

SIXTY Lashes AT MIDNIGHT

FOR
PREACHING
THE
GOSPEL

BISHOP
GRADY R. KENT



FOREWORD

My Christian friends and many others, some of whom I do not know, here in America and abroad, have heard of my persecutions in the year of 1939, and have written me asking for my testimony of the whipping I received from the Ku Klux Klan. For many months God has impressed me to write the story of the great revival at Egan, Georgia, of the whipping, of the court trial, and of the judgment God has sent upon those who whipped me, in order that many might be blessed and encouraged never to give up because of tribulations.

In the preparation of my book, the aim in view has been to tell the story truthfully and in a manner that will be interesting and inspiring to those who know not Christ, as well as those who do know Him, and not to cast a reflection upon the Ku Klux Klan.

That this story may awaken a new interest in Christianity in many lives and cause them to follow Him Who died to save us all, is my heart-felt desire.

May God bless every reader and inspire you to press onward until we meet in the great beyond where we will praise Him without ceasing for His grace that carried us through.

Grady R. Kent

On November 25, 1941, I was called before the Governor of Georgia, Eugene Talmadge, by the Assistant Attorney General for the purpose of opposing the Order of the Ku Klux Klan, because of the cruelty and injustice that were shown by them to the citizens of America, and religious freedom of which I stand this day as one of their victims. I suffered cruel persecutions and bore many stripes from this secret organization because they did not agree with my way of worship and praising and glorifying God as in the days of old. In those days Christians suffered many persecutions and endured many lashes because men of this type did not agree with their way of worship and the way they praised God and honored Him. That day I stood with Bishop A. J. Tomlinson, General Overseer of the Church of God, and a great number of other ministers, Methodists, Baptists, Holiness, and other denominations to uphold the law and religious rights.

In the December 8th, 1941 issue of Life Magazine, the following brief description printed along with pictures, appeared:

THE GOVERNOR OF GEORGIA REMEMBERS THAT HE WAS ONCE A FLOGGER HIMSELF

Last week in Atlanta, in the capitol of an American State, occurred a nightmare scene that should make most Americans flush with shame and anger. On a table in front of Governor Eugene Talmadge were two leather man whips that might have come straight from a Gestapo cellar in Poland. Also on the table were clemency petition for six Ku Klux Klansmen now in prison for flogging pro-union

mill workers. Assistant Solicitor Dan Duke, fighting the petitions, shook a whip in the Governor's face and shouted: "These are whips you could kill a bull elephant with."

Gene Talmadge, grim and glittery-eyed, stared straight at the whip. Then he announced he was sorry for the floggers, would take their pleas under consideration. He recalled that he had once helped flog a Negro himself. "I wasn't in such bad company," he said. "The Apostle Paul was a flogger in his life, then confessed, reformed and became one of the greatest powers of the Christian Church. That proves to me that good people can be misguided and do bad things."

Dr. Newton, pastor of the leading Baptist church of Atlanta, Georgia, stood to his feet on that day and asked the Court and the order of the Ku Klux Klan who were assembled in the courtroom if the testimony I had given was correct or if anyone wished to challenge it. Suddenly there was a commotion in the back of the room and as I looked I saw a blind man making his way toward the speaker's stand. I did not know what was going to be said, but I knew something had taken place as some of the people stood gazing at me. Some were attracted by Dr. Newton and others were interested in what this blind man was about to say. With a trembling voice, he said, "I can only tell of the disturbance in the neighborhood out there. The people in the neighborhood said they couldn't sleep at night because of the noise this preacher and his flock made. Although the services usually ended by 11:00 o'clock, some of

the church people stayed around shouting and holding after-services."

Dr. Newton then said, "I only wish I had more of that kind of spirit in my church."

