He sent you here. You've got to stay another week." I agreed to stay another week.

The second week the place was covered with people. They had heard about it in different states and people were there from eight states. One night I was praying for a blind man who had come down from Kansas. All of a sudden he screamed, "I can see! I can see!" It was like an electrical shock to the crowd. They leaped to their feet, started running down the aisles and praising God. People were brought in on cots, and God raised them up. Many outstanding miracles were wrought in the name of Jesus. Some of the most outstanding full gospel pastors in the city opened their hearts and came to this meeting, even though it was sponsored by another church. People seemed to melt together when they got in the tent and they forgot what church they belonged to.

I had the greatest anointing I had ever had in my life. God anointed me every night. I preached for an hour and a half every night with such anointing that people were held spellbound. It seemed a spell was cast over me and the Lord opened my mind to treasures in His Bible I did not know existed.

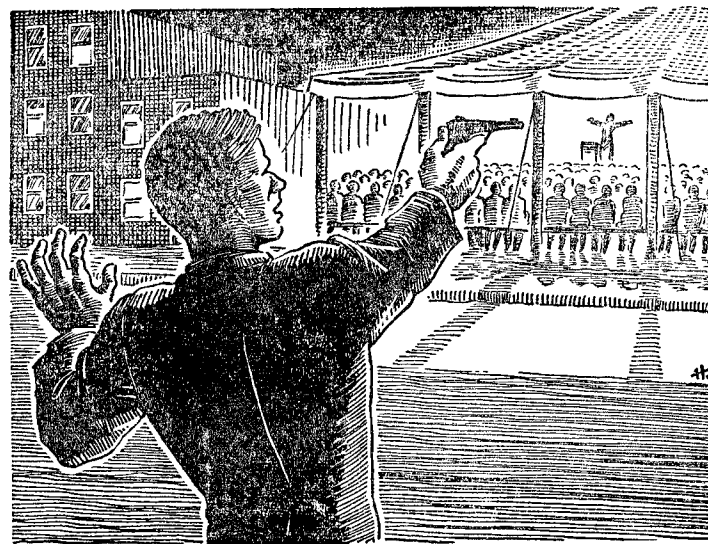
Each week Brother Pringle would tell me that I couldn't close so I stayed nine straight weeks.

As the meeting wore on, I ran out of deliverance sermons. All my old sermons had left me. I couldn't think of one that God wanted to use in this meeting. I had to get something fresh and vigorous and stimulating for the people's faith. I read the Bible, I read it on my knees for hours at a time. Sometimes I would come right up to the very hour before I had to go to the tent, without a sermon, then suddenly God would open up a scripture and I would see the whole thing. When I got to the tent that night I would preach like a man from another world.

One night I was up preaching and great power was upon me. A man standing across the street pulled out his revolver, pointed it at me, and pulled the trigger. The bullet missed my head by inches as the slug tore through the tent just above my head. The newspapers heard about it and carried the story of how I had been shot at. The United Press carried it from coast to coast. We never learned the identity of the man who shot at me; we didn't even try to. The power of the Lord was coming down to heal the people and we knew nothing could stop us.

Letters started pouring in from all over the country. Also telegrams and telephone calls. People were offering to pay my plane fare if I would come and pray for them. Some wired and asked me if they could bring their loved ones in on the plane and if I would meet them at the airport. Preachers started calling me for revivals from many states.

Each day Evelyn and I would take the mail in on the little twelve-dollar desk and try to answer it. The mail increased so much that we couldn't handle it. Three young girls, stenographers in downtown Tulsa, were attending the meeting. They volunteered to help us. I dictated answers to the letters and the girls were typing them all over the dining room. I secured extra typewriters, and still the mail increased. Pretty soon the work overflowed the dining



room. We were being moved out of the house by the mail. We decided to take our garage and build it into an office. It was a big step for us. It would take several hundred dollars, but we had faith and went ahead. Pretty soon the mail increased so much that we kept adding extra girls. Finally we started paying them so that we could have more of their time. They had been coming after work hours and working until church time free of charge. We told them if they would work for us and type our answers to the people that, as the Lord supplied our needs, we would pay them so much each week.

It was not long until the garage was too little, so we decided to turn the whole house into an office. That meant we had to move, so we found a place in the southern part of Tulsa, made a down payment, and moved, but it was not long until the entire house was too small to take care of the mail.

When I had the feeling I should move to Tulsa, I told

Evelyn about it. Before we went to look for a house and to visit Oscar and Anna Moore we made a quick trip to Tulsa to visit Sister Mildred Wicks, who, too, was launching out into the healing ministry. Her house was right across the street from a nice big, vacant lot on one of the main thoroughfares near downtown Tulsa. I stepped this lot off and had the feeling that this was it. I stood out in the middle of it, looked up toward the Lord, and asked Him to save that lot for my ministry. That occurred in May 1947. One year and a half later we had outgrown our house and had to have an office. I went all over Tulsa trying to find office space to rent and every door was closed in my face. Then I remembered the lot I had asked God to save for me. I jumped in the car and drove down there real quick and stepped off the lot again. I had the most wonderful feeling that I was standing on holy ground.

I began to try to contact the man who owned the lot. I called him and said, "I want to buy that property." I had only half of the money that the man asked for the lot. By saving the profits of my book, *If You Need Healing, Do These Things*, I had half of the money the man asked for the lot. That book has sold extremely well from the very day it came off the press. Evelyn and I took the profits at first, but later we decided that we would give it to the Lord, so we had \$5,500 when I decided to buy the lot.

The man said that if I wanted the lot I had better buy it right then because an oil company was also interested in it. I had not made a practice of borrowing money from individuals, preferring to deal with banks. I knew that no bank would lend me money on a piece of ground that was unimproved. I had a friend, a special friend, who was deeply interested in my ministry. I called him up on the phone long distance and told him I needed \$5,500 to buy the lot. He asked me how much the lot was, and I told him \$11,000. He misunderstood me and thought I wanted

\$11,000 instead of \$5,500, and he sent me a check for \$11,000.

Later I called him back on the phone and told him he had made a mistake. He said, "Oral, you think I have made a mistake?"

I said, "Yes, I only asked for \$5,500."

He said, "Can you use the money?"

I said, "Oh, sure. We've got to put up the building next."

He said, "All right, pay it back when you can."

I went up to the loan companies to borrow money for the new building and they told me if I would operate four or five years that perhaps then they could make me a loan. I asked them how I could operate if I didn't have some working capital right now. They said they were sorry, but that was all they could do.

God works in mysterious ways His wonders to perform. While all this was going on, a man in North Carolina heard of my ministry. A copy of my book, *If You Need Healing, Do These Things*, fell into his hands. It stirred his soul and set him on fire. He took a plane and flew to our meeting in Miami, Florida, to see if the meeting was as good as the reports. He took a seat in the rear of the tent so he could observe. He said, "If I don't like it, I will leave before anyone knows I'm here."

Pretty soon he was sitting on the edge of his seat, carried away with what he saw. For the first time in his life he saw several hundred people come forward to be saved at one time and in the healing line he saw miracles right before his eyes. He was a dear friend of Dr. O. E. Sproull, who was managing my meetings, and after the service he came up and told Dr. Sproull that he had heard about such things, but at last he had gotten to see them himself.

The following day Dr. Sproull brought him around to where I was and introduced him to me, and when I looked in Lee Braxton's face I saw a man's man, a man that God could depend on. Dr. Sproull told me that Lee was chair-

man of the board of the First National Bank in his city, also president of several other corporations. Since he was a businessman, I decided to tell him my problem. He said, "Oral, I will think about it."

Two months later he came to our meeting in Jacksonville, Florida, with his family. They, too, were thrilled with what they saw. Lee decided to fly home with me and to investigate my work in Tulsa.

When he got to Tulsa, I made arrangements for him to go alone and talk to my banker, my advertising agent, my insurance man, my certified public accountant, and my attorney, and anybody else he wanted to talk with who knew me. Following that I took him over to the five-room house where we had the office. He saw the great volume of mail, the thousands of prayer requests, and read some of the letters. When he read these letters, tears streamed down his face, and he saw the great work God had called me to do. He said, "Oral, you've got to have a bigger building and that lot you've picked out is the one to build on." He got a good report in Tulsa of my honesty and integrity, found that I paid my bills promptly, and had a good name in the city. Lee said, "Oral, let's go back to the loan companies and let me talk to them for you."

We received the same story that I had received previously. The last big company we went to the boss put his feet up on his desk, pulled a big cigar out of his pocket, lighted it, and began to blow smoke in our faces. He said, "Well, we haven't found that religious people are very good pay, and if you weren't religious we might consider your loan. That is, if you made my commission attractive enough."

I looked over at Lee, and I saw fire in his eyes. He said, "Oral, let's get out of here." Back on the street, Lee turned to me and said, "Oral, we're going to build that office."

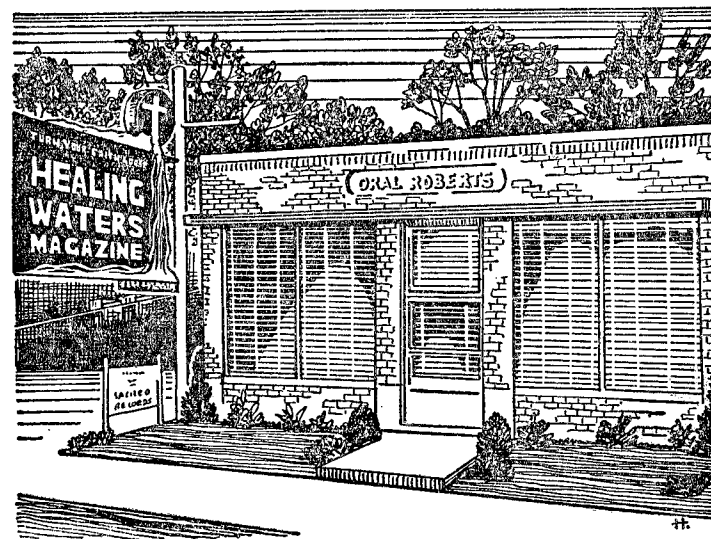
I was feeling the same way he was. I said, "Yes, Lee, it's going up, and it won't be long."

