He Stands Tall

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THE STORY OF RALPH G. COOK, A PIONEER PENTECOSTAL PREACHER

by **Mary Wallace**

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Preface

Will Rogers said, "I have never met a man I did not like." Rogers was a "people" person. I am a "people" person. I am a "Pentecostal people" person. My grandmother, Anne Fuqua Weedman, and my mother, Maria Kate Weedman Hardwick, accepted the Pentecostal message in 1916, so that makes me a third generation Pentecostal. My nine grandchildren are fifth generation Pentecostals.

All my life I have avidly listened to Pentecostals as they told stories of how God moved in their lives. These stories are part of my heritage.

It was a great joy to me, therefore, when early this year Brother Ralph G. Cook, pioneer Pentecostal preacher, agreed to tell me his story. He had been active in the Pentecostal ministry since 1919 and he has served as an official since 1922, so I knew that he would have a great story.

First we sat down and talked. We talked for hours and hours. Then I read all that I could find that had already been written about the move of God beginning at Topeka, Kansas, and on Azusa Street in Los Angeles, California (bibliography is in the back of this book). As I began to write, Brother Cook followed me closely, correcting, adding to and taking away mistakes. Along with Sister Cook, their son Paul, their daughter Alice Mae, their niece Joan, their daughter-in-law Faith, and their grandchildren, Renae, Karen, and Paul, freely shared information with me. Many of the ministers who are his friends and close associates, including Nathaniel Urshan, S. W. Chambers, Jack Leaman, Norman Paslay,

C. M. Becton, and Fred Kinzie, helped with the story. Brother Duane Kramer, editor of the *Ohio Apostolic News*, did research in the district paper for information. Sisters Verna Clark, Levi Cameron, Carrie Brown, are dear friends of the Cooks. I deeply appreciate all these persons as well as others who helped me.

Tim Agnew has designed the artistic cover and chapter headings. Special thanks to all the people in production: Leona Smith, typesetting; Carmi Sims, layout; Larry Craig, camera; Bill Sims, printing; Jim Daniels, bindery; and Pete Perrin in shipping. What a great team!

Then there was the constant support of Brother J. L. Hall, who helped me tremendously with transitions, organization and the myriad editorial details.

Two secretaries, Shirley Curry and Phyllis Welcher, helped with the tedious typing and transcribing tapes. Frequently I tried out ideas on my friend and co-worker, Georgia Smelser.

A special note of thanks is due to my husband, J. O. Wallace, for his unfailing love and support.

Brother Cook and I have worked very hard to keep the story as accurate as possible. It is his story as he recalls it.

How can I thank you, Brother Cook, for sharing your life with me? It has been a spiritual experience to recall these events and record them for our children.

Ralph G. Cook does indeed stand tall in my life.

Mary H. Wallace

INTRODUCTION

The accomplishments today of the United Pentecostal Church International can be attributed in a large measure to the dedication, sacrifice, and leadership of its pioneers. From the early years of the Oneness Pentecostal revival that flamed across the North American continent and then around the world, these hardy pioneers courageously evangelized cities and rural communities with the gospel. They often faced rigid opposition in many forms. Sometimes they struggled against the hostility of established religious organizations; they were besieged by many erroneous and false doctrines; and they combated ignorance that often spawned fanaticism and radicalism. But they fought and they won.

Many of these Pentecostal pioneer preachers had little or no professional training for the ministry, but they knew that the call of God was upon their lives. With unwavering faith they valiantly gave themselves

to the task that was theirs. They preached under trees and brush arbors, in homes and schools, in tents and storefront buildings. They preached alone and sometimes in a group of gospel workers. Sometimes their converts were few, but often they had meetings in which multitudes turned toward God. In faith they opened their hearts to God's will and found a walk with God that turned the impossible into reality.

Often the pioneer preachers had little in the way of finances, and they had to rely upon God to provide their next meal. To establish churches, they often labored on secular jobs as they preached. Sometimes growth was slow and years passed before the church had sufficient finances to support the pastor. Even then, what they received was often meager.

Moreover, as in any period, they found rebellion and rejection among the people they sought to help. They faced false doctrine and false teachers who attempted to destroy the flock they pastored. Sometimes they experienced disappointment, discouragement, and failure. There were moments of sorrow and grief as death gripped a loved one. There were lonely days without fellowship. But so great was their faith, so earnest were their prayers, so fervent was their dedication that no obstacle could for long impede their onward march with the gospel message.

As a young man of sixteen, Brother Cook received the Holy Ghost and was baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Soon God called him into the ministry, a ministry he has faithfully followed for more than sixty years. He came from the East, an area in which he preached many revivals and faithfully pastored for

many years. But he also pastored churches in Illinois, Arkansas, Indiana, and Ohio. For many years he regularly preached revivals and camps in Canada, the birthplace of his parents. In his travels as an official in the United Pentecostal Church International, his ministry has touched and changed the lives of thousands of people in every area of the United States and Canada.

As you read the biography of Brother Ralph Cook, you will delight in the humorous incidents, sorrow with him in his tragedies and failures, struggle with the young family in their determination to do God's will, and rejoice with them in their successes. The story is his, but it is also ours, for his life is a part of our heritage.

J. L. Hall
Editor,
Word Aflame Publications

TRIBUTE TO R. G. COOK

The sound of prayer came from the deep and intoned intercession of a man who was talking to his Lord. It was early in the morning, long before the household had risen. As I listened to this devoted disciple opening his heart to his God, I felt the deep security of being in a home where a prophet lived. The man I am speaking about is Brother Ralph G. Cook, who is the vital subject of this book. It has been my pleasure to know this God-fearing man, his wife and his children for many years. He is a man who has contributed untold dimensions of blessing to the body of Christ and particularly to the United Pentecostal Church International.

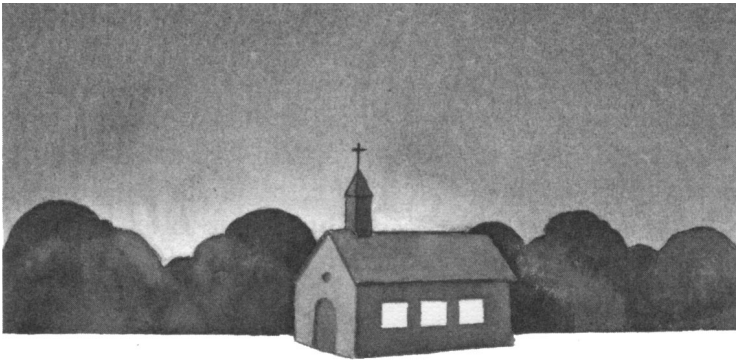
If it had not been for this pioneer preacher of the gospel, who stood tall in his six feet and four inches stature but was also taller than that in his spiritual dedication to the things of righteousness and truth, the cause of God would have been stunted and seriously hindered. His ministry goes back to the years when the Oneness Pentecostal movement was a struggling body trying to survive the misunderstandings of the theologians and the powerful opposition of Satanic forces. In all of this great battle to survive, R. G. Cook never wavered. The intercessory prayer that I heard him pray in his home, when my wife and I evangelized in the church that he pastored in Lancaster, Ohio, was the kind of foundation that helped him weather the storms that blew fiercely upon his spiritual life.

Today this fine man, who has stood tall all of these years, is still standing tall. The shock of hair is white on his head (the honor which God says is a crown of righteousness). The effectiveness and influence of his ministry has touched hundreds and thousands of people.

For many years he labored as an official of the United Pentecostal Church and as Assistant General Superintendent of the Eastern Zone of the North American Continent. Today he is an honorary member of the Executive General Board of the United Pentecostal Church International. He is still esteemed. He is still regarded in the spiritual awe that he has always deserved. I speak in behalf of numerous ministers, officials, and leaders of the United Pentecostal Church International. It could be fittingly said that this kind of a man could be placed in the same introduction as was said of John; paraphrased it would read: "There was a man sent from God and his name was Ralph."



Nathaniel A. Urshan
General Superintendent
United Pentecostal Church International



In The Beginning

"If you can just get away, steal away with me, I'll get you out of here. It's indeed shameful the way my brother has beat you," the concerned neighbor whispered to the thin, pale-faced twelve-year-old boy, named George Cook.

George's father and mother were born in Cookstown, northern Ireland. They had come to Canada and settled near St. John. Their first children were twins, George and his brother. The brother later was burned to death. Two sisters were added. First Eliza and at a later date, Mary.

For the next few years, as in every family, things went along with the ups and downs of everyday living. It was not long, however, before the mother began to lose ground and became quite ill. She never did recover and she was buried, with a small quiet service,

in a St. John cemetery. Not long after this, George's father returned to Ireland.

Plans for the future were made and it was decided that the children, George, Eliza, and Mary, would join him when he was settled in Ireland. In the meantime, each child was placed in a different home to be cared for and schooled. Money had been sent to each foster home for room and board and the necessities of each child.

The homes the girls were placed in were kind and they were accepted as part of the family. But the home George had been placed in was just the opposite. There was nothing but greed and abuse here and George, being so young, had no place to turn.

There had been no relatives willing to provide a warm and loving home for the lad—only this harsh neighbor who mistreated him. Work, work, work from early dawn to dusk. No school, no play, not even shoes for his feet—just work. The harsh, cold Canadian winters were especially long and unbearable. George Cook considered running away.

"Will I ever see New Brunswick again?" the frightened boy wondered. New Brunswick had been his birthplace. His mother lay in an early grave there.

St. John with its thriving shipyards was a busy place in the nineteenth century. Ever since 1840, the shipbuilding business had been booming. Vast stands of timber covered all New Brunswick as well as Quebec to the north, providing abundant lumber for the construction of ships. Even the royal navy came to St. John and the mouth of the Miramichi River to pick up cargoes of spars and deals.

Folks in St. John were still talking about the Marco Polo, whose keel was laid in 1850. She was the longest ship ever undertaken at St. John, more than two hundred feet overall. Although she had been damaged at launching and some eyewitnesses thought sure she was a total loss, St. John's shipbuilders had dug the ship out and floated her on the tide. The Black Ball Line bought her for an Australian run. "Why, she's got a hog (twist)," some sailors sneered. But her captain predicted that he would take the Marco Polo out to Australia and bring her back within six months. Just five months and twenty-one days after leaving Liverpool, the big ship sailed to Melbourne, rounded Cape Horn and arrived safely back into Liverpool—a tribute to the master shipbuilders of St. John. Even little boys talked about "the fastest ship in the world."

A New Brunswicker poet paid a tribute to these hardy shipbuilders of his country.

> They built 'em on the beaches an' they built 'em in the cricks,
> They carved her figger-head themselves an' fashioned up her sticks.
> They didn't use no blue-prints when they set her up in frame.
> For the builders they was sailormen what knew the sailing game.[1]

As the weeks turned into months, George Cook began to think about Boston. He began to think about

means of transportation in which he could get there. He also wondered about the problems of crossing the border.

"What about being a stowaway on a boat? I know St. John harbor and the shipping line to Boston. Maybe I can find someone to go with me. At least there would be two of us if anything happened or we were caught. That's it! I'll do it!" His mind was made up. Now it was time to act.

With another young lad, George Cook quietly crawled aboard a ship in the harbor of St. John. He was going to Boston as a stowaway. His heart beat fast! What would happen to him?

Memories of the past and anxieties about the future filled George's mind as he cowered in the hold of the ship. He remembered broad King Street that ran down to Market Slip. He remembered the colorful flowers which grew in King Square and the band that played there. He remembered the Old Burying Ground, cater-corner across from King Square. One tombstone read, "Ann Peel—wife of Humphrey Peel, who departed this life January 10th, 1815, in the 37th year of her age." Just a young woman like his mother had been. Below this simple statement of the facts was the epitaph of Ann Peel:

Now I am dead and in my grave
And all my bones be rotten.
These lines you may see. Remember me
When I am quite forgotten.

"I'll never forget my mom and dad. I won't forget St. John or New Brunswick either, but I do hope things

will be better in Boston," George thought.

Hour after hour the ship rocked on across the Bay of Fundy, down the coast, past Grand Manan Island and Campobello Island into American waters on to Boston. An occasional lighthouse flickered in the black night.

Back in St. John was a bronze plaque almost lost in a sea of cobblestones which commemorated the Loyalists who had fled from the American colonies almost a hundred years before. Now a small, neglected Canadian orphan was hidden on a ship, hoping to find a better home and a brighter future in America.

All night long the two small boys cowered deep in the hold of the creaking ship. Hungry, frightened, cold. How far was it to Boston? George did not know, but what he did know was that he was very hungry and becoming a little sick from the constant motion of the vessel. "Sure do wish we had something to eat, a piece of cod or halibut. Even fiddleheads would taste mighty good," he whispered to his companion. But his attention was immediately on something else. What was that? A footstep?

Suddenly a booming voice broke into his fears. "Here, what are you young fellers doing? Stowaways, eh? Come along. The captain will be seeing about you two." Abruptly the rough sailor dragged the two scared lads up to the captain's cabin.

"What have ya got, stowaways? You know very well what to do with stowaways. Turn 'em over to the arresting officer. We can't run a commuter service for runaway lads from St. John to Boston," grumbled the crabby captain.

Solemnly young George stood on the windswept deck with the other boy and the stern arresting officer. That salt air smelled good after being confined in the stuffy hold of the ship. He was told, however, that he would be put in jail as soon as the ship docked in Boston. "Jail? That would be far worse than the hold of a ship," the boy thought. "I've just got to get away. I am not going to jail," he determined. Although he was not a Christian, he quietly prayed, "Help me, Lord, help me."

Just as the ship hit the dock, before the arresting officer could lay a hand on him, George made a wild leap upon the rail, jumped to the pier, and dashed madly into the crowd.

"My land, he trod on my foot and almost ran right over me," a stout, elderly woman complained.

"Chelsea, Massachusetts? Which way to Chelsea?" George panted to the first friendly face.

"Go north, lad, north past Bunker Hill. On past the Navy Yard. You can't miss it."

Hours later after persistent inquiry, George stumbled into the small village of Chelsea. "Now, if I can just find lodging. Well, all I can do is just start asking." At last he knocked on a door where he was accepted without question and he was invited to come in out of the cold. The door opened wide and the lad was ushered into the warm and inviting house.

Soon the young Canadian settled down into life in America. Chelsea was just a little way north of Boston and the cars ran regularly to the big city. The adventurous young boy began to feel more at home. He kept busy helping and keeping a sharp eye out for odd jobs

to earn a bit of pocket money. He found an interesting challenge in the bustling construction work that was on the increase in Boston.

At last he found employment and started work on a Monday. "I'm starting just as a hod carrier. But I'll be laying bricks before long." And so he was.

George Cook began a trade that he followed for many years. The strong young Canadian, who had worked so hard for a harsh taskmaster, lugged hod after hod of heavy cement up and down the wobbly ladder, struggling with a load of brick, then down to help mix the sand and lime, and back up the ladder with a fifty-pound hod of wet cement. By late afternoon a thin layer of gray dust covered his rough work clothes and blobs of dry cement clung to his heavy work shoes as well as to his clothes. Social life held little appeal to this hardworking young man. No pretty young girls could tempt him to spend much time or money even on Sunday, his day off.

George was more interested in watching the skilled bricklayers as they trowelled the wet mortar on, carefully lining up the bricks and smoothing off the mortar.

"Here, try it, George," a kind bricklayer offered.

How good the trowel felt! "I can do this," George felt confident. Soon he was laying bricks more and more and carrying cement less. All over south Boston he laid brick. Later he began to work with cut stone.

George Cook was an experienced and skilled bricklayer and stone mason when he met another New Brunswicker who had moved to Boston. Her name was Alice Price. She was slender as a pine sapling, tall and

lovely with big blue eyes.

"Are you from St. John?" the husky bricklayer asked.

"No, I am from Petitcodiac. That's below Moncton," Alice responded, somewhat shy with the man who was nineteen years her senior. "You have heard folks talk about the Tidal Bore at Petitcodiac, haven't you?"

"Sure, the tide there gets as tall as a man, doesn't it? How about that Magnetic Hill? It is in Petitcodiac, isn't it? Does it really seem like you are walking uphill when you are actually going downhill?" George was enjoying talking with someone who knew about his homeland.

Alice laughed at the reference to the optical illusion caused by the hills surrounding Magnetic Hill.

"Little boys sure have lots of fun with their hoops rolling uphill," she recalled. As the days passed the two young New Brunswickers found more and more to talk about.

Somehow George felt more at home in America after he met Alice. Since she was nineteen years younger, he felt very protective, strong, and stalwart as he stood by her side the day they were wed.

What a dimension Alice added to George's life! She was a lovely young girl. She kept their small house spotless. Every Saturday was baked beans and brown bread day.

Their first child was a beautiful, brown-eyed girl, Adelade Mae. Such a cheerful, happy baby she was, quite a lot like her dad.

On September 1, 1899, a second child, Ralph Gleason Cook, was born. "Ralph is going to be tall like

his mother," tiny little grandmother Price soon noticed. "He has her blue eyes, too, as well as her good nature."

Four years later in 1903, another son was born, Frederick Manning. A fourth child entered the Cook household in 1907. Another boy! He also looked a lot like his mother and his brother Ralph. He was named George William, Jr. after his father.

The family was now living in a tall three-story house at Gifford Place. This was a cul-de-sac in South Boston.

Near the Cooks lived a large family by the name of Reuter. There was Albert, Ernest, Ivor, Charlie, and another Ralph. Ralph Reuter. He was quite chunky and strong. They nicknamed him "Fatso." These boys were young Ralph's buddies. The Reuters were of German stock and enjoyed sauerkraut and weiner schnitzel.

"C'mon, Ralph, have a cold glass of beer," coaxed the Reuter boys on a hot summer day.

"No, I don't want any beer," Ralph refused. "Let's go play rugby." So it was back to the rough-and-tumble game of street rugby. Ralph, good at sports, was tall for his age and could run like a deer.

Another neighbor lady was not so warm and friendly as Mrs. Reuter.

"G'wan, move, you kids. Don't be digging bunny holes in my yard," she screeched at the boys when they played marbles early in the spring. Later she brought a bucket of water and carefully poured water down all the "bunny holes." "That'll fix 'em," she declared with satisfaction, sure that she had stopped the fun once

and for all.

"Mean old soul," the boys grumbled.

If the boys sat on her door stoop, she would open an upstairs window and throw a bucket of water over them.

In the fall the same impatient woman complained about the boys and their football. When Ralph kicked a long shot over into her backyard, he knew it was hopeless to ask for his ball back.

One Valentine's Day, Ralph and the Reuter boys fooled their complaining neighbor. Carefully they took a piece of chalk and drew an envelope on her front step. R-r-r-ring! The giggling boys rang the doorbell. Then they ran and hid to watch the fun. The lady's spectacles slid off her nose and she blindly tried to pick up the "envelope." "Humph," she barked and then slammed the door as she went back inside, furious that she had been outwitted by those pesky boys.

One stern policeman who patrolled the area occasionally got rough on the boys in Gifford Place. "Young rascals," he scolded without much sympathy or understanding for young people. One day this particular policeman chased young Ralph and the Reuter boys down the alley. Somehow the others got away, but Ralph was almost cornered in the back of the court. Although he could run like a deer, he knew he could not leap over the tall back fence that loomed ahead.

Almost out of breath he ducked into an ash house and pulled an empty ash barrel over him. Pound, pound, pound came the footsteps of the stout, puffing,

irate officer close behind.

"Now, how did that kid get over that fence?" the officer stood puzzled. He soon left without catching his culprit.

"Ralph Cook, wherever have you been? You look like you have been in an ash can," scolded his mother as he tried to sneak in the house for supper. Alice Cook particularly prided herself on her clean house. Her kitchen was a special place—warm, clean, smelling of good homemade baked goods and brown bread.

The night policeman, however, was a friend to the children on his beat. "Want to go sledding?" he inquired after the first good snow of the season. "I can block off the streets where it will be safe."

Skating, sledding, rugby, marbles, football! The Cooks and the Reuters filled their days with fun in South Boston.

There was a lot of time at night for visiting with relatives, especially Aunt Maggie and Uncle Bill as well as Grandmother Price. Occasionally someone mentioned the well-to-do relative, Uncle Ephraim. He was the one with the big farm in Canada. The Cook children, whose play area was the streets and alleys of South Boston, enjoyed an annual trip to Canada every summer. The hardworking bricklayer provided a far better life for his growing family than he had enjoyed in Canada after his mother's death and his father's return to Ireland.

For several years the Cook family spent their summers in their cottage at Glen Echo Lake, Stoughton, Massachusetts. What fun it was to catch the streetcar to Glen Echo Lake away from the hot city! It was a

beautiful lake. The water was as clear as crystal and was spring fed, which kept it moving and clean. Of course, the Cook children helped keep it moving with their jumping and diving into it as well as their swimming and boating. They all became good swimmers.

There was a huge, high rock on one side of the lake named Drum Rock. Many of the older fellows would climb to the top of this rock and dive off. Ralph watched them many times and felt if they could do it, so could he.

On one of their summer vacations, the day came when Ralph felt it was time to try his dive from Drum Rock. When he reached the top and looked down, a slight shiver went over him. It seemed a long way to the water. Guess it was time to think awhile before springing away from the solid rock he was standing on to go flying into space. Standing on top of Drum Rock, his courage was fully tested. As he hesitated, he realized that it was now or never. It was a beautiful day. The sun was shining on the surface of the water and everything seemed to be just right. The water was beckoning him. Gathering all of his courage, Ralph positioned himself and dove.

What he did not know was the conditions under the surface of the water in that area. He did not push himself far enough out for the dive, so when he broke the water surface he went down between rocks.

Unknowing to Ralph or any other member of the family, God's hand was upon him even then. It was only the mercy of God that he was not killed, crippled, or paralyzed in such a way that he would spend his life in a wheelchair.

When he came to the surface, he was cut, bruised, and bleeding badly. His younger brother, George, saw him and shuddered at the awful sight. A couple of men in a boat who had also been watching came to Ralph's rescue. They pulled him from the water and took him home. He was not seriously hurt, and in a few days he was back swimming with the others. But his misadventure settled any future thoughts about diving from Drum Rock. It was much too dangerous.

Like many other families, the Cooks enjoyed stories of their relatives. Some of these stories of the Cook family were told to Ralph and the other children by one of the aunts on the Price side of the family. She told of the fifty-million-dollar fortune that their great-grandfather was supposed to have inherited in central Baltimore. The Cook children listened wide eyed to this story as well as to tales of pioneer life in Canada.

But their favorite storyteller was Grandmother Price, who could send shivers down their backs with her "bear" story.

"I was just a young woman," she would start her story. "My first baby was small but a very good-natured baby, thank God. Your grandfather and I were struggling to build our first home, a small cabin back in the bush below Moncton near Petitcodiac. It was necessary for him to go down to the town for food supplies, which was an overnight journey. We had not finished the house. In fact, we had just thrown a canvas over a hole in the floor that led down to the cellar.

"'You ought to go spend the night with the neighbors, my dear,' your grandfather urged me. "'Oh, I am not afraid to spend the night here!' I assured him.

"Later I took the baby and went to bed. In the night a bear came up through that hole in the floor. He shuffled over to the bed and smelled all over my face. There was a barrel of salt fish sitting in a corner of the room. That big old bear went over and smelled that fish. Then he came back and smelled me, went back and smelled the fish, came back again and smelled me before returning to the barrel. Finally the bear went to the barrel and gobbled up most of that salt fish.

"I was so scared the baby would wake and cry, but he never did and, oh! how I thanked God! That old stuffed bear came over and put his cold nose in my face again and sniffed. Then he went down through the hole and out.

"I got up and pulled everything I could possibly pull that was heavy over that hole. 'Course I never closed an eye all night. That was the last time I ever stayed by myself in that cabin."

Before any of the children could ask, she would add, "Oh my, yes, there was bear in those north woods, moose, deer, porcupines and all sorts of varmints."

To support Grandmother Price's story, George Cook would tell about the time that deer and moose came right up in the city of St. John when he was a boy.

Music was also a part of the large house at Gifford Place. The attractive daughter, Adelade, the only one of the children who favored her dad, was now a lot like her mother, tall and slender. Adelade took singing lessons as well as piano lessons. Young Ralph, who had a keen memory, quickly learned one of Adelade's diction exercises and teased his sister by parroting her.

A flea and a fly were in prison,
What could they do?
Said the flea, "Let us fly."
"Let us fly," said the flea.
So they flew through a flaw in the flue.

On Sunday the Reuters and the Cooks went to the little Methodist church on the corner of Vinton Street in South Boston. Pastor Heath was a young preacher right out of seminary.

One Sunday all the pastor's educated ideas were not enough to keep Albert Reuter awake. Albert, Ernest, Ivor, Charlie and chunky Ralph were all sitting on the hard pew next to their stern father.

Mr. Reuter was a rigid disciplinarian. He ran his household with the military precision that he himself had learned in the German navy. When his pale blue eyes noted young Albert napping in church, he spoke up loud and clear, "Ernest, wake up Albert. He has gone to sleep!"

When Ralph was still in his early teens, two men held a revival in the little Methodist church. They sang a special song, "His Eye Is On The Sparrow And I Know He Watches Me," a song that deeply moved Ralph. Feeling conviction, he rushed up to the altar and fell down crying.

Young Pastor Heath was a bit startled. What had he learned in seminary about heartfelt conviction? He did think he should comfort the lad. Reaching over the rail, he patted the distraught boy on the head. "Don't cry, Ralph! You are a good boy. You have nothing to worry about. Your parents belong to this church and

there is nothing wrong with you."

But Ralph knew in his heart that there was something desperately wrong with him. He knew that he needed God, so he lingered at the altar.

Later Pastor Heath suggested that they go into his office and talk. "I think it is time for us to take you in the church, Ralph," the pastor suggested. "Here, take this Methodist manual and read it. Then we will take you in the church."

During the next few weeks, Ralph tried to make sense of the religious manual. "This thing is all Greek to me," he decided, deeply disappointed. Soon he turned his attention to other things, but he remembered the hunger for God he had felt in his heart.

The carefree days of childhood came somewhat to a sudden end in Ralph's early teens.

One unforgettable day, his father, George Cook, was seriously injured. While he was laying bricks, he stepped out on a staging of the scaffold that a half-drunken laborer had built for him. Cra-a-ack, the whole staging leaned crazily. Before George Cook could think what to do with his heavy load of brick and mortar, he was falling. He fell thirty feet. His fall had been broken by a large plank jutting out from one of the windows or he might have been killed.

"He will not be able to do any more heavy work like bricklaying or stonecutting," was the doctor's verdict. The ten cents per week endowment policy Alice had taken out on George, Sr. was certainly not adequate insurance for the head of the household.

Later, however, the resourceful and responsible Canadian was able to find a job as a fireman with a

firm in Boston.

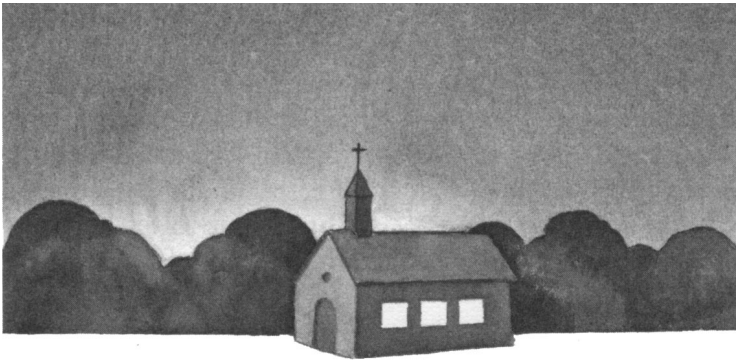
"I know it's not much money, Alice," George said resignedly, "but at least it's a job. We can still have our baked beans, brown bread, and potatoes." George confided, "A man's got to make a living for his family."

So this courageous man, whose broken body ached with rheumatism and arthritis when the damp cold winds blew in off Boston harbor, accepted his broken health and worked thirty-three years with that Boston firm as a fireman.

"I'm sure they will give me at least a small pension, Alice," he said hopefully when his working days were coming to an end. But his last pay envelope just contained a hundred dollars extra. No pension. Life was not too easy for a working man in those days.

When the neighborhood around Gifford Place began to change for the worse, Alice urged her husband to move. "Let's move, George. This neighborhood is getting too rough. This is not a good place for the young people any more," Alice worried. So the Cook family moved out of South Boston to Everett, Massachusetts.

[1]Lowell Thomas, *In New Brunswick We'll Find It*, p. 42.



The Way To God

"I'll go to work and help with all these bills," young Ralph announced the day he finished the eighth grade. "Since Dad can't do that heavy bricklaying and cut stone work any more, it is only fair for me to help out. I heard they were hiring down at the machine shop. I want to see if I can get a job."

So that year when he finished grade eight, Ralph left the schoolroom for a machine shop. His weekly pay check was quite a help at home. At about this time his mother took out a small insurance policy for him.

After the disappointing experience in Pastor Heath's little Methodist church on Vinton Street, Ralph wandered from first one church to another. For a while he went with Aunt Margaret (or Aunt Maggie as he called her) and Uncle Bill Dawson to the

Salvation Army where Aunt Maggie was a captain. At that time Uncle Bill was a building mover. Later he helped put the subways through Boston. Aunt Maggie had no children of her own, so she adopted two small children.

"You children look especially nice today and you smell good, too. Some of those children in Sunday school must not ever take a bath. It's enough to make a body sick to sit near them," she commented as they left for church. "Ralph, we're happy to have you go with us to the Army as long as your folks don't mind."

Aunt Margaret was an immaculate person. She would wash the linoleum right off the floors. Her doilies were starched stiff, and when the Cook children sat in her parlor, they sat on the edge of the seats for fear of cracking a doily. Her stockings were ironed and her hankies were starched. Of course, her hankie was only for show. When Uncle Bill came home from work, he had to leave his shoes outside the door. She was, however, interested in inner cleanliness also, so she went to church.

The move to Everett, Massachusetts, did not separate the Cook and Reuter family. Chunky Ralph and Ivor almost lived with the Cook family now. The bond of friendship was being tightly woven. The only concern about the future was having a good time.

"Let's go to a show," someone suggested. So Ralph pushed serious thoughts of God and the future to the back of his mind and joined other young people in going to the movies and having a good time. He was working. He had a little pocket money. He had a girlfriend in Everett, too. What fun they had going danc-

ing! Almost forgotten was the time when Ralph felt the convicting power of God in Pastor Heath's small Methodist church.

Adelade, too, enjoyed social life, especially dancing. She could play the piano; she could sing; she could dance.

There was always something going on in the city and in the suburbs of Boston. In the summer there was fun out at the cottage at Glen Echo Lake. Life around Boston was great in the early 1900s!

Out on the West Coast, however, another member of the family, Uncle Bill Price, was totally discouraged with life. In fact, he was on the verge of suicide. Uncle Bill knew who he was. He was a helpless, hopeless alcoholic. He remembered where he came from—the sturdy, God-fearing pioneer stock from New Brunswick. But what sort of a future did he have?

Time after time Bill Price had signed the pledge, jumped up and down on his hat, and swore never to take another drink. Time after time he had failed miserably and gone straight back to the bottle. Night after night he lay out cold and miserable and drunk, his ravaged body aching with sinus and other ailments. For twelve long years he lived in California, three thousand miles from his family. His tiny gray-haired mother, Grandmother Price, mourned him for dead.

"Bill's gone, I am sure. I know he would write at least once in twelve years. I'll never see my boy again," Grandmother Price thought although she rarely ever mentioned Uncle Bill and the Cook children knew little about him.

In California, however, Bill Price was the talk of the town. "Too bad about old Bill. He's a first-class carpenter. Makes the finest cabinets in town when he's sober."

"Yeah, but when has he been sober? Last I heard he was trying to sell some lead pipe. Everybody was sure he had cut it out of that job he had been working on."

"They tell me he rode into town on the rods. Wonder where his folks are? Where's Bill Price from?"

"Back east, I think I heard him say, but last I heard he was living in an ash house, trying to sell his carpenter tools for another drink."

Bill Price—the talk of the town. The town drunk.

"I'm just a sot—no good," he told himself. "Thank God, Momma has never seen me like this. Momma—will I ever see her again? My sweet baby sister, Alice. And Maggie—oh, God, I can't keep on living like this! I'll just go jump in the river. That's the only way out for me."

"Where you going?" a friend called to the despondent man who was on his way to the river.

"I'm going down to the river and jump in. I can't go on like this. I'm sick of being the town drunk."

"Wait a minute. You can't just give up like this." But Bill Price kept on walking.

Bill Price had often passed Pentecostal street meetings but never paid any attention to anything that was said. This night, however, a man from that assembly approached him to invite him to church. He told Bill Price that Jesus could save him and urged him to come with him to their little mission.

"Oh, well, a few more hours won't make that much difference. I'll go by the church," and he turned and walked toward the little Pentecostal mission. Quietly the despondent derelict slipped into the back, sat down on the wood chair and listened to the preaching. But to Bill nothing the preacher said meant much. Nothing seemed to offer him any hope. "Should have gone on to the river," Bill thought hopelessly.

When the congregation stood for dismissal prayer, Bill merely slumped in the chair, looking at the floor. It was then that an elderly woman saw Bill Price's despair. She quietly came, knelt beside him, and began to pray earnestly.

The man who invited him to come and several others gathered around him and told him to pray. He said he did not know how. All he knew was, "Now I lay me down to sleep." The man who invited him said, "If you repeat after me what I say and really mean it, God will save you."

So he prayed, "O Lord, I'm sick of my sin; save me for Jesus' sake." From the depths of his heart he repeated what he said.

Suddenly before he quite realized what was happening to him, the power of God knocked Bill Price from his chair onto the floor, and he was gloriously blessed and healed.

"My God, what's happened to me?" Bill wondered as he came to himself, sober for the first time in weeks. That night as he crawled into his makeshift bed at the ash house, he felt clean. Sober and clean and well.

"Even my sinus trouble is all gone," Bill realized as he fell into a sound, restful sleep. God had totally

forgiven his sins, taken away the demon of drink, and healed his sinus condition. What a mighty God Bill Price had found!

About three months after he had found joy in repentance, Bill Price heard of an even greater experience. "You ought to hear Brother Ewart preach about the Holy Ghost! They tell me that many people have received the Holy Ghost in the last few months," a man told Bill.

