

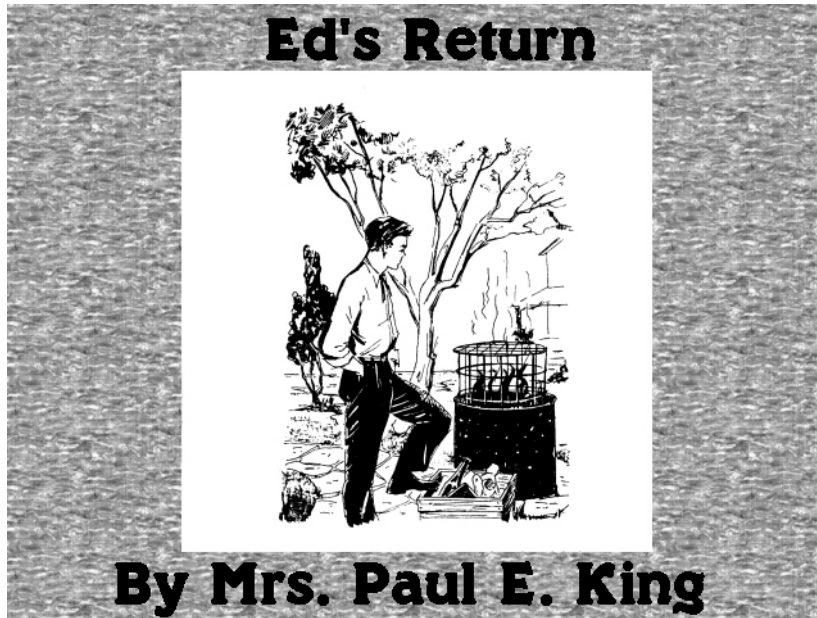
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Digital Edition 10/22/2001
By Holiness Data Ministry

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The Sunday School Beacon
October 3, 1999



ED'S RETURN
By Mrs. Paul E. King

The revival meeting was in its second week and God was there; every service was freighted with a holy awe over His Divine presence and moving. No five-day meeting nor, even, only a week. Our pastor "outlawed" the suggestion of a three-day meeting by one of the church members, stating firmly and tearfully, "I'm praying for a Holy Ghost revival, folks. I want God to come in old time power like I experienced and saw as a child. I'm sick and

tired of these mini-meetings to which the church world is ascribing and bowing. I want revival! A Holy Ghost revival!

"It will cost, in time and tears and sleep and sweat and sacrifice. Do you want revival? Are you willing to pay the price for God to come? If so, please come and join me around this altar. First, prepare your heart for His coming. If you have anything against anybody -- any ill will, strife or bitterness, hatred or malice or anger -- get it out of the way. Who will join me here at the altar?"

Moved to tears, and stirred greatly and mightily in my soul, I hurried to the front, kneeling at the altar. I knew God was going to visit us and our church in a gracious way; my entire being believed this, for two of my friends and I had been meeting twice weekly in the hay loft of Fathers barn, praying, pleading and entreating God to send a revival to our church and our community.

I didn't pay attention to how many, or who, came to the front to pray that night; I only know that my two best friends and I were there, sobbing and pleading with God for a real Holy Ghost revival: a meeting that would make the hardest sinners tremble and bow under Holy Ghost power and repent and become converted; a revival that would deal the death blow to the carnal heart of the unsanctified until they would loathe and hate the thing that caused them to backslide -- the awful nature that "is enmity against God," and "is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8:7). It had to be slain. Eradicated. Taken out, root and all. We needed a revival of heart cleansing and sin purging. With all my heart and soul and mind and strength, I wanted to see God visit us with a real Holy Ghost revival.

My heart rejoiced at the changes our new pastor was trying to make in the church: changes from dead programs and entertainment to Biblical spirituality and growth in Him through prayer meetings and Bible studies and personal visitation upon sinners. The wonderful, old, God-inspired hymns of the church were being used totally now, in place of the once, slowly-encroaching modern contemporary songs and music.

Many in the church rejoiced and thanked God for a shepherd whose emphasis was on prayer, repentance and minding God and more prayer and fasting and minding God, until His glory and power would be so mightily present and manifested until the entire town and community would tremble under Holy Ghost conviction and the revival would spread far and wide.

Others grumbled and murmured and complained, declaring that our pastor was "narrow minded" and would drive the young people away. A two-week meeting was entirely too long, some of the grumblers and murmurers complained, adding that, "One should conform to the times and the busyness of the members and their schedules."

In spite of all that was said, the burdened but gentle-hearted pastor continued preaching what God had laid upon his heart, not slacking up in the least. A holy and reverential fear settled down upon the congregation, frightening some, convicting many, and angering others.

The battle for souls was on; it was a fearsome battle. Through it all, came the voice of our pastor-shepherd, "Pray on! Keep holding to God! Fight on!"

The charge was electrifying, challenging those who were praying and fasting, on to victory -- for the lost ones and the unsanctified.

In one of the prayer sessions, Adam Younger stood up, requesting prayer for Eddie Stowe.

Eddie Stowe! The name shook me to the tips of my toes. I hadn't thought about Ed in ever so long. Everybody who knew Ed knew he was a sure enough prodigal. The sad thing was that Eddie was brought up and had been reared in a good holiness home.