This all happened in the little town of Egan, Georgia, suburb of Atlanta, where God gave one of the greatest revivals ever known in that vicinity. The spirit of God had come down there in a greater way than the people had ever witnessed before. There were hundreds of people converted, received the second definite work of grace—sanctification, and at the time the great persecution broke out, to the best of my recollection, I had counted more than two hundred who had received the great experience of the Baptism with the Holy Ghost, with the evidence of speaking in other tongues as the Spirit gave the utterance. People were healed by the mighty power of God, the blind received their sight. Many who had been paralyzed for years came and were healed, throwing their hands in the air and praising God because they had been healed by His mighty power.

My soul is thrilled as I think of one special night of this great revival. About service time, as hundreds had gathered for service, I saw coming down the aisle three men carrying an old arm chair in which sat a woman. As they sat the old chair down by a post, I walked over and others followed me. With tears in her eyes the woman said to me, "Brother Kent, tomorrow they are going to take my foot off. Three of my toes have practically decayed as a result of Sugar Diabetes. I asked the hospital authorities to allow me to come to this revival tonight and maybe God will heal me."

We laid hands on her and anointed her with oil and immediately she came out of the old rocking chair and ran up and down the aisle, jumping and praising God. Then her voice rang out, "God has instantly healed me!"

By this time my persecutions had become very great and threats began to come to me, but God kept pouring out the latter rain in the little town of Egan, Georgia. It was almost dangerous for me to go around alone. At nine o'clock in the morning and at three o'clock in the afternoon, we would ring the old church bell, as it had already been made known to the city and the surrounding territory that these hours were the hours of prayer. We were praying for an abundance of the latter rain, and it was surely falling. The indignation of some of the people had been stirred to such an extent that they sent me word I had better close that meeting. My reply to them was always, "How can I shut that which God has opened?" I had orders to stop ringing my church bell. The devil knew that we were getting results from those prayers, but the old church bell kept ringing and prayers continued. One afternoon a man came to me and said, "Six men in the community have filed a bill of injunction against you and your church." As he handed me the bill of injunction, I learned that he was a deputy sheriff. But that did not stop the revival, for the Judge who signed this paper told me over the telephone to open the church doors and let the revival continue.

In a few days we were summoned to court. During four weeks I appeared before as many different Judges, but for some reason they hesitated to try my case. They

shifted me from one Judge to another until it made me think of the days of old when men of God were being tried and were shifted from one rule to another. These Judges seemed to fear having their hands interfere with God's great work. Hundreds of saints followed me from one court to another, standing by me and praying for me.

Finally my case was brought to trial. On that day there stood by me a great man of God, M. E. Wilson, State Overseer of the Church of God in Georgia. The courtroom was packed with hundreds of people. A great silence came over the people as they sat watching and waiting for the time for me to give my testimony. After I was called to the stand, I learned that there were three lawyers present who opposed my mode of worship. After being questioned and falsely accused by my enemies, I learned that among my enemies, there was a minister who opposed my way of worship. It gave me a great shock to learn that a man who preached the gospel would be against a soul-saving revival, but my mind flashed back to the days of the Apostles when they had to contend with just such things.

The Judge talked to me a while and asked me questions, and as he finished, he reached into his coat pocket and pulled out a little Testament. A quietness came over the people as they sat watching him so intently, waiting for his decision. He lifted his head and said, "Men and brethren, I can see no fault in this man. There is no reason to have accused him of the way he and his congregation worship, if they believe that way. I, too, believe in heart-felt religion. It looks to me that someone is jealous of him and his success. I am go-

ing to let him go free." Then the indignation of my enemies was really aroused.

This marked the starting point of my horrible and almost unbearable persecutions. It is only through God that I am alive today. The revival fire kept burning and threats continued to come such as "There is a way to stop you," and others just as convincing, but on we went serving the Lord. I had no thought of the awful things I would have to bear and the horrible, brutish and almost unbearable persecutions that would be mine. Thank God that He loved me so much and wanted me to continue to preach His message, that He protected me even in the shadow of death at the hands of cruel men, and I am still preaching the Church of God and the great last days message which must be told to all the world.