"If God has more than repentance for me, then I want more. I want all of God I can get," Bill decided. So he decided to go to hear Brother Ewart.

Brother Ewart, a young Australian Scotch-Irish boy, had experienced a truly unforgettable vision of the crucified Christ on the cross with His hair all disheveled and blood bespattered. This vision permanently changed the young Aussie's life. In 1903, when he was twenty-seven, Ewart's health failed due in part to the long hours he spent in study and prayer as well as the hard work he had done as a Baptist bush missionary. Because the doctors advised a change in climate, he left his native country and went to a cousin's farm in Weyburn, Saskatchewan. Later he went to the Baptist headquarters in Winnipeg, Canada, where he was given a church to pastor. He married a fine young girl, and for two years they pastored in Canada. Earnestly they sought God and prayed for the power of the Holy Ghost to be manifested in their ministry as it had been in the ministries of Charles G. Finney and Dwight L. Moody.

Although Frank Ewart's ministry was somewhat spiritually rewarding, his physical condition grew

worse. A brother-in-law who lived near New Westminster, British Columbia, wrote about a religious phenomenon that had occurred there. A pastor and every bona fide member of a local congregation had claimed to receive the Holy Ghost with the initial sign of speaking in tongues. Also, the letter went on to say that many miracles of healings were occurring.

"I will just get a furlough from our church and we will go investigate this," Brother Ewart quickly decided. When the young couple arrived in New Westminster, they attended a few of the meetings and then left for a camp meeting in Portland, Oregon. There Brother Ewart saw with his own eyes many miracles, among which were drunken men, who had been brought in on the "gospel wagon" and sobered up, filled with the Holy Ghost and speaking in tongues. After earnestly praying for twenty-one days, Frank Ewart received his baptism of the Holy Ghost.

When he returned to Winnipeg rejoicing, however, he found that the superintendent of the Baptist church board was not quite so happy about the young Australian's newfound experience.

Later in 1911 the Ewarts moved to Los Angeles and assumed the pastorate in Brother Durhams' church on Seventh Street. It was at this church that Bill Price came to hear Brother Ewart preach and to learn more about the gift of the Holy Ghost and the revelation of the Oneness.[1]

From the first service Bill Price was stirred by the dynamic preaching about the Holy Ghost baptism. Brother Ewart preached with great anointing and fervor. "God will fill even a repented drunk with this great

Holy Ghost and fire," Ewart declared. And God did just that for Bill Price during one of the services.

"God has done so much for me, I must make restitution for all the mean things I did in the past," Bill Price decided. "I must pay for all those things I stole."

Soon it was the talk of the town. Old Bill Price was paying for all his thefts!

"Have you heard what Bill did the other day? Why, he went down to the railroad. He had figured up as best he could how many miles he had ridden on the rods and in the blinds, and then he paid off the railroad as though he had ridden in a seat. Beats all, the change in that man!"

"What else can I do for my wonderful Lord?" Bill Price wondered. "Oh, I know what I must do right away."

"I must go home, back to mother's house. O Lord, let Momma live until I can tell her how good You have been to me. I want to tell Momma and Alice and Maggie all about the Holy Ghost," Bill prayed as he started thumbing his way toward the East. He was broke, without even money for a train ticket, and too conscientious now to steal even a railroad ride, so he begged rides.

The first day on the road, Bill rode to Needles, California. That night as he slept, God visited him in a special way again. This time God spoke to Bill Price in a vision just as He had spoken several years before to young Frank Ewart in Australia. However, instead of a crucified Christ, Bill saw a vision of the Holy City coming down out of heaven. "To think that city is really my

home," Bill mused in awe when he awoke.

Now more than ever he wanted to hasten to tell everyone—Mother, sisters, friends, and acquaintances. He had a message burning within him, a simple message but one that was made real by his dream. "Prepare yourselves. The Holy City will be worth it all," raced through his mind as he slowly thumbed his way across a continent. Finally he arrived in Everett, Massachusetts.

"Momma, Momma, Momma!" Bill cried as he gathered his tiny, gray-haired, eighty-year-old mother in his arms.

"Bill, oh, Bill," Grandmother Price cried as tears of joy streamed down her wrinkled cheeks. Still holding his little old mother in his arms, Bill sat down in a rocker and rocked his mother like a baby.

"Oh, Mom, I have found the Lord. I was lost—just a no-good drunk, but Jesus found me," Bill began. Then he witnessed to the other relatives. "Have you people heard how God is filling folks with the Holy Ghost?" Sisters, brothers-in-law, nieces, and nephews listened, but they did not respond too warmly to this long lost, prodigal relative.

"Humph, where has he been the last twelve years?"

"Why, that fellow did not even let Mom know whether he was dead or alive."

"Did he even send her a card at Christmas?"

The younger folk like Ralph Cook scarcely knew who Uncle Bill was. Nothing much had ever been said about him. However, his sincerity and dedication could not be questioned.

Not only did he witness to his own family but he also began to preach on the streets. When he sat in the barber chair, he told the barber how God had delivered him from the demon of alcohol and filled him with the Holy Ghost. He witnessed to everybody with whom he came in contact.

"I owe it to every man to tell what great things God has done for me," Bill Price declared.

When the Cooks went out to Stoughton, Massachusetts, to their summer cabin on Glen Echo Lake, Bill Price went along. On the first night, there was a big dance on the open pavilion. Nearly one hundred couples were dancing and enjoying the summer evening. A large, tough bouncer was there to keep an eye on the young folks and to keep law and order.

Bill Price walked right out in the middle of that dance floor and called the astonished dancers to order. Then he started to preach the gospel to the crowd. The bouncer followed Bill watching and listening, but he never laid a hand on the Spirit-filled preacher.

When Bill finished his simple message, he just walked off the dance floor, leaving a powerful witness to the fun-loving crowd.

"Nothing like this has ever happened at Glen Echo Lake before! Stoughton, Massachusetts, won't forget this night," people whispered as they wondered about the Cooks' strange uncle from California.

Later when they returned home to Everett, Uncle Bill said to his young nephew, "Ralph, we must find a good church to attend, a church with a Spirit-filled minister. They tell me that over in Chelsea, there is a Methodist minister who has been filled with the Holy

Spirit. Let's go hear Pastor Stead. We can catch the Bay State cars over to Chelsea, Massachusetts. I think the little church is on Chelsea Square."

Pastor Stead was a small Englishman with a goatee. He was about sixty years old. He had been a presiding elder in the Methodist church and was quite a fluent speaker. He was preaching a remarkable message about being "saved, sanctified, and filled with the Holy Ghost." He also sprinkled personal experiences liberally in his Spirit-filled messages of faith and healings.

"Uncle Bill, what did you think of Pastor Stead's testimony about the woman who had cancer of the throat? When he prayed for her, Pastor Stead said she just spit the cancer out. Do you really believe God can perform miracles of healing like that, Uncle Bill?" young Ralph questioned.

"Listen, Ralph, if God can take an old sot like I was, clean him up, heal his sinus trouble and fill him with the Holy Ghost, He can certainly heal cancer. God made these old bodies in the first place, so He can surely repair them a little from time to time."

Patiently line upon line, and precept upon precept, God began to work in the heart of Ralph Cook.

For several weeks Ralph and Uncle Bill attended Pastor Stead's little church. One Sunday before church, Ralph felt such a sense of urgency and conviction that he did not want to wait for the Bay State cars to run. "It is just a short ways over to Chelsea. I'm going on now, Mom," he called as he stepped out into the slush on the road.

When Ralph arrived at the church in Chelsea, he

discovered that Pastor Stead was still in his room on the third floor of the building. Ralph went up to talk with the elder minister, but he did not fully share his heart's burden with the kindly man. However, after Pastor Stead preached an anointed Spirit-filled message of faith in the service that day, the spirit of God began again to speak to Ralph. He rushed to the altar and began to call on the Lord. That day Ralph Cook fully repented.

Two nights later he came in from work wanting some fellowship. "I'll just go over to the boardinghouse in Chelsea where Charlie Ryan and some of the fellows are," he thought as he left the house.

"Come on in, Ralph," Charlie called when he heard the knock on his door. "Here, sit in this straight back chair. What have you got on your mind?"

Ralph, Charlie, and a few other young men began to talk about the Lord. Shortly after nine o'clock, Ralph felt the room fill with the presence of God. Suddenly the joy and ecstasy of the Holy Ghost flooded his soul and he began to speak in other tongues. Ralph began to shout and dance about. The young men threw him on the bed because he was making quite a fuss and might disturb the other people in the boarding home. But even this was not enough to mute the noise.

"Charlie Ryan, get him out of here," the irate landlady called up the hall. "He's waking up all the boarders."

Down the hall and out across Chelsea Square, the young men led the Spirit-filled boy. It was a busy section of town with a bar on every corner.

"Look at that drunk!" a disgusted passerby called.

"Let's take him over to the church. Pastor Stead will help us," the young men decided. When they got to the church, the young men turned Ralph loose and he fell on the floor near the altar still speaking in tongues.

"But he has not been sanctified yet," Pastor Stead was amazed. "This might be the work of the devil," the minister thought. Standing over Ralph, Pastor Stead repeated over and over, "Devil, I rebuke you! I rebuke you!" Sometime before three the next morning, the confused little Methodist pastor decided that Ralph Cook had indeed been filled with the Holy Ghost, which quite upset his "three works of grace" message.

Grandmother Price, George Cook Sr., and Alice along with Aunt Maggie and Uncle Bill had all agreed from hearing Uncle Bill Price's testimony that this was the one and only true way to God.

They became involved and all felt the mighty presence of the Lord, but they had not come into the fullness of the Holy Ghost. Even Ralph's brothers, Fred and George, had received a touch but not a definite experience as yet.

Adelade was the last of the family to come to church. Uncle Bill had begged and begged her time and time again to come with him to the little mission. At last, she consented, hoping this would make him leave her alone. The next Wednesday night she went. Her reaction was definite: "If I ever get out of here in one piece, I'll never come back." The whole family prayed for her and Uncle Bill at last convinced her to attend one more service.

Adelade did not know it but Brother Stead, the

pastor, had been told of her musical talent. When the meeting was ready to start, Brother Stead asked her to come up and play the organ. This came as a shock to her, and rather than make a scene, she went to the organ and sat down. The first hymn announced was "Since Jesus Came Into My Heart." She knew Jesus was not in her heart and she just could not coordinate her fingers—every finger was like a thumb.

After a few more hymns, Brother Stead said, "Let's pray." Adelade refused to kneel. It was then that God took over. She was literally lifted off of the organ stool and slain on the floor—she screamed and screamed. Later she said she guessed she screamed until the devil let go. It was then that Jesus came and gave her a touch of heaven and all the love of the world left her. The next Sunday the Cooks began to get ready for church. "Are you going to wear your new 'Merry Widow' hat to church?" her mother queried.

"Oh, yes, Momma, Pastor Stead has asked me to play, so I want to look nice," replied the lovely and talented young girl. She played the organ again, but oh! how different this time, and when they knelt to pray, she was one of the first to kneel. She was again slain by the Holy Ghost and burst out speaking in that heavenly language and, surprisingly, she kept on her "Merry Widow" hat. She was the second one in the family to receive the Holy Ghost.

One family member after another received the Holy Ghost.

When George Cook Sr. started for the altar, he saw a vision of a stream of blood coming down from the altar. When the blood hit him, George Cook fell to the

floor and began to speak in tongues.

How God did bless the George William Cook family! What times of rejoicing and glory filled their souls!

One of the most dramatic and life-shaping experiences came to Ralph when he was only sixteen years old. He had received the Holy Ghost, but he had not received any definite direction for his place in the work of God.

One evening after Ralph and his brother Fred had a disagreement that left both of them feeling sorry, Ralph went upstairs to lie down. He noticed that the sun was on the horizon and he knew that the lengthening shadows soon would gently spread over the city. He was not ready for sleep, but he needed time to think and to pray. His mind turned to the apostle Peter's vision on the housetop and how God had shown him that the gospel was to be preached to the Gentiles.

He was lying on the bed when he felt a pressure pushing against him as if it would shove him onto the floor. A rushing sound filled the room, the sound of a strong wind. He sensed a real presence of the Holy Ghost and wondered if he were being visited by angels. Was it the whirr of the angel's wings? Or was it the mighty rushing wind of the Holy Ghost? He realized that he had fallen into a trance, just as Peter had experienced, and that God was trying to show him something.

For several moments the presence of God lingered, and then he started to come out of his trance. But in that transitional moment he saw the hem of Jesus' garment and His feet passing by. He saw nothing else, but he knew it was He and that the Lord was

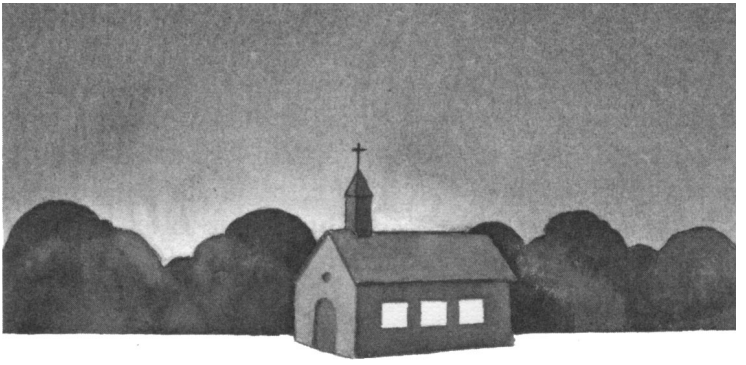
asking him to follow in His footsteps. Later he knew it was his call into the ministry, but for the moment he could only rejoice in the vision.

Leaping out of bed, Ralph ran downstairs where he grabbed and hugged everybody he encountered. He shouted over and over, "Oh, I am so happy!"

What he felt in that room when he saw the vision has stayed with him. Words could never express the glow and glory of that moment, but the feeling remains alive within him. Often when Ralph recounts this vision, his voice chokes and trembles, his eyes fill with tears, and his words rush with erratic joy. "Oh, my! Oh, dear! Such a glow! I can't express it! I'll never forget it! It was some experience—just to see that. I knew it was the hem of His garment and I knew that it was His feet."

This was not the last time that God spoke to Ralph about the ministry, but it formed the foundation for his call to preach the gospel. The confirmation that his life was to follow this call would come along life's road as needed.

[1]Frank J. Ewart, *The Phenomenon of Pentecost*, p. 13, 19.



A Changed Life

A great change occurred in Ralph Cook's life in 1916 when he received the Holy Ghost. His girlfriend in Everett, a town near Boston, was one of the first to notice the change.

"What about the dance tonight, Ralph?" she questioned him.

"Dance? I am not going to any more dances," Ralph assured the young lady. "And I am not going to any more movies, either," he added.

"Not going! Well, if you are not going to any more movies or dances with me, I am not interested in going anywhere with you," the girl replied.

"That's all right with me," Ralph responded. So he broke up with his girlfriend, but God had better things in store for him. God had a plan, a purpose and a will for his life. Ralph Cook earnestly sought to

know the will of God.

Other people also soon knew that something had happened to Ralph Cook. The morning after he had been so marvelously filled with the Spirit, Ralph got up to go to work at his job at a wholesale grocery firm. He was still feeling wonderful with the afterglow of the Spirit upon him. He wanted to get to work early so he could begin witnessing.

"I'll start with the office boy," he planned as he quickly tied his clean white sneakers and left for work. "Everybody will be so glad to hear about the Holy Ghost," he thought.

Sure enough he did see the office boy first and had a good chance to testify, but the office boy only replied, "What's the matter with you, Ralph? Are you off your base?"

Later Ralph ran into the head skipper, a sort of surly fellow. He was a dark, swarthy Portuguese whom Ralph knew only slightly. The head shipper was usually not too talkative as he always had a big chew of tobacco in his mouth.

"Good morning, sir," Ralph greeted the man courteously. "Let me tell you what happened to me last night. God wonderfully filled me with the Holy Ghost," Ralph began enthusiastically.

The mean-natured man took slow, careful aim and spit chewing tobacco all over Ralph's clean white sneakers.

Somewhat nonplussed, Ralph decided to try the higher executives. "They will at least have better manners," he thought as he pondered his next witnessing. "I'll do it. I'll go straight to the main office. The Baines

brothers are intelligent, successful businessmen. They will be happy to hear about something so wonderful as the Holy Ghost."

The Baines brothers, who were dignified, middle-aged businessmen, had their large desks arranged so that they faced each other in the office. Ralph walked confidently in between the two desks.

"Good morning, Mr. Baines," he greeted the sober, solemn administrators. "May I tell you what God has done for me? He has filled me with the Holy Ghost."

The room got very quiet. The Baines brothers never said a word. They just listened. They did not respond positively or negatively. With no response of any sort, young Ralph began to run out of conversation. At last he turned and quietly left the office.

"I'll just go on up to work," Ralph thought as he climbed the steps to the third floor. The aroma of freshly ground coffee filled the morning air. Part of Ralph's duties was to help grind and mix the special brand of coffee featured by the wholesale grocery firm. The first person he saw was his immediate superior, a large friendly Irishman named Phil Garrity. Oftentimes while at work Ralph and Phil sang together. Phil had a lovely Irish tenor voice. "Down by the Old Mill Stream" was one of their favorite songs.

"Good morning, Mr. Garrity," Ralph once more tried a friendly greeting. "I want to tell you something. Let me tell you what happened to me last night. I received the Holy Ghost, Mr. Garrity."

"Cook," Phil Garrity began to talk with his young friend in a solemn voice. "I want to tell you something.

You know there are a lot of people who go crazy over religion. If I were you, I wouldn't get so serious over this. I'd just forget about what happened if I were you, young man," Phil Garrity advised his young friend. Then he added anxiously, "You are liable to lose your mind."

Somehow Ralph did not get too upset by all the rebuffs. He continued working at the wholesale grocery firm. He also continued going to church and witnessing at every opportunity. He continually sought God's will. "What do you want me to do, Lord?"

From the beginning when Ralph first received the Holy Ghost, he felt a call to preach and he responded to that feeling in an unusual way.

As Pastor Stead was preaching one morning, he mentioned the fact that there was a church in Exeter, New Hampshire, that needed a pastor. Without saying a word to Pastor Stead, Ralph, who was only sixteen years old, made up his mind that he was going to Exeter to be the pastor of that church.

"That may be God's will for me," he thought. "I will catch a train for Exeter tonight," he decided.

He arrived late at night around one o'clock. The city boy from Boston was quite surprised to find that the small town station was closed.

"What will I do?" he worried. "Where will I find this Mrs. Luce who is in charge of the church?"

Suddenly Ralph saw a man coming down the street with a flashlight. "What is he going to do?" he wondered. "Is he a thief? Is he going to break into a building somewhere?" Ralph questioned as he quickly stepped back into a doorway. When the man came to

the doorway, he threw the flashlight beam into Ralph's face.

"Where did you come from?" the man questioned.

"I just came in from Boston," Ralph tried to explain. Somewhat to his relief, he noticed that the man wore a policeman's badge.

"Why are you here?" the policeman continued to question the frightened young Bostonian. Ralph hesitated, almost ashamed to tell why he had come to Exeter.

"What is your trade?" was the next question.

"I am a machinist," Ralph answered. "I am looking for a woman by the name of Mrs. Luce."

"I don't know her. Everything is closed up. There are no accommodations for you. You had better come with me." So he took Ralph down to the county jail. At first Ralph hardly knew where he was going, but cold reality hit him in the face when the heavy iron-barred door clanged to and he was locked in for the night.

"You can stay here for the night," the officer said.

In the small cell were two wooden bunks. On the bunks were a couple of old, dirty quilts.

"There are probably bugs in those quilts," thought Ralph and he began to shake the quilts vigorously. The dust flew out into the small, cold, dirty cell. Gone were the dreams of pastoring the church. Humiliated about spending a night in jail, anxious about the morrow, Ralph fell into a fitful sleep a little before dawn.

The next morning, the officer took Ralph before the captain.

"Young man, there seems to be no charges against

you. Why are you here? For whom are you looking?" questioned the captain.

"I am looking for a Mrs. Luce, Captain," Ralph tried to explain.

"Oh, Mrs. Luce! I know her quite well, and I can direct you to her."

Soon Ralph was standing at the door of the small New England home of Mrs. Luce. Although the elderly woman was surprised to have such an unexpected early morning visitor, she immediately invited him in.

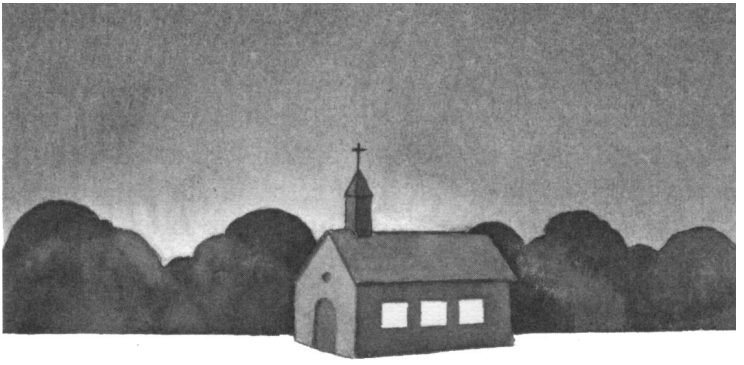
"Now, just what is it that you are here for?" she asked.

"Well, Mrs. Luce, Pastor Stead said that the Pentecostal church here needed a pastor," Ralph began somewhat hesitantly.

"Oh," she smiled. "You are a Pentecostal young man. Well, that's wonderful, but I think the best thing for me to do is to give you your breakfast and then pay your fare back to Boston.

So Ralph went back to Boston still full of the Holy Ghost and still feeling a deep desire and commitment to the work of God, but he was less sure of the exact direction his life would take. "What is God's will for my life?" he wondered.

A few months later Ralph quit his job and moved to Hyde Park, Massachusetts. Little did he know that in Hyde Park he would receive a revelation of the name of Jesus Christ that would set the course of his life and his ministry.



Hattie

When he was only sixteen years old, Ralph Cook left home to move to Hyde Park, Massachusetts. There he went to work as a machinist for the B. F. Sturdivant Machine Company. World War I was raging in Europe, and the United States was becoming more involved. Machinists were in demand and Ralph found that this was work that he enjoyed and was proficient in. He spent hours polishing his toolbox until it shone.

Church services and the work of the Lord were still the big things in Ralph's life, however. In Boston Billy Sunday was holding meetings which Ralph enjoyed attending.

Billy Sunday, "the baseball evangelist," assisted J. Wilbur Chapman in his evangelistic campaigns as the organizer and liaison man before he started his

own campaigns. His first revival was in Garner Opera House, Garner, Iowa, in 1897.

From this beginning he had many great meetings across the country in large wooden tabernacles. The first tabernacle for his meetings was built in Perry, Iowa, and cost seven hundred dollars. Others were built in Dixon and Princeton, Illinois; Columbus, Ohio; Philadelphia and Scranton, Pennsylvania; Denver, Colorado; Baltimore, Maryland; Washington, D.C. and New York City.

The one built in Baltimore was called the "Salvation Shed." It measured 288 feet by 218 feet and had a seating capacity of over fifteen thousand. It was reported that more than one and a half million people attended that revival in 1916.

In Boston the large tabernacle erected for the Sunday campaign was built by Bostonian brickmasons and was the only masonry tabernacle. It was reported that ten percent of the population of Boston "hit the sawdust trail" during these meetings in 1916 and 1917.[1]

One of these persons was Ralph's boss. The man had a vicious temper and knew it. "I went down the aisle in Billy Sunday's meeting but it did not seem to have much effect on me," the man confided to Ralph. "The next day after I came back one of my men did something. I had a hammer in my hand and I threw it across the room!" Then the man added somewhat wistfully, "I wish I had some of what you have, Ralph, but it cost too much."

"What you need is the Holy Ghost," Ralph witnessed to his boss, but the man refused to pay the price.

It was at a meeting in Boston that Ralph met the Lowell family. There were Mr. and Mrs. Lowell, their three sons and two daughters. Mr. Lowell also worked for the B. F. Sturdivant Machine Company setting up machinery all over the country. Mrs. Lowell had received the Holy Ghost, but Mr. Lowell considered himself an atheist. He and Ralph got into several lively discussions regarding evolution.

"Ralph, don't you know that science teaches us that mankind evolved from a monkey?" Mr. Lowell asserted.

"Well, when did we lose our tails?" Ralph responded.

"Well," Mr. Lowell admitted, "we don't know really."

"Where did the monkey come from?" Ralph persisted. "Where did the monkey get its life?"

"I can't answer that," Mr. Lowell finally conceded.

However, the one member of the Lowell family who really attracted Ralph's attention was the tall, beautiful, young daughter, Hattie. Lovely, auburn-haired Hattie! Although she dressed very simply, almost plainly, Hattie's outgoing, sparkling personality appealed to Ralph.

The attraction was mutual and quickly developed into love. Since Ralph was already on his own and had a good job, he felt free to ask Hattie to marry him. He was more than delighted with her answer. They were married in September 1918. The happy young couple set up housekeeping in a small but attractive apartment on the second floor of the Lowell home in Hyde Park. Just three little rooms, plainly furnished but full

of love and laughter.

Ralph was happy. He had a beautiful new bride, a neat apartment, a good job, and the Holy Ghost. But when he tried to work for God and to witness, he often encountered indifference and occasionally downright opposition. He liked to conduct street meetings with other young people, but some of the men from work followed him down the street hollering, "Blookity, blookity, blook! Holy roller! Holy roller!"

It was at a street meeting that Ralph found another way he could work for God. He discovered that he really could sing quite well and people would listen and respond to his singing even if they rejected his testimony.

He also knew that his life and testimony were bearing fruit on the job, for some of the men sought out the dedicated young Ralph Cook privately and talked with him about the Lord.

Ralph really saw quite a change in one man, who was a Scotchman and who was very vocal in his opposition to Ralph. "We ought to throw that young holy roller out on his head," he would often yell. The Scotchman may have felt a sense of guilt regarding his own young son, for one day when he approached Ralph to apologize for his actions, he spoke first of his son. He began, "I was too patriotic. I signed and let my boy go into the service. I would never do it again. My boy did not know how to take care of himself. He was just seventeen, but now he is buried in Flanders Field." Then looking at the young man in front of him, the grief-stricken father spoke from his heart, "I am sorry for what I said to you, Ralph."

But not all the men came to apologize or to turn toward the Lord.

One man especially seemed to almost hate the young Pentecostal. In despair Ralph decided to give up his job at Sturdivant's. But he did not leave before the man had one last rock to throw at him. When a truck came to move Ralph's toolbox, the hostile man took chips out of the end of the milling machine and shoveled them over the shining, well-kept box. Since the chips had a cutting compound in them, the whole box was damaged by the chips. Quietly Ralph took a soft rag, wiped off the box, and left. At that moment he did not realize that, in a few weeks, he would retrace his steps and return to work for the B. F. Sturdivant Machine Company.

"Don't worry, Hattie. There is a war on. They need good machinists. I will find another job soon," Ralph tried to reassure himself as well as his young wife. Every morning the hardworking, energetic young man went out to seek work. Day after day, he walked the streets. But in spite of his persistence, he was not successful.

"Sorry, we are not hiring just now."

"No, we really don't need any more machinists."

"Why don't you try Sturdivant's again? I hear they are still hiring."

Finally Ralph did return to the B. F. Sturdivant Machine Company and there he was quickly rehired.

"Sure, Cook, you have a good record here. We are glad to have you back."

Thus early in his life, Ralph Cook learned that he could suffer persecution and still be an overcomer. He

learned that God does not always deliver us from troubles and trials, but He does supply abundant grace to endure that which cannot be enjoyed. He learned that following God's will was not always simple or easy, and sometimes a person had only his faith to guide him.

Strength to survive tragedy was an attribute that young Ralph Cook was soon desperately to need.

The third most devastating epidemic ever to hit mankind struck in 1918. It was commonly called Spanish influenza probably because of its sudden appearance during the war in neutral Spain. But no one is sure where it first started, for it seemed to spring spontaneously in many countries. In the spring of 1918, the influenza epidemic occurred in Japan and China as well as in Europe among the American, British, and French troops. The first case in America was reported at Camp Funston (part of Fort Riley), Kansas, on March 11, 1918. By noon of this same day, one hundred and seven cases had been reported.

A second lethal wave of influenza hit Chungking in July, Persia and France in August. It is reported that some twenty-two million people died in this worldwide epidemic during 1918 and 1919.[2]

The Holy Ghost-filled Pentecostals were not immune to this raging epidemic, but they continued with their efforts to evangelize as well as they could.

One of the Pentecostal evangelists was Aimee Semple McPherson, who founded the Foursquare Gospel Church. In spite of the quarantines that shut down many schools, theaters, and churches, she was able to preach some meetings scheduled throughout

Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New York. Ralph was able to attend a few of these meetings and was impressed with her dynamic preaching and her skillful manner of handling the services.

Aimee McPherson preached in many pioneer Pentecostal churches throughout the United States, including Brother Durham's church in Chicago.[3] In her meetings, hundreds of people turned to God for help. However, Mrs. McPherson and her small daughter became stricken with the dreaded flu. When they recovered in a few days, Mrs. McPherson felt led to go to California, where she later built Angelus Temple.[4]

In the same year of 1918 in Eureka Springs, Arkansas, several Pentecostal leaders gathered for a special meeting. These preachers included such men as Daniel C. O. Opperman, M. E. Mills, William Booth-Clibborn, Brother and Sister W. L. Stallones, W. R. Pair, A. O. Moore, A. D. Urshan, Arthur Duck, Claborn Williams, Mary Krause, Sybil Krause, Mother Barnes, Brother and Sister J. A. Johnson, Sam Nalley, and Odell Cagle. In the middle of this special meeting, about forty people were stricken with the dreadful influenza at one time—preachers, wives, and children together with the workers.[5]

Another Pentecostal preacher's wife who was stricken with the dread disease was Sister B. H. Hite from St. Louis, Missouri. At the time, Mary Hite was an expectant mother upon whom the influenza was especially lethal. However, after the saints prayed earnestly, she recovered.

Ralph and Hattie, who was expecting her first child, were living in Hyde Park near Boston when the

influenza epidemic hit New England. On August 28, 1918, a sailor on a ship at a Boston dock had symptoms of influenza. Quickly the devastating epidemic raced through all New England like a forest fire. In four short months fifteen thousand civilians were dead in Massachusetts.[6]

Shortly after Hattie had given birth to her baby, both she and the newborn child became victims. At the same time, the whole Lowell family became sick. Only Ralph was able to nurse his young wife. He felt so alone and helpless as the high fever took its dreadful course. He was only nineteen years old. Taking care of a newborn baby and her mother was scary enough, but what could he do as the burning fever went higher? It seemed to him that they vomited up every bit of nourishment that he offered. With a cool cloth, he wiped Hattie's forehead and then turned to comfort the tiny baby girl.

At that time antibiotics were unknown. Most doctors were only prescribing quinine, which had little effect on the vomiting or the raging fever followed by clammy chills.[7]

To Ralph, Hattie's sudden death followed by the death of the baby came as a shock. So many were dying in Boston that Hattie's body, along with the baby, lay on a slab for three days before Ralph could obtain a casket for them.

Young Ralph Cook's faith in God and confidence in himself were personally tried as by fire. The distraught, grief-stricken young husband had to make all arrangements for his wife and baby's funeral as best he could since the Lowells were all very sick. Although he

lacked one hundred dollars having enough money to pay the expenses, Ralph got a cheap casket and buried his young wife and baby in Dedham, Massachusetts.

Invariably the conversations among people in the community turned toward the dead and the dying. Rumors, many of which proved to be true, spread from house to house.

"They are just tagging the corpses and burying them with a steam shovel in Philadelphia."

"They say that about fifteen percent of the people in Baltimore have died with the flu."

"It's not so bad in New York. Only six percent have died there. Wonder why?"

"It's bad overseas, too. The papers said there were probably a thousand children left orphans in Samoa."

"Down at the docks I heard that the Coast Guard reported that whole villages of Eskimos have been totally wiped out."[8]

"Franklin Roosevelt, the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, has been very sick too."[9]

The raging epidemic did affect the whole world with the exception of tiny Trist da Cunha in the extreme South Atlantic.

After the funeral, Ralph Cook walked out of his small, neat apartment where he left his furniture and where he tried to leave his tender memories. He never went back. Too much hurt! Too many memories! A lonely grave containing a young wife and a newborn baby.

The tall, young Pentecostal, who had wanted to pastor a church at sixteen, who had learned to witness on the job, to sing in street meetings, to believe in

miracles of healings in Holy Ghost revivals, now tasted the cup of suffering.

Still the flame of the Holy Ghost flickered in the big heart of the tall young man named Ralph Cook. He was still determined to follow the will of God in his life.

Seeking comfort for his torn heart, Ralph returned to his parents' home in Everett, Massachusetts, but when he arrived, he was too grief-stricken to talk. For a long time he sat at the kitchen table, his eyes flooded with tears, his head bent over the table, his trembling body leaning on his arms. Then his deep racking sobs filled the room, breaking the hearts of the ones who heard him. The family sat weeping silently, sharing in his sorrow but unable to find words that could comfort him.

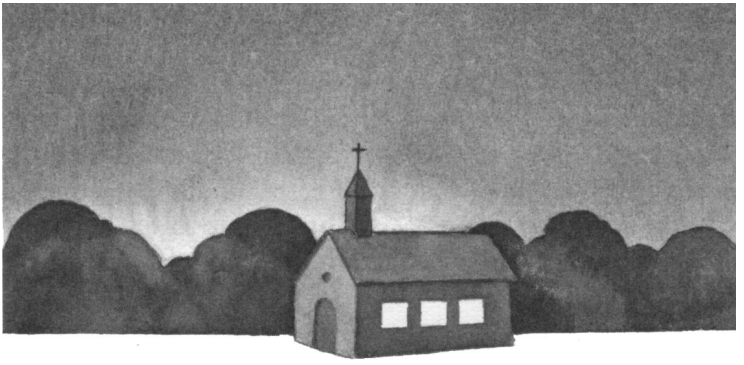
Ralph eventually lifted his head a little and began singing:

> Tho' the way seems straight and narrow,
> All I claimed was swept away,
> My ambitions, plans, and wishes,
> At my feet in ashes lay.
> But I will praise Him!
> I will praise Him![10]

Never had the tall young man stood taller.