"I saw Eddie roaming the street. He looked sad," Adam reported in his prayer request for Ed.

You'd have to know Adam to understand why I said the request shook me to the tips of my size 11 toe tips. Adam was thirtyish. He collected rubbish and junk in a strange looking foot pedaled kind of wagon-looking vehicle to make a living for his widowed mother and himself.

Adam had never gone beyond the fifth grade in school: his learning capabilities forbade him going higher. What Adam lacked in book learning education and intelligence, however, was made up for in spirituality and obedience to God and His Holy Word. Adam loved the Lord devotedly and was one of the best "images" of Christ that our church had. Adam was

concerned about Eddie's lost condition. Adam! Whereas I hadn't even thought about Eddie for a long, long time.

"Oh, God," I cried, "forgive my unconcern over Eddie's lostness and give me a burden for his soul, like Adam."

"I told Ed I loved him," Adam stated in his usual halting, stammering way. "I invited him out to our revival meeting too. He's coming, folks. Ed's going to come. I know he is: Jesus told me he is, while I was praying for him in the shed. And Ed's going to get saved, He is!"

I knew, from that moment on, that Edward Roy Stowe was going to be saved, and get back into the Good Shepherd's fold. Adam never said anything like that unless he had the answer from God and knew it.

Adam had a child-like faith in God: a faith that believed for what was being asked. He knew no impossibilities with God; whatever God promised, would happen and come to pass. He had won many souls to Christ through his gentle, loving approach and his genuine compassion and love and concern. The love of Jesus shone through Adam's entire being.

Two nights before the end of the second week of the meeting a lone figure strode through the church doors and before the first hymn was sung, Eddie Stowe, still on his feet, said brokenly, "Preacher, may I say something, please?"

Leaving his place behind the pulpit, our pastor walked down the aisle, saying, "Edward Stowe! Yes. Yes, you may speak. I'd know you anywhere: Adam described you perfectly to me. I've prayed many a prayer for you. Welcome, Eddie. I'm Brother Langerford."

The two met in the aisle and hugged like long-lost brothers who had finally found each other after many years of separation.

"I'm saved!" Ed cried. "I can't keep still. Tonight, in Adam's rubbish shed, I 'unloaded' I didn't spare a thing. Not a thing! I 'unloaded' everything -- at the cross -- and the burden of my heart rolled away. My black, wicked, sinful heart is washed whiter than snow. Jesus' precious Blood washed away my every sin and pardoned my transgressions. Tonight I stand before you a child of God. I'm born again! Forgiven!"

Talk about revival! And glory -- God's glory! I never saw anything like it. Many who had been professing to be lovers of the Lord, ran to the altar, begging for God to forgive the coldness and the deadness and dryness of their heart and to give them the reality of His salvation; to restore to them the joy of His salvation. Others came to be purged and cleansed from the awful carnal nature, which, if not completely eradicated and taken out, would cause them to lose out with God and backslide.

Confessions were made; restitutions, too. People who hadn't spoken to each other in years, fell on each other's necks, men with men, women with women, and got old grudges and bitternesses straightened out and taken care of. Time was of no significance and importance: getting right with God was! It was the all-important thing. The only important thing!

The meeting continued on for a third week, and not once was there a barren altar during all that time.

"Brother Langerford," Ed said one night during the conclusion of a wonderful altar service in the third week of the meeting, "I severed all my relationships with the devil and I now belong to the Lord Jesus Christ. I'm sanctified wholly and I have a pure and clean heart, but I feel I need to get rid of the devil's trash. My drawers have had a housecleaning, and so have the rooms and the shelves and, well, you name it. I have everything that I could get into garbage bags, in garbage bags. Other things are ready for the rubbish truck. I emptied the contents of the bottles down the drain. I've been thinking, and Adam's been talking to me; he said no way would he be able to haul my rubbish away and sell it as junk to another since the Bible says, 'I will set no evil thing before mine eye.'

"Adam's right, if it's wrong for me to have these wicked things then it's wrong for me to give them to another, and let him have them. I want a total severance of these things, each of which was a part of my old life of sin. I want to burn them: everything that can be burned. Everything! And I want to be baptized too. I have left the land -- the world -- of death and sin, the land that I once traveled in: I want my old buddies and friends and acquaintances to know that I've parted company with Satan and his trash forever."

It was wonderful! Marvelous and glorious, the burning. God's Spirit was upon it all, the singing, praying, testifying and praising. Eddie was beside

himself with holy joy and freedom in the Lord as the flames consumed and devoured the tapes, the magazines and books, the vile movies and videos and all of the trinkets and trash of the enemy of his soul.

His friends, so-called, dubbed him crazy, saying he had lost his mind and needed his head examined; his old buddies declared he'd regret what he had done and would soon be back. Eddie, however, proved each and every prediction false and untrue: he had returned to God, he testified, to never go back; the rest and joy and peace in his soul satisfied his deepest inner longing. "Best of all," he said, "I have eternal life."

I shall never forget that glorious Holy Ghost revival: the revival in which Eddie, through God's amazing grace, found his way out of the maze of sin and its degradation straight back into the open and outstretched arms of the Good Shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ.

THE END