It was on the twenty-third day of May, 1939, after a great and mighty service during this revival that Satan put his agents to work. I had failed to eat supper that night because I had been so busy working for the Lord. We entered right into the service and to the best of my recollection, there was no preaching. The meeting was so powerful it was amazing. It was great to see the mighty power of God upon the saints. The house was filled with His glory. The saints were shouting and praising God. The special song that night was, "In the Midst of Tribulations, Stand By Me."

When the storms of life are raging,
Stand by me;

When the storms of life are raging,
Stand by me;

When the world is tossing me,
Like a ship upon the sea;
Thou who rulest wind and water,
Stand by me.

In the midst of tribulations,
Stand by me;
In the midst of tribulations,
Stand by me;
When the hosts of hell assail
And my strength begins to fail,
Thou who never lost a battle,
Stand by me.

In the midst of faults and failures,
Stand by me;
In the midst of faults and failures,
Stand by me;
When I do the best I can,
And my friends misunderstand,
Thou who knowest all about me,
Stand by me.

In the midst of persecution,
Stand by me;
In the midst of persecution,
Stand by me;
When my foes in battle array,
Undertake to stop my way,
Thou who saved Paul and Silas,
Stand by me.

When I'm growing old and feeble,
Stand by me;

When I'm growing old and feeble,
Stand by me;

When my life becomes a burden,
And I'm nearing chilly Jordan,
O, thou "Lily of the Valley,"
Stand by me.

No one knew what was just ahead, but many wept and there were amazing happenings that made the whole congregation wonder. I did not know that in just an hour or two I would be in the shadow of death and in the hands of wicked men. I did not know why that song was being sung that night, but it seemed to be the one to strike the keynote for the service.

After the service had closed I told my wife I was going out for lunch as I had not eaten any supper. I walked away with some brethren to a little lunch stand which the deacon of our church operated. He and his wife had invited me to go with them for supper. As I was sitting there eating, two well-dressed men came to the door and asked if the Reverend Kent was there. They had just been to my house looking for me and had made it appear to my wife that I was needed for some distress call. She, knowing that at all times I was willing to lend a helping hand to those who needed me, readily told them that I was at Latham's Restaurant eating supper. I always made it a practice to visit people in the community, pray for the sick at any time, day or night, and many times I was called out of bed at night to pray for the sick and assist anyone who needed me, because I felt it was my duty and privilege, since I was a minister of the Gospel.

These cruel men knew that I did this and that was their scheme to get me into their hands that night. After these men left the door of my home, my wife went to the door and saw more than one car drive away as the men went out. She became troubled because there were more than just two men looking for me. As they drove down the street, the next door neighbors, who were special friends of ours, hastened to my house and asked my wife what those people were wanting. They had seen a number of cars parked by their house which immediately started and joined the other cars which made a great company of them. When my friends found out that they were asking for me, they became stirred, too. No one at this time knew that this was the Ku Klux Klan looking for me. It wasn't even thought that they would participate in such a crime as flogging preachers and hindering religious worship. They had always been known as defenders of religion heretofore, but at this time they certainly departed from civilization and went into barbarism.

As these men stood at the door of the restaurant, I heard my name called, so I arose from my lunch and quietly walked to the door expecting to help someone as I was often called upon to do. I told those men that I was the Reverend Kent and they with very polite words, said, "Reverend, there is a lady out in the car who wants to speak to you a minute." I said, "All right, where is the car?" They pointed across the street. I stepped off the porch, hastening to the car, expecting to see someone in need of help. These two men walked one on each side of me. They asked me to get in the car. I replied, "I can talk to the woman standing here."

Then I discovered there was no lady in the car. I was bewildered for a moment for I saw something was wrong, but in that short time I could not observe all that was happening. There were four other men in the car and with demanding voice one said to me the second time, "Get in this car." Again I replied, "I can hear what the woman has to say standing here. Anyway I see no woman in the car."