[1]D. Bruce Lockerbie, *Billy Sunday*, pp. 6-15.
[2]Geoffrey Marks and William K. Beatty, *Epidemics*, pp. 271-277.
[3]Ethel Goss, *Winds of God*, p. 205.
[4]Robert Bahr, *Least of All Saints.*

[5]Odell Cagle, *Echoes of the Past*, p. 27.
[6]Geoffrey Marks and William K. Beatty, loc. cit.
[7]Anthony Zeoli, *Free Forever*, p. 35-38.
[8]Geoffrey Marks and William K. Beatty, loc. cit.
[9]Lorena A. Hickok, *The Road to the White House*, *FDR: The Pre-Presidential Years*, p. 117.
[10]"I Will Praise Him," *Sing Unto The Lord*, p. 55.



Young Preacher

After his wife's tragic death in the influenza epidemic, Ralph Cook began to attend a black church on Shawmut Avenue in Boston. This church was of the trinity faith. Brother Wilks, who preached three works of grace, was the pastor. Tall gangling Ralph liked the medium-sized, older black preacher. "Brother Wilks really knows his Bible," Ralph commented to a friend.

Also attending the church on Shawmut Avenue was an intelligent young Negro, Oddous Barber. During the First World War, the United States government had moved this capable man to Boston to take charge of the blueprinting at Charlestown Navy Yard. Brother Barber and Ralph became good friends.

"Would you like to go fishing in the ocean, Ralph? I can tell you where the fish are. The government

keeps up with the fish, and I can find out where to drag your net." This was the only information about his high level security job that Oddous Barber ever shared with his young friend.

Barber was not only a responsible man performing a responsible job for his country; he was also a faithful witness for God. It was February 1908 that Barber and his brother, John, attended a Pentecostal service in an old tin shop on West Michigan Street in Indianapolis. There they were both filled with the Holy Ghost. Later Brother Barber went to visit a friend of his, Gladstone Thomas Haywood.

"Tom, let me tell you what the Lord has done for me." Barber shared his burning testimony with his friend. Later G. T. Haywood, along with his wife and sister, attended a Pentecostal service and responded to Oddous Barber's invitation to pray. It was at this meeting that Brother Haywood was gloriously filled with the Holy Ghost.

Afterward when Brother Haywood reflected on that wonderful night when he received the Holy Ghost, he wrote the beautiful song of thanksgiving, "Thank God for the Blood." This song has blessed thousands of congregations and perhaps millions of God's people.

Thank God For the Blood

G.T.H. G.T. Haywood



When Evangelist Glenn Cook came to Indianapolis, Indiana, in 1915, preaching what was called the "new issue," on the message of Jesus Name baptism and the oneness of God, he visited Brother Haywood in his home. At first Brother Haywood was unwilling to accept the message, but when he heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Walk in the light lest greater darkness come upon you," he responded, "Yes, Lord, I will believe and I will accept it." Soon he and his entire congregation were baptized in the name of Jesus Christ by Brother L. V. Roberts, pastor of Oakhill Tabernacle in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Brother Haywood was the outstanding founder and pastor of Christ Temple, 11th and Senate Streets, Indianapolis, Indiana, until his untimely death in 1932.[1] He wrote thirty-eight songs and compiled them along with fifty-six other worship and doctrinal songs into a hymnal that was published in the twenties.[2]

As an unassuming Andrew had brought his dynamic brother, Peter, to the Lord so had Oddous Barber brought G. T. Haywood.

Oddous Barber continued to serve God by helping and influencing others. At one service in Boston, Brother Barber gave Pastor Wilks a little bit of unusual support. The evening message had just been delivered when a woman walked into the church wearing a very long veil. Brother Barber was sitting on the platform with Brother Wilks, who assumed that the lady was some demon-inspired person who had come to disturb the service. As the woman started down the aisle, Brother Wilks became excited and began to pray and then to speak in tongues as if he were talking to the

lady. Seeing that both Brother Wilks and the veiled lady were confused, Brother Barber tried to help.

"Brother Wilks," asked Brother Barber, "do you want her to sit down?"

"Yes," replied Brother Wilks.

"Well, just tell her to sit down. You need not talk in tongues to her," advised Brother Barber.

Brother Wilks immediately invited the lady to be seated, and she complied. The interruption was over and the service proceeded without further problems.

Services on Shawmut Avenue were a little unique on occasion and Ralph enjoyed them a lot. He was especially interested in Brother Barber's preaching. Brother Barber preached the Jesus Name message, but he did not actually "name" the message. He was preparing the way for this congregation to receive the truth when the time came. For almost a year Brother Barber faithfully preached the message in many ways without once referring to what he preached as the "Oneness message" or "new issue" message. Eventually his patience and preaching were rewarded. God sent someone to finish what Brother Barber had begun.

A small paper, *Meat In Due Season*, published by Frank J. Ewart, was being wonderfully used of the Lord in spreading the message of water baptism in the name of Jesus Christ. Among those convinced by this paper of the truth of the oneness of God was evangelist Lemuel C. Hall. Brother Hall, a former Christian and Missionary Alliance pastor, received the Holy Ghost when a group of workers headed by Brother A. G. Canada and including Brother Howard A. Goss decided to use a San Antonio revival as a confirmation from

God concerning "other tongues." Although no one in San Antonio had ever seen anyone receive the Holy Ghost, yet Brother Hall was gloriously filled after two hours of praising God.

Brother Hall had an imposing appearance. He dressed with care and a touch of class. His thick head of hair was carefully groomed, giving him an aristocratic appearance. He was also described as a profound thinker who used irrefutable logic along with a keen wit and just a touch of sarcasm to persuade hundreds of the truth of the baptism of the Holy Ghost and water baptism in the name of Jesus Christ.[3] Brother L. C. Hall did "name" the message when he began to preach in Boston, Massachusetts.

Hearing the preaching of Brother Hall, Brother Barber invited three elders—Wilks, Wilkerson and White—from the church to hear him. As the elders sat and listened attentively to the irrefutable logic of this "Prince of Evangelists," they became convinced of the truth of the message.

"This is what you have been telling us for a year, Brother Barber!" exclaimed Brother Wilks.

During the first week Brother Hall preached in Boston about fifty people were baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. As many or more were baptized the second week. When Brother Hall was leaving, the people invited Brother Haywood to come. He preached for about three weeks. All together there were about three hundred people who were baptized in the name of Jesus Christ before this great meeting ended.

"This Jesus Name baptism preaching is creating quite a storm in Boston," young Ralph Cook observed.

Later Ralph was called upon to testify and to preach in Brother Wilks' church on Shawmut. The elders knew that God had His mighty hand upon the tall young man.

"Brother Cook, you need your credentials to preach," Brother Wilks advised. "God needs many more young men to help in the harvest."

In 1919 an older black minister, Brother N. Alexander preached the ordination services at the church on Shawmut for the nineteen-year-old Ralph G. Cook. The fee for the credentials was one dollar.

"Oh, God, I know I am not worthy, nor am I capable without Your help," Ralph prayed. "But I'll do whatever You desire. I want to do Your will in my life."

Sometime after Hattie's death, Ralph Cook met some people who were going to New York. They suggested that he go along with them to help with the driving, to sing on the streets, and to help them in their ministry.

"My dear brother," Ralph cautioned, "you know what I believe. I believe the full message. When I preach, I preach the oneness of the mighty God in Christ. And, too, I have a good job here. . . ."

"I know what you believe, Brother Cook. I believe the same thing. Quit your job and go with us," the man urged.

"Furthermore, brother, I have got a hundred dollar funeral bill left over. I must work out my expense for my wife's funeral," Ralph added somewhat uncertainly.

"Oh, don't worry about that. We'll take care of

that," the minister assured the young preacher.

When they got to New York, the brother went to a big church where he preached, "They saw no man save Jesus only." Some of the trinitarian people came privately to Ralph Cook inquiring, "What does he believe?" Then Brother Cook explained to them the Oneness message.

When they returned to their lodging, the brother scolded Ralph. "You keep your mouth shut. You are not with me to tell what I believe or what I do not believe."

"Well, I may be in trouble," thought Ralph, somewhat confused about the whole affair. He was not at all sure that he was in the will of God.

From New York they traveled to Philadelphia. There the minister preached in another church. One morning while they were in prayer, the man began to pray for Ralph. "Straighten this young man out. Get him out of false doctrine."

Quickly Ralph turned on his knees and retorted, "Brother, you might as well save your breath. God will never hear that prayer." Nevertheless Ralph continued on with the people all the way to Jacksonville, Florida. Over and over he cranked that old Ford. He almost broke his arms. Many roads were muddy and Ralph had to get out and push in mud up to his knees.

Ralph and the minister continued to disagree. Finally when they arrived in Jacksonville, Ralph said, "I am sorry, my brother, I am leaving. We are having too much trouble."

Although the minister had promised to help pay the one hundred dollars that Ralph owed on Hattie's

funeral, when they parted company, all Ralph received was ten dollars. He had preached. He had sung on the streets. He had done most of the driving. He had asked for nothing.

"Lord, You must help me," Ralph prayed. "Help me find a job." Although the young preacher tramped the streets day after day, from early morning until late at night, he could not find a job of any sort. However, some good people who had heard of his plight gave him some small offerings.

"I do believe I have enough now for a boat ticket to Boston," Ralph noticed as he painstakingly counted each coin. "I do not think that it is God's will for me to stay here."

Before he caught the boat, a young woman, Miss Swift, came to Ralph and said, "When you get to Savannah, Georgia, the boat will stop for twelve hours to load. My dear old mother has a small church in Savannah. Go and visit her during the stop. She will be glad to have you," Miss Swift suggested.

When Ralph got off the boat in Savannah, he found the elderly lady preacher, Sister Swift.

"I am glad to meet such a fine young man who is out preaching the gospel," the hospitable southern woman welcomed him graciously. "It was thoughtful of my daughter to tell you to look me up. I have a few sick calls to make. Why don't you go with me?"

After a short but pleasant visit with the dear sister, Ralph started to leave. "I had better go. I must catch that boat," he explained.

"Well, Brother Cook, I am glad you stopped by for a little visit. I feel led to give you something," said the

old lady as she slipped a bill in Ralph's hand.

"Thank you so much, Sister Swift," responded Ralph. "You are very kind. Another brother has already given me a dollar. Thank you so much and good-bye."

"That makes two extra dollars," thought the young preacher. "God is good. He is supplying all my needs according to His riches in glory." When he examined the gift from the elderly woman, however, he was amazed to find it was a ten dollar bill—not just a one.

"Eleven dollars! That's almost a fortune. Thank You, Jesus," Ralph began to praise the Lord. Again he felt the sweet assurance that as long as he followed God's will, the Lord would take care of him.

Shortly after the boat sailed out from the dock, a woman approached Ralph. "Young man, didn't I hear you singing on the streets? I am going to ask the captain if he will allow you to sing for us in the social cabin."

After receiving the captain's permission, the young woman requested Ralph to sing some current popular songs. "I am sorry, but I don't sing those kinds of songs," Ralph explained. "All I sing is hymns."

"Well, that's quite all right. Just go ahead and sing hymns for us," responded the woman agreeably.

What a pleasant voyage home it turned out to be! For three days and nights Ralph had a great time, enjoying the sea air, singing hymns and testifying about the greatness of the Lord.

While on board ship, another man approached him and gave him five dollars. "Brother Cook, I am giving you five dollars as a loan. When you get to Boston, if

Brother L. C. Hall happens to be there, I owe him five dollars for songbooks. Would you mind giving this money to Brother Hall for me?"

"I'll be glad to," Ralph agreed.

When the boat docked in New York, Ralph bought a ticket to Boston. Carefully he counted the leftover change. There was exactly five dollars left for Brother Hall if he should happen to see him.

Shortly after arriving in Boston, Ralph hurried over to the church. There was Brother Hall sitting on the platform.

"Praise the Lord, Brother Hall! I have some money to give you." Scrupulously Ralph Cook counted out five dollars to Brother Hall. "God knows exactly what I need and He supplies all my needs." The young preacher's faith was increased as he faithfully served and trusted God. He felt he was walking in the will of God.

Later Ralph went to New York alone, where he preached in a church whose pastor was a black woman, Sister Lightford. Ralph found New York to be an unfriendly place. He remembered that uptown where the wealthy women walked their dogs down the streets were signs everywhere that read, "Curb your dog! Curb your dog!" He felt that the spirit of the entire city was reflected in those signs. Was New York indeed "going to the dogs"? he wondered.

Sister Lightford lived downtown toward the Bronx. Most of the people rode the subway to church. Although Ralph received no offering for his preaching in the small church, it was a good experience for him. The last night he was there a man named Burley approached Ralph.

"Brother Cook, would you go with me over on Third Avenue? There is a little West Indian church there. They are trinity. I would like to have you speak with them."

As usual the congregation on Third Avenue met very late. Ralph opened to the Book of Daniel and began to preach. As he was finishing about eleven o'clock, God spoke to him, "Son, these people are honest. They have honest hearts. You give them the message."

"I have something else to tell you," Ralph explained to the congregation as he began to preach baptism in the name of Jesus Christ and the oneness of God. By the time he finished, it was almost midnight.

"That sounds wonderful! Why don't you stay and hold us a meeting?" many of the people urged. However, Ralph's sister, Adelade, had a friend, Ethel Mulloy, a beautiful older evangelist with laughing dark eyes. These two women were urging him to come to Chicago to hold a meeting. So he replied, "I have got to go. I am due in Chicago."

Then one of the men said, "I will keep in touch with you and let you know what happens." About a week later Ralph got a letter from New York telling him that eleven persons from that small West Indian assembly on Third had been baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Still later he got the following letter from Sister Ida Burleigh saying that the entire congregation had been baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

Had he left New York too soon? What was God's will for his life?

New york,May 12,19,19

Dear Bro. Cook,

Greetings in the Name of our Lord and Savour Jesus Christ,

I,am Writing you to tell you J esus is Victor,Through your message Friday night 3rd Ave has the Rev, And the whole Mission is going down in J esus Name next Sunday, D,V,We only wish you could have stayed for another week, But the Lord be praised for what He has done if you was not so far away We would ask you to come back and finish, your job and baptize them all,It would be blessed, Dont you think so? We are praying for you that the Lord bless you and make you a blessing in his Wonderful Name,My testimoney this Morning isthat through His Dear Name I have the Victory over the World the flesh And the Devil.Hallelujah, pray much for us here ,Yours, for the Glory of His Name

Sis,Ida G, Burleigh

56 E,131 st

N,Y,C

That was the beginning of Brother Robert C. Lawson's work in New York City. Brother Lawson was an elder from Brother G. T. Haywood's work in Indianapolis.

When Ralph arrived in Chicago, his sister, Adelade, and her friend, Ethel Mulloy, had arranged for him a room with a hard-of-hearing landlady. "You can room here, Ralph. Pray as long and as loud as you like. You won't disturb anyone," Sister Mulloy explained. So Ralph began to preach in Chicago at a black church on State Street.

One morning Sister Mulloy asked him, "Brother Cook, do you ever pray?"

"Oh, yes," Ralph answered. "I pray." And he did. Many times he had quite a good prayer experience.

"I want to tell you something, Brother Cook," Sister Mulloy continued. "There is another experience that you need to have. It is called 'waiting on the Lord.' Tomorrow morning before you come down for breakfast, when you get through with your prayer, I want you to stay on that floor for one hour. Don't come down for breakfast until you have spent one hour on that floor. When you run out of things to say, just sit there and wait on the Lord."

Well, that was a very trying experience for Ralph. He really did not see the need for it. But every time he started to get up and go down for breakfast, he remembered Sister Mulloy's admonition.

"Sister Mulloy is a very godly woman. After all, she had been a call girl in Sacramento, California, but God has forgiven her and filled her with the Holy Ghost. I had better finish the hour. O Lord, You know I do want

to do Your will in my life!"

Every second dragged. The minutes crept by. All sorts of thoughts passed through his mind. But he stayed the full hour. He kept praying for the will of God for his life.

Every morning he went through the same ritual. He spent ten or fifteen minutes in anointed, fervent prayer and the rest of the hour was almost torture. But he sat on the floor faithfully waiting until the hour was over. After two weeks of this hour-long morning prayer and wait, the Spirit of the Lord came upon him. He lay on the floor, he praised the Lord, he sang, he spoke in tongues. He was bathed in floods of the joy of the Lord. Thus began a lifelong habit of an hour of prayer each morning in the life of Ralph Cook. "I believe God wants me to pray at least an hour a day," Ralph thought. And as the years passed, he knew that this daily prayer time was God's will for him.

Although establishing a morning prayer hour was a marvelous experience in Chicago, Ralph had other meaningful experiences there. One particular experience occurred on January 16, 1920, the first night that prohibition came in. It was quite late when Ralph finished preaching at the black church on State Street. The congregation usually gathered late and they liked to "have church" even if they were late in leaving. Ralph was feeling good. The Lord had blessed in an unusual way.

"Praise the Lord, brother," Ralph hugged a big black fellow. Five white men were in the congregation that night. It was almost midnight when Ralph went out the door, but he had taken only a few steps when

the five white men surrounded him and began to question him.

"What do you mean by repentance?" questioned one of the men, but Ralph smelled liquor on his breath and knew that the man was not interested in repenting. He was trying to pick a fight. Ralph braced himself for trouble and sure enough trouble came. The man hit Ralph hard underneath the chin. Although his head popped back, Ralph did not respond with violence. All he did was raise his hands and say, "Hallelujah!" This startled the men and they all fell back a little.

At that very moment a streetcar came around the corner with its loud bell ringing. Ralph walked right through the middle of those thugs, climbed on the streetcar, and headed for his room.

"Is that you, Ralph?" called Adelade. "What are you so happy about? Why are you shouting?"

"I just got a punch in the jaw. I am getting a chance to learn a little about what the apostles went through," the young preacher responded. He had never felt more in the will of God.

In the latter part of 1919, Ralph went to Indianapolis, Indiana. There he had a chance to sit under the ministry of Elder G. T. Haywood.

Brother Haywood's influence as a minister of the gospel in the city of Indianapolis was so great that he received a share of the credit for the low crime rate in the city. But his influence was not limited to Indianapolis.

"He's a walking Bible!" "An outstanding teacher!" "A great evangelist!" These commendations and other

similar remarks were made not only by the Pentecostals in his own church but by men everywhere. He was highly respected by Pentecostal leaders such as Frank J. Ewart, Howard Goss, and L. V. Roberts. For years Haywood published and edited a paper entitled *"The Voice in the Wilderness,"* and he wrote numerous articles for other Pentecostal periodicals. Ewart called Haywood's pen "A mighty Pentecostal sledgehammer in Christian journalism."[4]

Ralph considered it a privilege to attend Christ Temple and sit under Brother Haywood's ministry. He definitely felt that this was God's will for him at that time.

Large crowds of more than eight hundred attended the services at Christ Temple. On Sunday morning Brother Haywood usually preached for two hours. Hundreds were blessed by his anointed ministry.

It was here that Ralph heard the amazing story of old Uncle Bob White. Uncle Bob had his own wagon that he used to pick up trash. Once while he was out picking up trash, a severe storm came up. He got down from his wagon and took shelter near a building. Suddenly lightning struck him in the chest. The lightning also struck a bunch of keys in his pocket. The keys melted, burning a hole in his leg. Bystanders picked him up and took him to the Methodist hospital.

The doctors gathered around to examine him. They pronounced him dead and called the undertaker. Just as they were carrying him out, Uncle Bob came to, jumped up and began to shout, "I have been to heaven! I have been to heaven!"

Time and time again, Uncle Bob testified, "Children, don't hold your peace. This is the stillest world that we will ever be in." Then the congregation would shout and shake and praise God.

One of the men of the church provided Ralph a room while he was in Indianapolis. Unfortunately, the room was alive with cockroaches.

"I am going to do something about these bugs," Ralph decided. "Mom never had bugs. She kept a clean house. I will get some powder and spray them."

He did just that, but that night it seemed that the roaches came out by the millions. When the brother noticed what Ralph had done, he scolded him sharply. "Don't ever do that again." Some bad situations may be better just left alone.

"Ralph, let's go down to the Inter-urban train station," one of the brothers said some time later. "There's a young man coming that I want you to meet." So it was that Ralph Cook, the young widower, met another young preacher who had lost his wife, Brother L. R. Ooton.

L. R. Ooton was about Ralph's age, a fine looking blond-headed young man. The two preachers became good friends. Like Ralph, Ooton was an excellent singer. Already he was composing songs, many of which were later included in Brother G. T. Haywood's hymnal, *The Bridegroom Songs*.

One song, "To Be Like Jesus," became a favorite of many Pentecostals. It seemed to express the deep desire not only of L. R. Ooton's heart but of all Pentecostals.[5]

To Be Like Him

L. R. O. Copyright, 1923, by L. R. Ooton L. R. Ooton



Several of the young preachers in Indianapolis often met in a room at Brother George Carlisle's home. They begin to refer to this room as a prophet's chamber. Here they gathered to study, to discuss the Scriptures and to pray. Sometimes they stayed all night in these meetings. Brother Ooton, Brother Fitzpatrick, Brother Curts, and Brother Cook were among the men who attended these meetings. Here in prayer they sought God's will.

In the "prophet's chamber" was an old overstuffed chair which had been stored in the attic. Some of the young men had brought it down to use for their meetings. Brother Carlisle, who had a habit of beating on something as he prayed, by chance knelt one night in front of the dusty old chair. Soon he got lost in fervent prayer and began beating on the chair.

After the men had finished a good season of prayer, Brother Curts said, "Brother Carlisle, go look in the mirror." Then all the men began to laugh. Only his eyes which he had squinted tight while in prayer were visible through the dust that covered his face.

God had His hand on these young men who met and prayed together. All of them were later active in the ministry. Praying and studying together helped them find the will of God for their lives.

Brother Ooton told Ralph of a small church in Bloomington, Indiana, that needed a pastor. This interested Ralph, and he decided to talk with Brother Haywood about it.

"Well, Brother Cook, that church is really in kind of a mess. They are all torn up over the marriage and divorce question. I don't know whether you could han-

dle it or not. It might be too much for you," he cautioned. "However, if you feel led to go, go ahead. I'll pray for you and I'm sure that God will take care of you."

As Ralph and his friend, Brother L. R. Ooton, traveled to Bloomington to look at the church, Ralph thought of his experience of several years before when he went to Exeter, New Hampshire, to apply for a pastorate. Brother Ooton consented to go with Ralph since he was acquainted with the church and could introduce him.

The church was just a small remodeled house on a hill. It seated fifty or sixty people, but it seemed big to Ralph Cook. His salary was to be fourteen dollars per week. After he was accepted as pastor, one of the saints, Jim Beck, was kind enough to offer Brother Cook a place to stay. Brother Beck was a building engineer for Bloomington College. For his large family of eight children, Brother Beck had a small house with an attached barn. Horseflies from the barn were sometimes a problem at meals. But the young preacher from Boston learned to ignore them.

Ralph shared a room with four of the children. The children had one bed, but there was a small halfbed for the preacher in the same room.

Ralph was tall, six feet and four inches. First he stretched out and his feet hung over the end of the bed. He pulled his feet up, but then his knees draped over the side of the bed. Still this was not the worst of the matter. To his amazement and annoyance, Mrs. Beck chose to lay the baby on Ralph's bed during the day. As could be expected, the bed was usually slightly

damp and a little smelly.

Young Brother Cook endeared himself both to the harassed housewife, young Mrs. Beck, and to the young children when he helped bathe the babies and get them ready for church. "Now, I will hang you out on the line to dry," he teased the children after he had helped with their baths. "Now, are you all ready? Let's go to church." The young pastor gathered up the children and took them to church himself in order to give the mother a little help.

Another one of the men in the church, Homer Bean, worked at that time for the Hoosier Cabinet Company. Unions were beginning to organize in the shop where he worked as a cabinetmaker.

"I don't want to join that union, Brother Cook. What am I going to do? They are really pressing me," Brother Bean confided in his young pastor.

Without thinking, Brother Cook replied, "Well, Homer, you go ahead and stay there. Don't leave your job. Stay on. God can work the thing out. God will shut that plant down before they can turn you out."

Hoosier Cabinet Company was a large company, but Ralph knew that God was bigger still and was able to do anything. Homer went back to work, but the pressure was so great that one day he pulled off his apron, picked up his tools, and told the men, "I am going to quit. I am tired of this pressure."

However, the head office heard about the problem and sent for Homer. "Come on up, Homer. We want to talk to you." After they talked with him awhile, they said, "Homer, go back down and put on your apron and go to work. We'll close this plant down before we will

turn you out."

When Homer got off work, he rushed down to talk with his pastor. "Brother Cook, everything you prophesied came true. It is hard to believe, but they told me they would shut the plant down before they would turn me out. On top of that, they gave me a raise!"

After a few testimonies of this nature, the saints learned to trust the leadership of the young man from Boston. Ralph Cook continued his practice of "waiting on the Lord" in much prayer. Many times he laid on the floor three and four hours at a time and prayed and called on the Lord. He often prayed for guidance. In response, God sent a great revival in the small church, and more than fifty people received the Holy Ghost.

Among those who received the Holy Ghost were Mr. and Mrs. Brown. It was only a few weeks later that Brother Brown, a railroad man, noticed that Brother Cook did not have a comfortable living arrangement in the crowded Beck home. He and his wife talked the situation over. "We have no children. Why don't we offer Brother Cook a room with us?" So the young pastor soon had a nice room with the Browns.

"What wonderful cakes you make, Sister Brown," was the enthusiastic comment of the Brown's new guest.

Faithfully each day the young pastor went up the hill to the little house that was his church. There he prayed and called on God to help him in his first pastorate. And God did help. There was no trouble on the marriage and divorce issue. Although he was young, Brother Cook spoke with authority in his saints' meetings and the saints listened, respected, and obeyed

him. Instead of trouble there was a great revival and many received the Holy Ghost.

After about five months in Bloomington, Ralph received a letter from his sister, Adelade, wanting him to come up to Nova Scotia, Canada, to help her and her friend, Ethel Mulloy, with a revival. After prayer, he felt he should return to the East, so he resigned the little church in Bloomington. God had used Brother Cook in Bloomington, and there is today a beautiful church building on the same spot where Ralph Cook pastored.

After a brief visit in Boston, Ralph caught a train out for St. John, New Brunswick. He paid for his ticket, but he realized he had no money left for food. "Lord, either provide me with food or take away my appetite," Ralph prayed. As the train sped along the tracks, Ralph talked with a man sitting next to him.

"We have to change at the next station. Perhaps we will have time for a sandwich," the fellow said. Although he had no money, Ralph did not want to appear unfriendly, so he got off the train with his new friend.

"Two ham sandwiches, please," his hungry friend ordered.

"No, nothing for me, thank you," Ralph responded to the waiter's inquiry.

When the waiter brought the two sandwiches, his friend was unhappy. "Mustard! They put lots of mustard on these sandwiches. I don't like mustard at all. Ralph, do you like mustard on a ham sandwich?"

"Why, yes, I am very fond of mustard. Thank you very much," Ralph responded as his friend handed him the sandwiches. "And thank You, Jesus, for these delicious ham sandwiches," he added.

"Antigonish! Next stop, Antigonish!" the train conductor called. The young preacher got his things together and got off. He knew there was no transportation from here to Country Harbor Mines where the revival was being held. Thinking of his situation, he took hope when he saw a mailman. "Perhaps he will give me a ride," he thought.

"No, I am sorry but I cannot accommodate you, young man," the mailman replied when Ralph asked for a ride.

Standing beside the mail car, Ralph felt faith and zeal rise up in his heart. Thoughts raced through his mind. "I have to get back to Country Harbor Mines. It is thirty-five miles back there. I cannot walk that far. That man ought to give me a ride. He's going right there." Just as the man started the car, Ralph threw his suitcase on top of the bag of mail and climbed in.

"Well, I guess I can't throw you out," the mailman must have thought. At least he let Ralph ride with him. When they arrived at the house where Adelade was staying, Ralph rushed in and told his sister about his plight.

"Oh, Ralph, here is some money. Go pay the mailman for your ride. We needed you here. We already have fifteen persons ready to be baptized."

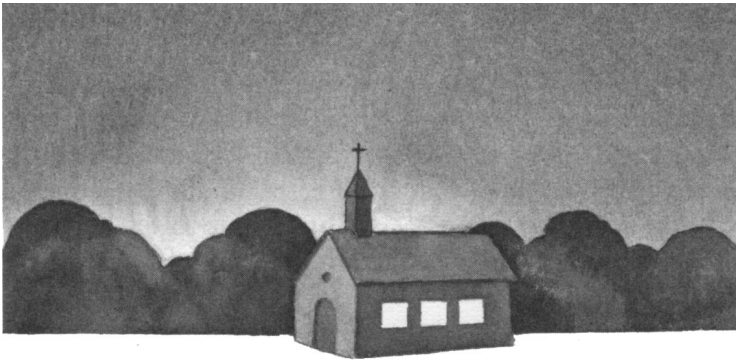
Although it was a dreadfully cold day, Ralph was happy to baptize the new converts in the precious name of Jesus Christ. "Our hearts are warm and on fire with the Holy Ghost although this water is cold," they told him.

It was in this part of Canada that nineteen-year-old Ralph Cook was asked to preach his first funeral. A

miner had lost his life in an accident in Mentol Mines. Although the truck that was bringing the body back to town broke down on the road, Ralph Cook conducted the funeral service without further mishap. The funeral service was held in a building used by the Church of England in the small Canadian community of Country Harbor Mines.

After preaching a few weeks in Country Harbor Mines beyond Antigonish, Nova Scotia, Ralph Cook decided once more to return to Boston.

[1]James L. Tyson, *Before I Sleep*, pp. 1-9.
[2]G. T. Haywood, *The Bridegroom Songs.*
[3]Ethel Goss, *The Winds of God*, pp. 103-105.
[4]Frank J. Ewart, *The Phenomenon of Pentecost*, pp. 202-203.
[5]G. T. Haywood, *The Bridegroom Songs,* p. 71.



Nellie

After the Nova Scotia trip, Ralph returned to Boston for a brief visit with his family before he left for an evangelistic trip in the Midwest. Since Ralph's good friend, Brother L. R. Ooton, was pastoring in Mount Vernon, Illinois, he thought he would preach some meetings near him. Besides Brother Ooton, several other ministers were preaching in Illinois, among them were Brother and Sister Benjamin Harrison Hite, Brother Odell Cagle, and Brother Albert S. Davis and his wife, Bertie. They were all preaching the Oneness message.

One Pentecostal evangelist, Brother Earl Hill, held a great revival in Centralia, Illinois, where 135 persons received the Holy Ghost in a six-weeks meeting. Many were slain under the power of God and fell prostrate in the sawdust. It rained during the meeting and water

stood in puddles, but the people often lay in the water talking in tongues, oblivious to everything but the mighty move of God. During one of Brother Hill's stirring messages on prophecy, several people under deep conviction ran from the meeting and through the woods in an effort to escape.

Hearing of the great move of God in Centralia, Ralph decided to go to Brother Hill's meeting. As he walked into the tent that first day, his attention was caught immediately by the beautiful young lady who was preaching. She was just five foot two, dark hair, big blue eyes—a tiny, little slip of a woman dressed in a polka-dot dress with snowy white collar and cuffs. To Ralph she was an unforgettable vision of loveliness.

Later Ralph learned that the young lady was Nellie Jane Reppond and that she was originally from Marion, Louisiana. She grew up in a large family on a plantation. The Repponds attended the Baptist church in the community. Usually Nellie got quite religious in the summer during revival time, but in the winter she shied away from the church as she enjoyed dancing and other worldly affairs.

In 1910, when Nellie was only fourteen years old, she met some Pentecostals in Monroe, Louisiana, a Brother and Sister Davies. They were prosperous saints who owned quite a bit of property, including a hardware store. But what she remembers most about them is that they really loved God.

Later in Hot Spring, Arkansas, Nellie was invited to attend a Pentecostal service. As she and her friends were riding a streetcar to service, she kept trying to pick out the church. Almost every church building they

passed, she would think they had arrived, but each time her friends remained seated. Finally when they came to the end of the streetcar line, they got off the car and began to walk down through an alley. Soon they were standing in front of a saloon. The sign was still on the outside of the building.

"How strange," Nellie thought. "That looks like religious paper on the windows, and this must be where they are holding services. This surely cannot be much of a church. If my mother ever saw me go into a place like this, she would disown me."

The young girl was definitely disturbed at the thought of having church in a saloon, but she bravely made her way inside with the others. She noticed that about a dozen people had gathered for a service. A crate served for a pulpit. Chairs were arranged for seats. When the worship service started, Nellie knew that she had never been in a church like this one. Before she quite realized what was happening, some of the good sisters had her in the altar on her knees. Next, she fell to the floor as the power of God moved on her, and soon she was filled with the Spirit. As Nellie received her baptism of the Holy Ghost, she saw a great bulb of light which seemed to burst and fill the room. Then she realized that she was speaking in tongues. Such a glorious experience in God did the young southern girl from Louisiana receive that she could not speak English for one solid week. Every time she began to talk, she could only utter a few words of English before she would again begin to speak in other tongues.

During the next few weeks, she often lay for hours

at a time, "slain under the power" of God. She told her friends in a semiserious mood, "Don't let the undertaker see me when I am out in the Spirit. He might think I am indeed dead and bury me alive."

While lying slain under the power of God one day, Nellie saw hands beckoning and waving and heard a voice saying, "Come join us! Come join us!" Later she realized that this was the way God was calling her into the ministry. The next year, 1911, Nellie was given Christian Workers Credentials.[1]

While visiting in Arkansas, Nellie met another young lady preacher, Millicent McClendon Goss, the wife of one of the early leaders in the Pentecostal movement, Brother Howard A. Goss.

This was the beginning of a warm friendship between the two ladies. Nellie was baptized in Jesus' name by Brother Goss.

