

## **With the “Sword”... A Flame**

### **By Velmer J. Gardner**

*Excerpt from “Men Who Heard From God” Compiled by J. Gordon Lindsay*

I graduated from the Northwestern Bible College in 1938 in Seattle, Washington. I immediately entered the evangelistic ministry, and also served as the President of the Alumni Association of this school for nine years. After a short time on the evangelistic field I pastored three churches in the state of Washington.

It was while pastoring my last church in 1943 that God began to speak to my soul in a greater way than ever before. I spent hours in prayer and God gave me faith to believe Him for great revivals with miracles of healing.

I resigned my church, bought a trailer house, secured a correspondence school course for our two children and started out believing God for Apostolic revival. I had dedicated my life afresh to God and had promised Him to pray for the sick in every revival.

In the first campaign I prayed for many hours a day seeking God for a demonstration of His power. I read the book of Acts again and again. My heart was broken as I compared it with our churches and evangelism today. I listened to the great men of faith, such as Smith Wigglesworth and Dr. Charles Price, and my soul was stirred and faith inspired. I cried out to God and said, "Why can't we have meetings like that today?" God spoke to my soul and said, "You can if you'll pay the price."

I determined to have God's best regardless of the cost and to let this generation see the power of God. I announced a healing service for the next night and spent all day fasting and praying. The devil came to me and said, "Not very many people get healed when you pray for them, do they?" I answered, "No." (No use trying to lie.) Those were days when faith was very low. Very few preached healing or had any faith. I had a lot of hope and a little faith. One man stood and testified like this: "I thank God for His healing power. I had a very bad cold. So I left church early, took a hot bath, drank some hot lemonade, took a couple of aspirins, rubbed myself down good with Vicks, put on a hot mustard plaster and went to bed and trusted God to heal me." (Amazing faith how sweet the sound.)

Yes, those were difficult days to pray for the sick and the devil was trying to discourage me. I rose from my knees and began to talk back to the devil. I said, "Listen devil, I'm praying for the sick tonight. If the first one I pray for falls dead I'll say, "Next. If that one dies, I'll go on down the line. If they all die I'll go to another church and start praying for

the sick there. I'm going to pray for the sick because God's Word says, if I call He'll answer, if I lay hands on the sick they'll recover. My job is to pray, it's up to God to heal."

The devil left me then and a new revelation of the power of God's word flooded my soul. I prayed for the sick that night and many miracles were wrought by His power. I prayed for the sick then in every meeting and we saw miracles of healing that shook cities and brought great revivals. In Eugene, Oregon, in 1948 I conducted my fourth revival campaign for Pastor Gordon Kampfer. The meeting had a small beginning, but finally grew to tremendous proportions, with people saved and healed and filled every night. Great crowds came for many miles each night. This great revival lasted for 10 weeks.

It was during this meeting that God visited my soul again. I was praying and reading the Bible one Saturday morning. I read Mark 13:34, "For the Son of Man is as a man taking a far journey, who left His house and gave authority to His servants." THIS VERSE OF SCRIPTURE SEEMED TO LEAP OUT OF THE PAGES OF THE BIBLE INTO MY VERY SOUL. Then God spoke to my soul and showed me the "authority" He had given to His servants today, and that no sickness, disease or devils could stand before our prayers. He showed me that every demon power was subject to His servants that were filled with His power. I immediately began to pray for the sick with a new found faith. It wasn't a struggle anymore. God had spoken to me through His word and at last I had a living faith for suffering humanity.

A short time prior to this great experience with God, I was in another revival in Washington State. The news came to me that Dr. Price and Wigglesworth had both suddenly been called to heaven. I went down in the basement of the church and cried my heart out. I thought of all the sick, twisted, deformed, broken bodies. And then I thought of how few men were praying for the sick and had a compassion for the suffering. I cried until it seemed I couldn't stop. Both of these men had been such a help to me. I cried, "Oh, God why did you take them? The world is filled with sickness and disease. The world needs the faith of Wigglesworth and the preaching of Price, but now they're dead and their message gone."

In brokenhearted despair I lay before God on the cold basement floor. THEN LIKE A MIGHTY FLAME OF FIRE GOD'S SPIRIT BEGAN TO BURN WITHIN MY SOUL, I knew that I was in the presence of the One that walked into the fiery furnace. I knew that the God that sent fire on Carmel had seen my tears. His Spirit spoke to me and said, "It is true Price my servant is dead, Wigglesworth my servant is dead But the God of Price and Wigglesworth still lives. And if you will humble yourself and walk softly before me, I will be with you as I was with them."

God promised miracles of healing and revivals that would shake the world. I leaped to my feet and began to praise God for the answer to prayers that had burdened my soul for years. At that very time God began to raise up men all over the country. Men of faith. Men that believed God. Men of prayer. Men of holy character. Miracles of healing were wrought. BIBLE DAYS WERE HERE AGAIN.

At this time Rev. Gordon Lindsay invited me to his church in Ashland, Oregon, where he was pastoring. We were there nine weeks and again God moved in a great way. During our stay there, Brother Lindsay told me of the great burden on his heart for bringing the churches together in great Union Campaigns and the great revival he believed God was going to send the world. It was during our time in Ashland that he resigned this thriving church and organized the Voice of Healing magazine.

In the providence of God, Brother Lindsay organized some great Union Healing Campaigns in the state where I was in meetings. I postponed one of my meetings and went to a week of these healing services. I saw the verse of scripture God had burned into my soul, "on our authority over sickness and the devil," put into practice by God's humble servants. I saw what God would do if we dared to believe. I saw miracles that thrilled my soul. Immediately I began holding meetings in large auditoriums and saw God move with signs and wonders I had never seen before. People would come for hundreds of miles every day to the services. Scores were being saved. God's blessing was upon my soul. I was the happiest I ever had been in my entire ministry.

I was sure everyone would be as happy over these great revivals as I was. However I soon found out that this was not the case. Many of my friends began to oppose these great revivals. I knew that if I wasn't careful I would lose the favor of men. I had invitations to nearly all the largest churches in our movement. So to keep popular I compromised the message God had given me. I stopped praying for the sick and even began opposing some of the men in the healing ministry. God's blessing lifted from my soul. The meetings became empty and lifeless. God's anointing had departed. I became discouraged and was planning on quitting the ministry. My great revivals were over. No healings, very few conversions, no one being filled with the Spirit. My soul was empty of God's blessing. I still had more invitations for meetings than I could fill, but I wasn't satisfied. There were no results.

God was merciful once again and allowed me to go to an-other great healing revival. There I heard God's Word preached under one of the greatest anointings I had ever felt in all my life. I saw hundreds answer a single altar call. I saw miracles that stirred my soul. I saw Jesus being exalted and magnified. I cried out to God and asked Him to forgive me. I prayed and cried out to God all night and promised God if He would forgive me and anoint me again I'd preach the gospel of deliverance without

compromise or fear of man. I told God I'd follow Him if every church in America closed its doors to me. I promised God I'd preach healing and pray for the sick if I had to do it in the corn fields.

I felt the fire of God once again begin to burn in my soul. Immediately hundreds began coming to Christ in our meetings. Miracles of healing were again wrought. We purchased a large tent and equipment and have seen thousands come to the altar seeking salvation. We have seen hundreds receive the Holy Ghost. We have seen totally blind eyes instantly opened. We have seen the deaf hear and cancers and tumors die. We have seen dying people leap from stretchers. We have seen the paralyzed leave wheel chairs. We have seen the lame leave their crutches and limp no more.

Friends, BIBLE DAYS ARE HERE AGAIN and as for me and my house "WE WILL SERVE THE LORD."

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