That night we called a contractor, Mr. Bill DeWitt, a

business friend of mine who had been to our meetings and was favorably disposed toward my ministry. He came over to my house and we laid the situation right in his hands. He said, "Brother Roberts, I will put your building up for you and you pay me as I go. I believe you will get the money."

So we had everything but the money. When I took Lee out to the airport to put him on the plane to go back to Whiteville, North Carolina, he said, "Oral, I have a plan. Go to your banker and tell him that you don't need his money. Tell him that Lee Braxton is going to arrange for the financing of the building himself. Tell him that I'm the chairman of the board of directors of the First National Bank in my city and that I can arrange the financing for you."

He told me to be careful to tell him exactly what he said. So I said to the president of our bank the following day exactly what Lee told me to tell him. I never shall forget



the look that came in his eyes. He said, "Reverend Roberts, you tell Lee Braxton to keep his money in North Carolina. This bank will take care of you."

The money was forthcoming, and we got the building under way. Within three months it was finished and we put a big neon sign out in front that said, "Turn Your Faith Loose" and underneath, "*Healing Waters Magazine*."

CHAPTER 14

HOW I HEARD THE VOICE OF GOD

I HAVE heard the voice of God three times. Significantly He spoke to me each time in the Month of May. In May 1935 He said, "Son, I am going to heal you and you are to take my healing power to your generation." In May 1947 He said, "Son, from this hour you will heal the sick and cast out devils by my power."

The third time was in May 1948. I was praying for the sick when He spoke to me that third time. I had been praying only a few minutes when a mother brought her young son to be healed of deafness. His left ear was stone deaf and the other was badly affected. He had not heard me preach—words were mere sounds to his ears.

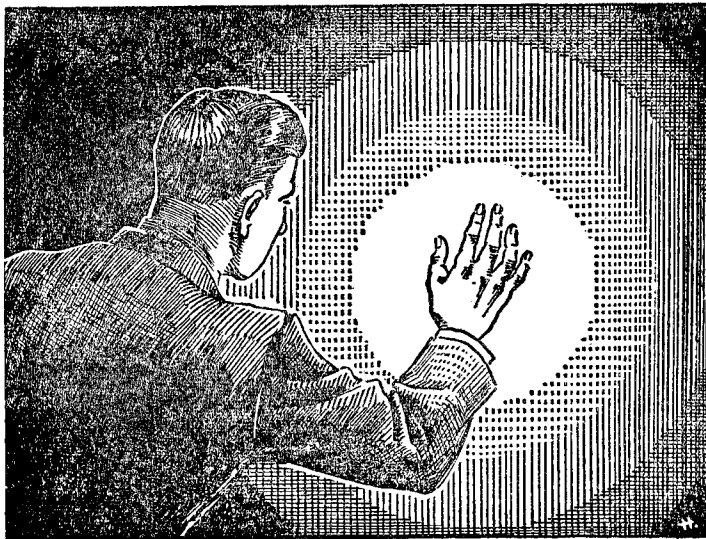
I reached forth my hand to pray for him when suddenly I heard the voice of God. It was clear and distinct. Immediately I stopped my prayer and stood very still. Here are His exact words to me, "Son, you have been faithful up until this hour and now you shall feel my power in your right hand. You shall detect the presence of demons, you will know their number and name and will have my power to cast them out."

These were strange words, but I did not question God. I have never questioned Him when He spoke to me. I stood there a moment, then I stretched forth my hand toward the

boy. As I did, I felt physical contact with God's presence in my right hand. It was a tingling sensation like an electrical current. God's presence was throbbing through the flesh of my right hand. I felt it in no other place in my body.

I stood there looking at my right hand and said to myself, "If I have really heard the voice of God and if this feeling in my hand is God's presence, then this boy's ears will be opened." I put my right hand on his deaf ear, and the moment I did I felt that tingling sensation in my right hand. I felt nothing in my left hand. Then I prayed for his other ear by putting my right hand on it. The second time the presence of the Lord surged through it.

I was so positive that the boy was healed, that I turned him away from his mother and asked her to speak to him. She spoke to him in a low voice and he whirled around and repeated what his mother had said. I turned him back again, and she talked to him. He heard every word she said. When they both realized healing had come, their faces



shone like stars and they turned and started hugging each other while the tears streamed down their cheeks. It was a never-to-be-forgotten sight.

At that moment I heard the praise of the crowd. I had not said a word to them about God speaking to me or what had happened to my right hand. In fact, I had forgotten they were there. But when I prayed for this boy and the power of God came into my right hand, the whole crowd felt it and were responding to it like steel to a magnet.

Right behind me sat an old woman who had been carried into the building in a chair, the joints of her body were stiff with arthritis and she had not been able to walk by herself for eight years. I looked into her face and saw she had great faith. She had just seen the miracle of how God opened this boy's ears. God's power was still tingling in my right hand. I walked over to her and gently touched her forehead and her knees, saying in a commanding voice, "Be thou made whole." With a sudden jerk of her body she leaped out of the chair and went running down the aisles with her hands up praising God. Pandemonium broke out in the audience, and for about five minutes I could not pray for anybody else. I looked over to where my wife was sitting, and she looked like an angel. It seemed that she would fly away, she was so happy.

The power of God was so strong in my hand that night it seemed it would tear my hand from my wrist.

In my room that night I lay for hours thinking of this strange point of contact God had put in my right hand. The first thing He had said to me was, "Son, you have been faithful." I had tried so hard to be faithful. When nobody seemed to understand my ministry and harsh criticism was coming from all sides, I had tried to be faithful. When it seemed my own mistakes would destroy me I had tried to be faithful. During the times I didn't understand God's dealings with my soul I tried to be faithful with what knowledge I had. All this time God had been watching me and had

found me faithful. His words, "Son, you have been faithful up until this hour," were the most pleasing words I had ever heard.

Then He said I would feel His presence in my right hand. This was something I could not deny. I had felt it, and it gave me a physical contact with the spiritual power of God. He said I would detect the presence of demons, would know their number and name. I had detected every demon-possessed person who had come forward in the healing line that night, I had discerned the number of demons they had, and had been able to bring deliverance to them.

All my life I have been afraid of demons. I have been afraid to pray for demon-possessed people, but that night I had something I had never had before. I felt as if I could meet any demon in any person and God would give deliverance.

The next night when I got up to preach I was a new man. The uncertainty that had plagued me at times was gone, so were the feelings of timidity and fear. God had said I would feel His presence in my right hand, and I stood in the pulpit with it vibrating through every fiber of the flesh of my hand. Never shall I forget the great boldness of soul that possessed me. My voice had a new vibrance and I spoke with commanding power. People made mention of the quality that came into my voice and how something went through them as I preached. They said God's power, like a puff of wind, would surge right through them and when I prayed in the healing line that night people felt God's power in waves clear to the back of the building.

The spirit of the Lord came upon me to deliver a demon-possessed girl that night. I detected the number of demons she had and also how many years she had been demon-possessed. I told these things just as if I were reading them out of a book. She confirmed every word I said, so did her people. When the demons came out of her, they almost tore her body apart. They seemed to be tearing and ripping her

flesh. She fell to the floor as if she had been shot dead. At any other time I would have been afraid, but God had said I would feel His presence in my right hand. It was tingling in my hand like an electrical current. I reached down and lifted her up off the floor, and when I did the light of God came on her face and His power came into her soul. She stood before me as straight as an arrow, shouting that she was free of the demons and no longer would she have to be tormented. The huge crowd of people were so thrilled over this miracle that they leaped to their feet and began praising God.

Since that time tens of thousands of people have felt the presence of God go through them from the crown of their head to the soles of their feet the moment I touch them with my right hand. When I have the anointing of the presence of God I always feel it in my right hand. However, when God's anointing is not upon me I do not feel His presence in my hand.

I can be praying in the healing line without feeling God's presence in my right hand and the people are not moved, very few miracles are wrought, but let that power strike my hand and the whole crowd immediately senses the presence of the Lord is present to heal.

One night in my first meeting in Jacksonville, Florida, God used this point of contact in my right hand to precipitate a mass outpouring of His healing virtue. As I was nearing the end of the healing line I felt this power strike my right hand. Sometimes it comes in my hand like an electrical current, sometimes it is like a liquid, and sometimes it is like a stinging fire. That night it struck my hand like a stinging fire. I had felt it only a few times like that before. As I sat there praying, God's power would strike my hand every few seconds. It stung like fire. Then suddenly it struck with tremendous force, and I screamed at the top of my voice, "People, something is coming! People, something is coming!"

There was some quality in my voice beyond the ordinary for it struck the crowd like a whip and people immediately knew something was going to happen. In a moment the power of God struck my hand a second time with such force that I shouted at the top of my voice, "People, it's here! People, it's here!" It seemed like an earthquake shook the tent. I saw the people as a blur before me. My right hand was vibrating and shaking with the presence of God in it. The people leaped to their feet and started streaming down the aisles toward me. People began pulling at my clothes. The voice of the crowd was like the roar of mighty waters.

I leaped off the main platform on to the lower platform and stood waiting. People started thronging it, and I began laying my right hand upon as many as I could and as fast as I could. It seemed like balls of fire were streaming through my hand and everybody I touched felt the healing power of God. The healing virtue of Jesus would strike them the moment I touched them, and they would go leaping and



shouting away. I turned to my right to pray for some people, and there sat a man and a woman in two wheel chairs. They were screaming for someone to let them touch me. I reached out my hand, and they both grabbed it. Without a word they both came out of those wheel chairs, and the last I saw of them they were running down the aisles. Right behind me I heard someone scream that he could see. I whirled around, and it was a blind man who was screaming that he could see the lights, he could see the people's faces.