Nellie told Ralph about hearing Brother E. N. Bell, a Pentecostal pioneer, as he preached at a camp meeting in Arkansas. As he preached, Brother Bell walked back and forth. A young man named Alpha Humbard reached out and got hold of Brother Bell's coat.

"Brother Bell, I've got a message," the young man lisped.

Brother Bell kept right on preaching but every time he was near, young Humbard jerked his coat and repeated, "Brother Bell, I've got a message."

Finally Brother Bell said, "There's a young man sitting back here who thinks he has a message." So young Alpha Humbard strode to the pulpit and began to preach. God really blessed and men and women moved forward to pray.

Sometime later in a small Arkansas sawmill town, Nellie saw young Humbard again. He had begun a campaign in a Masonic Hall in which many people were converted. This caused quite a stir in the town, dividing the people. Certain community leaders were opposed to the meeting and asked them to move to a city park.

One night at the close of a meeting, a mob of several hoodlums along with other community leaders grabbed young Humbard and another young man after the congregation had left. The young preachers did not resist and were quickly marched off down a street alongside the river.

"Are they going to tie a weight around my neck and throw me in the river?" young Humbard wondered. Instead they turned to the left, up the railroad. "The fast train is due in twenty minutes. Are they going to tie me to a rail to be run over by the train?"

As these thoughts ran through his mind, the young man began to think of heaven and he put his trust in God.

"Take him through that wire fence, out where the rest of the bunch is," said the leader of the mob.

Down by a little lake of water were small tables where the men had been gambling and drinking. Gasoline torches flickered, casting a weird light on the hostile crowd.

"Cut a big hickory switch. We're going to give them a whipping," said the leader of the mob. So they cut a six foot long switch and told the men to take off their coats and shirts. One man grabbed the young preacher by the hair of his head, cursed him and pulled him over until his chin touched his knees. Then

a half-drunk brute of a man grabbed the heavy switch with both hands and began to whip young Humbard. When they released him at last, the blood sloshed in his shoes as though he had been wading water. His bloody back looked like beefsteak. Still he trusted God and forgave the men.

About thirty days later one of the mob, who was a janitor at the high school, fell dead in the schoolyard with a stroke. A little later another man died. Then a third man, the one who had actually whipped the young preachers, died horribly in a terrible accident while working for the railroad. A fourth man, who had been a banker, lost his bank business, took tuberculosis and left for Arizona. Later he lost his mind and died. The fifth man was a doctor. Someone asked him, "Doc, aren't you afraid of the Lord's punishment after helping whip that preacher?"

"No," he answered. "We would be better off if all the preachers were killed and the church was burned."

A few days later this man fell dead while he was getting ready to go out on a call to a patient.[2]

Nellie never forgot this terrifying incident. She had seen the young preachers as they sat by the railroad with bloody beaten backs. Although this severe kind of persecution was unusual, many of the preachers in that day were subjected to ridicule and harrassment. Tent ropes were cut, tomatoes and rotten eggs thrown, and threats were made when preachers preached against sin and wickedness. Nevertheless the terrifying experience of seeing a man beaten for preaching did not scare Nellie Jane Reppond. Courageously she began to work and witness and preach.

For ten years Nellie faithfully preached as an evangelist the wonderful Pentecostal message. In the six-weeks revival in Centralia, Illinois, she and Ruth and Ione Miller assisted Brother Earl Hill. Nellie preached, Ruth played the piano, and Ione helped in the altar service. It was in this revival that 135 people received the Holy Ghost. And it was during the revival that Brother Ralph Cook saw Nellie for the first time and was immediately attracted to her.

Late one night during a revival in Mount Vernon, Brother Ooton baptized twelve people who had already received the Holy Ghost. Ralph managed to walk alongside Nellie down to the place of baptism. He knew that he must take advantage of every opportunity if he were to become better acquainted with the young lady. The Pentecostal preachers were very strict on these matters, and this was the only occasion that the young people were together. Ralph talked quietly out of the side of his mouth. "Nellie, you are so beautiful. I really am interested in you. I'm glad I have fallen for you."

But the fiery young lady evangelist from the south did not pay much attention to the tall young preacher from Boston. She was polite but not encouraging.

That night after Brother Ooton finished baptizing the twelve candidates, he asked, "Does anyone else want to be baptized?"

To his amazement, a Mr. Bogart walked into the water, Sunday clothes and all. Mr. Bogart had been extremely hostile toward his little Pentecostal wife. Many times she came to church with a black eye where he had abused her. Often when she returned home from church, she found the door to her house locked.

When this happened in the summer, she slept on the porch. In the winter, she sought shelter at a kind neighbor's home. Her quiet but consistent life had finally won her unbelieving husband. He came up from the baptismal waters speaking in other tongues.

Although Ralph's attention that night was mostly on Nellie, he never forgot the mighty power of God to convict sinners.

A few weeks later, Ralph was invited to St. Louis to preach a week at the church pastored by Brother Benjamin Harrison Hite, who had to attend a ministers' conference. In those days St. Louis was a rough place for mission churches. Gangs that roamed the streets thought it was great fun to come in and break up a mission service.

One night while Brother Cook was preaching in Brother Hite's church, a rough gang of five men dragged a large bag of garbage up to the second-floor mission hall. As a little introduction to the meanness they planned, the men of the gang threw some of the garbage down the aisle. Then they sat down in the back and began to smoke.

Sitting on the platform with Brother Cook was a young worker, Alvie Chappell. In 1918 Brother Chappell had persuaded Odell Cagle to go with him to a short-term Bible school in Eureka Springs, Arkansas. There they met such great leaders as Daniel C. O. Opperman, M. E. Mills, and William Booth-Clibborn.[3] Brother Chappell was strong in the Lord and also strong physically.

"You stay up here, Brother Cook. Take care of the platform," whispered Brother Chappell. "I'll go back

there and take care of those roughnecks. I worked for the circus. I know how to handle punks," he assured Brother Cook.

Brother Chappell strode down the aisle, sat down behind the roughnecks, and whispered a warning to them: "You had better be quiet." But the warning was not enough. One of the fellows turned around and retorted sneeringly. Quickly, Alvie picked him up under the chin and by the back of the neck and bounced him up and down in the chair about three times. This seemed to have more effect, but he warned them again.

"If you move again, I'll turn you sideways and push the rest of you downstairs."

With this mission completed, Brother Chappell walked back to the platform, but he no more than reached his chair when someone threw a firecracker up the stairs. They tried to ignore this latest interruption but without success. Just as Brother Cook started preaching, there was another big bang!

Alvie said to Brother Cook, "You take care of things up here. I am going down and see what's going on downstairs. A few minutes later, Brother Cook heard a woman scream. When Alvie came back upstairs, he said, "Well, I sure shook the pins out of her hair."

Brother Cook learned that this kind of disturbance was not too unusual in the missions in St. Louis. "You should go to Brother Ben Pemberton's church," someone told him. "You know Brother Ben was a prizefighter. Some roughneck tried to roughhouse in his meeting and Brother Ben broke a chair over his head. Then Brother Ben turned and ran for his life—straight down to where Mother Moise lived on Olive Street.

Later Brother Cook was told that Mother Moise ran a rescue and faith home for wayward girls and fallen women. He also learned that Nellie Reppond had been given the opportunity to minister in that home.

When Brother Hite returned to St. Louis, someone mentioned to Ralph, "Say, Brother Cook, have you heard that Sister Reppond is back in Mount Vernon again holding another meeting?"

"Mount Vernon, eh? Say, Mount Vernon is sure a pretty little town. And a good town, too. They say you can walk down the streets at twelve o'clock at night and hear people praying. Pentecostal people praying. Pentecostal people! Yes, Mount Vernon is a fine town. Are there good train connections to Mount Vernon, brother?" Ralph asked. "And Nellie is there!" he added to himself.

In Mount Vernon, Illinois, the manager of a car shop expressed the feelings of many people about the preaching of Nellie. He told Brother Ooton, who was the pastor at that time, "If you will get that Louisiana girl here to preach, we will come in a body to hear her." When Nellie came to Mount Vernon to preach, the manager was as good as his promise. The people gladly heard this young lady preacher.

"I've just got to see Nellie again," Ralph thought as he headed for Mount Vernon. "I can stay at the Clarks." His friend, Brother Ooton, lived with the Clarks.

Arthur and Grace Clark were very hospitable people. Arthur Clark worked for the Mount Vernon Car Shop. There were three daughters in the Clarks' family, Madge, Madeline, and Verna. Verna was only fourteen when the six foot four, good looking preacher

stayed with them. In reference to Brother Cook, Verna commented one day to her father, "I wonder if Brother Cook likes Mom's chocolate cake as well as Brother Ooton?"

Verna never forgot that Brother Cook, the preacher from Boston, had to learn how to eat food prepared in midwestern fashion. "Do we eat the green leaves too?" Brother Cook asked her one day when green onions were on the table.

The Mount Vernon church started as a storefront mission. Later they built a tabernacle on South Twelfth Street. What good times they had singing "Pentecostal Power," and Brother G. T. Haywood's songs, "Coming as a Thief in the Night" and "Baptized into the Body."

Although the Clarks and others at Mount Vernon were hospitable and warm toward the young preacher, he was most anxious to talk to Nellie. From the time he first saw her, his thoughts had been on marriage. When his chance came to tell Nellie that he wanted to marry her, Ralph tried to appear nonchalant, but he was nervous from his feet to his head. He pretended to be reading his newspaper as he told her his thought of marriage as if it were unrehearsed and unplanned. Her response was not as favorable as he desired, but it was not a refusal either.

"Well, I think we ought to wait," Nellie responded. "I haven't much money, and you haven't much money, either. I think that you ought to go out and hold a few meetings and get a little better fixed. I will do the same." The young French girl from down on the plantation in Louisiana was practical as well as pretty.

It was after Nellie's somewhat negative response

that Ralph noticed his paper was *upside down!* He quickly but quietly turned the paper around, and he also turned around Nellie's desire to wait.

The next day a friend went with Ralph to get the marriage license.

"Your full name, please?" asked the clerk at the courthouse.

"Ralph Gleason Cook," was the firm response.

"Your bride's full name?" was the next question.

"Nellie . . . Nellie . . . Oh, I have forgotten! What is Nellie's last name?" the nervous bridegroom stuttered to his friend.

Finally all the legal work was accomplished and tiny pretty Nellie Jane Reppond, the fiery girl evangelist from Louisiana, was married to the tall, handsome Ralph Cook, the young preacher from the East, on July 3, 1920, in Mount Vernon, Illinois. Brother Cook's dear friend, Brother L. R. Ooton, performed the marriage ceremony.

"When are you going to get married, Brother Ooton?" Brother Cook teased his friend. Often the young ladies flocked to hear Brother Ooton, who was sometimes called "the sweet singer." His good looks, personality, and talents made him a favorite among the young ladies.

"Oh, Brother Cook, I *am* in love," was Brother Ooton's response. Then he would add, "I am in love with Jesus."

Brother Ooton delayed his marriage, but Ralph and Nellie were in love with Jesus as well as each other. Together they made a great evangelistic team. In their meetings, Ralph and Nellie took turns preaching.

She would preach one night and he the next. The tiny one hundred and three pound lady had a powerful voice for preaching, and she could also lead the singing of the grand hymns that L. R. Ooton and G. T. Haywood wrote. Ralph was not only a great preacher, but he also had a marvelous voice for solo singing. Together this young couple preached all through southern Illinois. They both felt that they were in God's will, and they enjoyed His blessings upon their ministry.

The young couple had an unusual experience as they were riding into Centralia, Illinois. They had heard that Evangelist Mattie Crawford was in a tent revival there with Brother Earl Hill. As they were praying and thinking about the meeting on the way to Centralia (about fifteen miles out), the sweet presence of the Lord swept over the young couple. When they arrived at the meeting, they were full of faith and expecting God to move. And God did indeed move!

Sister Crawford prayed for the sick and many of them were healed. One veteran of the First World War came with three vertebrae of his spine shot away. He wore a big brace extending from his arm pits to his hips. He walked with two canes. He left his little business of selling trinkets and came to the meeting to be prayed for.

Sister Crawford laid hands on the crippled ex-soldier and prayed. Instantly the man felt a definite healing touch. He returned to his boardinghouse and asked a friend, "Help me pull this brace off over my head."

"You are crazy, man. You will collapse without your

brace."

"No, I won't. I am healed," the veteran declared firmly. So he pulled his brace off and went down the streets of Centralia waving the discarded brace in the air and hollering, "I am healed! I am healed!"

To demonstrate further how completely he was healed, the man came to the tent, picked up two other men and walked with them, one under each arm. Brother and Sister Cook never forgot such miracles. They knew that God was a prayer-answering God. There was salvation and healing in His name.

Brother Albert S. Davis, a dynamic evangelist, held revivals in several of the small towns in Illinois.

He had an unusually good revival in Benton, Illinois, a town of gamblers and miners. Quite rough people! It was whispered around town that when the men gambled, they placed a loaded revolver in the middle of the table. Anyone who cheated was shot by the first man who could get the gun.

Although it was a rough, tough town, Brother Davis was able to stir the people and there was a move of God, and many of the people turned to God. But as was his practice, Brother Davis moved to another town, leaving the converts without a pastor. Consequently, when Brother and Sister Ralph Cook arrived in Benton several months later, almost all the converts had backslidden or moved away. There were hardly enough people still living for God in Benton to hold a meeting.

Benton was not the only town where a revival under Brother Davis would result in many converts but, left without a pastor, these converts would soon lose out with God. Royalton, Illinois, was another town

with a similar experience. There were only a few saints left when Brother and Sister Cook preached a revival in this town in the latter part of 1920.

The firsthand experience of seeing so many converts from the great revivals conducted by Brother Davis go back into sin made Brother Cook aware of the importance of establishing churches with pastors. The converts needed to be taught the Word of God if they were to stand against Satan and sin.

When the Cooks went to preach a meeting in Benton, they carried all their worldly goods in a couple of suitcases on the train. As they got off at the depot, several small children began to laugh and giggle. Some pointed at the Cooks.

"Look, he's so t-a-a-11 and she's so short! Are they with a circus?"

"Humph!" muttered Ralph, who was quite annoyed by the outrageous behavior of the children. "These children here in Benton have had no upbringing!" he gruffly added.

"Ah, they are just teasing, Ralph," laughed Nellie, who thought it was all a big joke.

Ralph, who did not want to leave any bad impression on his new bride, tried to get rid of the children, but they continued to follow the couple down the street. "They must think we are in a show," Ralph sniffed as they made their way to the place they would be staying.

In spite of Ralph's irritation over the greetings at the depot, the meetings were blessed of God and the few saints still living for God thoroughly enjoyed hearing more about the great truth of the baptism of the

Holy Ghost, the oneness of God, and water baptism in the name of Jesus Christ. They had no proper church building in Benton, so they had to resort to cottage prayer meetings.

While the Cooks were in Benton, Brother Davis held a big tent meeting in Cape Girardeau, Missouri. He baptized one hundred and thirty people during the revival and every one of them received the Holy Ghost while still in the water. Some of the other ministers and some officials in the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, the organization to which Brother Davis belonged, urged him not to leave Cape Girardeau until a pastor could be left in charge. Although he did not build a church building, Brother Davis did leave a pastor in charge of this new congregation.

Leaving Benton, Illinois, Ralph and Nellie decided to cross the Mississippi River to attend a few nights of Brother Davis' meeting in Cape Girardeau. There they met Brother Wilford Eldon Kidson, a preacher and leader among the Pentecostals.

In August 1914 Brother Kidson heard the Pentecostal message when he was a young businessman operating a branch store for the Potter and Vaughn Company in Louisiana, Missouri. A group of about forty people had come from St. Louis to hold a tent revival.

The pastor of the large denominational church where the Kidsons attended tried to discourage Brother Kidson from seeking God at the tent revival. However, during one service, the Lord spoke to Brother Kidson saying, "My Spirit will not always strive with man." He immediately surrendered completely

and began to speak in a tongue foreign to him. On the following Sunday after the service in the denominational church, the wife of one of the city councilmen asked if Brother Kidson had studied Latin.

"No," replied Brother Kidson.

"I thought perhaps you had. I was present the night you received your baptism of the Holy Ghost, and I understood you to speak fluently in the Latin language."

Later Brother Kidson felt the call to preach. He, like other Pentecostal trailblazers, began to preach under tents, brush arbors, trees, in the cemetery, on the street, in other churches, in schoolhouses, and anywhere he could get a few people to listen.[4]

When Brother Kidson met Ralph Cook in Cape Girardeau, he asked him to go to Carrollton, Illinois, which was a small farming community. "There is a small group there who have been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. They need a minister, Brother Cook."

Brother Kidson accompanied the Cooks to Carrollton and introduced them to the people in the small church. Among the people in Carrollton was a former Baptist preacher by the name of Lewis. "Brother Lewis," Brother Kidson said, "I would like you to meet a young evangelist, Brother Ralph Cook, from Boston. He's full of the message."

About the middle of the first week of revival services, Brother Lewis came to visit Brother Cook.

"Young man," he said, "I don't know whether you know it or not but you are sitting in a field of clover. I'm retired and I am worth thirty thousand dollars. My brother-in-law is worth over a hundred thousand dollars. Miss Mary Brown, the schoolteacher here in our

group, is worth about one hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars, and she also owns a large farm. If you will just quit being so dogmatic about this message and ease up and get people saved and then teach them later, you would really do good here."

"Brother Lewis," Ralph Cook replied, "I am not for sale. You and your money perish together."

"Well, then," responded the angry preacher, "I am going over to Springfield and get a preacher from the Assemblies of God." He threatened, "We'll turn this town upside down."

The group of Pentecostals in Carrollton was indeed a prosperous group. They owned a spacious seventeen-room parsonage and they were building a large tabernacle. The church services were held temporarily in a grove outdoors while the tabernacle was being completed.

The caretaker who was employed to look after the property carried a large ring of keys. Although his name was not Uriah Heep, he was a stingy, tight-fisted old fellow. There was plenty of food brought in by the prosperous farmers, but the caretaker painstakingly doled out just a few potatoes to the Cooks to make a thin, watery potato soup almost every day.

"Not potato soup again," Ralph could hardly offer thanks. He just left the table to go somewhere else to pray. "That fellow thinks he is lord over God's heritage holding the keys to everything, even the groceries," he told his wife. On Sunday, however, a delicious dinner (minus potato soup) was served for everyone.

Brother Lewis was gone to Springfield for three days, but he returned in time for the Sunday services.

In the afternoon he was in charge of the service. Before turning the pulpit to Brother Cook he spoke enthusiastically of the minister who was to come from Springfield. Finally he added, "Well, Brother Cook is here. This is his last day. We will now turn the service to him."

Ralph rose to his feet and stepped out in the opening under the trees in the grove. The sun was shining down among the trees and almost into his eyes. Suddenly he felt the sweet anointing presence of the Lord warming him just as real as the warmth from the sunshine. He turned to the Book of Daniel and started to preach. The anointing became so heavy that he was almost in a trance—he hardly realized what he was preaching. As he preached, he closed his eyes, partly because of the sun and partly because of the anointing of the Spirit. Soon he realized he was singing:

I am the Good Shepherd;
I am seeking my wandering sheep.
Who will help me to find them
And with me a vigilance keep?
I know they are thirsty and hungry . . .

When Ralph Cook opened his eyes, he saw that some of the saints had fallen back in their chairs. Others were lying on the ground. Apparently God had knocked them down. After a long prayer session, several of the saints went to the back of the barn and voted Ralph in as their pastor. Brother Cook decided to stay and they notified the new man whom Brother Lewis had contacted that he need not come. "We

already have a good pastor," they wrote.

For three or four months Ralph and Nellie ministered to the church in Carrollton. Gradually the keen spirit of conviction began to wear off and the critics began to carp, criticize, and complain.

As Ralph stood in the pulpit to preach, he could not avoid noticing Brother Lewis's sister, Mrs. Carter. "Her face looks like a storm cloud," the young preacher observed. "Help me, Lord, help me to preach the real truth about repentance, baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus, and the infilling of the Holy Ghost!" And God did help and Ralph continued to preach without fear or favor. But he could not break the strong resistance of some of the people toward him and his message.

Finally those who opposed him called the young pastor into a meeting where they fired questions at him.

"If I had not received this message or been baptized in Jesus' name after I thoroughly understood it, what would have happened to me?" demanded Mrs. Lewis, the retired minister's wife.

"You would be lost," responded the young Pentecostal pastor firmly.

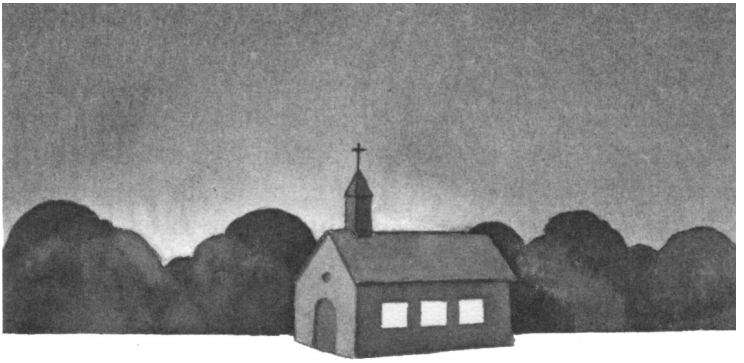
This session of questions only stiffened the opposition, and without giving the young pastor a notice, they told him to leave. They did not offer to give him any money to help him. However, some of the poorer saints got together and raised enough money for the young couple to get out of town.

Remarkably, Miss Mary Brown, the wealthy schoolteacher, contacted the discouraged young couple. "If

you will stay, I will open my home for you," was the unexpected, kind invitation.

But Ralph Cook was young and upset. "Let's go, Nellie! We need to leave this place. We've got our little Ford. Let's drive down to Louisiana. I want to meet your folks." So the couple set out for Louisiana. As they left, Ralph turned to Nellie in an effort to cheer her. "Let's keep on praying, Nellie. We're in the will of God."

[1]Marvelle Dees, *Heirs Together*, pp. 89-98.
[2]A. E. Humbard, *Faith Is My Inheritance*, pp. 41-48.
[3]Odell Cagle, *Echoes of the Past*, p. 27.
[4]W. E. Kidson, *In the Service of the King*, pp. 13-14.



Back Home to Louisiana

Down the Arkansas-Louisiana Pike chugged the little four-cylinder T-model Ford that the Cooks had purchased while they lived in Benton. By the time they were in Arkansas, night had fallen, but they pushed on toward Louisiana and to a visit with Nellie's parents and relatives. The darkness fell on the dirt road that had sandy ruts. As they continued south, Ralph noticed that the road became more difficult. Soon the red sand caked the wheels up to the hubs, and the motor strained against the added weight and deepening ruts.

"I am going to have to shift down to low gear," explained Ralph to his little bride. But he hardly had time to shift before they heard a knock, knock, clink, clank, clatter, crash from the motor, and Ralph brought the car to a grinding halt.

"What's that? What's happening?" wailed Nellie.

"I think I have burned out a rod!"

"Lord, help us! It's midnight, Ralph! What will we do?"

"We passed a house about a half mile back. I'll see if I can get some help there." Ralph got a man out of bed. Fortunately the farmer had a rod that would fit Brother Cook's car. Ralph bought the rod, plodded his way back through the darkness to the little Ford and Nellie, and went about making the repair despite the darkness and the deep sand.

"Here, Nellie, hold this lantern. I have got to find those wrenches," Ralph directed as he began to rummage through the little metal toolbox on the running board.

"This sure is a messy, dirty job," Ralph protested as he carefully unscrewed and removed the oil pan. Thinking that the oil might have slivers and pieces of metal that could cause further trouble, he dumped out the oil, "Sure hate to waste this oil. Oil is expensive."

The young preacher, who was also quite a good mechanic, carefully removed the oil pan, took off the cap on the rod, and skillfully inserted the new bearing. After replacing the rod bearing, he replaced the oil pan, making sure that each screw was firmly fastened. "Now, get me the can of oil there in the back of the car, Nellie. We will soon be on our way!"

"Ralph, you are just wonderful. Not only are you the greatest preacher and the sweetest singer I ever met but you are also a splendid mechanic. Who else could repair a broken-down car way out in the middle of nowhere at midnight?" Nellie then realized that

although she had been out on her own for several years and was independent, this man could definitely take care of her. She respected him and was delighted to take her tall bridegroom home to meet her folks.

At last the little Ford chugged through the small town of Marion, Louisiana, and on to the Reppond plantation. In the backyard of the family house, an old black woman smoking a TD (clay) pipe was huddled over a large, black pot full of boiling laundry. When she heard the car and saw Nellie, the old woman squealed, "Honey chile, there's my baby!" She grabbed Nellie and hugged her tightly. "My baby, every day I'd stand out and watch for that old choo choo train, Miss Nellie. I says, 'Go 'long, you black train, bring that chile back home!' Now, you're here!"

"This is Aunt Millie, Ralph. She was my wet nurse," explained Nellie. "And this is John and Hot," she said as she introduced two black boys. "They were raised here on the plantation with all the rest of us children. And here is my darling mother," Nellie turned to hug a short little French woman with a head full of black ringlets.

The Repponds were a large family—eleven children. They lived out on a large, busy plantation with a lot of stock. "This is sure different from South Boston," Ralph observed.

Every morning about five o'clock a huge country breakfast of several kinds of meat—duck, pork, chicken and ham—eggs, fried potatoes, grits, milk gravy, hot biscuits, and cane syrup, plus several kinds of jam and jelly was served before the rough country boys headed to the fields. Ralph tried to get up early enough

to be at the table in time to ask the blessing, but usually the boys rushed on ahead of him and were well into their breakfast by the time he arrived. Ralph especially liked the breast of duck that his little French mother-in-law prepared.

"Ralph, I love to see you coming to the table. You enjoy food so much," teased Mrs. Reppond. Indeed he did! He gained ten pounds the month they were in Louisiana.

Nellie was the only person in her family who had believed the full gospel message of repentance, baptism in the name of Jesus Christ and the infilling of the Holy Ghost. The rest of the family attended the Baptist church. Nellie tried to witness even to "Auntie," but all the response she got was, "Honey, don't talk to me about that. You'll have me tearing up the Missus' house." Later her son John did receive the Holy Ghost when a black preacher held a great revival in the area.

Nellie's father, Pinckney, was a tall big man, six foot and two inches, and weighed over two hundred pounds. He kept busy riding herd on his stock. Every morning he saddled up his horse, filled a saddlebag with corn to toll pigs together, and set out to check up on the stock. Several dogs, which he had skillfully trained, followed along: 'coon dogs, squirrel dogs, 'possum dogs and hog dogs, but to Ralph they were just all hound dogs.

The young couple stayed in Louisiana with the Repponds about a month. Then they drove up to Hot Springs, where they met Brother H. E. Reed, a tall fine looking man about fifty years old. Brother Reed had helped pioneer the work in Hot Springs, and he

had a good congregation of about one hundred and fifty people. In a camp meeting, which Brother Reed and Brother Sam McClain had conducted in Hot Springs, they had baptized fifty in the mighty name of Jesus Christ. Thirty-five of these had received the Holy Ghost in the water or while they were near the baptistry. Three ministers, two Methodist and one Baptist, were in the group.[1]

Since Nellie was expecting their first child, Brother Cook decided to get a job and stay awhile in Hot Springs.

After looking for work a few days, Ralph came in and announced the results to his wife. "Well, Nellie, all I can find is that night job at the restaurant. I had better take it. Sister Davenport says we can stay with her in the city. This resort town does not have any good paying jobs for machinists. A night fry cook job beats nothing."

So Ralph Cook began to fry hamburgers. From six in the evening until twelve midnight, the customers were average citizens, but from midnight until morning, he never knew who would stumble in. Sometimes Ralph served bootleggers, gamblers, and call girls. Some were almost blind. The hot baths in the resort town of Hot Springs were thought to be healing, and perhaps the water did give some measure of relief, but it could not heal the terrible disease that ate away the flesh with big sores.

Ralph soon learned to spot the men who were suffering from serious diseases. Their mouths would be sore and salivated. "Don't put any salt or pepper on my hamburger. Just a plain hamburger," the sick men

would instruct the cook.

One night after twelve o'clock, two gamblers strolled in and sat down. One of them ordered a full meal. "Gimme a T-bone steak rare, French fries and all the trimmings," he ordered extravagantly.

"Just a hamburger and a cup of coffee for me," added the other customer quietly.

Ralph carefully prepared the steak just right, fried the potatoes to a golden brown, and served the food. After the two men finished their meals, the one who ate the steak had enjoyed it so much that he handed Ralph a brand-new one dollar bill.

"I just made it," laughed the gambler.

"Could this be counterfeit?" wondered Ralph as he stared at the money.

"Look at it!"

Slowly Ralph turned the dollar over. "Well, it looks good," he commented as he handed the money back.

Again the gambler laughed heartily and explained, "I gave you that as a tip!"

"Well, thanks!" Ralph responded as he began to understand which gambler had won and which had lost.

Many things happened late at night in the resort city of Hot Springs. One fellow ran a cigarette stand in the front of the restaurant where Ralph worked. The man always parked his car out front, and Ralph suspected that moonshine whisky was hidden under the seat. One night as Ralph watched, his suspicions were confirmed. He saw the streetcar conductor stop, pay the man at the cigarette counter, and then collect his quart of liquor at the car.

On another occasion, a fellow came in loaded with moonshine and carrying a little pearl-handled revolver. He insinuated to Ralph that he was going to "pay off" the police. "I'll take them back to the mountain and pay 'em off," he kept repeating. As far as Ralph knew, the fellow never carried out his threat.

Another man came in, laid a forty-five revolver on the counter, and set out a bottle of moonshine beside the gun. "That gun is pointing right at me," the scared young preacher thought. Then he noticed a car pulling in. Thank you, Lord. Here comes the police," he sighed in relief. However, to his amazement and frustration, the policeman walked back and forth totally ignoring the gun and the liquor.

"This is a rough job, but I've got to work," Ralph encouraged himself. "Our baby will be here soon. Nellie must have good care." Since Ralph was well aware that a woman could die in childbirth, he kept on cooking.

One night a bellhop from the Arlington Hotel came in hurriedly. "Gimme two big hamburgers with a big thick slice of onion on 'em," the boy ordered. "Cook 'em right, man; those hamburgers are for Babe Ruth." Then Ralph remembered hearing that the famous ball-player was in town.

While Ralph and Nellie were in Hot Springs, they saw much illness among many who came to the area for therapy in the hot baths. However, they also saw the mighty healing power of the Holy Ghost. A neighbor was ill with gallstones. Their landlady asked, "Brother Cook, would you go pray for my neighbor? She is suffering from another attack of gallstones."

Brother Cook went right over to pray with the woman. That very day the gallstones passed and she was marvelously healed. Although he was just a young preacher, Ralph Cook learned early to trust God.

It was in Hot Springs that Ralph and Nellie's first child, Alice Mae, was born. A midwife took care of the delivery. Alice Mae was a beautiful, blue-eyed little girl, but best of all she was a good, contented baby. Young preachers who traveled a lot and stayed in other people's homes really appreciated contented babies. With that first child, Nellie was a devoted mother, rising up early for her own hour of prayer as well as fulfilling the demanding role of a wife and a mother.

Occasionally Brother Reed called on Brother Cook to preach. Usually the services were very good and the attendance was quite large.

While the Cooks were in Arkansas, Ralph met Brother Howard A. Goss, a leading pioneer of the Pentecostal movement. Brother Goss had baptized Nellie and she had known Millicent Goss, who had died in childbirth.

Brother Reed invited Brother Goss to come to Hot Springs for a meeting. Before the minister's arrival, Brother Reed held a ten-day prayer meeting. It seemed to Ralph Cook that Brother Reed was almost expecting God just to pick up Brother Goss bodily (as He did Phillip) and place him in Hot Springs. However, the portly minister arrived, as did most other travelers, by train. Ralph Cook went down to the station to meet him. He learned to love and respect this kind, gentle, dignified man of God.

One weekend a preacher came into town who

claimed to be from Southeast Asia. Brother Reed courteously asked the visiting minister to preach. From the moment Brother Reed turned the pulpit to the visitor, Ralph sensed that something was not as it should be. But he attributed his odd feeling to the man being from Southeast Asia.

"May I ask everyone to leave the platform, please," the minister requested. "I want everyone out front." Then he shared an incredible story of persecution overseas.

While the man was speaking, God spoke to Ralph Cook.

"That man is a deceiver!" the voice of God plainly stated. Brother Cook knew the voice was from God, but apparently no one else had heard. Could he be sure? When the ushers passed the collection plate, Ralph went ahead reluctantly and put in a small offering.

Later he spoke to Brother Reed about his feelings.

"God spoke to me, Brother Reed. That man is a deceiver." To his chagrin Brother Reed severely rebuked him for speaking against a minister, but Brother Cook was firmly convinced that God had spoken to him. "Well, I don't want to disagree with you, Brother Reed, but I am sure the man is a fake," Brother Cook insisted.

Later the visiting preacher was scheduled to speak for Brother and Sister Stallones in Little Rock. When he did not show up for his appointment, they discovered that he was making the round of the Baptist churches with the same tale.

"God, You can speak to us," Ralph prayed. "There

is indeed a gift of discerning of spirits."

Deceivers and delusions did come Ralph Cook's way and God helped the young preacher to discern what was truth and what was fake, but it was not always easy.

He was astonished one day when Brother Reed stopped in the middle of a street and said, "Brother Cook, I just got a revelation from the Lord!"

"What is it, Brother Reed?" Ralph Cook inquired.

"I just got a revelation that we are not born again."

"Where do you get that?" Ralph asked.

"Well," Brother Reed answered, "I got that out of the Book of I John. The Bible says that he that is born of God doth not commit sin for his seed remaineth in him and he cannot sin, for he is born of God." Then Pastor Reed turned to young Brother Cook and asked, "Did you ever do anything wrong since you have been saved?"

"Oh, I might have gotten a little out of line at times," the younger man replied, trying to be completely honest.

"Well, then you are not born again. The Bible says that he that is begotten of God keepeth himself and the wicked one toucheth him not. You are only begotten of God. You are not born."