Suddenly I saw it was a trap. I started back from the car, but they grabbed me by the belt and threw their coats back and showed me officers' badges fastened on their vests. One man said, "We are officers. You are under arrest, get in this car." Calmly I stepped inside the car. I thought if they were officers, I didn't want to resist them, still I could not think of any law that I had violated. They appeared to be nice, so I thought, "Maybe they are officers and probably some of my enemies have decided to give me more trouble." It had not been long since I had been in court because of our way of worship. As the car slowly pulled away I readily saw that the men sitting in that car could not be officers and it was only an alibi to get me into the car without any commotion or noise, so as not to disturb the people in the restaurant.

The car gained speed. I have never found words to express my feelings at that moment. After the car had gone about three blocks, the driver gave some peculiar signals with the horn and lights and immediately from a side street came rolling out speedily a 1939 model, blue Buick automobile, loaded to its capacity with men. I then realized more than ever that I had fallen into the hands of a mob and trapped into the hands of my

enemies. I knew that God was the only One who could help me through such a test, and there began in my heart words of prayer to my Lord. My heart was heavy and I was grieved to the uttermost.

I asked these men with whom I was riding, "What do you have me for, and where are you going with me? I have never done anyone any harm, but all these years I have preached and tried to be a blessing everywhere I go. Please tell me where you are taking me." They gave me no answer. I was silent for a moment and the cars were moving on at a speed of about forty miles per hour carrying me farther and farther away from my home into the night. Only God in heaven knew how I felt riding with those cruel men. I thought within myself, "I will never see Egan again." In my heart I bade goodbye to the little town where God had so wonderfully poured out His Spirit, where so many had been blessed and received the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, and had come into the great Church of God.

While still riding along toward the lonely woods, my mind again flashed back to my home where my wife and six little children were. My wife had been so faithful to stand by me all these years and my children needed their daddy.

I knew a mob had me. As I write these words I almost break down in tears because it all comes back so fresh to my mind. I began to pray aloud and call on God to help me and make these men see their mistake. As I prayed one of the men reached over and pushed my hat down over my face and hit me and said, "Shut up." I then began to pray silently in my heart. By this time we were rolling into the woods

and I did not know whether I would be lynched, hanged by a rope and swung to a tree or what they were going to do to me. I wondered if that would be my way of death as I had received so many threats. The thought came to me that they might tie me to a tree and burn me at the stake. Only those who have gone through this test can know the feeling which I had. I learned how to sympathize in reality with men of old who were punished by cruel men for the sake of the Gospel.

Just before we came to our stopping place, I asked the men again to please tell me what they had me for, and with angry voice one said, "What about all that shouting and loud praying and late services you are carrying on down at that church, disturbing the community and keeping them awake? We have heard enough of it. We are going to put a stop to it." Then the leader of the mob said, "We believe in religion as much as anyone, but we don't believe in any such religion as you and your church are carrying on down there and are not going to have it any longer." I tried to explain to them the good the revival had done to the community, but they became more angry. I decided it was best to be silent and ask God to help me bear the consequences whatever they might be. The woods were very dark and as the cars wended their way around the winding roads, I knew that it wouldn't be very long until I would know what was going to come to me.

At last the cars reached their destination and suddenly stopped. The car in front was the first to unload, then I knew it was only a matter of time with me.

The car in which I was riding began unloading, and when the men were out on the ground, they asked me to get out. I stepped from the car and looked around to see what was going on. The woods were dark with only the stars shining and just a little reflection from the moon. Everything was very silent, no one was talking. They made me walk down through the woods away from the cars with the men all around me, still no one uttered a word. At this time I began to utter words aloud to my God, and these are the words which I spoke, "My God, how can this be? Take care of me!"

Readers, no one could know how I felt at that time except those who have experienced such. I did not fight back, neither did I try to run away. I thought that if my time had come to depart this life I was ready to die as a testimony to show the world that this gospel which the Church of God teaches would stand the test in time of tribulations. I began to commit my life into God's hands, that all things would be worked out and done for His glory. Even though I should be hanged to a limb, or burned at the stake, I only asked God to give me grace to go through with whatever was coming. The men told me to be quiet but I had reached a close connection with my God and it seemed as though something had come to embrace me at this hour of trial.