Deaf eardrums were opened, crippled and withered legs were made straight, and people all over the tent were feeling that miraculous power to set them free. This lasted for several minutes. It was like the angel troubling the water in Bible times. As many as could get near and who believed were healed. Then in a moment it was over. When the spirit of God ceased, nobody else tried to get to me. I walked over to the microphone and told the people to raise their hands and praise God for what He had done for us. A great volume of praise spread from the front of the tent to the rear. At such a time as this, one would think that the crowd was hard to control, but there was almost perfect order, and everyone in the huge tent was perfectly reverent.

It was a thrilling sight the next day when I came out to the big tent for a few moments. There I saw a pile of crutches, two wheel chairs, a pile of earphones, glasses, walking sticks, and such like in a pile. They were a mute testimony that God's power is on this earth today to heal sick and suffering humanity.

When the presence of God comes in my right hand it becomes my point of contact. When I feel it, my faith is very strong. I lose sight of Oral Roberts, I forget my doubts, my feelings of inadequacy and timidity. I am hid with Christ in God. It helps me turn my faith loose, and it is that faith that causes God to heal the people.

In that same meeting, in Jacksonville, Papa and Mama came down for a few days. They love my ministry and know

that God has raised me up. One night when I had finished my sermon and gone back behind the platform to pray for the invalid cases, Papa met me and said, "Oral, come quick. There is a boy here who has gone stark, raving mad, and the policemen are holding him back here at the end of the tent. They want you to come right now and see what you can do for him."

Several of the Jacksonville police had been attending the meeting and were tremendously impressed with what they saw. I had met two or three of them as I entered the tent on different nights.

As I walked over toward the boy, Papa told me what had happened. The boy's parents had brought him there to be delivered but he had broken away from them during the service and had run outside the tent and begun tearing his clothes off and screaming at the top of his voice. Some of the policemen had seen him and had run out and caught him and were holding him back there with his father.

When I got there these policemen had him in their arms. The boy was about twenty-two years old. He had a wild look in his eye and most of his clothes were torn off his body. I knew he was filled with unclean spirits and that the only way they would come out was through the power of Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

I walked up to him without any fear. Suddenly the power of God began to surge through my right hand. I placed my right hand on his head and started to pray, when he began clawing at my hand to tear it off, but it seemed as if his hand were striking steel. He could do nothing with my right hand, God's power was surging through every fiber of it.

I spoke to those demons in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth and commanded them to come out. The boy began to twist his body in a violent way, the demons were tearing his flesh and trying to destroy him before I could finish my prayer. The father got scared, and I reached over and patted him on the shoulder and assured him that every-

thing was under control. The policemen didn't know whether to run or stay. Papa was to my left praying with all his heart. I had not let go of my hand on his head. His body was shaking like a leaf in a March wind under my hand. One final time I commanded those demons to come out and never to return. When they came out, the boy slid out of my hand on to the ground. His father thought he was dead. I told him he was all right. I reached down and picked him up, and when I did the power of the Lord struck the boy and he leaped right straight up. His father took him and hugged him to his breast. It was a beautiful sight to see. I turned and walked away.

Papa remained behind to see what the boy would do. The boy was in his right mind and stood there talking to his father in a rational manner. The policemen looked at each other and started to cry, and said they have never seen a miracle like this.

The news of that miracle spread throughout the big tent, and when I left that night about a thousand people were between me and the car and many of them were trying to touch my clothes. The same policemen who had seen the boy healed ran up and literally pulled me through to the car. Papa ran up. He said, "Oral, that boy is perfectly normal, and he is in there now trying to get his daddy to come and get you so he can thank you for what you have done for him."

Papa and Mama and I went to the hotel and in a little while Papa came down to my room. I had just got in my pajamas and was preparing to go to bed when Papa said, "Son."

I said, "Yes, Papa."

He said, "Oral, put your hand on my head and pray for me."

I said, "Papa, what's the matter?"

He said, "Son, I want you to pray for me. What God did for that boy tonight in the tent was the greatest miracle I

have ever seen. When I saw him in his right mind and begging his father to let him come and talk to you and thank you for your prayers, I made up my mind I was going to have you put your hand on my head and pray that God's great anointing would come upon me."

I said, "Papa, you have had the anointing ever since I can remember."

He said, "Oral, I have never had the anointing like this. Put your hand on me, Son, and pray."

I said, "Papa, you are my own father."

He said, "Son, that makes no difference. You may be my son, but the power of God is upon you, and I want you to pray for me right now."

I stood there looking at him. The presence of God was still upon me. Sometimes it lingers upon me for several hours after I return to my room. I saw that Papa was sincere and that he was looking beyond mortal flesh to the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. I put my hand on his head and started to pray. The power of the Lord came through my hand so forcibly that it knocked Papa right down on his knees. He reached out with his arms and put them around my legs and knelt there holding me. I reached down and lifted him to his feet. His face was shining like an angel and he looked as if he would be raptured.

He said he had never felt God's power come upon him like that before, that it was going through every fiber of his being. He said, "Son, I told you years ago that someday God would give you the greatest revivals of your day. Son, keep humble before God. Keep your mind on the Lord. You have yet to see what God's going to do through you."

With these words he left me.

Sometime ago one of our minister friends came to me and asked me if I was sure that God had spoken to me and that I felt His presence in my right hand.

I told him that I was.

He said other ministers didn't feel God's presence like



that and wanted to know where that would leave them.

I told him that I could not answer for any other minister, I could only answer for myself, and that I could not deny what God had done.

He kept pressing me, and I said, "All right, if you demand an answer to this point of contact in my hand, please tell me why Moses was given a rod and Elijah used his mantle and Peter used his shadow and Paul used his handkerchiefs and aprons, all of which are points of contact through which God's power moved to bless humanity."

He said, "Well, that was in the Bible."

I said, "Well, God isn't dead. People need deliverance now just like they did back there, and God is going to raise up men now just like He did then." Then I told him that I had put this to the test many times myself. If it brought deliverance to people and led them to God, then that was the testimony and the proof. If my ministry did not have results, I would be the first one to say that I was mistaken.

Jesus said, "If you cannot believe me, believe for the very works sake," and I say to anyone if they cannot believe me, an individual, then believe the works that I do, for they testify that they are of God and are blessing humanity.

Sometimes ministers get so busy in their denomination that they forget that God is going to raise up deliverers for these last days.

CHAPTER 15

THE BIG TENT

WHEN I closed the nine-weeks healing campaign in Tulsa I was thronged with invitations from all over America. I started going to churches and city auditoriums, but practically every one of them was too small to hold the huge crowds that thronged me everywhere I went.

The big municipal auditoriums were not arranged right for my campaigns. Crowds were limited, there was no place to pray with the unsaved, and often the place for the healing line had to be improvised.

It came in my heart to get a big tent. I had been healed in one twelve years before at Ada, Oklahoma. My first outstanding healing campaign was under Steve Pringle's tent in Tulsa. God showed me the vision of the big new tent and gave me the full details. He told me to get the biggest tent on the earth and carry it to the big metropolitan areas. In this manner I could reach the masses of lost and suffering humanity who would come from everywhere to see and hear the wonderful works of God. In my original plans I included a Hammond organ, a Steinway piano, 3,000 folding chairs, a portable platform, a portable lighting system, big trailers, and trucks.

I told the people in my audiences what I was going to do and they responded to my needs. I was sincere and honest

and they believed me. The total cost of the new equipment was to be \$55,000 a sum unheard of in those days for that kind of gospel equipment. In a few months I had raised enough for a down payment on most of the equipment, and on the parts of the equipment that I had to pay cash for my bank advanced me a loan of \$9,000. They said it was the first time they had ever loaned a preacher money, but they believed that I was sincere and would pay the debt. Thereafter each time I went into the bank to make a deposit or to make a payment, the president would come out of his little office and the first thing he would say was, "Hello, Reverend Roberts, how is your health?" I guess he thought as long as I stayed well the bank would get its money.

We took the new tent to Durham, North Carolina. It was the largest portable equipment in use in America. It had taken a miracle of faith to get it all together. In fact, I could write an entire story on all the things I did to get the equipment ready. At any rate, we were ready to start the first campaign in June 1948. I took the entire family with me to Durham in the car. At that time we had only Rebecca and Ronald David. Richard Lee was born the following November. (We now have four children; Roberta Jean was born in December 1950.) We had asked Geneva and Roberta Millard to play the organ and piano for us. We took Geneva with us from Tulsa, but Roberta met us in Durham. She came by train from Lincoln, Nebraska.

I have never had any ability with my hands. I am not mechanically minded. We set about to erect the tent, but I did not know how to tell the men to do it. We had no tent man at that time, but I was assured that it would be a relatively simple matter. But to erect a tent 100 feet wide by 220 feet long is no simple operation. We had announced in the papers that the meeting was to start on Thursday, but we couldn't get the tent up until Saturday.

A company had sold us some push-type poles which were supposed to cause the tent to go up real easy. We started to

push the canvas up and got it one third the distance between the ground and the top of the poles. There the great mass of canvas hung. We pushed and tugged and lifted until we thought we would break our bodies in pieces. We stayed under the canvas so long that one man had to be carried out because of the heat. Dark was coming on that first evening and the tent was one third up in the air. That is as far as we could get it. I remember I climbed out from under the canvas and walked off by myself to try to figure out something to do. My critics had said that we would never get the tent up. They said that I would never hold a successful meeting in Durham, North Carolina. They said that my ministry wouldn't last. They had said a lot of other things. There I stood with the tent one third up and with no hope that it would ever go any higher. I had only enough money left to buy food for my family and Roberta and Geneva through Sunday. We had paid our rent through Sunday at the motel. Standing just under the flap of the tent, I was never more discouraged in my life. Once again I had come to a dead-end street. If I had had enough money I could have sent off for a man who knew how to erect tents, but I didn't have it. I said, "Lord, I don't know what in the world I am going to do, but I am going to do it. I am going to get this tent up. I am going to hold this revival."