This line of thinking upset the young preacher. Here was a veteran, a pioneer. He himself was just a young preacher. Sometime later Brother Reed began to talk of spiritual communion. He also came to believe that there was a generation of people before Adam. One Sunday morning when Ralph came into the service, Brother Reed was teaching this doctrine of a

pre-Adamic race. During a discussion time, Brother Cook commented, "Brother Reed, the Bible says that Eve was the mother of all living."

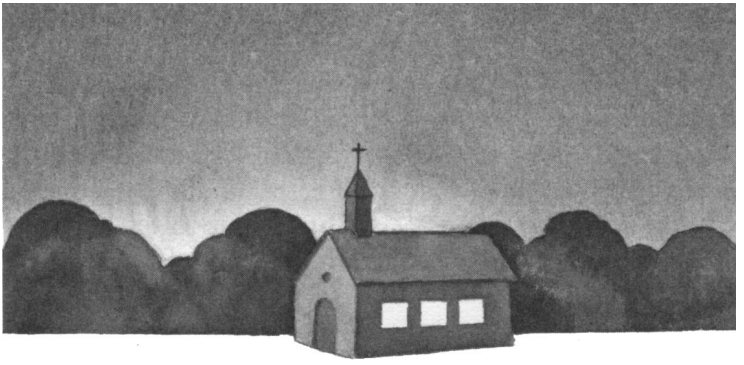
"Well, if you are going to take that stance," Brother Reed replied, "then you must believe that Eve was the mother of all the animals.

This kind of thinking and preaching caused Ralph Cook to become uneasy and uncomfortable. After the Cooks had been in Hot Springs for about seven months, Brother Reed evidently sensed that the young preacher needed to move on. He talked with Brother Cook about his leaving, then asked him, "Would you like to go to Missouri? There is a church up in Joplin, Missouri. I have influence there and I can put you in as pastor. Would you consider that?"

"Yes," Brother Cook replied. "I will think about it."

"Well, then, let's just go up there. We will stop in Little Rock to see the Stallones on our way to Joplin," Brother Reed proposed.

[1]Fred J. Foster, *Think It Not Strange*, p. 99.



Little Rock

The Cook family, including Ralph, Nellie and the baby, Alice Mae, packed up and started for Joplin, Missouri. They planned a brief stop at Little Rock, Arkansas, to visit with Brother and Sister Stallones, who were pastoring the church there. When they arrived in Little Rock, which was only about thirty miles from Hot Springs, they were surprised to discover that Brother and Sister Stallones were resigning and leaving. At the time they were conducting a tent revival for the church, so Brother Stallones asked Brother Cook to preach in the afternoon service. God blessed and the anointing came so much upon Brother Cook that after the service some of the people gathered around the young preacher. "Brother Cook, will you be our pastor since Brother Stallones is resigning?" they asked him.

"Could this be the will of God?" he wondered. Later Ralph had an opportunity to confer with his friend, Brother Reed.

"By all means, take it," the senior minister advised. After praying about it, the Ralph Cook family settled in Little Rock to pastor the church.

The saints in the Little Rock church helped get furniture together. Brother and Sister Levi Cameron donated a cookstove and a heater as well as bedding. Soon the Cooks had enough supplies together for their home and Brother Cook was able to devote his time to pastoring the church.

The church was blessed with good music including a choir and a talented pianist, Anita Turner, who was one of the leading music teachers in Little Rock. Many other musicians helped make a "joyful sound in the mission hall." "Best music of any church in Little Rock," was an often heard comment.

Brother Cook soon discovered that the church in Little Rock was blessed with preachers. In fact about twenty-five men claimed to be preachers. One aspiring preacher soon approached the new pastor. "Brother Cook, when are you going to call on me to preach?" he inquired.

Pastor Cook had already heard the story of how this zealous brother had in another church desired to preach. However, the pastor had let him sit in a pew for weeks without once asking him to preach. Finally the pastor was sick one night, so at last the brother had his chance to preach, but the results were not anything to boast about. But the incident gave Brother Cook an answer for this preacher.

"When am I going to call on you to preach?" Pastor Cook responded. "Whenever I get sick. Then you can preach."

Brother Cook, who had left all to travel and preach in New York, Illinois, Missouri, Nova Scotia, and now in Arkansas, was appalled that so many mature men who claimed to be called to preach were content just to sit.

"You fellows get off the platform," he directed. "If you want to preach and you are called to preach, why are you sitting on this platform? You did not need me to come if all of you are called to preach. Why don't you get out into the fields? They are white already to harvest," he exhorted the ministry.

In the meantime Ralph Cook himself was seeking God daily for a true answer to some of the questions that he had encountered, including Brother Reed's theory of spiritual communion. He was praying earnestly one day about this. "Lord, what about this spiritual communion?" Suddenly he heard a voice speak audibly to him, "Spiritual communion is right." After this he spoke on the subject to his church in support of this new teaching of spiritualized communion. But he was not comfortable or satisfied with his answers on this matter. For one thing, it was a questionable interpretation of the Scriptures.

Shortly after this a Persian brother by the name of Joseph Sargus came by to visit the Cooks in Little Rock. Brother Cook talked with this godly man about the apparent revelation that he had experienced.

"Brother Cook, spiritual communion is right. The only thing is that it is not like you think it is. The Bible

says first that which is *natural*, then afterwards that which is spiritual. You take natural baptism to get spiritual baptism. You partake of natural communion to get spiritual communion. In spiritual communion, you do commune with God."

Thus the kindly Persian preacher helped the young pastor. Bravely Brother Cook apologized to the church in Little Rock, backed up, and began to preach and practice foot washing and communion. Every month while he pastored there, they had a foot washing and communion service. Ralph Cook was a tall man, but he was also humble enough to take instructions from others.

The church met in a large hall on the second floor over a grocery store on the corner of Seventh and Cross. Each week the splintery floor was cleaned with oil and sawdust. The ladies of the group, including Sister Levi Cameron, met and cleaned the church regularly. They were given money enough for brooms and mops, but all the labor was freely volunteered. Several years later Sister Cameron assumed the major custodial responsibilities. A visiting minister suggested that a small salary be allocated, so she was paid two dollars per week for her services.

Since Sister Cameron was alerted to be ready for baptisms, she always kept clean clothes for the ladies and a pair of overalls for the men. She usually stood at the top of the ladder to the baptistry ready to help any of the ladies after they were baptized.

Into this humble place of worship one Sunday morning strolled two women, both well-dressed with large ostrich plumes in their hats. How lovely they

were! Dressed in the height of fashion and straight out of the First Christian Church, which was the biggest church in the city, the two ladies were seated in the small crude sanctuary.

One of the women was named Mrs. Brasier and the other Mrs. Hill. Mrs. Brasier had on a diamond ring worth about fifteen hundred dollars, and she had matching diamond studs in her ears.

Pastor Cook noticed the fashionable visitors, but he preached with his usual freedom and anointing; he spared nothing but exhorted the congregation to shun sin and unrighteousness. He had the liberty to declare the whole counsel of God. While he preached, Nellie prayed.

When Brother Cook finished the sermon, he gave the altar call in his usual manner. However, he himself was shocked to see those two well-dressed women come and fall down at the altar.

Sister Brasier and Sister Hill were both baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus and filled with the Holy Ghost. Sister Hill received the Holy Ghost in quite an unusual way. She actually stuck her tongue out as she was talking in tongues. Later she fell under the power of God and rolled on the floor. On the other hand, Sister Brasier worshiped very quietly, but she was nonetheless filled with the Holy Ghost.

The pastor and saints in the Little Rock church were thrilled with the unusual move of God. Pastor Cook was careful to nurture these two "babes in Christ," tenderly feeding them first on the milk of the Word. In fact he said nothing whatsoever about the costly jewelry Sister Brasier was wearing. However, she

got convicted herself, took the ring off and put it in a drawer.

Her husband, a conductor on the Rock Island Railroad, was a good-sized man. When Mr. Brasier came home from work, he looked at her hand and then asked, "Where is your diamond ring? Where are those diamond ear studs?"

"They are in the drawer," his wife responded quietly.

"Why did you take them off?" he questioned her sharply.

"Well, I received the Holy Ghost," she tried to explain. But she knew that her answer only irritated her husband. They were standing in the bedroom near their big brass bed. Suddenly the angry husband lost his temper and swung at his wife with his fist. Instead of hitting her, he hit the brass bed and cut a nasty gash in his arm. This brought him quickly to his senses.

"Honey," he cried, "if I had hit you, I might have killed you. I want to apologize. Please forgive me."

The man never came into the church—never even attended a service, but he would not hinder his wife in her serving God. Later he bought his wife a Star automobile, which was one of the better machines of that day.

"If you ever have a special occasion, Brother Cook, a funeral or something, come and get this car," he offered his wife's young pastor. Sister Brasier continued quietly but devotedly to serve the Lord in the beauty of holiness. Instead of a fashionable, expensive dress such as she had worn on her first visit to the little church, she now wore a simple gingham dress. The

diamonds stayed in the drawer. Both she and her best friend, Sister Hill, were consecrated, devoted workers in the church.

Not all of the people who came to church were quite so sophisticated.

One of the loyal men of the church was young Frank Warren. Frank had belonged to a rough gang in Little Rock called the Dirty Dozen. But God cleaned Frank up. He was no longer qualified to be a member of the Dirty Dozen, but he was accepted as a member of the blood-washed throng. He had experienced the power of the "Crimson Stream of Blood" that Brother Haywood's song spoke of. He was baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, and he became a devoted friend to the new pastor.

One of the faithful women in the Little Rock church was Sister Goodson. Like Mr. Brasier, her husband was a railroad employee. When Brother Ooton came to Little Rock in his Page car to visit his good friend, Ralph Cook, Sister Goodson gave them a very unusual offering—a goat.

"What can we do with this goat, Brother Ooton?" asked the young man from South Boston.

"We'll kill that goat and eat it, Brother Cook," responded Brother Ooton. "But we will surely have to be careful. If we get any of the goat hair on the meat, it will ruin the taste of it." Carefully they butchered the animal.

"We did it! We did it right! This barbecued goat is delicious, Brother Ooton." There was meat in the parsonage for several days.

Some time later Brother Ooton traded in his Page

car for a fine Chevrolet with smart yellow wheels. "Brother Ooton is really proud of that fine car," Brother Cook observed.

Not only did God save people in Little Rock, He also healed the sick. A large woman came in one day dressed rather poorly. Her figure seemed to be almost straight up and down; apparently she was swollen with some sort of growth or tumor. "I'm having a problem, Brother Cook," the woman confided. "I need prayer." Brother Cook prayed and the woman went on her way.

Two weeks later Brother Cook noticed that a slender, well-dressed woman in a black and white pinstriped suit had come into the meeting. After the service was over, she came forward to greet the pastor.

"Do you remember me?" she asked.

"No, I don't believe I do," replied Brother Cook.

"Well, you prayed for me about two weeks ago and a large tumor passed from my body. God wonderfully healed me," she affirmed.

"To God be the glory!" With each answered prayer Ralph Cook's faith and confidence increased. He appreciated God healing the sick when he prayed, but more than anything he was happy to be in the will of God.

In the summer of 1921 the Zimmerman twins, Ethel (the preacher) and Lillian (a worker) came to Brother Cook about a needy sick man, Sam Looper. At the back of the hall, which was on the second floor over a grocery store, Sam was lying on a small cot, suffering with a bad leg.

The Little Rock saints tried to keep their mission hall clean, but with the grocery business downstairs

and a horse barn and a lumberyard out back, it was not easy.

"Don't open the windows," Brother Cook instructed. "The horseflies will get in."

Poor Sam was lying sick on a cot in the hall. The Zimmerman twins, who liked things clean, saw his condition and knew that something must be done. "Bedbugs are eating Sam up, Sister Cook," they confided.

"Well, I will tell Brother Cook to bring him to our house. I'll do his laundry," Nellie offered.

So Brother Cook took the poor man into their own home. Then he found Sam another bed. "I'll just burn his old cot," thought Brother Cook.

What Brother Cook and the Zimmerman twins did not know was that someone had already reported the sad affair to the Board of Health. The Zimmerman twins were still sitting with the man when a health officer came in with a cart. He shifted his smelly cigar and spoke through a haze of smoke, "Where's the invalid? We have come to get him."

"I don't want to go with you. Brother Cook has prayed for me. He is taking care of me," Sam protested.

"Yes," replied Ethel Zimmerman, who was a Holy Ghost-filled preacher. "We are praying for this boy. God will heal him."

The health officer wanted to argue, so he said scornfully, "Well, you know Jesus used different means to heal people. He spit on the ground and made clay and healed a man. Is this what you are planning?"

Ethel was instant in season with her reply. "You do remember that man was born blind, wasn't he?"

"Yes, I think that was it."

"He never had any eyes, did he?"

"No."

"Well, then, the creative Lord just made the man a pair of eyes," the quick witted young preacher woman replied.

"Well, I guess you folks can handle this case." The health officer turned, pulled his cart after him and left, still smoking his cigar.

Later Ethel Zimmerman married Brother Earl Toole and Lillian married Brother Julius Rode.

The citizens of Little Rock had heard much of Pentecostal people before Ralph Cook came to town. Brother and Sister W. L. Stallones had pastored there. They were pioneers who had attended the short-term Bible school in Eureka Springs in 1918.

Then Brother George Joiner pastored in Little Rock and held a meeting on the Capitol grounds right in the heart of downtown Little Rock. The crowd was estimated at five thousand people.

An unusual healing occurred during this meeting. A wicked man was brought in suffering from palsy. Although he was so distraught that he was actually cursing, his friends, who were full of faith, brought him to Brother Joiner for prayer. God honored the faith of the friends and healed the man instantly. In his ignorance and sinful state, he left the tent still talking rough and loud. In spite of his wonderful touch from God, the man went on his way and never served God.

However, others gladly served God and were full of zeal. One young fellow kept pestering Brother Joiner to let him preach.

"God has called me, Brother Joiner. I've got a message burning on my heart," the young man persisted.

"Very well," Brother Joiner finally relented.

"Tomorrow you be ready. You're the preacher tomorrow."

When the hour arrived, Brother Joiner introduced the young man. He walked to the pulpit, with a long list of Scriptures tucked in his Bible. Slowly he read his text, backed away from the pulpit, walked up again, read his text again. Then he repeated this performance. For the third time, the aspiring preacher looked up and said, "The Lord said . . ." For one moment he stood staring at the crowd before he stammered, "I do-o-on't know wha-a-at He said!"

Many unusual and amusing incidents happened in the early days of the Pentecostal revival.

Brother and Sister G. H. Brown were among the saints in the Little Rock church. These were wonderful people with a rich Pentecostal heritage. Carrie Rogers Brown was reared in a Pentecostal preacher's home. She received the Holy Ghost while her father, Brother Henry Greene Rogers, pastored the church on Royal Street in Jackson, Tennessee. Brother Brown received the Holy Ghost in one of Brother B. H. Hite's meetings. Brother Brown was also employed in Little Rock by the Missouri Pacific Railroad, so the young couple had a good living.

When Sister Cook and her small daughter, Alice Mae, arrived in Little Rock, Sister Brown was intrigued by the charming little girl and her vivacious mother.

"Alice Mae, what a pretty little girl! I don't know how to sew, but I am going to try to make you a little

dress," Sister Brown promised. And she did. Downtown she shopped, fingering soft, cotton percales, crisp dimities and organdy. "Perhaps this dotted swiss would be pretty. Pique would be nice for a coat and bonnet if I do good on the dress. Oh, look, these nice ginghams! This is what I want—little pin-checked gingham for Alice Mae a dress! I'll take a yard of the yellow and one of the blue and I must have a yard of that pretty pink."

Excitedly Carrie Brown found a pattern, went home and made several pretty little dresses for Alice Mae Cook. The Browns were thrilled about their new pastor and his family. They were devoted to the Lord and loyal to the Little Rock church.

Although Brother Cook was very busy pastoring the church in Little Rock, he was still interested in the move of God in other areas. In 1922 there was a conference in Indianapolis.

"I want to go, Nellie. I wonder if we could make it in our Model T. We sure do need new tires. Those tires that I have on now will not last until we get out of town."

Sister Brasier heard about the conference and she wanted to go, too. "Brother Cook, let me buy you a good set of tires and we will go to that conference. I think the Zimmerman twins want to go, too."

"Well, praise the Lord, Sister Brasier. That would be great. Brother Frank Warren wants to go, too. I'll see about the tires tomorrow. I think Fiske tires would be fine."

"You go get those Fiske tires, Brother Cook, and give the bill to me," Sister Brasier said firmly.

The little old Model T Ford was loaded! Brother and Sister Cook and Alice Mae and Brother Warren sat in the front seat with Sister Brasier and the Zimmerman twins in the back seat. Late that afternoon Brother Cook reminded his passengers, "We'll have to drive hard to get to the next town to spend the night there in a hotel."

Sometime after dark he had to race the motor to keep the car lights bright enough to see the road. This night the car lights flickered and then went out entirely.

"Burnt out! The lights are burnt out. Well, we will just have to stop by the side of the road," Brother Cook decided. "Frank, you and I can take this blanket and lie on the ground. The ladies can stay in the car."

At last the long weary journey was over. "Indianapolis, next stop! It will be nice to see Brother Ooton and Brother Haywood and all our friends."

Ralph Cook met another minister in this conference, Brother W. A. Mulford. Brother Mulford had conducted a revival for Samuel Calvin McClain in Fort Smith, Arkansas, where Brother McClain was pastoring. Brother McClain, who was one of the Pentecostal leaders, had come into Pentecost in 1912. He had taught grammar school at the Ozark Bible and Literary School in Hot Springs in 1918 when Alvie Chappell and Odell Cagle along with some forty other Pentecostals attended.[1]

Brother Mulford and Brother McClain felt the need of another great spiritual gathering where all the Pentecostals could worship and draw near to God in spiritual fellowship. They agreed that Little Rock would

be a fine place to hold such a conference.[2]

With these thoughts in mind, Brother Mulford approached Brother Cook. "Brother Cook, would you be interested in entertaining a conference in Little Rock?"

"Yes, I would," Brother Cook responded, not entirely realizing all the responsibility that attended such an undertaking.

"We have a conference committee," Brother Mulford informed the young preacher. "Brother W. L. Stallones, Brother Ben Blunt, and Brother C. A. Pyatt from Arkansas, Brother Daniel C. O. Opperman, and Brother James Shinn from Texas, Brother J. A. Cullifer from Alabama, Brother Charles Smith from Mississippi, Brother G. C. Lout and Brother G. C. Stroud from Louisiana, Brother J. C. Brickey and Brother E. J. Douglas from Tennessee and Brother W. H. Lion from Oklahoma are on our committee.

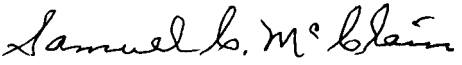
"Brother McClain has a letter from this committee ready to mail to ministers and workers throughout the South. This conference is, of course, called in affiliation with The Pentecostal Assemblies of the World."

The following excerpt is from the letter sent by the Committee to the Pentecostal brethren in the South:

> *"Greetings to you fellow-soldiers in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ:*
>
> *You will be glad that the South, this fall, has a gathering of all the real saints of God. A great Bible Conference will be held for all the Southern States, at Little Rock, Arkansas, November 3rd to 12th, 1922. God has done*

much for us in the past and we have truly had great meetings, but is God limited? Can we not have greater ones? May we not freely ask Him to make this the very best Conference we have ever had? Amen.

Our purpose in calling such a meeting is to work for greater unity—we all need each other—let us come together, even at an expense, for a ten days' feast of the Word of God and to stimulate us to greater fellowship and unity. The South has long looked and hoped for true fellowship and unity and we believe this meeting will do a great deal to bring it about. All will have an equal chance to take part."



The rest of the letter referred to business details. It was signed by Brother McClain.[3]

After agreeing to host this important conference, Ralph Cook hurried home to Little Rock to plan for the meeting.

"We need more spacious quarters, Nellie. That mission hall over the grocery store is not adequate."

While looking around in downtown Little Rock, Brother Cook noticed an Episcopal church on the corner of Fifth and Victory, just two blocks from the State Capitol building. On it was a sign, "For Sale—See the Worthen Bank."

Brother Cook went to the bank and inquired about renting the building. He was told that it might be available. "How much?" was his next question.

"Fifty dollars for ten days," was the fee mentioned.

"Here's ten dollars for a deposit," Brother Cook agreed as he placed his last dollar on the counter.

"There is one slight hitch," the bank official hesitated. "You must go over to the Episcopal church, talk with the pastor and get his permission," explained the banker.

So Brother Cook hurried over to the Episcopal church and knocked on the door of the pastor's office.

"Come in," he heard a deep voice say. When Brother Cook opened the door, heavy cigar smoke assailed his nostrils.

"Sir, I have just come from the Worthen Bank. I talked with the president and got his permission to rent this property for about ten days. He tells me that we also need your permission."

"You can't have it," refused the pastor abruptly as he shifted his cigar.

"Why not?" questioned Brother Cook.

"This church is dedicated to our services," declared the Episcopalian pastor possessively.

"I have already paid a deposit on it," persisted the Pentecostal pastor.

"Well," paused the pastor, "how much have you rented it for?"

"Fifty dollars."

"H'mm, fifty dollars! Well, we might as well let you have it for that."

"May I look over the facilities?" Brother Cook asked.

"Sure, go ahead. There is an ell that connects the church proper with the parsonage. You can go ahead and inspect the whole plant."

To his dismay, Brother Cook found the building somewhat dusty and cluttered—especially the ell that led off the church to the parsonage. The Cox Cash Grocery Store even had some machinery stored in that area.

Later as Brother Cook was telling his wife about the church, Nellie replied, "Oh, don't worry, Ralph. I'll get Sister Cameron and Sister Brown and we'll help you clean it."

But not everyone was enthusiastic about the new facilities. Sister Looper complained, "Brother Cook, if we ever move into that church, we'll all backslide." Others thought that having such a fancy church would lead to worldliness.

"Well, Sister, Jesus was born in a manger but He lives in heaven now, so we'll get along all right. Don't worry," comforted the wise young pastor.

"Brother and Sister Cook may have been young, but they sure were precious," Sister Cameron commented to an acquaintance many years later.

By this time, the Cox Cash Grocery Store's lease had run out, so they agreed to move all their machinery out of the ell of the Episcopalian church that Ralph Cook had rented for the Southern Bible Conference. Brother Cook then called a clean-up day. After all the dust, cobwebs, and clutter were cleaned out, Brother Cook began to collect beds, cots, and pallets to fill the three floors of the large parsonage.

"This will be the dormitory," he declared. "But

what will I do for food?" he wondered.

There was a young man in the church who had a thriving sweet business. He ran a candy kitchen. Carefully he hand-dipped delicious chocolates and sold them all over Arkansas and Missouri.

"Don't worry about food for the first day, Brother Cook. I'll just make a big pot of soup. I can get a big soup bone cheap," Brother Hoffman assured his pastor. Later someone donated one hundred pounds of rice for the conference and another friend gave one hundred pounds of sweet potatoes. One generous man gave three hundred dollars to purchase food.

On November 3, 1922, between sixty and seventy preachers, ministers, pastors and workers, mostly from the southern states, convened in the church at Fifth and Victory, Little Rock, Arkansas. Brother Mulford had wired Brother E. W. Doak, Presiding Chairman-Bishop of the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World about the conference. Brother Doak took the next train out to Little Rock.

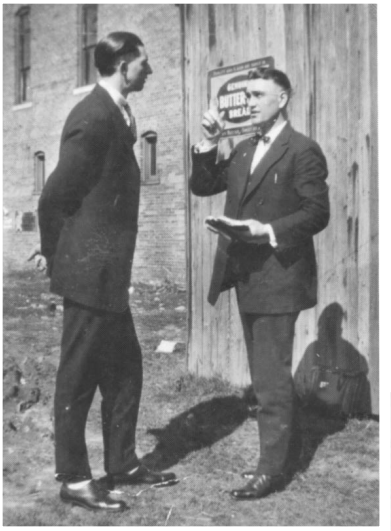
Brother Daniel C. O. Opperman, President of the Ozark Bible and Literary School, was chosen Chairman and Moderator of the Bible conference. Brother Opperman was a dignified older man, with a full beard and dark hair with just a little gray in it. He was a good administrator, taking full charge of the entire conference.

The first morning, one brother arose and simply said that the crying need of the Pentecostal movement was a praying ministry. Without any further comment, the congregation knelt and prayed.

Another brother then spoke. He mentioned that



Serious young preacher, Ralph G. Cook.



Young Evangelists,
Ralph G. Cook and
L. R. Ooton, 1922.



"Lord, send me!"
(Ralph Cook, 1919)



"Welcome to Foxboro."
(Ralph Cook and S. R. Hanby)



Brother Ralph Cook and Brother Lloyd Romine, 1930.



Brother Cook and friends
in front of the Foxboro church, 1937.

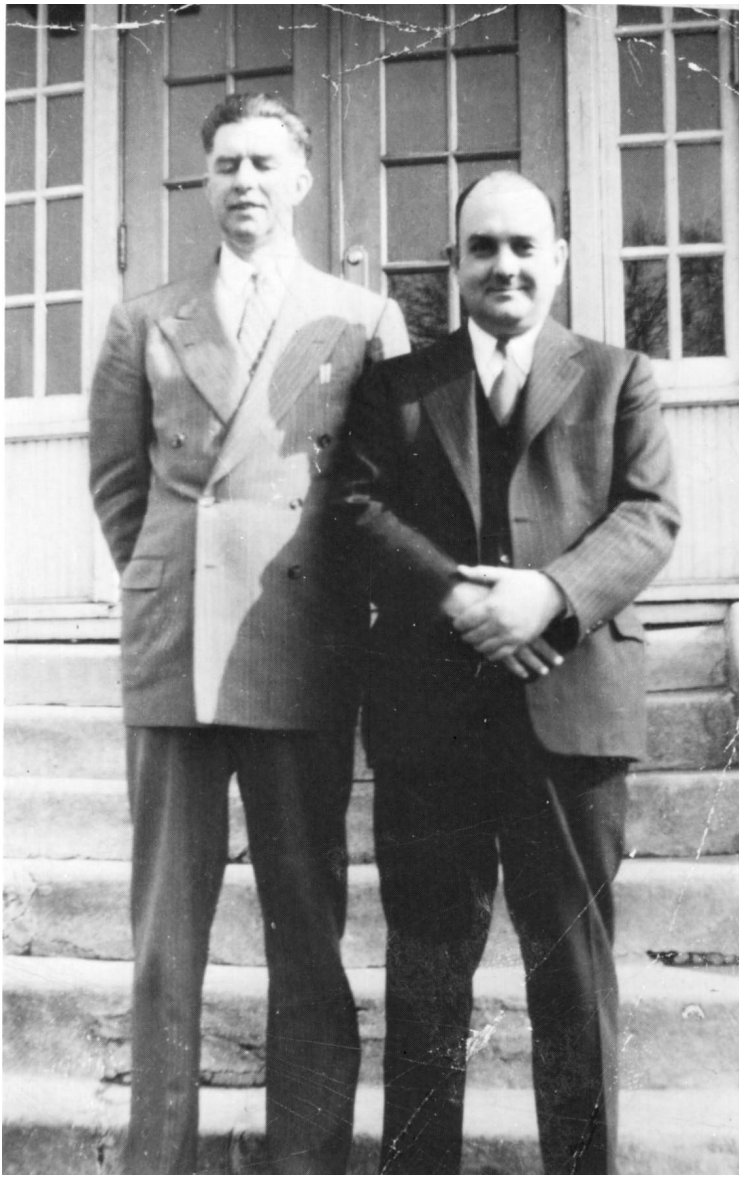


Brothers Paul Box,
R. G. Cook, and
S. W. Chambers.



Sisters Olga Box,
Nellie Cook, and
Catherine Chambers.

"Friends from New York!" (Fall, 1940)



Brother R. G. Cook visits Brother S. G. Norris
at Midway Tabernacle in St. Paul, 1944.



The General Board of the United Pentecostal Church, 1946.



Merry Christmas from the Cooks. (undated)



A later (1963) Christmas photograph.





The church at Lancaster, Ohio.



The ground breaking for the new United Pentecostal Church headquarters in Hazelwood, Mo., December 20, 1968.



Brother Cook offers the invocation at the dedication of the new United Pentecostal Church headquarters, Oct. 1970.

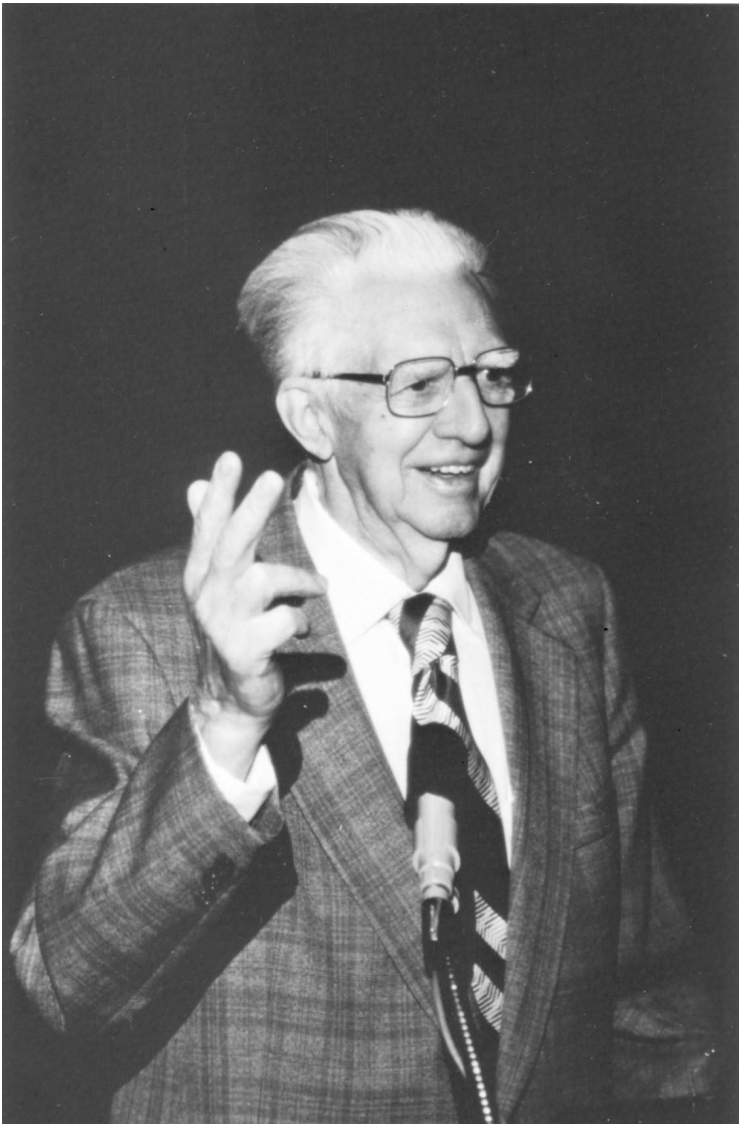


Brother Cook and Brother Curts enjoy fishing in Florida.





Time to retire! (1973)



Still active in retirement! (1980)

one of the saints had questioned him as to the *purpose* of the conference. While in prayer, God had spoken to him saying the conference was *FOR US*.

Later another brother told of the debate and contention that had arisen at previous meetings and called for a closed (to the public) meeting just for the ministers for heart-searching prayer, confession, and consecration.

In this atmosphere, the Spirit of God prevailed. Days were spent in tears and the spirit of weeping broke forth until none could speak, and if someone had spoken, he would not have been heard as they all fell on their knees time and time again, calling upon God for mercy, for forgiveness, for pardon, for power, for grace, for revival, for wisdom—for each need as it became manifest.

The meetings began at 7:00 A.M., 10:30 A.M., 3:00 P.M. and 7:30 P.M. The night evangelistic services, which were open to the public, were usually over about 11:00 P.M. After this another ministers' meeting was held, which sometimes lasted until almost dawn. Food, sleep and other "necessities" of life were forgotten in the overwhelming need to touch God.[3]

One night a communion service for preachers was held, followed by foot washing and confession service. This lasted until 3:00 in the morning. When they washed Brother J. C. Brickey's feet, he was instantly healed of flat feet. His arches came back in place. "Now, I will have to buy new shoes," declared Brother Brickey. "My flat feet are completely healed. My arches are in the proper place."

The special theme of the conference was the

preacher: his calling, his responsibilities, his vision, his walk, his behavior, his prayer life, his preaching, his compassion, his mediatorship, and his purpose of heart.

"How good it was to sit under the hammer of God's Word, to face the sword of the Spirit, and, oh, how it did profit us to fall upon the Rock and be broken to pieces," commented Brother Opperman, the chairman of the conference.

The two main speakers for the conference were Brother William E. Booth-Clibborn from England and Brother Andrew D. Urshan, the well-known Pentecostal leader who had come to America from Persia. Although he did not always get to preach, Brother William E. Booth-Clibborn said, "Personally, I can say that without exception this is the most beneficial conference I have ever attended on the American continent for the past ten years."

Each preacher seemed to be praying, "Lord, deal with me."

At first the night evangelistic meetings seemed somewhat "heavy," but toward the last there was a breakthrough and eighteen received the Holy Ghost and many were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Almost sixty years later Ralph Cook, Ben Blunt, Sister Cameron, and others recalled with deep emotion the moving of the Spirit of the Lord in this southern conference.

The logistics of such a meeting, however, were a terrific load for such a young pastor. As host pastor, Brother Cook served as purchasing agent for the food.

One night Ralph Cook came into service late. He

had been buying food for the next day, which was no small chore with the limited funds available. Since he was the host pastor, he came in and took his usual seat on the platform next to Brother Opperman. The older dignified minister turned to him and rebuked him. "Young man, the Bible says when you come to a feast, take the lower seat. There are more honorable men sitting behind you."

Quickly but quietly, Ralph Cook eased off the platform. That afternoon Brother Opperman sought out Brother Cook and prayed for him. "Lord, bless this young man. Help him to take instruction. Don't let him backslide."

Men who were pioneers and who later became great for God were in the gathering—W. R. Pair and his brother-in-law, A. O. Moore, Earl Toole, who was pastoring at Benton, and Elder Sharp, Elder Edge and Elder Shinn.