As we reached an open space in the woods, they surrounded me. I was standing in the center of the ring and the chief leader of the mob, which is better known at this time as the "Wrecking Crew Boss of the Ku Klux Klan," began to talk to me again about my religion. He spoke evil of it and let me know that he

was against this way. I made a short talk, trying to reason with them. I explained this salvation and why we got happy and shouted but it seemed to do no good. Their indignation was stirred the more. It seemed that the only thing they wanted me to do was to close down the church and stop the saints from shouting.

I still did not know what was going to happen to me, but suddenly with roaring words, the boss said, "Pull your clothes off." I thought, "Maybe they are going to whip me to death." I wanted to stay sweet in my soul and keep the spirit of Christ within me and I began to cry and plead with them as I pulled off my clothes. Then I said, "Surely you all are mistaken in what you are intending to do." But it seemed as though the enemy had gotten a greater hold on them than ever. Nothing that I said or did seemed to touch their hearts in any way. When I had removed my clothes, I stood there in the dark woods listening, expecting something to strike me. God was very near me and it seemed as though I heard Him say, "Be sweet in your soul, I will take care of you." Then the boss spoke and said to two men, one standing on each side of me, "Give him thirty lashes," and as my eyes flashed around I saw great whips with large handles on them unrolling. Then I discovered that they were large leather straps which were about three feet long and nearly four inches wide and one-half inch thick.

Suddenly the lashes began to burn across my back. As I twisted and turned these two men kept lashing away. My skin was torn by the mighty lashes these two large men were laying on my back. I asked them to please quit but they seemed not to hear me, but

beat me all the more. After they had given me seemingly more than fifteen lashes each, I felt that I had taken more than I could bear. As I was still twisting, writhing, groaning, crying, trying to utter words of prayer, I began to weaken and found myself lying on the ground. As I fell the lashes were still coming. It seems now as if I can almost feel those straps as they lashed across my back. When I had fallen to the ground it seemed that God knew that I had all that I could bear and received my spirit for a time. I don't know how long, but when my spirit began to come back into my body the men had ceased beating me. I remember the last lash seemed to be very light.

When the whipping had ceased I realized some men were holding my head and feet to the ground. The next thing that I realized was a man's foot kicking me in the side and saying, "Get up." Bloody, flesh torn, beaten almost to death, I could hardly raise up. They showed me no mercy. Then came those angry words, "Put on your clothes." I staggered across the ground trying to put my clothes on which seemed almost impossible for I was beaten so badly. When I had my clothes on, except my coat, I laid it across my left arm and the men began to gather around me. I thought for a moment, "Are they going to finish beating me to death?" One of the men blazed out and said, "What do you now intend to do?" I asked them, "What do you want me to do?" I could hardly talk for my suffering and pain—only God understood my suffering. The men said, "Get your family and get out from down there or else this will be only a sample of what you will get." That was what they were wanting me to

do all the time, but I had not obeyed, because God had sent me there and I was only to move at God's notice. These men turned to go back to their cars and they said to me, "We bring them out, but we don't take them back," and directed me to go through the swamps the opposite direction from home.

I staggered along for I could hardly put one foot before the other, and a few feet away I leaned up against a pine tree. In my mind to this day I can clearly see that old pine tree. I pulled myself around behind it and watched the men as they climbed into their cars. They pulled away and in the winding, wooded road I saw the tail lights of the cars as they disappeared out of sight, leaving me all alone in the woods. I wondered if I would ever be able to walk out of the woods and live to get home. I came from behind the old pine tree and struggled across the ground where I had just been whipped. I was crying and step by step slowly plodded along. It had now become darker than ever. Everything was very still and quiet, not a sound to be heard only my weary feet dragging the ground. My back was bleeding, my clothes were stuck to me. I came to a low marshy place in the road, almost half knee deep in water. I could not see my way to go around it for I feared I would get lost from the road if I got out of the roadbed because it was so dark, so I began to wade through the mud and water. When I had reached about the center of the puddle, it seemed that my soul magnified God. I stopped suddenly and raised both my hands toward heaven, looking up into the starry sky, and said, "Thank Thee, O Lord, for sparing my life and that You counted me worthy to bear

this reproach for Thee, and for the Church of God and its doctrine." I began to walk on through the mud and it seemed as though I could walk better then.