I didn't know that a man had walked up behind me and was watching me. He heard that prayer. It touched his heart and he broke down and began to cry. The first thing I knew he was tapping me on the shoulder and saying, "Look here, preacher, you just quit that worrying. We are going to put this tent up." His name was Lacy Maynard.

He turned and walked away. Pretty soon I heard him tell the men to come over there where he was. When I walked up, he was saying to them, "Men, I've got a little money. I am going to hire some men. This preacher here has got something in his soul and the Lord has sent him here. I'm going to stand by him. How about you fellows?" A change

came over the men. They began pulling out their purses and counting their money. The next morning they had located a tent man and the work began to hum. By Saturday noon we had the new tent in the air, the platform erected, the seats in place, and only one thing remained to be done.

One of the sponsoring pastors ran up and said the light company would not turn on the lights until I had paid a deposit of \$97. They might as well have asked me for a million dollars because I didn't have any money except enough to eat on through Sunday. I looked at the big tent as it towered toward Heaven. One of the men near by remarked that it looked like a giant tent cathedral. It was so big, so beautiful, so beyond anything I had ever seen, that a lump came into my throat. I thought to myself, "Lord, we finally got the tent up and everything is ready for the meeting. Now we don't have any light. What am I going to do?"

I said, "Men, I'll be back in about an hour."

I drove quickly to the motel and went in and told Evelyn what had happened. I asked her what she thought we could do.

She said, "Oral, I don't know."

I said, "Don't we have any extra money at all besides what we have to eat on through Sunday?"

She said, "Well, I wasn't going to tell you, but we have \$97 in our account at the bank in Tulsa. That's all we have in this world."

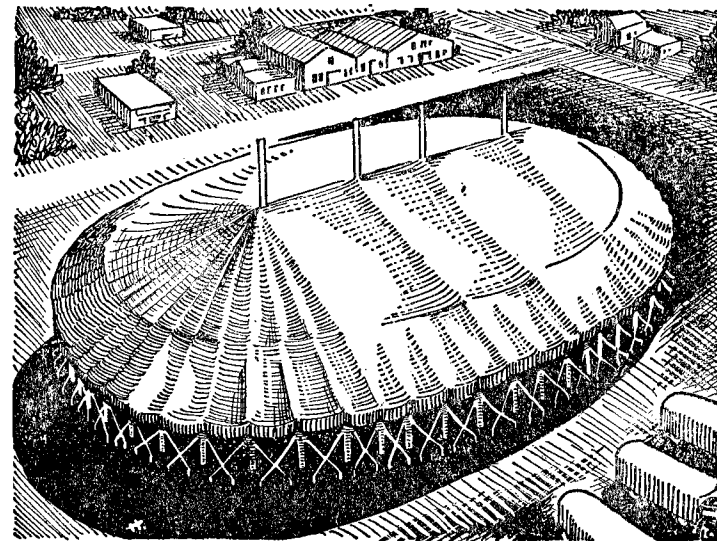
I said, "Write the check quick. We've got to get the lights on."

She said, "O.K. We'll either lose everything we have together or we'll come out on top together." I knew she was telling the truth. Everything I had was at stake. We got the lights turned on, and I hurried back to the motel to dress and to prepare for the night service. I shut myself in before God, opened my Bible, and began to study and pray. In a little while I felt the fire of God burning. I had had my mind on the mechanical part of the equipment so long it

seemed as if I would never feel His mighty presence again. Now as I walked the floor, my hands upraised calling upon God to stand with me, I felt His power going through every fiber of my being. I felt as if I were looking at a great mountain and my faith was going to move it.

Never shall I forget the thrill of the first night. As I got out of the car, I looked around me. Cars were parked everywhere. People were hurrying toward the tent.

Reg Hanson, who was manager of our meetings at that time, was leading the song service. I came up behind the tent and smelled the sawdust. My, it smelled wonderful. I signaled to them that when they were ready, I was ready. Then I heard Brother Hanson say, "And now I present to you God's man for this hour, Reverend Oral Roberts." For a moment I couldn't believe he was introducing me. I couldn't quite conceive that the big tent was in the air and that the huge crowd were waiting out there for me. I walked up the back steps of the platform and stepped before the



people. I remember how I thought to myself, "These people are not hostile toward me. Their faces are shining with expectancy. They believe I have something in my soul and they have come to hear and to see." With my hands I motioned them to stand, and we sang, "Where the Healing Waters Flow." The spirit began to move quietly over the audience. They sat down, and I started to preach. Presently I had forgotten myself and began to feel the anointing of God. It seemed that my lips were coals of fire. The spirit and presence of God were vibrating in my right hand. I preached an hour and a half and when I was through I asked the people to bow their heads while I prayed. It seemed there was such a quiet in that vast tent cathedral that you could almost hear a pin drop. When I finished my prayer for the unsaved and asked people who wanted me to pray for them to be saved that night to raise their hands and then to stand, and then to come forward, I was literally amazed. Hands were raised all over the tent, and when I told them to come down the aisle to stand before me for prayer, they thronged down every aisle. This was what I had always wanted. I wanted to preach and see people saved. I wanted to preach and feel the reverence and respect of the people.

Brother Hanson called the healing line and I started praying for the sick. I prayed for a young man on crutches, and he threw them down and went running off the platform shouting at the top of his voice. You could almost feel the faith of the people rising. In a few minutes I prayed for a man about sixty years of age, who was deaf and dumb. Many in the audience knew him and wondered what I would do with him. I prayed a simple prayer and turned him around to the audience. He heard every word I said and could repeat several words real well. It was not a perfect miracle, but it was so stupendous, so out of this world to us all, that a deaf man could hear.

One of the outstanding features of this campaign was the

special service I conducted in the interest of the colored people of Durham. We had received many hundreds of telephone calls from them requesting that I open the tent for them one night. The colored line was so strong in that area that they were not permitted to enter the tent with the white people, so on a Monday night I opened the tent only for the colored. I had no idea how many of them would want to attend the meeting. When I arrived that night about eight o'clock the service was in progress and Brother Hanson was leading them in that beautiful Negro spiritual "Shine on Me." It seemed like ten thousand people were singing. I jumped out of the car and ran as fast as I could to the tent. I saw that it was packed and jammed with colored people. Many were standing on the outside edges.

I had never seen as many colored people gathered in one place in my life. When Brother Hanson found out I was there, he signaled the audience. They had planned to sing "Shine on Me" just for me. When I got up on the platform, they opened up. It seemed to me that they were angels in ebony. Their voices were like the voices of the angels. From their throats and hearts rolled forth the beautiful words of "Shine on Me, shine on me. Let the light from the lighthouse shine on me."

I remember that I looked straight up to the top of the tent. I would not have been surprised if a shaft of light from Heaven had shone all the way from Glory to that earthly place. I felt chills going up and down my spine. It seemed all of Heaven broke loose and the glory of the Lord filled that place.

Brother Hanson whispered to me that sixty-three colored ministers were present and they had brought their congregations to hear me preach and they were ready for the Word of God.

I started preaching. As I did, it seemed that they reached out with their hands and pulled me to their hearts. Every word I said was received by them. The place roared with

their amens and hallelujahs. I began to gather speed as they said amen to me. When I had preached about an hour, I saw I was losing my voice, for as they had got louder, I got louder. Presently I stopped and said, "People, if you don't quit saying amen to me I will preach myself to death." They laughed but just kept on saying amen. The "preach" rolled out of me that night like rivers of water.

When I made the altar call 300 of those people got up and came down the aisles to be gloriously saved. Following the altar call we announced that I would pray for as many sick as were there. It seemed as if everybody in the tent was sick. More than 1,000 people rose and came forward to be healed. I didn't know what in the world I would do with such a mob of sick people. I started in praying for them one by one. I got so tired I had to grit my teeth, but I held on. I was determined to pray for every one of them. I knew this was their only night and if I didn't get to pray for them that night I would have no further opportunity.

The colored people have simple faith. When they came before me that night in the prayer line I told them I would lay my right hand upon them and say a brief prayer for their healing and I would expect the Lord to heal them. I asked them to believe through that point of contact. I saw them nodding their heads all down the line. They realized it was not man who heals, but the Lord God Almighty.

I was not accustomed to such physical demonstrations, and when they came before me and I touched them on the head with my right hand and prayed a brief prayer they would jump like they were shot. Some would jump right straight up and down, some would run right out of my arms down through the crowd waving their hands and shouting, some would fall right down on the floor, but I noticed that every one of them had a shine on his face, a bright light in his eyes, and that he was hilariously happy. I couldn't tell by these demonstrations if they were healed or not. Presently, however, a young woman brought her blind son.

Never shall I forget her. What she said almost tore the heart out of me. She was saying, "Oh, Lord, I just want him to see. Oh, Lord, I just want him to see." Turning her eyes upon me, she said, "Man of God, I'm not asking much, I just want him to see."

I thought my heart would burst from my body. I looked into that child's sightless eyes and the tears streamed down my face like water. The young colored woman began to sway before me, chanting her pleading prayer, "Oh, Lord, I just want him to see."

When I touched his eyes with my right hand and prayed, it seemed as if I touched a live wire. The child screamed, "I can see! I can see!" The little mother shook with joy and that entire crowd jumped to their feet. They began to jerk their bodies and wave their hands, some were crying, some were shouting, some were singing. I had them all stop and sing "Shine on Me." There was drama, pathos, and joy all through the audience.

Near the end of the healing line something happened that was really funny. I looked out and saw an old colored woman hobbling along on her crutches. The spirit of God witnessed in my heart that the Lord was going to heal her. When she got before me, I just touched her briefly with my hand and sent her on. Apparently she thought that since I had only touched her that she wasn't healed. I said, "You can throw away your crutches if you want to."

She kept hobbling on.

I said, "You can throw your crutches away if you want to."

She just hobbled on.