Brother William E. Booth-Clibborn, who was in his thirties, was not only a great speaker but also a gifted musician. He had studied violin in Europe.

At the conference, Brother Clibborn met a railroad man who had learned to make beautiful violins. This man had made his first violin from a railroad cross tie. After making many other instruments, the craftsman entered one in the World's Fair, where his instrument took first place.

The craftsman was impressed with Brother Booth-Clibborn's talent. "If you will recommend my violins, I will give you this instrument. It has been valued at fifteen hundred dollars." Thus the man who was skilled with his hands paid tribute to a minister of God.

William E. Booth-Clibborn was indeed a most remarkable minister. A young man in his thirties, he was highly educated. He was proficient in French and German as well as three other languages. A gifted musician, he had studied violin in Europe. Like G. T. Haywood and L. R. Ooton, he composed many songs.

In Jackson, Tennessee, Brother Booth-Clibborn preached on the courthouse steps. The crowd was estimated at sixteen thousand.

An amusing incident occurred there. A man who fancied himself to be another Houdini thought he would entertain the large crowd. Some of his friends tied him up in chains. About that time, Brother Booth-Clibborn walked up on the steps and announced, "Everyone that's coming to my meeting, come on." The entire crowd moved on to hear the Pentecostal preacher, leaving the would-be entertainer sitting in his chains.

From the conference the pastors, evangelists, and workers went everywhere holding revivals.

The Little Rock church experienced a real growth in its attendance and they continued to rent the Episcopal church. But trouble was soon to come.

Three of the main men in the church met Brother Cook with a serious complaint. Among other things, they accused him of taking money from the church treasury for the conference trip to Indianapolis. Although Brother Cook carefully explained that Sister Brasier had paid most all of the expenses of that trip, these critical men chose not to believe their pastor. They tried to arouse other opposition and put him out.

Quickly Brother Cook called the church together

for a vote of confidence. "If you are with me and you want to stand with me, then you stand," he stated. The majority of the good saints stood with their pastor. Although these three men were the heaviest financial contributors, Brother Cook disfellowshipped them.

Since the major part of their financial support was gone, the Cooks had to move from the Episcopal parsonage to live with a poor widow, Sister Rosie Nalley.

Times were hard. Sister Nalley was very poor, but she willingly shared what she had. Gunnysacks were over the windows. The meals were mostly sowbelly and sorghum molasses and biscuits. For three months the Cooks lived simply by faith. Then they were able to move back into the Episcopal parsonage. His willingness to endure hardness as a good soldier, however, established Brother Cook's leadership in the Little Rock church. God also blessed Sister Nalley, and her daughters continued to serve God. In later years they attended Brother Paul Price's church in California.

Brother Cook was asked to serve as an Arkansas district elder for the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World. When the church building in Lonoke burned and the city issued an injunction to try to keep the congregation from rebuilding, the saints called for Brother Cook.

"I believe I will call Brother Henry Greene Rogers, Nellie. (Brother Rogers was Sister Brown's father.) He is a very dignified, experienced, and wise man. Perhaps he will go to Lonoke with me," Brother Cook decided.

When Brother Rogers and Brother Cook arrived and took their place in court, the lawyer, a Mr. Reed, began to make fun of the two preachers. He had made

charges that the Pentecostals were moaning and groaning, swaying in a weaving way, and talking in tongues. "They do not need to rebuild a church for these kinds of people in Lonoke," he asserted. Then turning to Brother Rogers, he added sarcastically. "Sir, do you know a noun from a verb?"

Although he resented the lawyer's attempt to belittle him, Brother Rogers kept his composure and replied courteously.

Then the lawyer tried another tactic, "Mr. Rogers, do you believe in war?" he questioned.

"No, I do not believe in war," responded the minister.

"Well, suppose everybody believed like you?" baited the lawyer.

"Well, there would not be any war," the kindly minister quickly responded with a twinkle in his eye. The entire courtroom began to laugh.

For three days the two ministers endured the prosecuting attorney's harassment. At one point, the lawyer asked, "Mr. Cook, do you believe the Lord could heal a toe itch?"

At the final trial, however, the chancellor, a wise older man from Little Rock, came down and met the two ministers.

Again the prosecuting lawyer charged, "These people are a public nuisance. They moan and groan and carry on all night. They talk in tongues and sway in a weaving way."

The chancellor sat quietly and listened. When the prosecuting lawyer finished, the chancellor simply said, "Well, folks, this is a free country. If they want to

moan and groan and talk in tongues and pray all night, that is their privilege. Case dismissed!" With that ruling, the chancellor threw the case out of court.

The trial at Lonoke was hard, but an even harder trial occurred when Brother Cook came back to Little Rock. Each morning as was his custom, Brother Cook arose early and went through the ell that connected the manse (parsonage) to the church to pray. The morning sun usually shone softly through the "rose window" in the back of the church.

Alice Mae was growing out of babyhood—old enough to wean. Unfortunately, however, there was no food in the house.

"Ralph, there is nothing. No sugar, no flour, no milk," Nellie softly reminded her husband. "I gave the last little bit of milk to the baby last night." She lay quietly in bed after her husband left for morning prayer.

"Maybe, if I lie still, Alice Mae will sleep awhile longer but, oh, God, do send us some food," Sister Cook prayed quietly.

Brother Cook prayed earnestly for a long time that morning. When he got up from prayer, he dreaded going back to the empty cupboard in the quiet kitchen.

"Perhaps if I go out on the street, I might find a nickel or a dime," he thought.

Down the center aisle and through the front door of the church the tall young preacher strode, trying to trust God. He had to push the door a little.

"What is this?" There on the doorstep was a big basket overflowing with groceries.

"Thank you, Jesus!" He grabbed the basket and

ran into the house shouting, "Nellie, come here! Look what God has done!"

Sister Cook quickly hopped out of bed, grabbed a robe and ran to see what God had done.

"Oh, Ralph, look, sugar, flour, butter, corn, cheese, meat, potatoes, rice, everything! And, thank you, Jesus, here is milk for my baby. Momma's coming, darling. Here's your milk, Alice Mae. Oh, we do offer thanks, Jesus. Thank you so much!"

Ralph and Nellie Cook never learned who their silent benefactor was, but sixty years later the faith such episodes brought still shines brightly.

Some time later a second baby was born to the Cook family. Ralph William Cook was born in the parsonage on Fifth and Victory just two blocks from the Arkansas State Capitol.

Again, a midwife attended Sister Cook. After the tiny little woman had been in labor twenty-four hours, the frightened midwife said, "Brother Cook, I cannot take the responsibility. You had better call a doctor."

"Give me five minutes to pray. If that baby is not born in five minutes, we will call the doctor," responded Brother Cook as he fell to his knees in prayer.

Five minutes later Ralph William was born.

"God not only supplies our daily bread, He also heals us," Brother Cook rejoiced.

Later Alice Mae contracted a disease called "white thrush."

"That girl's going to die, Brother Cook," someone said after hearing that the child was passing nothing but blood through her bowels. Brother Cook knew that the child was seriously ill. He had preached the funer-

als of children who had died of the same sickness. After hours of travailing prayer, God heard and healed. Praise God! He is a prayer-answering God.

Occasionally Brother Cook held revivals. One such meeting was for Brother Harry Nigh in Junction City, Kansas, in the cold winter of 1922. Many of the people there were German farmers. When Brother Nigh made his pastoral calls, the saints loaded him with chickens, eggs, whipping cream and other farm produce.

During the first ten days of the revival, there was little response. "If there is not a move of God tonight, I am going home," Brother Cook declared on the tenth night.

After the service, Brother Nigh came to Brother Cook.

"Well, Brother Cook, the blacksmith's wife has been under conviction all summer, but now she wants to be baptized."

"Baptized! Isn't the tank frozen over, Brother Nigh?"

"Well, you just sing real loud, Brother Cook, and I will break the ice," assured Brother Nigh, and he did just that.

The tiny little woman came up out of that ice cold water with the fire of the Holy Ghost in her soul. She began to shout, splash ice water, and speak in tongues. The revival continued for twenty-one days. Seven converts were baptized in that cold weather and they all got the Holy Ghost.

One black man got so happy after Brother Nigh put him under the water that he came up shouting. Then he

jumped up on the side of the tank and back into the cold water again.

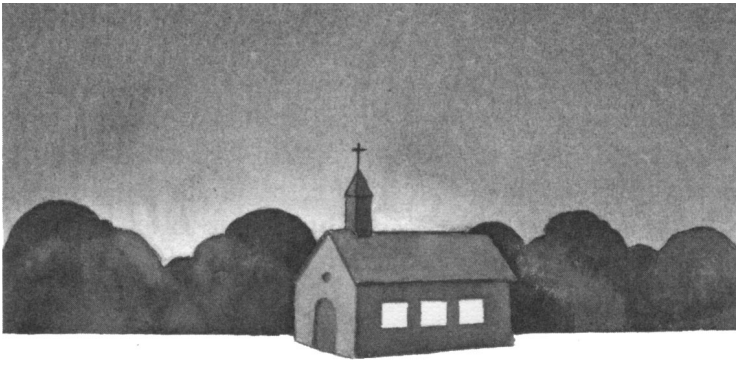
When Ralph got back to Little Rock, he received a letter from Boston, from his mother and father. "We are getting old, Ralph. It has been so long since you were home. When are you coming home?"

After receiving several such letters, Brother Cook began to feel that he should go back to Boston.

"But it can't be just for a visit, Nellie. It is just too far. It is twenty-one hundred miles to Boston," Brother Cook tried to think.

"Perhaps Brother Brown would take the church," he thought. After talking with Brother Brown, Brother Cook decided to leave the church with him. He and his wife and two small children packed up their belongings and headed for Boston and for a new venture in the work of God.

[1]Odell Cagle, *Echoes of the Past*, p. 27.
[2]Fred J. Foster, *Think It Not Strange*, p. 75.
[3]William E. Booth-Clibborn, *A Call To The Dust & Ashes.*



Foxboro

When Brother and Sister Cook and their two small children, Alice Mae and Ralph William (Bill), arrived in Boston, the latter part of 1923, the family was united again with Grandma and Grandpa Cook. They began to attend the black church once more on Shawmut Avenue. Brother Oddous Barber was the pastor.

In Foxboro, Massachusetts, just twenty-three miles from Boston, was a small group of four Pentecostals. One of the men came to Brother Cook. "Will you come to Foxboro to preach for us, Brother Cook?"

"Well, brother, I already have an appointment to go back to Junction City, Kansas. I held them a meeting some time ago. They want me to come back there as pastor," Brother Cook explained. "However, while I am here in the East, I will come and preach for you."

The four saints in Foxboro began to pray. There

were only two women and two men, but they loved God and the Pentecostal truth. They wanted their own church and their own pastor.

"Would you consider being our pastor?" they asked Brother Cook again after he preached for them the third Sunday.

"Well, brother, I can't. I am already engaged to go to Junction City, Kansas," the young preacher explained again carefully.

"If God would change your plan, would you come and be our pastor?"

"Oh, yes, if God changed my plans then I would come," Brother Cook agreed, never dreaming that God might just do that. "All I want is the will of God."

A few days later, Nellie called as Brother Cook came in one afternoon, "Ralph, here's a letter for you. The postmark says Junction City, Kansas."

Slowly Ralph Cook opened the letter and began to read. "Due to the fact that we are unable to raise the necessary funds for you to move so far, we have reconsidered. There is a man nearby who is willing to be our pastor. We have decided that he should be our pastor."

"Well," Ralph exclaimed as he dropped the letter on the table. "Read this, Nellie! I guess God does want us to go to Foxboro! I cannot ask four people to support me, but I suppose I can go back to work. I am a good machinist and there is work here in the East."

There is an old Chinese proverb which says "The longest journey starts with the first step." So in the latter part of 1923 Ralph Cook became pastor of four saints in Foxboro, Massachusetts.

Among the saints in Foxboro was a businessman, Brother E. U. Wurlitzer, Sr. He was related to the famous Wurlitzer family who has done so well in the music business. In fact, his relatives went to court to try to stop Brother Wurlitzer from putting his name on the musical instruments that he built.

"The man has a right to use his own name," was the court's verdict.

"I want you to be one of my deacons, Brother Wurlitzer," Pastor Cook told him one day. So Brother Wurlitzer had an opportunity to serve his church as well as his business.

By the end of the first year, the attendance in the Foxboro church was often up to fifty. People who knew Brother Cook or had heard of his work came all the way from Brooklyn and Boston as well as the area surrounding Foxboro. Brother Cook located a small restaurant and remodeled it to seat about seventy-five or more people. The crowded little church was located at Bird and Railroad Avenues. The noisy trains ran by often during services. It was called the First Pentecostal Church.

By this time Nellie Reppond Cook was expecting her third child. Her time was fully taken up with her duties as a wife and a mother. "One preacher in a family is enough," she thought. She had been willing to travel and preach with one child, but now there were two small children and a third one on the way. "We need a home, Ralph—nothing fancy—just some place to call home."

So the Cooks bought a home in Foxboro, Massachusetts, on 9 Chestnut Street, and the little girl

from the plantation in Louisiana settled down in the crowded, cold, industrial East to make a home for her tall preacher husband and her babies.

Boston baked beans and brown bread were the local favorites, but the saints in Foxboro got an occasional taste of cornbread, Louisiana gumbo, and southern fried chicken.

At Christmas time many hospitable Norwegians and Swedes who lived in the East invited the Cooks for fancy baked goods and rich food. They filled the coffee with rich cream. "This is different from Louisiana, eh, wife!" Brother Cook teased.

Although Nellie was more into homemaking than preaching, she was still faithful in prayer and helped to keep the local services going, especially when her husband was away on trips.

"He's got a call to fulfill. I know what that means," she thought as she waved good-bye when her husband left for another conference. For fourteen years she stayed home with the children while he went to conferences.

Family devotions were always a regular part of the routine in the Cook household. "We've got time for prayer. We *take* time for prayer. We need the strength and the power. We've got a big job to do," the Cooks agreed.

Indeed it was a big job. For twelve long years Ralph Cook worked in the Bird Machine Shop on South Walpole as well as pastoring the church in Foxboro.

By request, he also sat on a bench at the machine shop and taught the Bible during his lunch hour for a year and a half. One of the men there at work asked

the young preacher-machinist to bring him a Bible, but then he qualified his request by saying, "If you are going to bring me a Bible, please bring it in a newspaper. I don't want those other workers to know that I am asking you for a Bible."

"He will probably never serve God," Brother Cook thought. "He doesn't mean business with God." Brother Cook took him a Bible anyway. The man took the Bible, but to Brother Cook's knowledge, he never served God.

Adelade, Ralph Cook's sister, had married Ivor Reuter and this splendid young couple were a part of the congregation in Foxboro. The Cooks had a quartet with Ralph Cook singing along with Adelade and Ivor Reuter and with his brother, George Cook. Adelade was the pianist. They sang in many of the services in the East. Their favorite song was "By the Rivers of Babylon."

The preaching was the main part of any Pentecostal service, however. Anointed preaching! Strict preaching! Jewelry was out. When a young unmarried man rode with a young single woman, they were expected to have a chaperone. However, not all preachers were quite so strict.

While Brother Cook was pastoring in Foxboro, Aimee Semple McPherson came once again to the East. When she asked about renting the city auditorium in Boston Gardens, the city official replied, "You could not pay for it!"

By the Rivers of Babylon



Aimee replied, "I'll just give you a check in advance."

Twenty thousand people flocked to hear the popular lady evangelist. Long lines formed two hours before meeting time. The elevated train packed with people ran right into the Gardens.

Ralph Cook was amazed to see the dramatics of the meetings Mrs. McPherson was holding now. The lady evangelist had one dress made with a red stripe down the middle. When she held out her arms, this red stripe made a cross. One dramatic sermon was entitled, "From the Milk Pail to the Pulpit." Another, "Curfew Shall Not Ring Tonight."

Another night they had a bell hung high with a rope dangling from it. Aimee grabbed the rope and swung out over the audience. She had studied elocution and in that huge crowd her voice could be heard any place in the auditorium. There was no public address system, only a sounding board. When the offering was taken up, it took a wash tub to take care of it. Big time preaching!

Brother Cook had heard that Brother Lemuel C. Hall had baptized Aimee in the name of the Lord Jesus, but this was never verified. "It seems a long time since I first heard Mrs. McPherson at the Stone church in Chicago, Nellie. She had just returned from China. She was just a young girl but already a widow. Now they say she has built quite a temple in Los Angeles."

The young pastor returned from the big meetings back to his small congregation in Foxboro committed to the truth which he so firmly believed in—repentance, baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus, and the

infilling of the Holy Ghost.

Many times in earlier days Ralph had been strictly taught to rely upon God. "Trust God! He will supply your needs." Some of the early ministers did not even take offerings—they just trusted God for every need. So he worked on at the Bird Machine Shop and kept on preaching the truth.

While Brother Cook was pastoring in Foxboro, he heard from an old friend, Sister Laden, the daughter of Pastor Stead. She was pastoring a trinity church in Caribou, Maine, and she wanted Brother Cook to come to Caribou for their special trinity conference.

"You know what I believe, Sister Laden," answered Brother Cook.

"I know what you believe, Brother Cook, but you are my father's convert and I want you to come," she insisted.

Since another speaker was scheduled, Brother Cook preached on alternate nights. Although he used wisdom and did not "name" the message, some of the ministers soon recognized the Oneness doctrine.

Two fellows showed their opposition in a rather crude way. They got down on the floor and crawled like snakes. Later, however, one of the other preachers, Gene Kembel, accepted the truth and was baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Among these ministers who attended the Caribou conference was Brother Wynn Stairs from New Brunswick, Canada. After he heard Brother Cook preach, Brother Stairs said, "Come on downstairs, Brother Cook. I want to talk with you."

So the tall young preacher from Foxboro went

downstairs behind the furnace with the rugged man from New Brunswick. "Brother Cook, do you believe the Oneness message?"

"Yes, I do believe that."

"When you are through here, why don't you drive over into Canada to Plaster Rock. Brother Rolston's conference is coming up."

Brother Rolston, a dignified white-haired Irishman, was delighted to meet the tall Pentecostal preacher from Foxboro. Brother Roosevelt York's two daughters, Margaret and Honey, and a friend went to Plaster Rock with the Cooks. One of the girls played the piano and the other a bass guitar. Their music added to the ministry of Brother Cook.

Brother Cook sang also. "Fifty Miles of Elbow Room" was a favorite but "Turkey Buzzard" and the "Oak and the Ivy" were also requested over and over. He preached twenty-seven times in nine days—morning, afternoon and night services.

The Turkey Buzzard Song

A turkey buzzard setting on the comb of a church
Sunning himself in the air
He looked down the chimney and gave himself a scratch
Said, "There's nothing going on down there.
The doors are shut and the organ won't play;
The members all gone to the sea.
The preacher and his family gone off to Cape May.
There's nobody here but me."

CHORUS
Well you can't serve God and mammon; that's what the good Book says.
Whom the Lord has called to His service has no business going away.

"The Sunday school teacher just like the preacher gone off to the mountain to cool.
The superintendent like the gospel defendant is obliged to close up the school.
I'm beginning to see because it's getting plain to me.
For I've got some sense in my head for I'm telling the truth sitting here on the roof.
I'm sure watching over the dead."

So without another word that poor buzzard bird spread his wings and fled to the sky.
And he bade farewell to every fear as he wiped his weeping eye.
Well, the preacher came back and got on the track, his members all gone to the sea.
He was praying mighty loud for he'd now lost his crowd.
"Lord send us the Holy Ghost."

Well the buzzard came back and lit on the roof to sun himself in the air
He lifted up his head for he heard an awful noise he said, "There's surely something going on there.

Such a singin' and a shoutin' and a dancin' in
the Spirit and talking in tongues do I hear.
Everybody's on fire and very much alive
So I've got no business here."

The Canadian saints had a wonderful camp at Plaster Rock. Brother Rolston pastored the church in Plaster Rock and another small church at Tillie. The two small Canadian sawmill villages were just a few miles over the border from Aroostook County, Maine.

"When I first came to Plaster Rock, I had quite a bit of persecution, Brother Cook," Brother Rolston confided in his new friend. "The man who owned the sawmill overheard some of my critics talking against me. He called a special meeting to talk with these men.

"'If I hear any more discussion against that man Rolston, someone will be in trouble. I don't know what he believes and I don't care what he believes. All I know is that since he has been preaching here, my equipment has been coming back. All my tools have been coming home. I don't want any more discussion about that man. If you do, you will get fired.'"

"Pentecostal preaching causes people to make restitution, Brother Rolston," Brother Cook agreed.

A warm friendship soon grew between Brother Rolston and Brother Cook. Brother Rolston had recently made a trip back to his native Ireland.

"Brother Cook, are you Irish? There is a statue to a man by the name of Koock in Ireland. Is that a relative?"

Brother Cook was aware that his roots were Irish, and he *knew* that he enjoyed a warm friendship with this remarkable spiritual brother, Brother Rolston. But he did not know of any famous ancestors in Ireland.

"I want you to come to Foxboro to preach for me," Brother Cook urged. At last Brother Rolston did come, but it was hard to get him to preach anywhere but at Plaster Rock in his own church.

Brother Cook met many consecrated and devoted Pentecostal ministers in Canada. He invited them to attend a conference at Brother Witherspoon's church in Columbus. Later several of these men came to the United States and met American preachers of like precious faith.

Jesus Name Pentecostals longed for more fellowship, too. It was lonely in the East. Ralph Cook pastored the Foxboro church for twenty years and worked with his hands in the machine shop for twelve years to support his growing family. His tithes into the small church helped pay the operating expenses of the church. During those long twenty years only two evangelists came to lend a hand.

When Brother Cook contacted one popular preacher about a revival, the response was, "I will come if you will guarantee me so much money." By this time the Cooks were so hungry for fellowship that Brother Cook replied, "Come ahead. I will take care of it."

"We will have to budget our paycheck from the machine shop to pay for this revival, wife, but it will be worth so much to me to have another preacher in," he explained to Sister Cook. The evangelist was on his

way north for a fishing trip, so he agreed to stop by for a few nights' meetings. The Cooks did enjoy his fellowship, but there were little results from the night evangelistic services.

Then Brother Cook called the church together. "Let's go to prayer. Let's believe God for a real revival." For fifteen weeks, the saints met for prayer every night. They prayed and sought God. Brother Cook only preached Sunday morning and Sunday night.

At the end of fifteen weeks, a man and his wife walked into service one night. "He looks like a preacher," Brother Cook noticed as he went back to greet the stranger.

"We are happy to have you in our service, sir. I am Brother Cook, the pastor of this church."

"I am Charles Sweeney, Brother Cook," the man responded. "I was a policeman in Portland, Maine, when God saved me." Then the stranger shared some of his personal testimony. Although he had been quite an unusual character, God had saved him.

"I am now the New England evangelist for the Assemblies of God."

"Well, brother, would you preach for us tonight?" Brother Cook invited. "I can straighten out his doctrine later. I am not afraid of him," he thought.

After Brother Sweeney finished preaching that night, Brother Cook said, "How about staying a little while and holding us a meeting?"

"Well, I am not too busy right now; I will do it." So the evangelist stayed and preached for two weeks. He preached at night, but Brother Cook preached

baptism in the name of Jesus to Brother Sweeney during the day. During the revival, a Baptist deacon came and got the Holy Ghost. The husband of the treasurer of the Baptist church got the Holy Ghost. Altogether seven persons received the Holy Ghost. Brother Cook baptized all of them in the name of the Lord Jesus and taught them the oneness of God. That year forty-five young people were filled with the Holy Ghost. What a revival!

"Fifteen weeks of prayer will do something," Brother Cook declared enthusiastically.

Later Brother Cook's preaching on the oneness of God and baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus began to pay off. Brother Forrest A. Nickerson from the state of Maine baptized Brother Sweeney in the name of Jesus. The minister turned in his credentials to the Assemblies of God and began to preach not only repentance and the infilling of the Holy Ghost but also baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus.

After a few years the Foxboro church was enlarged again to seat a hundred and twenty. A new baptistry was added and new lighting installed.

In 1925 a third child, Paul, was born to the Cook family. Some two years later Nellie gave birth to twins—a boy and a girl.

"What a beautiful family God has given me," she rejoiced. As all mothers do, she marveled as the babies grew and changed almost from week to week. She daydreamed of the twins. "Soon they will start to school and grow up." She could picture them as fine adults serving God. Nellie Cook prayed daily for her children.

The Cook children, although they were preacher's children, were just normal. There were squabbles and rivalry. Once the two little boys, Ralph William, better known as Bill, and Paul, who was about two years younger, had one tricycle to share. That was very hard to do.

Bill had possession of the tricycle. He evidently thought "possession is nine-tenths of the law." He rode 'round and 'round, all the time saying soothingly, "Next time, Pauley. You can ride next time."

Paul may have been young but he was already showing determined "do or die" traits that mark a leader. He suffered in silence for a few rounds. Then he tackled his older brother, unseated him, bit him soundly on the lip, and rode off in triumph on the tricycle.

The daily routine of housework and mothering five lively children kept the short, little woman busy. But she always was cheerful. She always had a merry laugh and a twinkle in her eye.

Although these energetic youngsters kept her totally occupied, Sister Cook faithfully kept her hour of prayer. She always bowed low in prayer. First she knelt and then bent over putting her head to the floor. Her prayer hour was scheduled for the time that the twins were supposed to be napping, but often Sister Cook would hear soft footsteps. Then she felt a little warm body next to hers. The little girl, Adaleen, would lie as close to her mother as she could get. Soon the little girl would begin to try to pray—imitating her mother. In another moment or so, Sister Cook would feel another body crawling up on her back. There

Robert would perch while his mother prayed and sought God.

Pressures, tensions, change, and sorrow happen to all families. Nellie loved her baby twins. She dressed them alike as toddlers. "How cute those babies are," was often heard. "My, they are growing up." Nellie loved them and dreamed of their future.

But the dream became almost a nightmare in 1933 when the tiny little girl, Adaleen, was only six years old. "I don't feel good, Mommie," the little girl complained. Later, she added, "My legs hurt." Still later Sister Cook noticed a slight fever.

"Rheumatic fever," was the doctor's diagnosis. "Not a lot we can do, just bed rest mostly." Within nine short weeks the tall preacher from Foxboro and his short little wife from Louisiana faced the Gethsemane of all parents—the death of a beloved child.

"O God, help me," Nellie prayed and God did help. "I cannot question you, God. You said, 'All things work together for good to them that love God.' I believe you, God."

So Sister Cook clung closer to her God and to her beloved husband. Together they walked through the valley of the shadow of death. No bitterness! No questions! But a daily fight to stay under subjection to God.

"The last mile will determine where we spend eternity. I must endure what I cannot enjoy!" That was Nellie Cook's testimony.[1]

In May 1937 a little old Model A Ford automobile packed full of people and luggage drove into the Cooks' driveway.

"Why, it's Brother Stair's from New Brunswick, wife," exclaimed Brother Cook.

"Hello, Brother Cook, this is Brother Verne Larson and his wife, Abby. They are going as missionaries to Columbia, South America. We are on our way to New York to catch the boat. We just thought we would stop for a little visit. Actually we are dreading driving in New York. That's a big city!"

"Well, I am glad you stopped by. You can get a little rest. Then I will drive you to New York myself."

So Ralph Cook showed an early interest in the missionary work. He took a week off from his work at Bird Machine Shop, moved all their luggage to his larger gray Chevy with its roomy trunk and drove Brother Stairs and the Larsons to New York. Little did Brother Cook realize as he waved good-bye that little Sister Larson would never return. Soon after the Larsons reached the land of their calling, Sister Larson (like Hattie) died in childbirth leaving Brother Larson and little Abby all alone and far from home.

In 1938 Brother Cook met William Thomas Witherspoon. Brother Witherspoon had received the Holy Ghost in 1912 and three years later God revealed to him the truth of the oneness of the Godhead and water baptism in the name of Jesus Christ.

In 1917, having received a call to the ministry, Brother Witherspoon organized a small congregation of people in Columbus, Ohio. This church was known as the Apostolic Gospel Church and became one of the largest Oneness assemblies in the world.

It was at a conference held in this church in 1938 that Brother Cook met not only Brother Witherspoon

but also Brother Nathaniel A. Urshan and Stanley R. Hanby.

Brother Urshan was the son of the Persian evangelist, Andrew Urshan, who had preached the one God message so forcefully in Little Rock at the southern conference. The young Brother Urshan had just been healed of tuberculosis. He was singing the praises of God. "That is a fine young man," Brother Cook observed, "and a splendid singer."

What a great time of fellowship the ministers had at this conference! Brother Cook, who was often lonely for fellowship, invited Brother Hanby to come to Foxboro for a meeting. Brother Hanby was a devoted home mission preacher. The call of God seemed to dominate his life. He had held many street meetings, tent meetings and special services in the areas of New Salem, Baltimore, Basil and Pleasant Valley, Ohio. At this time he was building a new church at Lancaster, Ohio. Dedication day was to be November 27, 1938.

"Brother Hanby, I would like you to come to Foxboro to preach for us," Brother Cook invited.

Later Brother Hanby did come to Foxboro and a warm fellowship developed between them. "God seems to use me to get churches started, Brother Cook. So far I have held seven tent revivals in Lancaster, but there are so many places to go—so many towns and villages that need the gospel. If the Lord wants me to leave Lancaster, I am willing to leave the new building and go."

The Canadian brethren that Brother Cook had invited also came to this conference in Columbus. Brother Rolston, as well as Wynn Stairs, Quincy Stairs

and John Dewing all drove down seeking closer fellowship with their American brothers of like precious faith. Although Brother Witherspoon had already promoted foreign missions, the Canadian brethren were very dedicated to this phase of God's work and gave generously to it.

It was also in 1938 at this conference that Brother Cook was asked to go on the board of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Jesus Christ.

Brother S. G. Norris, founder of the Apostolic Bible Institute, was also present at the conference. "I want you to come to St. Paul and preach for me, Brother Cook," Brother Norris said hospitably. This began a close lifelong friendship between the Norrises and the Cooks. Every February from 1939 to 1945 Brother Norris invited Brother Cook to the Apostolic Bible Institute to preach.

The children were older now and Sister Cook went on this first trip with Brother Cook to St. Paul. "Speak to my class, Sister Cook," Brother Norris insisted. The fiery evangelistic spirit was burning in the little woman's heart. The young people loved her and responded.

When Alice Mae graduated from high school, she went to the Apostolic Bible Institute. Still later, Paul and Robert attended the school after graduating from the high school in Foxboro.

Foxboro had a good school system as well as many churches, but these religious people were not always open to the truth of the Holy Ghost. People attended the Pentecostal church, driving from Brooklyn and Boston and surrounding areas. Brother Cook continued

to baptize people in the name of the Lord Jesus. Often on Sunday night the attendance would be about one hundred.

It was in 1937 that an insurance endowment policy that Ralph's mother had taken out years earlier matured. She had only paid ten cents per week for the policy, but Ralph Cook collected almost five hundred dollars on it.

"Nellie, I am going to buy us a car with this money," Ralph confided. "Remember that Model T Ford that I got in Indianapolis? That is the only Ford I have ever had. I want another Ford."

So the Cooks went shopping for a car. He found a brand new Ford with bumperettes. "Just nine hundred dollars, Nellie, and it is really dressed up. I need a car to drive around town while I am making my calls. The whole family will enjoy a car."

Indeed they did enjoy the car! Alice Mae decided she could drive, so she took the car into Boston. Down on Park Street a truck was parked with the tailgate hanging down.

"I really don't know exactly how I skinned those handles off, Dad. There was this truck and . . ."

Later Paul took the car to school one day. As he was coming home, he had to throw on his brakes abruptly.

"The next thing I knew, Dad, this fellow just plowed right into me," Paul explained ruefully.

Ralph William (Bill) took a girl to Boston in the new car. It was a cold night and the road was iced over. Suddenly Bill hit a patch of ice, lost control, and mowed down two or three retaining posts. "Well, Bill,

that just about wrecks the front end of it," said his father.

Although parts were hard to find, Brother Cook shopped around and found enough to patch up the car.

About four years later, Brother Cook sold the Ford and got exactly nine hundred dollars for it.

"We must pray more, Nellie. Our children are growing up."

One Sunday morning in the late fall of 1940 Brother Cook, who was standing at the pulpit, was greatly surprised to see the church door open and two attractive young couples enter.

"Why, those young people must be from Brother Urshan's church in New York," he said to himself as he hurried to greet them.

"Yes, we are from New York, Brother Cook. I am Stanley Chambers and this is my wife, Catherine. These are our friends, Brother and Sister Paul Box."

"How kind of you to come to visit us. We don't get too many visitors here in Foxboro. Please come to the platform and greet the congregation."

After the service was over, Sister Cook insisted that the young people have lunch with her family before they drove back to New York. A close, warm friendship began to develop that day among the Cooks, the Chambers and the Boxes. Little did they realize at that time how closely they would all be associated in the future.

When Paul Cook grew older, he still showed the competitive determined drive that he had as a toddler. Football was his game. How disappointed he was when he broke some fingers and had to put them in a cast.

It was the last game of the season.

"I really want to play," he insisted, so he played cast and all.

"Paul, what happened? Your cast is broken. Did you go ahead and play ball?"

After Paul graduated from Foxboro High in 1943, he was soon drafted.

Bill was already in the Navy—the Seabees.

Paul made radio man aboard the *Cowpen*, an aircraft carrier. He was in the thick of the war—fifteen major battles in the Pacific. Every day Brother and Sister Cook faithfully prayed for their boys in the service.

One day a terrible accident occurred. The *Houston* and the *Cambora* collided, leaving a large hole big enough to set a small house in the side of the *Cambora*.

All was chaos! Grown men crawled under tables, calling on God. They closed the hatches to save part of the ship knowing full well that the men in the hole would never get out.

Paul's ship, the *Cowpen*, hooked on to the *Houston* and the *Cambora* and towed them across the Pacific.

"What are they trying to do? Draw out the whole Jap Navy," the sailors wondered. Later, the crew was given a citation for the action.

Although Paul's own prayer life was not very good, he *knew* that back in Foxboro a praying mother and a godly father were interceding daily for his safety, both soul and body.