On reaching the suburb of East Point, I came to a street light and discovered that three of my fingers were burst and bleeding. I was in such pain that I could hardly tell where all my injuries were, but I struggled on up the street till I came to a street car line. When I reached the car stop, there stood a young man by the post. I hobbled up to him and with trembling words asked him, "Has the last car going to Egan already run?" (It was still about two miles to my home.) He said, "No, but it is already past time for it." It was twenty minutes late. It seemed as though God had worked it out that way for my benefit for soon the car came rolling up and stopped. With bleeding hands and muddy clothes I climbed into the street car. The conductor gazed at me as though he wondered what had happened, still he never asked me any questions. He only looked around at me occasionally. Then he said to a young man standing by his side, "I am twenty minutes behind schedule for some reason." I then knew that God had worked all things to my good and I thanked Him in my heart.

By this time the car was approaching my place to get off, which was in front of the restaurant from where the mob had taken me a few hours previous. As the car rolled up to the place, I saw a great multitude of people stirring on the corner. The cars were dashing to and fro at that early hour of the morning. As the street car stopped, I saw over the crowd, looking through the window, my father and mother, and

they were weeping, for no one except the mob knew what had become of me that night. They got me away so quietly even the people with me in the restaurant did not know that I was gone till the cars were out of sight. The people of the little town knew my life had been threatened several times and they could only think that the end of my time had come and no one had any idea where to hunt for me. The officers of the town were looking for me but no one could find me. Only the Lord, the mob and I knew where I was that night. As I began to descend from the street car, a large number of people surrounded the end of it. I saw some of them were weeping, some were asking where I had been, others wanted to know what had happened. I told them to hold their peace a few minutes and I struggled along from the car to the home of our dear Brother Joe Latham, which was close by and I was still several blocks from my home.

As I walked into Brother Latham's home the crowd pressed me, wanting to hear my story of what had happened. My first words to them were, "I have been beaten almost to death by a mob." The saints then lifted their hands and began to call on God, some of them praying for me. I asked them to be silent for a moment and I would tell them what had happened. When I had finished my story, the brethren took me into another room and removed my clothes from my body, brought warm water and bathed my wounds, tried to dry me with a towel, and poured olive oil over my back. When I had put on more clothes they took me into the room where a great number of people were waiting. The saints prayed for me, laying their hands on me

in the name of the Lord asking Him to heal me, and thank God, He gave us great victory. My soul was greatly blessed and when they had ceased to pray for me, the enemy came on the scene to try my faith. He tried to make me think that I was dying. I began to weaken in my body and asked some of the brethren to help me to the bed. As they helped me to the bed, prayers again began to ring out and again my faith was renewed and my body received strength. There was no sleep for most of the people around there that night.

I began to see a real Bible scene of when the Church of God was persecuted in the olden days, when Stephen was beaten to death by a cruel mob. The Apostle Paul himself was chief of that cruel mob and held the cloak of Stephen while he was being stoned to death. Afterwards Paul himself was converted, sanctified, baptized with the Holy Ghost, and says in 1 Cor. 14:18, "I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all." Paul and Silas also received the lashes on their backs and were cast into prison and tried before rulers, all because people did not believe in their way of worship and the testimony of Jesus Christ. The jailer, who kept the prison, himself, washed their backs and wounds and gave them lunch to eat because on that night God made him to know that this salvation that Paul and Silas were being lashed for was real salvation. He, himself, accepted the Lord Jesus Christ and I hope some day that some of this mob who beat me will come by the way of Jesus Christ and accept real heart-felt salvation. Bless the great and wonderful name of Jesus for this victory that has been won,

and that the way of Christ and the old time Gospel may continue to the end of the world.