I said, "You can throw your crutches away if you want to."

Some of the ushers stopped her and turned her around and pointed toward me.

I said, "You can throw your crutches away if you want to."

She looked at me, and I said, "Yes, you can throw them down."

She picked up her right leg and shook it, found it was all right, and put it down. She picked up her left leg and shook it, found it was all right, and put it down. She walled her eyes around at me as if waiting for her cue. I nodded my head and smiled. She let out a scream of joy. Throwing her crutches down, she started racing down the aisle. The last I saw of her she was like a black streak as she left the tent.

CHAPTER 16

THE STORM AT AMARILLO

WHILE in Durham I decided to take the big tent from coast to coast. That was in June 1948. During the rest of the year we conducted campaigns in Granite City, Illinois, Minneapolis, Minnesota, Ada, Oklahoma, and Dallas, Texas.

During the first four months of 1949 we took the tent to Florida. People were there from all over the world, and it was the best place for me to reach the masses with the message of deliverance. The climate was perfect, and I conducted four straight campaigns in four Florida population centers: Miami, Tampa, Jacksonville, and Tallahassee. Huge crowds packed and overflowed the tent in all these cities.

I soon realized the tent with a seating capacity of 3,000 was too small. In Jacksonville the crowds broke all attendance records. They stood ten and twenty deep all around the outside of the tent. The inside was packed two hours before starting time. One night in the Jacksonville campaign more than 800 unsaved people came forward to be saved. I thought that was the climax, but the very next month in Tallahassee we exceeded the attendance in Jacksonville, also the conversions. One night in Tallahassee 1,000 people came forward to give their hearts to Jesus Christ. People were healed sitting out in the audience, some were healed

as they stood around the tent, and thousands were healed in the healing line.

The second tent was half again bigger than the first one. It seated 4,500 people. In Fort Worth, Texas, the crowds were estimated to run in excess of 10,000 on several nights. In Bakersfield, California, the crowds were even larger. One night as I came up to the tent I counted the people from the outer edges to the outside of the tent. I counted twenty-two people deep. It was over 800 feet around the tent, so you can imagine how many people were standing outside besides those who were able to get seats.

The third tent I ordered seated 7,000 people and I thought, "Surely it will hold the people."

We took it to Columbia, South Carolina. Billy Graham had just closed one of the most successful meetings of his ministry there and I wondered if anybody would come out to hear me preach. The tent was almost completely filled the first night. The second night the tent was filled thirty minutes before starting time, and the third night it was hard even to get near the tent.

We had the largest crowds that I had ever had up to that time: 22,000 were present the last night.

I made several altar calls in which more than 1,000 people came forward to be saved. The last three nights broke all records of anything I had ever heard of in the history of America.

Friday night I preached on The Fourth Man. More than 1,400 sinners came forward to be saved. Saturday night I preached on A Man's Life and more than 1,600 came forward to be saved. Sunday night, which was the closing night, I preached on David and Bathsheba, Battle of the Passions, and more than 2,200 people came forward to be saved.

They poured down the aisles until every aisle was full. I sent as many as possible to the prayer tent, but it held only half of them. The passageway between the main tent

and the prayer tent was filled with sinners, the platform was completely encircled, and every aisle was jammed with them and still they came. Finally I told those who could not get into the prayer room and had no place to kneel just to raise their hands and say, "Oh, God, be merciful to me a sinner." It was the greatest sight I ever saw.

The newspapers in Columbia were exceedingly kind toward my ministry. They reported the huge crowds, the great number of conversions, and the effect my ministry had had on Columbia and the state of South Carolina.

In September 1950 we took that big tent to Amarillo, Texas. As we were closing the service on the tenth night, a storm struck us. The winds came roaring in out of the northwest.

I was standing at the pulpit. Suddenly the lights went out. A brilliant flash of lightning shot across the heavens, and the huge tent was tossed straight up toward the sky. Then it settled down; just floated down slowly. It was a miracle.

For a moment the people didn't know the tent was gone because of the lights going out. They were as calm as if they had been expecting the tent to collapse.

It seemed like a thousand invisible hands took control of the situation. If we had trained 1,000 men to have sheltered the people, we could not have done it so well. The aluminum quarter poles fell very gently and the steel center poles, weighing 1,000 pounds each, seemed to be lowered a foot at a time.

God knew this storm was going to strike. We were in His will, in the path of duty. The Amarillo campaign had been glorious, more than 2,450 souls had already been saved. Just a few minutes before the storm struck 400 men and women came forward to give their hearts to Jesus Christ and had returned to their chairs. The miracles of healing were outstanding, and thousands of people were impressed with the power of the Lord.

I remember a statement I had made in one of my sermons during the meeting. I said, "The storms of life come to everybody, to the saved and unsaved, to those who live in God's will and to those who don't. The only difference is that Jesus is in the Christian's boat and that makes all the difference in the world."

I felt that God was riding with us that night. I was in the same position that Job was when he was struck down by the devil's power while he was in God's will. I felt the same as Paul must have felt when the storm wrecked his ship but could not touch his life.

I believe the angels were on the scene that night. When the storm struck and I felt it was serious, I told the people they were free to go, but nobody wanted to leave. We began to sing "When the Saints Go Marching In," and the presence of the Lord came down over us. When suddenly the lights went out, I shouted, "Everyone stay seated and keep your mind on God." They did. In that split second the



twister struck. I saw flashes of lightning. I saw the entire tent begin to lift toward the sky. It looked like billows of light, then began to settle down easily, floating down slowly.

The next thing I knew the rear of the tent lifted over my head carrying with it the big neon sign over the platform and I felt myself falling backward. I said, "Lord, this is it." I was laid down very gently on the lower platform as if by an invisible hand. I still had the microphone in my hands. I was not hurt.

By this time lightning was constantly playing on the scene. I thought, "Oh, Lord, save the 7,000 people." Then I heard several hundred people singing. A man near me began to praise the Lord. I climbed out from under the platform which had not been blown over. Roberta Millard had gotten under the piano and shouted to me, "Brother Roberts, I am all right."

I looked back at the crowd. The aluminum poles were gently being lowered toward the people on the chairs. The big 1,000-pound steel center poles were inching toward the ground slowly. A part of the tent draped over the chairs and I saw the people crawling out, some very deliberately fighting canvas off their heads. There was absolutely no panic.

Yes, there were angels in that tent that guided the poles down between the chairs—not on them. There were hundreds of babies and children scattered over the audience, but they were not struck down by the poles. Some of the people found themselves covered by the chairs that seconds before they had been sitting on. The chairs were twisted, but not around anybody. The invisible hands of angels protected the people.

Every person came out alive. About fifty people were hurt, but none seriously. By Wednesday there was only one person who had been found to be seriously injured. He had suffered a broken limb and the doctors had pronounced

him out of danger. (This man was later healed in the hospital and walked out perfectly whole.)

I ran from group to group praying with people and praising God for our safety. It was several minutes before I realized that I did not know where my wife and baby were. Evelyn had come to the meeting with little Richard Lee. I began to call "Evelyn, Evelyn." I came back out and met Vaden. He shouted, "Oral, she and Richard Lee are all right. They are with Lillie Mae under the platform." I got them out and into the car where Geneva Millard had found refuge and was unharmed.

Meanwhile the hail was really coming down. People had chairs over their heads to protect them. Someone called for me to pray for the injured. I did, and found that they were all mostly minor injuries. The firemen got there, went through the tent, and announced that no one was left under it. A policeman rushed up to me and said, "Reverend Roberts, this is the most miraculous thing I have ever seen." He said that most of the few who had been injured were not hurt under the tent. Some of them had slipped and fallen on the muddy grounds while running to their cars.

Around midnight Evelyn and I got to our room. We flipped on the radio. Fifty people were recorded injured, but none seriously hurt. I thanked God.

Already they were proclaiming it a miracle. They recalled the circus fire in Hartford, Connecticut, where more than 100 were killed and hundreds injured and now they were marveling. More than 7,000 people were under our tent, all of whom escaped. The reporters found me. I told them how it happened. One was almost in tears. "Brother Roberts," he said, "God was there." The next morning the *Amarillo Times* crowded the war news off the front page and ran a blazing headline, "ESCAPE OF 7,000 CALLED MIRACLE."

The next day I went out to see the wreckage. Poles and ripped canvas lay over the chairs. How anybody could

have gotten out alive can only be answered by saying, "This is the greatest miracle I have ever seen." One of the insurance men said to me, "Reverend, the good Lord had His hand over this place last night." I got back into the car and was looking over some telegrams I had just received. As I sat there, I said, "Well, I have come to another dead end. What will I do? Where will I go?"

Evelyn said, "Oral, what do you intend to do?"

I said, "Evelyn, I don't know."

She said, "What's on your mind?"

I said, "Evelyn, I was just wondering if God was through with me."

I had a pile of telegrams that had just been given me. I began to open them. I was amazed at what I read. They were from people who were praying for me, who were telling me to rise up out of the ripped canvas and keep going on. Some said they were going to wire money for a new and bigger and better tent.

I looked at what remained of the tent, and for the first time tears came into my eyes. I said, "Old tent, you are gone, but I have no regrets. You fought the battle with me. Under your protecting canvas more than 40,000 souls came to Jesus since last March. You are gone now, but thousands will remember you."

I said to the Lord, "Lord, I have no regrets. I had nothing when I started forty months ago but faith, I still have that faith. You protected 7,000 people and only a few suffered minor injuries. Lord, no sermon I might have preached could compare with this one mighty miracle. This will convince more people that God lives, that He cares for His own, more truly than a thousand sermons I might preach. The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord."

I had one more telegram to open. I opened it. It was from a man in Colorado Springs, Colorado. It said, "Dear Brother Roberts, you can't go under for going over." Something

leaped in my heart. If I had had that man there I would have hugged him. I turned to Evelyn and said, "Honey, I am going to order a brand-new tent, a bigger tent, a stronger tent, a tent that will stand the winds. Come on, let's go."