As he sat at his radio duty five decks below water,

he knew his danger. Once fifty Japanese planes flew over the ship. The horror and the chaos were unspeakable, but God's grace and His mercy were everlasting.

In the winter of 1942 another interesting sailor attended the church in Foxboro. Alice Mae asked questions and soon learned that the cute new sailor was Allan Bourne.

"He's from Michigan, Mom, and he goes to church there. He goes to Brother Kirby's church. Brother Kirby's daughter wrote Allan and told him about our little church here in Foxboro!"

"Oh, he is related to Brother Kirby you say?" Brother Cook quizzed his daughter. "Brother Kirby has quite a church there in Royal Oak."

"What ship is your friend on?" asked Sister Cook.

"He's on that *USS Bunker Hill* aircraft carrier. He may have to go out on a shake-down run soon, but I can write him at least."

So it was that Alice and Allan ("Don't our names sound good together!") met.

It was not long, however, until the young Michigan sailor did leave for the South Pacific. Only the letters kept the relationship intact for the next two years. On occasion Paul and Allan had brief contact, but the southeast Pacific is a big place. Mail call was very important to Allan Bourne.

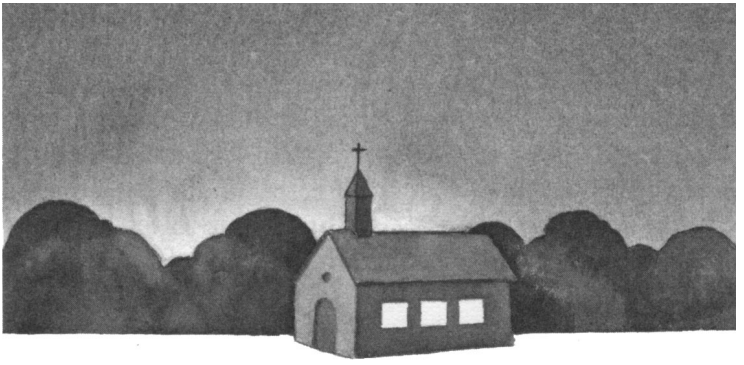
At this time the Cooks had been at Foxboro almost twenty years. Paul and the twins, Bob and Adaleen, had been born there. All the children (except Adaleen, who died in her sixth year) had finished high school at Foxboro High. In the early forties Bill and Paul left for military service.

"I have been here a long time, wife. I wonder if it is not God's will for me to think about a change. My brother, George, would make a good pastor for this work in Foxboro. He is a builder. He could help them in a building project. I am willing to go or stay, but I want to do God's will.

After much prayer, Brother and Sister Cook decided to resign the Foxboro church and move to Waterbury, Connecticut. "I am glad the Foxboro assembly wants my brother, George, to be their new pastor. He is a builder. There are many things he can do to improve that building. I am not sure just what God has in mind for us, wife, but He will show us His will. Right now I think we should move to Waterbury."

Shortly after they moved to Waterbury a letter arrived from Lancaster, Ohio.

[1]Marvelle Dees, *Heirs Together*, p. 95.



Lancaster

During twelve of the twenty years the Cooks stayed at Foxboro, Massachusetts, Brother Cook worked as a machinist to help support his family. It was a struggle in this eastern city to establish a strong congregation for the Lord, but there was a constant growth in his assembly. Only a few ministers came to preach revivals for the Cooks, but among those who came was Brother Stanley R. Hanby, who was to have a hand in the Cooks' next pastorate.

Feeling that God wanted him to leave Foxboro, Brother Cook resigned as pastor in 1945 and moved to Connecticut. There he evangelized and waited on God for direction. He knew that it was God's will for him to leave Foxboro, but he did not know what he was to do next. Then one day he received a letter from Brother Hanby inviting him to pastor the church in Lancaster, Ohio.

As usual, Brother and Sister Cook took the matter to God, for they wanted His will. After much prayer, Brother Cook knew God was leading them to Lancaster. Therefore in June 1945 Brother and Sister Cook and their four children, Alice, William, Paul, and Robert, made the move to Lancaster, Ohio.

Brother Stanley R. Hanby had started the church in Lancaster in 1932 with a tent revival on the fairgrounds. Several received the Holy Ghost in this revival and Brother Hanby immediately looked for a building for the new converts. In 1933 he rented a garage on North Broad Street and named the new assembly, "Lancaster Apostolic Tabernacle."

The following year, in 1934, the young church moved to a building on East Wheeling Street, where several "fortune-tellers" practiced their trade. These people were not happy to have a church as a neighbor, and they predicted that they would "move the pulpit," presumably by their "spirit" contacts. However, they were not successful, for the church stayed and progressed for more than a year in this location.

In the latter part of 1935, the congregation found a better meeting place in The Republican Headquarters Hall above Luckoff's Store. During these early years in Lancaster, Brother Hanby often preached successful tent revivals at various locations in the city and the number of saints increased. The growing congregation soon realized that they needed their own building. They were able to purchase suitable property on North Front Street, and they began work on the construction of a building. In November 1938 Brother Hanby dedi-

cated the little brick building at 810 North Front Street (presently Memorial Drive).

For the next seven years, Brother Hanby pastored the church, but in 1945 he felt he needed to start a church in Logan, Ohio. But who would pastor the church in Lancaster? His thoughts turned to Brother Cook, the tall preacher from the East.

At this time, there were about sixty people attending Sunday school in Lancaster, including the children. The pastoral income, Brother Hanby told Brother Cook, was only about thirty-five dollars a week. But more important than the size of the congregation or the income was the will of God, and Brother Cook moved to Lancaster knowing that he had heard from heaven.

However not everyone in the church at Lancaster was at all sure that Brother Cook should be the pastor. Shortly after moving to Lancaster, he was approached by two women who came to share their doubts with him.

"Brother Cook," one of the women stated, "you don't preach like Brother Hanby. Is your doctrine different?"

In a kind voice, Brother Cook answered the women. "Well, I can't help it if I don't preach like Brother Hanby. We believe the same message, but I could never be Brother Hanby if I wanted to. He is a good preacher and a man of God. But I am a different individual. You may be happier in another church, perhaps at Baltimore. If you want to go, the choice is yours."

These two women decided to stay with the tall

preacher from the East, and they were faithful workers in the growing church. It was soon evident that God's blessings were upon the new pastor and the church in Lancaster. For the next four years the church experienced almost a constant revival, and many people were added to the assembly.

The year of 1945 marked not only the move of the Cooks to Lancaster but also the merger of the two large Oneness Pentecostal organizations, the Pentecostal Church Incorporated and the Pentecostal Assemblies of Jesus Christ. Both organizations held their conferences in St. Louis, Missouri, during the same week in the hope that they could be united. Plans called for the two organizations to conduct their business sessions in separate places during the day and then meet together for the evening services at the Kiel Auditorium. The General Boards of the two organizations met together throughout the week in an attempt to find an agreement for the merger.

Brother Cook had served on the General Board of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Jesus Christ since 1938, and he looked forward to the conference in St. Louis. He was in favor of the merger, feeling that God was moving upon the ministers in both organizations to unite.

Anticipating the large attendance, Brother Cook told Sister Cook, "This year is very important, wife. We must get to St. Louis early and find a good room. Our day sessions will be at White Way Tabernacle, on Blair Street and Warren Avenue. Brother Walter Guinn is the pastor there."

With the other ministers in both organizations,

Brother and Sister Cook sought God in prayer for His will in the merger. They knew that many problems had to be solved, but they also knew that the problems were not too big for God to help them find answers.

Several weeks before the conference, Brother and Sister Guinn had, as they often did, invited some of the leaders of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Jesus Christ to stay at their house—the historic old Bissell Mansion on Randal Avenue. The Guinns had bought this famous home from the widow of Doctor Randal, who was the fourth owner of the home. In 1830, Captain Lewis Bissell had built the house high on a bluff north of downtown St. Louis, overlooking the Mississippi River.

Although Brother and Sister Cook were not staying at the Guinns, several of their friends—Brothers W. T. Witherspoon, C. P. Williams, S. R. Hanby, S. L. Wise, Robert McFarland, and Brother and Sister Oliver F. Fauss—were. In fact one morning Stella Guinn served breakfast for eighteen Pentecostals at the ten-foot-long table which she had ordered specially built for her large country kitchen.

Shortly after her guests arrived, Sister Guinn had to leave for Kentucky due to the death of her father. Fifteen-year-old Janie, the youngest Guinn daughter, inherited the cooking job.

"Dad, you have got to do something. Brother Wise won't touch coffee. Neither will Brother Williams. Drinking coffee and soda is against their convictions, yet Sister Jewell Fauss has to have her strong, black coffee early. And Mom said Brother Hanby was puny

and needed a special diet. What can I do, Daddy?" cried the frustrated teen-ager. Actually the girl had not gotten much sleep either because the preachers kept talking church business until all hours in the kitchen at the big table while she tried to sleep on a daybed in the dining room.

"Well, Janie, don't fret. I'll take care of it," soothed the jovial host as he left for the corner grocery. A few minutes later, he returned loaded with groceries. As he unpacked coffee, tea, chocolate, Postum, Coca-Cola, 7 Up, orange and grape Nehi soda and Royal Crown Cola, he said hospitably, "Well here it is, folks. Serve yourself to anything your conscience will let you drink."

In addition to serving as chairman of various committees and discussing the merger, Brother Cook's dear friend, Brother W. T. Witherspoon, who had been General Chairman of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Jesus Christ since 1938, was planning a "private merger." His first wife, Julia Blanche Crane Witherspoon, had died earlier.

Brother Witherspoon had been in touch with Sister Jet Stallones, well-known pioneer evangelist and widow of Brother W. L. Stallones. The Stallones had pastored the church in Little Rock just prior to the Cooks.

Late one night after Brother Guinn had securely locked all the doors to his home (as any responsible householder in a large metropolitan city would), there was a cautious turn of the kitchen doorknob as someone tried to enter the house. In a few minutes there were soft footsteps on the front porch overlooking the

dark Mississippi River. Finally a front window creaked as it was forced open. Just as the agile older minister was crawling in through the window, knocking over an imported china bisque vase, Brother Guinn burst through the hall door in his pajamas, his hair sticking straight up and his large dark brown eyes bigger than ever.

"Bro-o-o-ther Witherspoon! Is that you?"

Later Sister Jet tried to explain to young Janie. "Well, we just got to talking and time got away! We simply stayed out too late."

Time was important to all those attending the convention. Every day Brother and Sister Cook attended the sessions at the White Way Tabernacle for the Pentecostal Assemblies of Jesus Christ. Then at night they went to the Kiel Auditorium for the evangelistic sessions.

At last all minds seemed to be in one accord regarding the merger, and when the question was finally brought to a vote on Monday, September 24, 1945, Brother Cook was delighted that the final vote was unanimous.

"This was a very important step, wife; I feel good about it. I feel God's will was done. I am glad to be a part of the United Pentecostal Church."

After the official merger on Monday of the two organizations, the dignified portly Brother Howard A. Goss, newly elected General Superintendent of the new organization, the United Pentecostal Church, performed the ceremony that concluded the "minor merger" in the marriage of Brother W. T. Witherspoon and Sister Jet Stallones. As soon as the minister

pronounced the couple man and wife, Brother Witherspoon turned abruptly and left his new bride standing alone on the platform. How Brother and Sister Cook and all the audience laughed!

After conducting the "minor merger," one of the first tasks that faced the new General Superintendent of the United Pentecostal Church was reorganizing all the districts. When the Ohio District of the United Pentecostal Church was organized, Ralph Cook was elected District Superintendent. His responsibility as an official had been continuous since he had been chosen as a District Elder in the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World in Little Rock in 1922.

In 1946 Brother and Sister Nathaniel A. Urshan held a three weeks' meeting for Brother Cook at the Lancaster church. In this great meeting twenty-one were baptized and nineteen received the Holy Ghost. Each night the services were blessed not only with the powerful preaching of Brother Urshan but also with Sister Jean's sweet singing. When they sang together it was doubly blessed.

Sister Cook's part in the revival was her consistent and anointed praying.

In addition to his leading the services, Brother Cook did the baptizing. The baptismal pool was in the front of the church. Ordinarily Brother Cook put on boots and got into the pool to baptize, but since his boots were leaking he decided to stand outside the baptistry.

One of the candidates was a large woman who weighed about two hundred and fifty pounds. Brother Cook had no trouble putting the woman down, but to

his horror he could not lift the woman up. Instead, the weight of the woman pulled him off his feet. He teetered precariously on the edge of the pool.

"I am going to get wet, anyway. I am going to fall in that pool." He was appalled at the thought.

But Sister Urshan came quickly to the rescue. She grabbed Brother Cook and pulled him down and to safety. Did she ever laugh—the famous Jean Urshan laugh!

Brother Cook tried to laugh, but he was also quite relieved that many of the folks had left.

Brother and Sister Cook felt a deep debt of gratitude to Brother and Sister Urshan not only for the good revival that they had conducted in Lancaster but also for their ministry to the Cook's son, Paul.

When young Paul Cook came home from the U.S. Navy, he, as did many other young American veterans, suffered from the horrors and strain of the Second World War. What terrible memories flooded his mind! All the nights of fighting and the constant danger and strain were no doubt still heavy. He, as many others, turned to liquor as an escape.

One night Brother Cook was still up at 3:00 A.M. walking the floor, praying for his troubled young son. He heard a car door slam. It was a taxi. Unceremoniously the taxi driver dumped Paul Cook out. The young man staggered up the steps and stumbled toward his bedroom.

Quietly Brother Cook went to bed without confronting his son. The next morning when Paul woke up sober, his father said sternly, "I want to talk with you, Paul. Let's go out here in the backyard."

Outside under the blue skies with the fresh air on his face, Paul Cook faced his father.

"Paul, I am a pastor. I am a minister in this town. I know that you have been in the war and I know that war is hell. But I want you to understand that this *cannot* go on. You have to come in this house at twelve o'clock at night and sober."

Although Brother Cook appeared calm and stern to his son, the devil was whispering to the anxious father, "You will lose him. Your boy will leave you. He is twenty-one years old." But Brother Cook knew that the devil is a liar!

Just two weeks later the Ohio camp meeting opened at nearby Buckeye Lake. Brother and Sister Nathaniel Urshan were the evangelists.

"Paul, come and go with us to the camp meeting," invited his mother kindly.

"O.K., Mom, I will," her son responded courteously.

All during the service Brother and Sister Cook prayed as they had been praying for months. "God, help our boy." Suddenly Brother Cook saw Paul coming down the aisle with his hands raised. Abruptly the young ex-sailor pulled a pack of cigarettes out of his pocket and laid them on the front of the platform, which served as an altar. For two hours he knelt at that old-fashioned altar and cried, "God, take the love of the world out of my heart."

"Oh, thank God! Hallelujah! Praise God! You are the same yesterday, today and forever!" The Cooks rejoiced with their son. "Indeed, He is a prayer-answering God." The many long hours the little woman

from Louisiana had spent with her head bowed low in intercessory prayer and the regular morning hour that Brother Cook had sat on the floor and waited on God paid rich dividends that night when they saw God wonderfully cleanse and fill their son with His Spirit.

Watching that scene that night was a young eight-year-old boy, Jack Leaman, who would in later years assist Brother Cook. His father, Brother Glenn Leaman, pastored two small Ohio churches—one at Crooksville and one at New Straitsville. Jack never forgot the night Paul Cook received the Holy Ghost.

Later Paul Cook felt his call to the ministry and he left home again. This time, however, he was not going to serve in the United States Navy but he was going to Apostolic Bible Institute to prepare himself to fight the good fight of faith as a soldier in God's army.

"Well, we gave our boy to the war for three years. We can certainly give him to God for His service," said the Cooks as they gladly renewed their dedication of all their children to God.

Paul was not the only young sailor home from the war. Alice Mae was thrilled when, after two years, Allan Bourne was coming home. Through all the lonely months in Foxboro, then later when she was at Apostolic Bible Institute for a year, and now in Lancaster, the letters kept the young couple in touch. The relationship was warm and now in 1946 big plans were in the making. The Cooks were going to have a wedding! Their first wedding.

"My little girl is going to get married!" Sister Cook

was particularly excited.

"We will have a June wedding, Momma, but it must be June 1. We have waited long enough."

The dress! The dress had to be perfect and it was. A beautiful long white satin and lace dress with countless buttons on the sleeves.

"Oh, look, Momma, it buttons down the back, too."

"That lace skirt over the white satin underskirt hangs so beautifully. You will be a beautiful bride, my dear."

"And you will look lovely, Mom, in that pink outfit with that darling pink hat."

"I am glad so many of the relatives are coming." Sister Cook was always happy to have the folks from Louisiana to visit. Ruby Taylor, a cousin, was one of the bridesmaids as well as a friend from Brother Witherspoon's church in Columbus, Ohio. Mabel Taylor from Lancaster was also a bridesmaid.

"Then Aunt Adelade and Uncle Ivor and Joan are coming from Foxboro."

"The Wurlitzers are coming too. We will have the reception at the Lancaster Hotel."

"But not just cake and punch like they do in the South, Momma. We will have a sit-down dinner."

And so they did.

The house was crowded with relatives. Years later Cousin Joan Reuter recalled the mad rush for the bathroom with its two doors, both of which had to be locked for privacy. Inevitably someone was always forgetting to unlock one door! What confusion that created!

Aunt Adelade sang, "Oh, Promise Me," "Always"

and "I Love You Truly." Then the pianist began the traditional wedding march.

So the Cook children grew up and began to leave the nest. What a time of mixed emotions it was for Nellie Cook! "I love my sons dearly, but there is something so special about a daughter! Well, it isn't far to Detroit. We can visit."

When the General Conference was held in October 1947 in Dallas, Texas, Brother Cook and the other officials were sorry to hear of the death of their beloved Assistant General Superintendent, Brother W. T. Witherspoon. He died the night before the election of officers. Because of his death, the conference was cut short one day in order that the officials could attend his funeral. Brother Witherspoon had been ill for several weeks, but this valiant, godly man continued to live by the faith that he had so firmly preached, When he became ill, his new bride, Jet, faithfully and lovingly cared for him, but nothing seemed to help. He died October 27, 1947.

"This will be a difficult time for Jet," thought Sister Cook.

"And it may be especially difficult for that wonderful church. What a leader! What a man of faith he was!" pondered Brother Cook.

Indeed it did take all the patience and wisdom Brother Cook could summon as he tried to help the church in Columbus adjust to the death of their beloved shepherd.

After weeks of meetings and hours of intercessory prayer, part of the group chose to stay at the old location on 1074 West Broad Street with young Arthur

Witherspoon as their pastor. Many of the older saints chose to move to a new location, 38 West Greenwood Avenue, under the capable and wise leadership of Brother George Chambers, longtime assistant pastor to Brother W. T. Witherspoon.

In recalling this event years later, Brother Cook said sadly, "That was the hardest problem I ever faced as an official." Life as an official included far more than banquets and public recognition.

In February 1948 the Kinzie Evangelistic Party arrived in Lancaster to conduct a revival. Brother and Sister Cook looked forward to entertaining these successful evangelists in their home. The Kinzie Evangelistic Party consisted of the preacher, Brother Fred Kinzie, who played the saxophone; his attractive little wife, Vera, with the sparkling brown eyes and dark hair who played the accordion; and the two McQueen sisters, beautiful Pam, who played the Hawaiian guitar, and vivacious Pat, who played the bass viol. All four voices harmonized together beautifully and often they switched parts.

"What a musical feast we will have, wife, not to mention Brother Kinzie's anointed preaching! We will be doubly blessed to have them all staying right here with us." Brother Cook was thoroughly enjoying Ohio. It was good to be back more in the center of Pentecostal activity. He recalled the long, lonely months that they had spent back in Foxboro with very few evangelists or visiting gospel workers to give them a hand with the work of the Lord.

Although four guests are a challenge to any homemaker, Sister Cook enjoyed entertaining. The Kinzies

thoroughly enjoyed her good cooking, which was a mixture of eastern and southern recipes. There was southern fried chicken as well as Boston baked beans and brown bread. Often there was a tantalizing aroma of Sister Cook's special spaghetti sauce as well as New England boiled dinner. Cornbread and biscuits were often served. Leftovers were few, but if by chance there was ever any baked beans and brown bread left over, Brother Cook and his son, Paul, finished them up for breakfast. This amused the Kinzies, who usually had bacon and eggs for breakfast.

What good services the Lancaster church enjoyed with the Kinzie Evangelistic Party! The building was often full with crowds up to two hundred and fifty people. Several Church of Christ people became very interested in Brother Kinzie's doctrinal preaching, and they often called during the day to find out more about the truth of baptism in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ as well as the oneness of God and the infilling of the Holy Spirit.

"Music Night" was an outstanding feature of the revival. Some of the group's songs included: "I've Got That Old-time Religion," "Brother, You Ain't Got Nothing At All," "Say 'Amen' to Jesus," "The Train Song," and "The Airplane Song." One particular night the enthusiastic crowd demanded to hear "The Train Song" three times.

After they finished the singing each night, Brother Kinzie would turn to Brother Cook and ask, "Brother Cook, may I borrow your pocket watch?" He definitely wanted to keep track of the time lest he weary his audience. At the close of the revival, the Hurst family

presented Brother Kinzie with a small nicely gift-wrapped package. "What in the world?" Brother Kinzie questioned as he unwrapped the package. "A watch! A lovely pocket watch for me!"

Later that night when they had returned to the house, Brother Cook teased Brother Kinzie about his ingenuous way of getting a watch. However, Brother Kinzie was deeply touched by the generosity of the saints and he always treasured that special watch.

In the fall of 1948, Brother and Sister Cook made plans as usual to attend the annual conference of the United Pentecostal Church.

"Wife, the conference is going to be in Long Beach this year. We will need a new car." After he shopped a bit, Brother Cook bought a brand-new Chrysler with fluid drive to drive out to the meeting on the West Coast.

En route they decided to stop by Pikes Peak. Everything was fine going up, but Brother Cook was shocked when he started down.

"Wife, the brakes are gone!" He grabbed for the hand brake, and Sister Cook began to pray. When he pulled hard on the hand brake, the rear end of the Chrysler danced up and down and the smoke began to pour out. He finally got the car under control, and they eased down the mountain.

"If I can just get off this mountain, maybe I can get some repair work done in Colorado Springs."

"I think I have got it fixed," the mechanic assured Brother Cook. So he headed out for Salt Lake City, but in Denver he was forced to stop for more repairs on the front end.

At last they reached Long Beach and took the car to a garage there. The mechanic told them that since on that particular model they had not anodized the brake cylinders, the system was full of aluminum. The fluid had run out all over the brakes.

"Look, Wife, my tires are ruined! This car has jerked back one way then another until the tires are ruined. They say they are going to have to turn the drums, too. Oh, well, in this world we do have tribulations. I am just grateful we got off Pikes Peak alive!"

When Brother Cook finally got back to Lancaster, he traded cars. "I really like *this* new car," said Sister Cook.

From October 3 to October 24, 1948, during the four years of great revivals, Brother and Sister Norman Paslay came to minister in the little red block church on Front Street.

It was a very special time. In talking over old times with the Cooks, Brother Paslay mentioned that he had grown up on the farm in Vandalia, Illinois, where Sister Cook and Ruth and Ione Miller had ministered. Although his father was a Baptist, Brother Paslay's paternal grandparents had been strict members of the Church of the Brethren. His mother was Methodist, and her parents had been old-time shouting Methodists.

In 1914 when Nellie Reppond and the Miller girls held a meeting in Vandalia, Brother Paslay's mother, Pearl Gharst, was just a teenager. She never forgot the dedicated young Pentecostal women and their revival.

A young man, John Henry Reeter, rode a motorcycle out to the grove. His heart was stirred as he

heard Nellie preach. Later he answered God's call and was licensed to preach in 1924.

"You sowed the seed, Sister Cook, that led to my salvation," confided Norman Paslay. "The whole neighborhood was stirred by your preaching, including my pastor."

Norman Paslay found the Lord as just a lad of sixteen. Brother Dennis Lyerla was the evangelist and Brother John Henry Reeter became Norman Paslay's pastor. Over one hundred people, including Norman Paslay, Dean Jones, and Anetta Harris received the Holy Ghost during this great revival, many of whom are still in the church today. One hundred and ten were baptized, and six people received their call to preach.

"I'll never forget the day I repented," Brother Paslay told Sister Cook, "January 11, 1938. I was baptized in Jesus' name on the sixteenth and received the Holy Ghost on the seventeenth. I still have the calendar where I marked those precious dates."

"This revival is special, too," remarked Brother Cook as he knelt to pray for the lost in Lancaster. "We won't forget this meeting," and they did not.

In addition to enjoying the anointed preaching and special singing, the Cooks particularly liked the fellowship of the "kids," as they called the Paslays.

However, at this time the Cook's daughter, Alice Mae, needed her mother.

"Mom, can you come to be with me when my baby is born?" So Sister Cook went to Detroit to await the birth of her grandchild. What fun she and Alice Mae had while waiting for the blessed event!

"Here, Mom, this is a cute bonnet pattern. Can you crochet this?" Alice Mae said as she leafed through a magazine looking at baby clothes. Then she read the directions while Sister Cook's needle flashed in and out of the soft pastel baby yarn.

Meanwhile back in Lancaster, Brother Cook was trying to entertain the Paslays, pastor the church, and help with the revival. Every two or three days he would call Detroit.

"No, dear, no news yet." Brother Cook hung up the phone somewhat frustrated.

"You are a great host, Brother Cook," the Paslays tried to encourage him. But privately they were concerned because he was moping around so.

"He misses Sister Cook," Sister Paslay said. "I know what I'll do." Dramatic as usual, Sister Paslay, who was very good at telling stories to children, created a life-sized stuffed figure of a little old lady and sat it in a rocking chair. When Brother Cook came in, Sister Paslay greeted him, "No more moping! I've arranged everything. You won't be lonely anymore."

Brother Cook laughed until he cried. "Mary Alice, not only do you sing 'It's Bubbling,' but you just bubble over with mischief yourself." The Paslays and the Cooks became closest of friends, sharing not only a burden for the work of the Lord but also a keen sense of wit and humor.

In the fulness of time the grandchild, a beautiful little girl, was born. They named the baby Suzanne.

In the hot summertime of 1950, from June 11 until July 23, Brother and Sister Paslay returned for a great six weeks' meeting with the Cooks in Lancaster.

Again they stayed in the home with the Cooks. Night after night the small church was packed out. Needless to say, there was no air-conditioning. But Sister Paslay kept the accordion playing and they kept on singing their favorite: "It's Bubbling."

The Paslays preached in many places. Six or eight times they preached the camp meeting in Tennessee, usually with a week before or a week after with their good friend Brother William McClellan Greer, the District Superintendent, in his church in Bemis, Tennessee.

On one occasion they preached all three camps in Ohio—children, youth and adult. During these camp meetings, the night services in the camp meetings were preceded by a live broadcast from the Lancaster church on Front Street. The Paslays preached the radio service and then quickly jumped in the car and drove the fifteen miles to Buckeye Lake to preach to the hundreds of Ohio people gathered for the camp service.

Once during a revival for the Cooks in Lancaster, the Paslays made plans to meet the Nathaniel A. Urshans and the Fred Kinzies in Indianapolis to cut a record. These three talented couples had their own record company, Gospel Melodies.

"We'll have to miss a night of the revival, Mary Alice. Do I dare ask off a night?" Norman Paslay squirmed at the thought.

The old-timers took "meeting time" seriously. They even had a song, "When I Take My Vacation In Heaven," because Pentecostal preachers did *not* take even a night off down here.

Brother Paslay finally got up enough courage to ask. His discomfort lingered as Brother Cook deliberated quite a while before agreeing to the request. Although evangelistic services were serious stuff—blood, sweat, and tears—the Paslays still had to play a trick or two on their dear old friends, the Cooks.

"Have you noticed how proud he is of that lovely couch, Norman?" Mary Alice observed with a twinkle in her eye.

"Ye-es. Oh, no, Mary Alice, you wouldn't! Maybe we better not." Norman remembered the trick ink bottle they had bought. It looked very authentic—just like a real bottle of liquid ink had toppled over and spilled out. She carefully placed this in the middle of the lovely couch. Then they hid to watch the results.

When Brother Cook came in, he exclaimed, "Tsk, tsk, tsk, look at that!" He turned quickly, ran to get a fistful of towels, and started mopping vigorously. Then he turned and gingerly carried the whole mess to the trash.

How Sister Cook and the Paslays roared!

"You kids, you are always playing tricks on me," Brother Cook admitted sheepishly.

In February 1951 the Kinzie Evangelistic Party returned for another great revival in Lancaster. They looked forward to the gracious hospitality of the Cooks.

"Do you suppose Sister Rozella Wright will bring us one of her pies?" Sister Wright's pies were famous in the Lancaster church. However, Brother Kinzie looked forward not only to the food and hospitality but

also to the unique privilege of fellowship with Brother Cook.

Every day early in the morning before daylight, Brother and Sister Kinzie awoke to the sound of Brother Cook's praying—not just for ten minutes or even thirty minutes but hour after hour. This godly pastor prayed and sought God for His will not only in just his own personal life but also for his church and all the saints in it. Brother Cook was a devoted, active pastor who visited, prayed, rejoiced and wept with his flock.

"It is easy to preach here, Vera," Brother Kinzie observed. "Brother Cook backs me up constantly in fervent prayer."

Brother Fred Kinzie, who traveled as an evangelist throughout United Pentecostal circles, carefully noted what made a successful church. All the while, he was thinking and planning for the day when he would be a pastor. "One thing I will do," he determined. "I will seek God's will in my life and I will maintain a good prayer life." And he did just this.

"That's right, dear, and don't forget Sister Cook's prayers and her gracious hospitality. Her fiery testimonies are a blessing to me. I just love to hear her start, 'Beloved . . .' And she is so kind and thoughtful to watch after our baby, Sandy, while we practice in the afternoon. Sandy loves to rock in that old cradle. Sister Cook told me that she can go ahead and cook supper as long as she can keep one toe rocking that cradle. But if she stops rocking, then Sandy starts to cry."

Later when Vera Kinzie was a busy pastor's wife,

she, too, practiced warm, gracious hospitality and good cooking along with an almost impossible schedule of seventy piano students and a very responsible job as International President of the Ladies' Auxiliary of the United Pentecostal Church. She never forgot the glowing pattern of Christian womanhood as practiced by Nellie Cook.

Pam McQueen also became a busy pastor's wife when she married Brother Jim Hosch. Pat McQueen is an active church woman and the wife of Coy Jackson of Bemis, Tennessee. Sandy Kinzie, whom Sister Cook rocked in the cradle, is now also a minister's wife. She married Brother Mark Jordan. They assist Brother and Sister Kinzie in the work in Toledo, Ohio.

In recalling the revivals that they conducted for Brother Cook, Sister Kinzie commented: "Many years have passed, and I wonder how many of us realize the tremendous effect our Christian living has on others? I love to read and re-read Sister Cook's chapter in the book, *Heirs Together*. It inspires me to have faith for the future, for God is so able."

Brother Kinzie added his comments. "Brother Cook was the District Superintendent of Ohio when we came to Toledo to pastor a small, struggling work. Brother Cook was so thrilled when we came. Anything that he could do to help, he was right there. God was so good to all of us to give us a man like Brother Cook at the helm. Ohio is a great district, and Brother Cook made a tremendous contribution to Ohio's greatness by his splendid Christian character. Indeed he is a tall man in God."

Dozens of souls found God during the revivals

with the Kinzies, the Urshans, and the Paslays. During the first four years the Cooks were in Lancaster, there was almost a continuous revival.

One couple, Harold and Harriet (Hattie) Kellenbarger, who were converted early in Brother Cook's ministry in Lancaster, soon became devoted to their church and to their pastor and his sweet, little wife. The years since then have only deepened their love and devotion. "Sister Cook is so lovely, so sweet. She is not only an excellent and hospitable homemaker but her fire-filled testimonies just thrill me. I do love to hear her begin her testimony with, 'Beloved . . .' She must have forty or fifty of those beautiful hand crochet trimmed handkerchiefs. I never see her without one," observed Harriet.

In September 1951 the annual conference of the United Pentecostal Church was held in St. Louis, Missouri. One of the main topics of discussion was the election of Brother Arthur Theodore Morgan as General Superintendent. Brother Morgan pastored in Port Arthur, Texas, and had served as District Secretary of the Texas District. Now the constituency had chosen him to fill their most responsible office.

"Well, it has been great working with Brother Goss, wife. We will miss him, but I think I will enjoy working with Brother Morgan. He is a fine man," Brother Cook said later as they talked of the conference.

One afternoon when Brother Cook came in after his pastoral calls, Sister Cook handed him a letter. "This is addressed to you, Brother Cook. It seems to be from Nova Scotia."

"Nova Scotia? Now who would be writing me from Nova Scotia?" After he read the letter, he exclaimed, "Honey, this letter is from Antigonish. You remember that I told you about preaching in Antigonish? That was almost thirty-three years ago. I baptized fifteen people there. I still remember that cold river. There was a lawyer named Keith, and also the local postmaster. I baptized them in the name of the Lord Jesus. They are asking why I don't come back and finish that job," Brother Cook laughed.

"That's wonderful, Brother Cook. It's great to know that seed sown does bring forth a harvest! God does confirm His Word."

On the morning of October 23, 1952, Brother Cook was at the General Conference in Little Rock, Arkansas, at the Robinson Memorial Auditorium near the Little Rock First Pentecostal Church at Fifth and Victory. He had enjoyed greeting old friends. Someone noticed a small table that Brother James Onell Wallace, the new Publishing House Manager, had set up.

"What's that all about?"

"Oh, that's Brother Wallace's record booth. If you have any questions about your account, just ask him. He has brought all the Publishing House records with him."

"Well, that's one way to straighten out things!"

Suddenly a startling bit of news swept the foyer.

"Headquarters is burning!"

"Headquarters? You mean our offices in St. Louis?"

"Yes, our office building down on South Grand. They say the whole building is a total loss. Thank God, Brother Wallace *did* bring his records."