Lee Braxton had heard about it and had got on a plane in Whiteville, North Carolina, and had flown to my side. He said "Brother Roberts, you can't quit. You've got to get a bigger and better tent. The people are waiting for this message of deliverance. You can't let the devil stop you now."

I said, "Lee, we're going to do it. Somewhere somebody will make me a tent that will stand the winds."

I contacted the United States Tent and Awning Company in Chicago. They said, "Brother Roberts, we will try to build you a tent that will stand the wind better than a brick building. That may seem strange to you, but we know we can do it. We'll teach you how to handle the tent and we believe it will stand wherever you put it up."

Since then they have made us two giant tents each bigger than any other tent we ever used. Of course I do not know what will happen in the future. I can only say what has happened since we have had these two big tents. Each of these tents has been in winds and storms twice as fierce as the storm that took the tent in Amarillo and neither tent has been fazed. I attribute this to the hand of God. I know that God raised me up to bring deliverance to my generation. I know He ordained that I should take these great tents to metropolitan areas and use them for His glory. He laid that upon my heart in 1948 and has not lifted the burden yet.

CHAPTER 17

LIFE MAGAZINE REPORTS OUR MEETINGS

WHILE we were using the fourth big tent which seated 10,000 people, a representative of *Life Magazine* came to us in Atlanta, Georgia, where we had the tent up. He wired New York City about the huge crowds, the miracles, and the effect of the campaign on Atlanta, and asked for permission to report the campaigns. They wired their O.K. This man brought out a photographer who used two cameras at the same time. They wanted to photograph me in action while I was preaching. This man got behind me, then on either side of me, and finally in front of me. He was shooting with two cameras at a time and he shot 500 pictures of me during that sermon. He shot pictures of the great crowd, also one of the healing line, and of various people attending the services. *Life Magazine* ran four pages in the April 17, 1951, issue. In July *Look Magazine* also reported our meetings. They came to our Nashville, Tennessee, campaign and took pictures of the tent and of the crowds.

It is significant that secular magazines have been more interested in our meetings than some of the religious publications.

The fourth tent was too small also, so I ordered the present tent which seats 12,500 people. It is half again bigger than a football field. It has thirty-eight miles of rope

and 18,000 yards of canvas. We use more than 600 stakes four and a half feet long. The poles are aluminum except for the center poles and they are steel. The platform is aluminum also. We carry with us nearly 9,000 portable chairs. To transport this equipment from ocean to ocean each year we have seven big trailers and trucks. This equipment weighs more than 175 tons and cost a quarter of a million dollars. It is beautiful equipment.

We erected this big new tent the first time in April of this year in Fayetteville, North Carolina. Would we fill it? Would the crowds come and overflow it like they did the other tents? Those were questions that came in our minds.

Nine thousand people were present the first night, 11,000 people came the second night, and 14,000 the third night.

We went uptown and rented every chair available in the schools and funeral homes. We finally had 11,000 chairs. Then we were told we could use the benches from the Pentecostal Holiness Camp Meeting at Falcon, North Carolina, and we filled out the rest of the tent so that we had seating for 12,000 people. It is approximately a quarter of a mile around this tent. Within five or six days after the meeting started 12,000 people filled the tent two hours before service time and the entire tent was encircled with people. They were standing as much as thirty deep. Police estimated several of the nightly crowds at 25,000.

I was staying in a hotel three and a half miles from the tent. I had to start to the tent an hour and a half before my usual time because the traffic was blocked from my hotel to the tent and beyond it another three miles. The cars were two deep and it took me an hour and a half on several occasions to go three and a half miles.

My sermons in that campaign averaged an hour and a half each, but it seemed that they were only five minutes. There was the most perfect reverence one ever saw. The audience held on to every word as though it were the last gospel word they would ever hear in this world. When I

made the altar calls hundreds of people would come down the aisle with tears streaming down their faces, wanting to be saved. More than 7,000 came forward in sixteen days.

One of the notable miracles in the Fayetteville campaign was the healing of a little child who was born blind. She was only an infant. I prayed for her and told her mother to go and she would soon know if the child could see. Pretty soon she came running back, shouting at the top of her voice, "My baby can see! My baby can see!" Miracles like this stirred the crowd and greatly increased their faith.

The last four days of the meeting the rains began to fall. The tent was located at the edge of town in a great big field. Within twenty-four hours the entire field was soggy and muddy. The rains kept pouring. Within forty-eight hours the mud was ten to fifteen inches deep. I remember one of the boys who is with the tent crew saying, "Well, this will slow the crowds down."

It rained all that first day. About four o'clock he said,



"Well, nobody will be here tonight. This will be one time that we won't have the tent full."

I had the same idea, so I came at the regular time. I called a cab and started down the street. I said, "Well, the traffic isn't blocked so heavy." I had gone only six blocks when I ran into the traffic jam on the way to the tent. It took me an hour to get there. When I arrived, I met the boy who said the crowd wouldn't be there. He said, "Brother Roberts, we haven't got anybody tonight. Only 15,000 are here!" Those who could not get in the tent stood at the edge right out in the rain and refused to move. When I made the altar call that night, many of them came in out of the rain and gave their hearts to Jesus Christ.

Governor Kerr Scott of North Carolina attended the Fayetteville meeting, giving me an official welcome to the state. He had many nice things to say. Governor Talmadge of Georgia and Governor Browning of Tennessee also attended our meetings in Atlanta and Nashville.

What causes people to come like that? It is the anointing of Jesus Christ of Nazareth upon a man's life. Take the anointing away and the people will not come.

CHAPTER 18

PUTTING FIRST THINGS FIRST

I ALWAYS put first things first in our campaigns. The saving of a lost soul is God's greatest miracle. I never offer prayer for the healing of the sick until I have first preached the gospel and led people to Jesus Christ.

My faith is always the strongest just after I have preached. The preaching of the Bible under the anointing of the Holy Spirit helps both the people and me to believe and to get a point of contact so we can turn our faith loose.

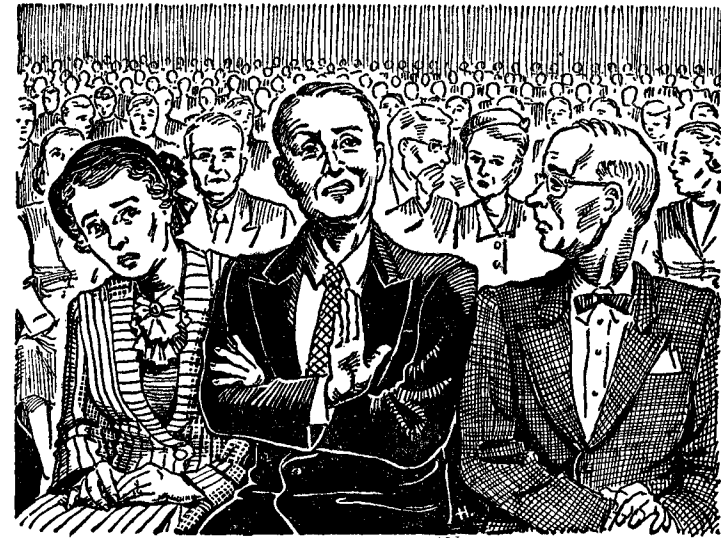
One night as I was preaching in the Durham, North Carolina campaign, the spirit of the Lord came upon me and revealed certain things to me about the unsaved. As I finished the sermon the Lord revealed to me that there were several people in the audience who were rejecting Him, and I was to call them out and have them come forward. A group of words came to my mind, clear and distinct. I remember them now just as clearly as God gave them to me that night. He told me to tell the people these words: "There are exactly 71 people in this audience who are rejecting God. This is your night. If you come tonight, you will be saved. If you don't come, you will never be saved. This is your night. If you don't come tonight, you will dig your own grave before the sun rises in the morning and we will know about it." Many had already come forward in my

regular altar call. The ones God was calling now were getting a special call. These 71 people had a strange feeling come upon them just as I had felt it come upon me. They jumped to their feet and started coming down the aisles. We counted them. Exactly 71 came forward. Three other times in that meeting God spoke through me to call people to come to Christ in this manner. And in all our succeeding campaigns this has occurred one or more times. I have called as high as 1,000 out in one night to be saved when the Lord spoke to me. When I know the Lord speaks to me, I am not afraid. I never doubt the outcome. I know the people will come.

Only two people have ever refused to come when the Lord spoke to me to call them out. I told them they would dig their own graves if they did not come, and they did. One became a raving maniac in a matter of hours, and the other one died violently the following day.

On another occasion a man came to our Sunday-afternoon meeting and sat mocking the service. When I made the call for the unsaved, a great number came. Then God told me He was calling some others. I called them, and this man was included. They all came but him. He sat there laughing and mocking. I looked straight at him and told him that he was getting his call, but he laughed it away.

The next service came that night two hours later. Roberta Millard, our pianist at that time, got under such a burden for this man that she prayed all afternoon asking God to give him another chance that night. I had dismissed him from my mind because when a man gets his call from God he alone can accept it or reject it. I got up to preach that night, and when I made the altar call my attention was drawn to a certain place in the audience where this man sat. I looked at him and said, "God has given you a final reprieve. If you come tonight, you will be saved; if you don't come, you will never come again." A mocking smile came on his face. Quick as a flash the spirit of God came



upon me and I heard myself saying, "They are going to carry you out of this building tonight and you will never walk again."

A strange power struck his legs and he was in terrible pain. He screamed at the top of his voice, grabbed his wife and shoved her ahead of him, and down the aisle they came. He went into the prayer room and was gloriously saved.

Through God's discerning power in my life I have been able to discern suicides in our audiences, and some nights I call them out to be saved. In Goldsboro, North Carolina, one night the Lord revealed to me that there were three people in the audience who were going out that night to commit suicide. During the altar call I told the people there were three people, two men and one woman, in the audience who were planning to go out and take their lives. If they would come up that night, the Lord would save them; if they did not come, they would lose their souls. These three

people got up and came immediately. One of the men pulled a gun out of his pocket and laid it on a chair in front of him while he prayed and gave his heart to God. They were all saved that night.