Later the usual order of business was waived and a Building Committee, which had already been actively seeking property to build a larger building, recommended the purchase of property at 3645 South Grand Boulevard, just three blocks south of the old headquarters. "We will not let a burnout hinder us. It can be a stepping-stone to something better," was the feeling of the officials.

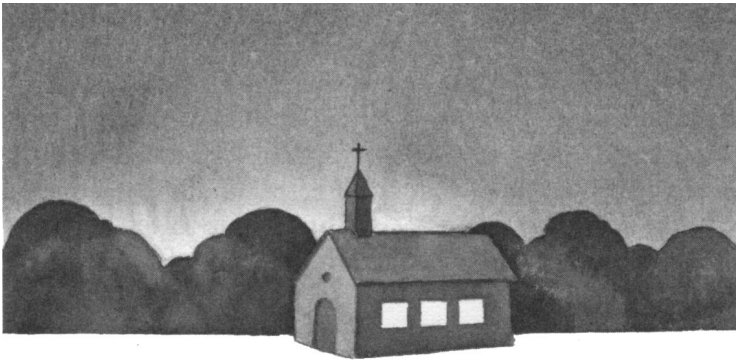
Not only did the Lord bless the organization and the Lancaster church financially, but He also blessed in the power and demonstration of His Spirit, especially in healing. One of the women of the Lancaster church, Sister Taylor, was instantly healed of asthma. She called Brother Cook about three o'clock early one morning because she was suffering with a severe attack of asthma.

When Brother Cook arrived, he found Sister Taylor pale and white, struggling for her breath. For two hours, Brother Cook prayed and sought God for her healing. About daylight, he knew he had touched God. At that moment Sister Taylor was instantly healed and she never had another attack of asthma.

On another occasion, Brother Cook was called to the Lancaster hospital to pray for a woman. Sharing her room was another woman. After prayer Brother Cook turned to the stranger and asked, "Would you like to have me pray for you?"

"I wish you would. I have a serious disease of the bowels. The doctors tell me I will not live." After he prayed, Brother Cook left the request in God's hands, walked out of the hospital, and thought no more about it.

Fourteen years later, the lady and her husband, Paul Lee, came into the church, received the Holy Ghost and were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then the woman reminded Brother Cook, "After you prayed for me that day fourteen years ago, God healed me. I have never forgotten God's power."



Time of Trouble

But not all of the Cook's prayers for healing were answered in the affirmative.

The Cooks' son, Bob, whose twin sister had died at the age of six of rheumatic fever in Foxboro, became ill in 1953. Bob, the surviving twin, had attended Apostolic Bible Institute as did Alice and Paul. Later he married and moved back to Ohio to be the pastor of a small church in Gallipolis, not far from Lancaster.

Then suddenly the young pastor was admitted to Holser Clinic, where his condition was diagnosed as leukemia. His condition deteriorated rapidly. One day Alice Mae got a call, "Come, Bob may not live through the night."

Although her own husband was off work recuperating from a heart attack, Alice rushed to

Gallipolis. Later she decided to take Bob's young baby boy back to Detroit. "That will help out some," she thought. "Besides my girls, Patricia and Suzanne, will help with him. First thing I want to do is potty train this fellow," she planned.

But the little boy seemed constantly thirsty. "Another drink?" Also the fourteen-months-old toddler slept an unusual amount.

"Mommy, the baby's asleep on the driveway," the girls said.

"That child is sick! Is he in a coma?" Alice questioned as she frantically called Brother Kirby for help. What a rich source of strength the older minister was! He and Alice rushed the young child to Detroit Children's Hospital, where concerned doctors began immediately to treat him.

"The child's name," asked the clerk in the admitting office of Detroit Children's Hospital.

"Billy Cook," Alice replied.

"Your full name, Mrs. Cook?"

"Oh, I am not the child's mother. I am his aunt."

"Where are his parents?"

"They are in Ohio. His father is desperately ill."

"Well, you will have to take the baby to Ohio for treatment," the clerk stated.

But the doctors decided otherwise. "No one's taking this baby anywhere," declared one of the doctors. "I have already started treatment for diabetes."

It was difficult for Alice Mae to let Brother and Sister Cook and the folks in Ohio know about the baby's illness. "I'll take care of things here. You take care of Bob."

However, Brother Ralph Cook together with one of the men from the church drove all night to Detroit to pray for his grandson.

It was a terrible time! What agony filled the early morning prayer times as Brother and Sister Cook sought God for Bob's healing as well as their grandchild in Detroit!

Six long weeks were filled with anxiety and desperate prayer as Bob held on to life. But the Cooks realized that he would soon be gone. It was almost unthinkable that Bob, the last twin, the youngest son, should be taken in death. His wife needed him. His two little boys needed him. His mother and father needed him. But in prayer they yielded to the will of God. "Nevertheless, not our will but Your will." This was Gethsemane—the valley of the shadow of death.

Brother and Sister Cook clung to God. Their faith was anchored in the Rock. "All things do work out for good to them that love God." Never once did they lose confidence in God.

"Our trouble only served to draw us closer to God and to each other. Perhaps this is the purpose behind sorrows such as this. We have learned (painfully) over the years, whether laymen or part of the ministry, that trouble and sorrow can either draw you closer to God or separate you from Him," Nellie Cook wrote these words about this stressful time several years later.

In July 1953 Bob Cook died. The Lancaster Apostolic Assembly on Memorial Drive was crowded as friends, relatives and thirty-five ministers gathered to show their respects to the Cook family. As the ministers filed past the coffin of the young man, they sang

softly, "I'll Meet You In The Morning."

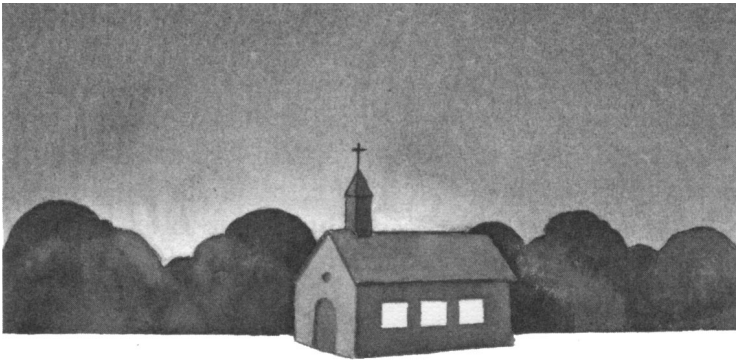
Among the ministers was a neighboring pastor, Glenn Leaman, who pastored the Crooksville and New Straitsville churches. Brother Cook and Brother Leaman were good friends. The Leamans had a large family of eight children, but almost all of them were married and gone at this time. Only young Jack and his sister, Donna, were left at home.

On April 6, 1954, Brother Leaman was quite ill. At noon his good friend, Brother Cook, called at the home to pray for his friend. Shortly after Brother Cook left, and very unexpectedly, Brother Leaman had a major heart attack and died. Young Jack was just sixteen; his sister, Donna, was only thirteen.

How the Cooks grieved for their friends!

"We have just been through this same valley," they thought.

Jack Leaman turned to Brother Cook almost as a father. Their relationship grew warmer as the tall pastor comforted the young boy.



A Busy Pastor

Pastoral duties were many, but official duties were also a large part of Brother Cook's life. On April 28, 1954, he and Sister Cook drove to St. Louis for the dedication of the remodeled headquarters which had been purchased in 1952. As Brother Cook greeted the General Superintendent, Brother Arthur T. Morgan, and the General Secretary, Brother Stanley W. Chambers, he was thrilled to note the spacious quarters in the new facility. That night, as the main speaker of the dedication service, Brother Cook addressed a large crowd of ministers and friends. God had truly blessed the United Pentecostal Church.

In 1955 Brother Cook, who was no longer serving as Superintendent of the Ohio District, was asked to serve on the Foreign Missionary Board. Here he had an opportunity to gain insight to the worldwide ministry

of the United Pentecostal Church. He had always supported foreign missions, giving generously of his own funds. For years he sent a very generous offering each month to Brother and Sister W. J. Thompson in Columbia, South America. This interest in missionaries no doubt influenced his son, Paul, almost thirty years later.

Official work, missionary work, Sunday school work—all were parts of the busy pastor's life in a thriving church.

The congregation in Lancaster continued to grow until the building, which would seat between 150 and 175 people, was too small. Brother Cook realized that larger facilities would be necessary for the crowds.

"We need to build a new church, wife. I have been praying about it. I feel that I should begin to raise money for a new building," Brother Cook decided.

Later he decided to turn the Sunday school offering over to the church for the new building. Brother Cook's efforts at fund-raising were remarkably successful. In two years they had forty-two thousand dollars in the building fund, including seventeen thousand dollars from the sale of the old building.

"We are blessed here in Lancaster with lots of good help, Sister Cook. There are five builders in our church. I feel that we are definitely in God's will to rise up and build."

Later Brother Cook got Harold Kellenbarger to supervise the actual construction of the new church. Both he and his brother were first-class carpenters.

After some planning and considering, Brother Cook concluded that they only needed to borrow

twenty-five thousand dollars for the new building. For years Brother Cook had conducted business at one bank, so he went there to apply for a loan.

"How in the world do you expect to repay this money, Brother Cook?" inquired the anxious banker nervously.

Shocked that the man showed so little faith and trust in him and his church, Brother Cook left and went across the street to the Hocking Valley National Bank, where Mr. Wilkinson, president of the Banker's Association, was in charge. After Brother Cook presented his need, Mr. Wilkinson responded, "Go across the street and tell Mr. Pruitt to set the loan up." They handled the loan by putting it in five banks, five thousand dollars in each bank.

Although the bankers seemed uneasy about loaning the church money, Brother Cook was not at all afraid. "God has blessed us. We've got the money to pay our bills," he assured the bankers.

God honored Brother Cook's faith. Nine years later, when he went to the bank to make the last payment, he shook hands with the president at the Equitable Bank, one of the five. The bank official offered his help to Brother Cook in the future. "Reverend, if you need fifty thousand dollars anytime, just come and see us. If you need more, just come and see us. We will arrange for whatever you need. We will put participating banks in it," the bank official said warmly. Brother Cook's faith in God and the Lancaster church was vindicated. He had been in God's will!

The Lancaster church was in good shape financially. The people gave generously. At one special service,

Brother N. J. Bibbs, superintendent of Indiana, raised five thousand dollars. After paying off the first mortgage, they borrowed a second mortgage of thirty-five thousand dollars.

When the congregation moved into the new church, in the latter part of 1956, attendance doubled the first year. What a joyous occasion dedication day, June 3, 1957, was! People from all walks of life began to attend. God blessed the church and Brother Cook felt the sweet assurance that comes when a person feels in the center of God's will.

During the Christmas holidays, in 1957, Jack and Shirley Leaman, who were students at Apostolic Bible Institute, came to Ohio to visit his widowed mother.

"Let's go over to see Brother Cook's new church in Lancaster, Shirley."

They drove over and looked at the beautiful church, walked up in the balcony, and looked out over the auditorium.

"Wouldn't it be wonderful to get to help out in this church?" Jack mused. "But that would be too good to be true."

Just two months later Brother Leaman received word from Brother Cook. "Dear Brother Leaman: Would you consider coming to Lancaster to assist me after you graduate from ABI?" God had answered the desire of this young man's heart.

Jack and Shirley Leaman loaded all their worldly goods into their rusty 1952 green Ford and drove to Lancaster. They moved into a small four room white frame house at 232 Adam Street.

Their first task was to conduct a two week's daily

Vacation Bible School. Shortly after this Jack got a job at Sears, Roebuck, and Company, where Paul Cook was working.

Young Brother Paul Cook was pastoring a home mission church at Circleville. Although he was a little older than Jack, Paul Cook and Jack Leaman became close friends as they labored for Sears five days a week and also faithfully labored for God.

Brother Leaman was a great help to Brother Ralph Cook. He taught the young people's class and had charge of the Tuesday night youth service. But he was also learning, especially about the Godhead. Although he had finished Apostolic Bible Institute where Brother S. G. Norris taught on this subject, yet Brother Leaman wanted to dig it out and get his own revelation on this vital doctrine. For four months he studied and taught, studied and taught. Then suddenly the whole revelation opened to him.

"What a mighty truth, Brother Cook! The mighty God is in Christ!"

Brother Ralph Cook deeply appreciated this fine young assistant who was maturing in Christ. Together they worked on building up the Sunday school attendance. Years later, one of the saints recalled that Brother Leaman drove the church bus at that time and also drove nine miles in his car each Sunday morning to pick up a mother and her three girls for Sunday school. This was a round trip of eighteen miles each Sunday morning, and he did this for a year. But the results are that the three girls are still in church to this day.

From June 1958 to June 1965, Brother Jack

Leaman assisted Brother Cook in the Lancaster church. During these years, his life was deeply influenced by the godly older minister. Thinking back over those early years in Lancaster, Brother Leaman attributes his own reliance on prayer to the example of Brother Cook. "I shall always be grateful to Brother Ralph Cook for teaching me to pray," recalled Brother Leaman. "He is usually in prayer early every morning. He is a great man of prayer."

Shirley Leaman was influenced also by Sister Cook. "I just enjoy watching Sister Cook respond to the minister. She nods her little white head and is so attentive," Shirley remarked to her husband. "She really seems to enjoy wearing that black embroidered eyelet outfit that I made for her."

Brother Leaman and Brother Cook worked together in many ways. In the summer of 1962 they planned a special singspiration. First they contacted Sister Ruth Hale, the local choir director.

"Yes, Brother Cook, we can have several numbers ready. My son-in-law, David Wright, will help me."

"We can also contact Sister Lois Newstrand. Perhaps she will bring her choir from Newark," Brother Cook suggested.

"And don't forget Lanny Wolfe's choir from Columbus," Brother Leaman added.

Brother Cook then suggested that they plan to tape this service and send a copy of the tape to Brother Billy Cole, the young West Virginia missionary to Thailand. "Perhaps this will give Brother Cole a little taste of familiar singing to encourage him."

The detailed planning brought good results. The

church was packed out! "We'll do this again!" Brother Cook promised enthusiastically, and they did—in 1963 and also in 1964.

In October 1963 the Cooks left for the annual General Conference, which was held in Memphis, Tennessee. At this conference Brother Oscar Vouga, who had been the Assistant General Superintendent for the Eastern Zone, was chosen to fill the office of Director of Foreign Missions.

Brother Morgan told Brother Cook that his name was being discussed for the office of Assistant General Superintendent. But it was more than being discussed—he was elected.

"Well, wife, this job will mean more traveling for me as I will be called upon to preside at district conferences." So began a busy, responsible, and wise ministry that entailed thousands of miles of driving and long hours in board sessions. He and Sister Cook especially enjoyed the fellowship of Brother Oliver F. Fauss, Assistant General Superintendent for the Western Zone, and his dear wife, Jewel.

During the long years of service at the church in Lancaster, Brother Cook saw many of the faithful saints pass off the scene and go on to their reward.

"Another funeral, dear?" questioned Sister Cook.

"Yes, wife, it seems as though I have buried an entire church since we have been here in Lancaster."

In July 1964, Brother Cook was informed of Brother Goss' death in Windsor, Ontario, Canada. "Another one of our pioneers has gone," he sadly commented to his wife.

In June 1965 Brother and Sister Leaman left

Lancaster to build a home missions church in Wausau, Wisconsin. While they had been at Lancaster, two children, Melanie and Rodney, were born. They had learned much about the work of God from the Cooks and the Lancaster church, but they felt it was time to leave.

"We will miss Brother and Sister Leaman. He has been like a son to me," Brother Cook remarked.

"And I will miss Rodney and Melanie," added Sister Cook.

After Brother and Sister Leaman left, Brother James Hinkle, an evangelist from Cincinnati, Ohio, and his wife came to assist Brother Cook. The Hinkles were a great help with the youth work. Their singing and music were an added blessing. There was always plenty to do.

As Assistant General Superintendent, Brother Cook had official responsibilities for the organization. One of the interesting topics of conversation among officials at this time was the possible relocation of the United Pentecostal Church headquarters. As early as 1957, the General Superintendent had been authorized to appoint a committee to make a thorough investigation into the possibility of moving the headquarters to a smaller city.

"God is blessing the United Pentecostal Church in a great way, Sister Cook. We are growing. They say there is very little room left at 3645 South Grand."

On June 1, 1965, the General Board in a meeting in St. Louis authorized the purchase of an eight-acre tract of land in Collinsville, Illinois, nine miles from downtown St. Louis.[1]

"With this location, Brother Cook, we will have all the big city advantages with a small town atmosphere," explained Brother Morgan.

However, in 1966, at the conference in New Orleans, there was some discussion of a possible move to Little Rock, Arkansas. But this was defeated. Later Brother Cook commented to his wife, "Well, we won't be moving the headquarters to Little Rock. That resolution was defeated. It seems that most of our people really want to stay on the St. Louis side of the river. A motion to this effect was made and it passed."

At the annual General Conference in Tulsa, Oklahoma, on October 18, 1967, Brother Cook attended a morning session of the General Board. Brother Morgan, chairman of the meeting, was seated at a table at the front of the room. Brother Cook was seated nearby. Brother Morgan rose, picked up some papers from the table, and walked around the table to address the board. "Brethren, I am going to open my heart to you." Then he sat back on the table and toppled over, almost falling on Brother Cook.

"What's the matter?"

"What's happened?"

Fellow ministers laid their beloved leader, Brother Morgan, gently on the floor. "I'm afraid he's gone."

Later Brother Cook told his wife of Brother Morgan's tragic death. "I went up to Sister Morgan. She was terribly grief-stricken. I went in the room, knelt beside Sister Morgan and began to sing, 'What a Friend We Have in Jesus!'"

Later Sister Morgan remarked to a friend, "That

song brought me more consolation than anything else that happened to me."

Brother Cook, together with other officials, left Tulsa by chartered plane and flew to DeRidder, Louisiana, for Brother Morgan's funeral.

Then the officials returned to Tulsa for a historic business session. Brother Oliver F. Fauss, Assistant General Superintendent for the Western Zone, was selected to fill Brother Morgan's unexpired term (lasting until January 1, 1968). Brother Cook prayed for his dear friend as Brother Fauss opened the conference for business. Brother Stanley W. Chambers, former General Secretary, was elected to serve as General Superintendent, and Brother Cleveland M. Becton from Nashville, Tennessee, was elected as General Secretary.

"These are good men, wife. Our church will go forward."

Although Brother Cook was a dedicated and faithful general official, he was also a responsible and progressive pastor. He usually had a revival in the spring as well as one in the fall. Often his dear friend, Brother Billy Cole, missionary to Thailand, stopped by for special services when he was home on furlough.

One of the evangelists who often came by for revivals was Brother Scotty Teets. Others, such as Brother Allan Oggs, preached revivals for the Lancaster church.

"We really need to build again, Sister Cook," Brother Cook said once more.

He got together with Brother Herbert Sudlow, a contractor, and soon a very fine educational unit was

added to the church. At this time the platform was redesigned, giving a totally new look to the auditorium. The educational unit was dedicated in 1968. Although Brother Cook was past the usual retirement age of sixty-five, he felt like Caleb of old, still active—well able to "take this mountain." He also enjoyed the help of faithful saints and fine dedicated younger ministers like Brother Leaman, Brother James Hinkle, and Brother Jonathan Maki.

In the same year, 1968, the General Board, of which Brother Cook was a member, decided to purchase an eight and one-half acre tract of land in Hazelwood, Missouri, for a new headquarters building. Hazelwood was a suburb of St. Louis, located to the north of the city. On December 20, 1968, a cold and dreary day, Brother Cook watched Sister Morgan turn the first shovel of dirt at the ground breaking ceremony for the new headquarters building, which would be named in honor to the memory of Brother Arthur T. Morgan.

"This is a moment to remember," Brother Cook thought. "And the name of the building is appropriate, for Brother Morgan was a splendid businessman as well as a great spiritual leader."

For four years Brother Hinkle served faithfully as an assistant to Brother Cook. He and Sister Hinkle sang, taught the youth class, visited the sick, helped with the building program and all the other multitude of details that assistants help with. In 1969 after prayer, he and Sister Hinkle decided to accept the pastorate of a small church in Mount Vernon, Ohio.

"Every preacher needs his own church, Brother

Hinkle. God bless you in this new venture."

Brother and Sister Jonathan Maki and their daughter, Rebecca, came to assist Brother Cook. What a great help they were, especially in the Sunday school! Soon the Sunday school supply room was all organized, Sunday school classrooms were decorated, and a teacher-training program was begun.

In October 1970 Brother and Sister Cook packed for a very important occasion. They were driving to St. Louis for the dedication of the new headquarters building at 8855 Dunn Road in Hazelwood.

"Brother Paul Pillau, the architect, certainly designed a beautiful building for us, wife," Brother Cook remarked.

"Is Sister Morgan going to come?" Sister Cook asked.

"Oh, yes, she will be there," Brother Cook replied confidently.

When they arrived in St. Louis, many of their close friends greeted them on this momentous occasion. In attendance were members of the General Board, heads of the various divisions, and many other ministers and laymen. The lovely chapel was crowded.

Brother Cleveland M. Becton served as the master of ceremonies.

Brother Cook gave the invocation. "Oh, Lord, touch this service. Make it memorable with Your divine presence. Touch everyone here."

Later Brother Hugh Rose led the congregation in that stirring old hymn, "Battle Hymn of the Republic."

"This new headquarters is a dream come true," commented Brother Guy E. Roam, Superintendent of

the Missouri District.

Everyone was touched when A. T. Morgan Jr. sang "Into Each Life," a song that he had written in honor of his deceased father.

When Sister Morgan came to the platform to speak, the congregation stood to honor this great woman.

"Many great women from Louisiana have been real assets to the United Pentecostal Church," Brother Cook was thinking of his own Nellie.

"I stand here with mixed emotions," Sister Morgan began soberly. "There is a happy feeling in my heart because my mind goes back to the former days. I am so thankful that you loved Brother Morgan and that you have dedicated this building to his memory. He would have been so happy to see this marvelous building. It is far beyond my expectation."[2]

Then Sister Morgan presented Brother Morgan's Bible to Brother Chambers. In the Bible were the notes for the sermon that Brother Morgan had planned to preach at the conference in Tulsa. This Bible is on display in a special window display in the new headquarters building.

In 1971 after the Makis left, Brother Cook began to need more help.

After much prayer Brother Cook told his wife of his plans. "I think that it is the will of God for me to contact Brother Leaman about returning to Lancaster."

God had been dealing with the Leamans about their future. In February 1971 they packed up and

moved back to Lancaster to assume the duties of associate pastor.

"With Brother Leaman to stand right beside me and share the load, I still am confident that God has a bit more for me to do as pastor of the Lancaster church," Brother Cook told the congregation.

In the same summer the Lancaster church had an opportunity to show their appreciation to Brother and Sister Cook at their golden wedding anniversary.

Fifty wonderful years had passed. It almost seemed a dream. Preaching, pastoring, official work; babies had grown into teenagers and then into adults, married, and were raising children of their own. Brother Cook's steps were growing slower. His hair was still there, but it was snow white now.

Relatives and friends got together and marked the occasion with a smorgasbord supper held at 4:00 P.M. at the First Apostolic Church at 350 Park Street in Lancaster.

It was a day of reminiscing, a day to stop and recall. It was also the silver anniversary of their pastoring in Lancaster.

"I can't believe we have been in Lancaster twenty-five years," Brother Cook told the group.

"Seems like just a short while ago we were married, Nellie. Remember those years in Little Rock? Then we moved to Foxboro and Paul was born, then later the twins."

There was much to rejoice over and some sad memories of Adaleen and Bob's deaths to leave with God, knowing that He does all things well.

"But God has truly blessed us. Just think, we still

have not only Bill, Alice, and Paul but also eleven beautiful grandchildren."

"Don't forget that great grandchild either, wife."

"Somehow, I really don't feel like a great-grandmother even if my hair is snow white," Sister Cook replied.

Later after the festive occasion was over, there were pictures to look through and a clipping from the *Eagle Gazette*, the local newspaper, to put away for a reminder of this day.

The years were busy. The help that Brother and Sister Leaman gave was a real asset; however, there was much for Brother Cook to do. Weddings were a joy, but funerals for old friends were a different matter.

One spring day in 1973, Brother Cook paid a visit to his son, Paul Cook, pastor of the church in Circleville.

"Paul," he began, "I am going to retire." Brother Paul Cook was astonished at his father's announcement.

"Retire? Don't ever do it, Dad," was Paul's first reaction.

"Yes, Paul, I think this is God's will for me at this time. I am doing well, feel well, and I know what I want to do. I want to retire at this point. I don't want to wait until I am past my prime," Brother Cook said firmly.

Paul Cook deeply respected his father's decision.

On a Thursday night before Bible study in April 1973, Brother Cook called Brother Leaman into his office and told him of his decision to retire. Like

Brother Paul Cook, Brother Leaman had not expected Brother Cook to leave the church. But that night Brother Cook announced his decision to the church.

After the church reluctantly accepted Brother Cook's decision, they elected Brother Leaman as pastor. Immediately Brother Leaman began to think of ways that he could honor his dear friends, Brother and Sister Cook. He met with the men of the church and talked with them.

"I want us to give Brother and Sister Cook a new car," he said.

"That is a good idea!" one of the men agreed.

Brother Leaman first went to Zanesville to the Chevrolet agency where Brother Cook usually bought his cars, but he did not find just the right car there. Later he went to the Oldsmobile place and found a beautiful blue 98 Oldsmobile! "That's it! That is the car for Brother and Sister Cook!"

"Sister Cook will like that lovely shade of blue," agreed Sister Leaman.

Then they made plans for the special service. It was held June 14, 1973, at eight o'clock at the First Apostolic Church. Brother George Thompson, District Superintendent of Ohio, was the master of ceremonies. Brother and Sister James Hinkle sang. Brother Harold Kellenbarger and Brother Paul Cook, two active ministers who had received training from Brother Cook, came to honor Brother Cook, whose wise counsel and godly example had blessed their own ministry. The church was filled with faithful saints and old friends who had mixed emotions

about the occasion.

Brother and Sister Cook were seated on the platform. After the singing was over and many kind words were spoken, the Cooks were called to the podium where Brother Leaman handed them a card. Inside the card was a picture of the new Oldsmobile. Underneath the picture these words were typed: "I Belong to You."

"What? I don't understand?" stammered Brother Cook.

"Look out the window!" he was told. But because he was so tall, he could not quite see. Sister Cook, being shorter, had already seen the car. She grabbed Brother Cook's arm and cried, "Oh, Dad!"

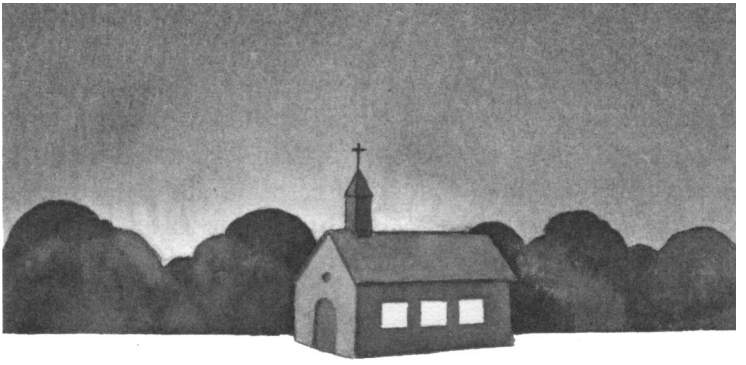
The Cooks, who had given so unselfishly for twenty-eight years to the Lancaster assembly, were overjoyed at this generous gift. But to Brother and Sister Leaman and the Lancaster congregation, nothing was too good for the Cooks, and they were pleased to show their love in this manner.

What a great night it was! Brother Cook's heart overflowed. He well knew that it was not always easy for a church to give up a pastor who had led them for twenty-eight years. He remembered the trauma and trouble other churches had suffered, but he had only wanted to do God's will. And since he had sought only His will, God had blessed him with friends, loved ones, faithful saints, children, grandchildren and great grandchildren! His heart was full of praise as he took the keys and he and Sister Cook drove away in the new blue Oldsmobile.

"I still want to do God's will, wife. We have much to be thankful for—fifty-two years of ministry—but we

still have things to pray about in the morning. We will need to be up early for prayer."

[1]Arthur L. Clanton, *United We Stand*, p. 149.
[2]*The Pentecostal Herald*, December, 1970.



Life as an Official

While he was pastoring in Little Rock in 1923, Ralph Cook was first asked to serve as a district elder with the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World. This began a long and notable career as a church official. Since that time he has served continuously in some capacity as an official.

In 1938 he was asked to serve on the General Board of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Jesus Christ. His good friend, Brother W. T. Witherspoon, was General Chairman at that time.

It was about this time that Brother Cook met Brother Wynn Stairs, and as a result of their friendship, Brother Cook suggested that Brother Stairs along with other Canadian ministers visit the convention of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Jesus Christ at Brother Witherspoon's church in Columbus. This helped to

bring the New Brunswick Oneness Pentecostals into fellowship with the American Oneness Pentecostals.

Brother Cook served on the General Board of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Jesus Christ until they merged with the Pentecostal Church Incorporated on Monday, September 24, 1945.

In 1945, at the time of the merger of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Jesus Christ and the Pentecostal Church Incorporated, Brother Cook was designated the District Superintendent of Ohio. He served under Brother Goss until 1951, and then under Brother Morgan, the newly elected General Superintendent.

"Brother Goss was quite a character," Brother Cook recalled. "He always carried a lunch in his suitcase. His favorite snack was salami, bologna, and a large onion. He liked to travel by Pullman on the train, but he snored like a train coming up the grade. I shared a compartment with him, and I got no sleep at all," he recalled laughingly.

Brother Cook served as District Superintendent of Ohio from 1945 to 1954. Afterwards for approximately nine years he served as a member of the Foreign Missionary Board. In 1963 he was elected as Assistant General Superintendent. He served under Brother Arthur T. Morgan and later served in the same capacity under Brother Stanley W. Chambers.

Although he served many years in an official capacity, Ralph G. Cook did not aspire to official status. When he was approached by Brother Morgan about letting his name run for Assistant General Superintendent, he replied, "Brother Morgan, I am not a parlimentarian." Brother Morgan replied in his Texas

drawl, "We need someone with a good spirit, Brother Cook."

Although he did not seek office, Brother Cook was re-elected as Assistant General Superintendent of the Eastern Zone for eight years. The last time he was elected, he received all but a few votes. At the General Conference in Houston, Texas, in 1971, he let it be known that he did not wish to serve another term

"I stepped down because I did not feel I wanted to go any further with it," was his only comment.

Ralph Cook was still sensitive to the will and purpose of God. "Only Your will for me, dear God," was his prayer. He felt it was God's will for him not to serve any longer.

Serving as an official involves more than riding trains, sharing snacks and enjoying the fellowship of other ministers. Some young ministers once accused Brother Cook of being a puppet of the General Superintendent. "All you fellows are doing is just pulling the wire. You are just polishing Goss's apples," they charged.

Some churches had sticky problems which required the utmost tact, patience, and wisdom to deal fairly. Many long hours were spent in tense board meetings.

Below is a copy (undated) of a form Brother Cook filled out sometime between 1945 and 1951. We need but note the busy schedule he filled, preaching approximately three hundred times in a twelve month period, to realize the load officials were asked to carry. Fortunately his health was still very good.

RELATING TO
MINISTERIAL ACTIVITIES

"Study to show thyself approved unto God—a workman that needeth not to be ashamed. Be instant in season and out of season."

The purpose of full credentials is to give official authority and acknowledgement to those actively engaged in the ministry of the Gospel. Broadly speaking, it is only for those who are giving their full time to the ministry, although it may include those who for good reasons may have to do some secular work to supplement their income from their ministry. In no case is it intended to include those who minister once in awhile and do not make their ministry their life work.

With the above in view, will you please answer the following as fully and accurately as possible.

Full name Ralph G. Cook

Address 1042 S. Broad St Lancaster Ohio

Telephone number Lancaster 3612 Married or single Married

Are you devoting your full time to the ministry? yes

What is your calling? Pastor

If pastor, give name of church, location and membership Lancaster Apostolic Church 810 N. Front St. Membership 140

Give an approximate record of your activities during the past 12 months, i. e., number of times you have preached; where you have labored, number of evangelistic meetings; your field of labor. preached about 300 times Lancaster Ohio St Paul minn Mass. Ohio District.

What are your plans for the next twelve months? Expect to keep preaching as I can

What do you think about the United Pentecostal Church and its activities? I like it but there is room for improvement along spiritual lines

Give any other information that you think would be helpful to us, such as, the state of your health if physically unable to preach, etc. Health is good

Signed R. G. Cook

Mail to United Pentecostal Church, 3449 S. Grand Blvd., St. Louis 18, Mo.

In February 1965 he traveled to Little Rock to attend the funeral of his dear friend, Brother G. H. Brown. Brother Brown had bought the Episcopal church building which Brother Cook had rented in 1922 for the Southern Conference. It had only cost seven thousand dollars. For forty-five years Brother Brown had served as pastor. What sweet memories flooded Ralph Cook's heart as he sat in the service! Little did he realize that in just three days from the time of the funeral the building would be destroyed by fire.

While in Little Rock, Brother Cook took sick and rode back as far as Memphis with his good friend, J. O. Wallace. Then he flew home.

From time to time Ralph Cook attended the funerals of good friends who had worked with him in the gospel.

"God has a will and a purpose for me. I must be careful to seek His will and not my own," was still the guiding principle in Ralph Cook's life.

Because he felt that it was God's will and the proper time, Brother Cook retired from the pastorate of the First Apostolic Church in Lancaster, Ohio, in 1973.

In tribute to his long years of service as an elected official, Brother Cook was asked to serve as an honorary member of the General Board. He takes his responsibilities seriously, and when his health permits, he always attends the board sessions.

The Cooks now reside at Ashville, Ohio. Their son, Paul Cook, is serving as Regional Field Director with the Foreign Missions Division. Grandchildren are growing up and becoming involved in the work of the Lord.

Brother Cook is called on frequently to preach, and he receives many requests to sing "Fifty Miles of Elbow Room," "The Oak and the Ivy," and many of the other songs of his earlier years.

"I'll just keep on doing God's will until He comes or I go to meet Him." The tall preacher still stands tall.

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