In the same meeting one night I discerned a jail break. A young woman came in the line and told me to pray for her brother in prison, and immediately I discerned that he was planning a jail break. I told the girl to go to him immediately and tell him that he must not carry out his plan. If he did, he would be killed. She went to the penitentiary as quickly as she could and told him what I had said. He confessed that he had planned a prison break and realized that if he had carried it out he would have played right into the hands of the guards and would have been killed. This young man was saved through this experience.

During the first half of our meetings I preach sermons that show people how to believe God. Sermons such as: What Everyone Should Know About Faith; You Are What Your Believing Is; Job—His Afflictions, His Fears; His Faith, His Deliverance and What His Experiences Mean to Us Today; The Master Key to Healing; Demons; You Can't Go Under for Going Over and My Life's Story. During the second half I preach inspirational sermons such as: Samson and Delilah—Battle of Champions; The Fourth Man; It Is Later Than You Think. Next to the last night I preach on A Man's Life which has won more souls than any other God has given me. The closing night I usually preach on David and Bathsheba—Battle of the Passions. These last two messages often bring a thousand souls to Christ each.

The sermon that usually turns the tide of the meeting is the sermon on Demon-Possession which I preach the first Wednesday night. Always hundreds of people are saved on the night I give this message and it changes the thinking of thousands of people. The most popular sermon I preach is the one on The Fourth Man. I suppose people like it because it honors Jesus so much.

The sermon God uses to show the people how to be healed is the one I preach on The Master Key to Healing. Also the sermon I preach on Job on the first Sunday night does a lot to change the people's believing from wrong believing to right believing.

Every sermon I preach is a deliverance sermon. I spend hours and hours and hours preparing each message. No matter how many times I may have preached that sermon, I prepare it each time I preach it as if I had never preached it before. I literally give myself to prayer and to the ministry of the Word, therefore, when I get up to preach I have something to say. My heart and mind are full of God's message and His spirit.

People tell me that my sermons bring Jesus right to them. He is not a million miles away, but right here among us. That's because Jesus is so real to me. I am more intimately acquainted with Jesus than I am with my wife or my children, or my parents, or anyone else on the face of the earth. There are certain hours of each day that I close myself in my room with Jesus and talk with Him and He with me. I reach out my hands to Him and I feel the pressure of His hands on mine. He comes into my room with me. I feel His presence. I know He is there. I often walk the floor talking to Him, beseeching Him for His power and presence, feeling He is right beside me. He is a real person to me. He is a living personality in my presence. When I am with Him he takes away my fears.

When I read the Bible, I often do so on my knees. I don't get up until the stories in the Bible are real to me. Then I can preach them so that the people in my audiences will relive them.

Also, I pledged to God that I would never enter the pulpit to preach to the people until first I had felt His presence in my right hand. So far I have always felt it. I have always had Him with me when I faced the people.

Little children have always loved my ministry. I some-

times think they understand my preaching better than grown folks. One little girl said, "Brother Roberts, I just love your preaching."

I said, "Why, honey?"

She said, "Well, you preach so simple. You preach different to my pastor."

I said, "What's the difference, honey?"

She said, "He uses big words and you use little words."

When we were in Miami, Florida, one little boy, the son of the chairman of the campaign, was greatly impressed with the big tent. His father had been holding a revival that summer under a small tent that had two center poles. At that time our big tent had five center poles. The little boy said, "Daddy, Brother Roberts is the greatest preacher in the world."

His father said, "Why, I thought you said I was the greatest preacher in the world."

The little boy said, "I don't think that any more. Brother Roberts is the greatest preacher in the world."

His father said, "Well, why do you say that?"

He said, "Well, Daddy, you are a two-pole preacher and Brother Roberts is a five-pole preacher."

So far we have had three men to manage our campaigns. Reg Hanson, one of the top businessmen of America, was the first manager of our campaigns. Brother Hanson fell in love with my ministry when I was in Kansas City. He went all out to put these meetings across in America. He helped me inaugurate a system of handling the people so that we could serve them better. When he stood by me in the healing line, it seemed he would get so thrilled that he would be translated. When he returned to his business, he had made a tremendous contribution to my ministry.

Dr. O. E. Sproull took charge of the meetings next. Dr. Sproull has been one of the great preachers of America, in fact, one of the great men of our day. That he was willing to come and manage my campaigns was one of the greatest

honors I ever received. Dr. Sproull loved me as he did his son and stayed with me until he just wore himself out and had to have some rest.

When he had to leave, I asked him who he thought could take his place. He said "Bob DeWeese of Tacoma, Washington."

I said, "You mean the man who was chairman of our meeting there?"

He said, "Yes, sir, Brother Roberts, he's the man."

I said, "Why, Brother Sproull, do you think he would come with me?"

He said, "If it's God's will, he will come with you."

I called Brother DeWeese and he took only a matter of minutes to think it over. He later told me that the moment I called him he was ready to go. Brother and Sister DeWeese are with me now, and the work they are doing is unsurpassed. His preaching in the afternoon meetings prepares the people for my messages at night in a manner that I have always desired. He shows people how to get ready to be healed.

Bob DeWeese is a man of great enthusiasm, vigor, and energy. His spirit is radiant and contagious with joy and the spirit of God. He is a constant thrill and inspiration to me.

We have had some wonderful young men handling our tent equipment. Today the big tent, the thousands of chairs, and all of the mobile equipment weighs 175 tons.

My brother Vaden got saved in one of my first meetings and gave up his business and began traveling with me. He stayed with me for about four years and then retired to private business. Vaden is mechanically inclined and made many innovations with equipment. With his crew he stayed with the tent almost day and night during this time and made it possible for us never to be late in one of our schedules anywhere in America. Sometimes he and the boys took the equipment 2,000 miles to the next appointment, but I

never worried about the equipment being up, I knew the tent would be in the air when I arrived.

About a year before he left me he hired a young man by the name of Collins Steele, whom he trained to handle the equipment. Brother Steele is a genius with the equipment. He handles it with the greatest of ease and dispatch. He has a small crew but each man knows and does his job.

The big tent is lighted with 55,000 watts of light. They place huge floodlights on me so that people can see me from the extreme edges of the tent. Our public-address system is so sensitive that people can hear a whisper over it anywhere in the audience.

When we made the world's first Bible deliverance film, *Venture into Faith*, we chose Birmingham, Alabama, as the spot where the scenes in our meetings would be filmed. The huge crowds completely overflowed the tent. What a sight it is to see 12,000 people seated in the tent with other thousands standing around the edges. We went to New York and rented special lighting equipment that lighted the inside of the tent more brilliantly than noonday. The technicians used their great cameras to capture the spirit of the meeting and to show the look on the people's faces as they watched and heard the wonderful things of God. When you see this film you will see the big tent, both outside and inside. You will see the great overflowing crowds. You will see me in action as I carry the microphone around as I preach. You will see the great altar call with hundreds of people streaming down the aisles to give their hearts to Jesus Christ. You will see the healing line with suffering humanity streaming by me as I lay my right hand upon them to pray for their deliverance. You will see many outstanding miracles of healing with your own eyes, and you will catch the spirit of our campaigns.

Approximately six million people have attended our meetings during the past five years, about 500,000 have entered the healing line, and more than 200,000 have been

converted. As I write, it is October 1952. We have had the largest crowds, the largest number converted, and the greatest healing miracles of my ministry during this year. The crowds have averaged more than 10,000 a night for our sixteen-day campaigns.

I am now heard on nearly 200 powerful radio stations on *Healing Waters* broadcast across America, Canada, and a few foreign lands. I am preparing to go on television. Our film, *Venture into Faith*, has just had its world première in Portland, Oregon. Over 10,000 were present and many were saved.

My first book, *If You Need Healing—Do These Things*, is now approaching sales of one-quarter million copies and is selling at the rate of one thousand copies a week, the profits of which go to Healing Waters. My second book, *The Fourth Man*, is also a national best seller. I am deeply thankful to God for this.

Not any of the equipment used for our meetings or the office and equipment in Tulsa is owned by me or members of my family. It could have been. I gave it to God by choice, and I am not sorry. All of it is controlled by a legal trust which at the expiration of my ministry, or upon my death, will dissolve Healing Waters, Inc. and give all the proceeds to certain churches who are sponsoring my ministry and shall be used by them for the support of their aged ministers.

If I live and God keeps me on the field for Him, I will use the equipment to bring deliverance to lost and suffering humanity. If I should die, the old preachers will reap the benefits of the financial assets of my ministry.

Today I am receiving an average of one thousand letters a day asking for my prayers. Every letter is answered, every request is prayed over.

Our books are audited monthly by a certified public accountant and are open to any responsible person at any time.

CHAPTER 19

GOD'S LAW OF AVERAGES

EARLY in my ministry I realized I would have to make some kind of adjustment to the fact that I am a human being and as such am not perfect. I have been able to believe in God so strongly that thousands of people have been saved and healed. But I have not been able to help everyone. I have failed on some.

Sometimes I work myself down in praying for the multitudes who throng our meetings. When I get real tired my faith doesn't work very well. Also sometimes the people aren't mentally or spiritually prepared to believe God. Once in a while unbelief is present for a time as it was when Jesus returned to Nazareth. "He could do no mighty miracle there," the Bible declares, "because of their unbelief." I am no better than my Lord—my faith will not work where there is deliberate unbelief.

There are times when I fail and I cannot determine the reason. It is just one of those things. Maybe I wasn't ready or maybe the people weren't. At any rate God's power did not flow through me. When His power is not upon me I cannot deliver the people. I have no personal power. I cannot heal. Only God can heal.

I cannot stop preaching the gospel because all men do not receive it. I cannot stop trying to get people saved

because some reject God. Neither can I stop praying for the sick because I fail on some. I have to do the best I can and leave the results in His hands.

One thing that has helped me keep my balance is God's law of averages. I believe there is such a law and that it will work in my life if I will let it.

The story is told of Babe Ruth that he believed there was a law of averages working in his favor. As you know, he is considered the greatest hitter baseball has ever had. He knocked 851 home runs and is known throughout the world as the home-run king.

What is not known is that he was another kind of king, the strike-out king. He struck out 1,330 times. That means he struck out more times than he knocked home runs. Had he quit just because he struck out more times than he knocked home runs he never would have become a renowned hitter.

The story is told how one day when he was playing in Philadelphia, Lefty Grove had struck him out three times in succession but Babe had the same expression on his face when he struck out as he did when he knocked a home run. When he struck out, he would turn to the crowd, doff his hat, make a little bow, walk to the dugout, sit down, pull out his handkerchief, and mop his brow. When he knocked a home run and trotted around the base and stepped on home plate, he would turn and face the crowd, doff his hat, make a little bow, walk to the dugout, take out his handkerchief, and mop his brow. He was as nonchalant in striking out as he was in knocking a home run. He didn't let his failure get the better of him.

That day one of the boys leaned over and said, "Babe, how in this world can you be so calm when you just struck out twice?" Babe said, "Well, I believe in the law of averages. Each time I strike out three times I am due two home runs, and I was just sitting here thinking how sorry I felt for the pitcher the next time I get up to bat."

When he got up to bat, he pointed where the ball was going and leaned back and slammed it out of the park.

Babe Ruth believed in the law of averages.

I, too, believe in the law of averages. I believe God has a law of averages for every child of God.

In our meeting in Goldsboro, North Carolina, in December 1949, in the B-29 hangar, I was faced with this very same situation in which Babe Ruth found himself. I was not up at bat on a baseball diamond but I was at bat in a different manner. The Goldsboro meeting had been one of the greatest and most outstanding meetings of my ministry. The big hangar seated 6,000 people but was far too small for the vast crowds.

One night, however, it was extremely difficult for me to preach. The place was packed and jammed with humanity. Many preachers were there, some of them cold and critical. While I was preaching, something was beating my words back in my face. When that happens, it has a peculiar effect upon me. I would preach then if it killed me. I summoned all the courage I had and determined I would preach that sermon if I died in my tracks. When I got through preaching more than 300 sinners came forward to be saved. Then I started the healing service. It seemed nobody was getting healed. I would pray, but my prayers weren't getting anywhere. It broke my heart. I knew what was wrong. I knew the cold criticism and indifference of some preachers in the audience were tying up the service and chilling the warmth of the atmosphere. I know the power of unbelief. It can tie the hands of God's people unless it is moved out of the way.

Person after person came by with apparently no miraculous results. The devil was making a fool of me. The first thought I had was to quit and get up and go home. I said to myself, "I can't do that. I am working for God. These people in the healing line are not responsible for the criticism of some preachers in this audience. They have come

here to be healed, and by God's help I am going to get them healed."

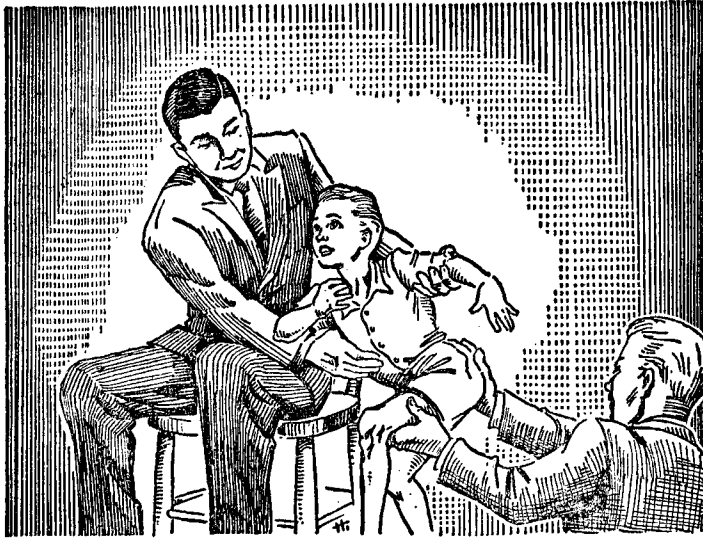
Then I remembered the law of averages. I was failing on some but pretty soon, if I held on and kept believing, I would knock a home run. I looked down the line. I saw a woman coming with a little crippled child. Something leaped in my heart and I knew when they got before me I would knock that home run.

Pretty soon the little boy, accompanied by his mother, came hobbling up on crutches. One of his little feet was securely bound in some kind of strap which was looped over his shoulder.

I told Dr. Sproull to unstrap the child and to take away his crutches and hand him up to me. I was as nonchalant as if I were taking a drink of water. I had cases before me just a few minutes before this, not half so bad, and I had failed to bring healing to them. Now I was calm and had the perfect assurance that I was going to knock the ball out of the park.

Brother Sproull set the little boy upon my knee. I put my arms around him, looked up to God, and asked Him to heal him and let him walk again. One little leg was lifeless. I put my hands upon it and it dangled from his hip. I knew that God could straighten that little leg and put life in it and cause this child to run and leap like other children. While I was praying, the power of God struck my hand like lightning and I knew the child would be able to walk. I gave him back to Dr. Sproull, who held him upon the platform. I jumped out of my chair down on the lower platform with him and chanced to look at his mother, who was so full of sympathy that she was not much help. I quickly prayed for her and sent her off the platform to wait for the child to come to her. I said, "Dr. Sproull, do you believe this boy can walk?"

He said, "Yes, sir, Brother Roberts."



I said, "Son, do you believe God can make you walk tonight?"

He said, "Yes, sir."

I said, "Do you believe you can walk right now?"

He said, "Yes, sir."

I said, "All right, you're going. I don't want you to walk, I want you to run."

He jumped out of Brother Sproull's arms and started walking. I said, "Run, Son, run to your mother." He began to run. Then someone picked up his crutches and gave them to him and he put them over his shoulders and ran down the aisles for the thousands of people to see.

In one second the vast audience in the great B-29 hangar came to its feet. They forgot about all my failures. They leaped, they shouted, they ran, they glorified God. I saw men throw their hats into the air, I saw women waving their handkerchiefs. This went on for several minutes. Finally I said, "People, will you be seated, please?"

It was as if I were speaking to the ocean. When I saw that they were not going to stop, I said, "Then help yourselves."

Lee Braxton later told me that that was the first time he ever saw me lose control of my crowd. No one could have held those people that night. My faith had knocked a home run and they couldn't sit still.

CHAPTER 20

WHAT HEALING HAS DONE FOR ME

I OWE my life, my all to healing. I never wanted to be saved until I found out I could be healed. I never loved God until Mama told me that if I would get saved and give my life to God, the Lord would raise me up and make something out of me. That was the first time I ever remember wanting to be saved.

Healing turned my mind toward God. It changed my mind about Him and caused me to realize that He is a good God. It caused me to study the Bible and to discover that Jesus spent two thirds of his time in his earthly ministry healing the sick.

Healing gave me the promise of life again. I had lost everything, my health, my ambitions, my dreams.

After I was saved and healed I began preaching. I did some good but not good enough. My crowds were small, my results meager. I was greatly dissatisfied and knew if I ever moved people I would have to be like Jesus and deliver the people with signs and wonders of God's power to heal.

I reached my climax while sitting in a classroom of one of America's great universities. It came into my heart that I could do for the people of my generation what the disciples did for theirs during the first century. I could have the anointing of Jesus of Nazareth if I wanted it badly

enough. I wanted it. I sought it. It was not easy. I had to give up many things and many friends.

I have had to live almost alone.

I have a home, a beautiful, spacious home, and a farm where my wife and children live. I am there only eight days a month. I live in a lonely hotel room. I eat by myself most of the time. I am cut off from most social contacts so wanted and enjoyed by most people. I am away from my family. My children are growing up without me. I live only for one thing: for the deliverance of lost and suffering humanity. Everything is subordinated to that cause.

I love the soil. I love good cattle. I love our home and farm. But these are not my peace and satisfaction. They do not and cannot satisfy me. For a few days I am content at home, riding my horse, seeing my small herd of cattle, playing with the children, sleeping in my big, soft, wide bed. But hardly have I begun to rest until that feeling I've known all my life starts coming upon me. Evelyn sees that faraway look in my eyes and says, "Children, your daddy may be here in the flesh but his spirit is with the people."

I cannot help it. I have seen the world's hurt. I have felt the heartbeat of lost and suffering humanity. I have heard the voice of God: "Son, I am going to heal you and you are to take my healing power to your generation."

I have to go. I have no choice. I am on fire, and I can't stand still. The call of God to deliver mankind rings in my ears day and night. I must go.

I said to one of the great preachers of our day, "What are you going to do with the sick?"

He said, "Oral, I am going to leave them to you."

I said, "Thank you. I'll take them."

I do not know how long Jesus will tarry, nor how long He will let me live, but until He comes, or I leave this world—

Listen to me, America:

I love you;
I have flown your skies,
driven your highways,
walked your hills,
enjoyed your freedoms;
I have preached to your masses,
won your lost,
healed your sick,
given you God's message for this hour.

Look for me, America:

I will be preaching to you that God is a Good God and
the devil is a bad devil—

that you are facing your greatest revival and this time it
is a revival of signs and wonders, miraculous healings, de-
liverance of soul, mind, and body—

that you will see, and this is a prophecy, your greatest
power is not in your tanks and bombs, your dollars and
guns, but in your trust and faith in God.

My America:

I am one of your sons,
the least of all your sons,
but the spirit of deliverance is in me,
a consuming fire is in my soul,
a firebrand is in my hand,
faith is in my message.

Look for me, my America:

at the crossroads of your greatest cities,
in the big tent,
on your radios,
on your television sets,
for God has raised me up to take His healing power to
my generation.