On that early morning as day began to dawn, I had not slept any because of my dreadful pain and suffering. I laid in bed the best I could and those who labored in the little city were out in the early morning on their way to their daily work. There were people walking and stirring around the house where I was which made others wonder what had happened to stir folks at that time of morning. Questions were asked about what had happened and the answer was, "The outlaws and church fighters kidnapped our preacher and beat him almost to death." Then the people's indignation rose in my favor. Those who did not attend our church and belonged to other denominations began to turn to us. It seemed that the majority of the people more than ever before had turned toward our faith. I began to think within myself that God would get more glory out of my whipping and reach more people by that method than I had reached by my preaching. There were hundreds of angry people who could not withhold their indignation even though I told them that I had nothing against these men and felt no envy in my heart toward them. I would say, "God, forgive them, surely they have made a mistake in whipping me." The thought comes to me, "For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth." 2 Cor. 13:8.

To this day I bear the signs of the horrible and brutish lashes of those whips on my back, but God has used that to work a work through me that could not have been otherwise worked. It has given me the privilege to express and make known the testimony of

Christ to men who would not have otherwise heard. It has given me the privilege to testify of this salvation to many hundreds of people, to great lawyers and honorable judges, policemen and men in authority and besides all this, thousands of Ku Klux Klansmen have heard about the Church of God and have learned of its teaching more than ever before. I pray that thousands of them will be saved by this whipping. This group of men departed from their practice and gave cruel punishment to an American citizen for his religious belief because they didn't see just like me. The Klan itself took the charter from that group of men who beat me so unmercifully.

The news began to spread on that morning after the whipping. It was announced over the radio and people began to come from over the city of Atlanta to see what had happened. Folks drove many miles from other towns looking for the little town of Egan in the suburb of Atlanta, and I would hear words from their lips highly praising the Church of God and its doctrine. Some would say, "The Church of God must be the old-time Gospel." Even though I was suffering from pain, I would rejoice in my soul to hear these words come from the lips of strangers. It brought to me a joy that I had never felt before. I indeed then began to feel my shame turned into honor and thanked the Lord for being able to bear it for His glory. The day rolled by and night was coming and after praying all day and others praying, God gave me strength to rise in the evening and put on my clothes once again.

The people pressed me all day, wanting to hear my story of what had happened. Many preachers and

newspaper men visited me. They would say, "What do you intend to do?" As I would lift my eyes toward heaven, I would tell them, "If God will give me strength I will fill my pulpit at the proper time." And at the proper time in the evening at the old tabernacle that old church bell began to ring, calling the people to the house of God. The news had gone out that I would be there. On that night there was no little stir among the people. The church was filled and the churchyard was packed, the road in front was almost impassable with people, wanting to hear what I had to say. There was a great number of people in arms walking to and fro, up and down the streets and around the church house. They had shotguns, pistols, big knives and clubs. I tried to persuade them not to do that but it seemed as though their indignation had grown to such a height that they wanted to get vengeance on these men because they had whipped a preacher in their community. Nearly all the public knew that I had never harmed anyone but had worked hard to promote the way of Christian living.

On that night, as I sat in the tabernacle, the saints were singing, the tabernacle was packed and as I have said before, there was hardly passing room outside, the people were waiting to hear what I had to say. Already I had been ordered by the mob not to be in town at sundown, neither my family nor myself, but I knew the Church of God must move on. I determined that it must move on in Egan even though it took my life. After the song service and many had prayed it came my time to speak to the congregation. I will never forget that night. As I rose from the chair on the plat-



Grady R. Kent was about to appear before the Governor of Georgia in the hearing of the trial of the "Floggers." At the left appears Prosecutor Dan Duke, Assistant Attorney General of Georgia, holding one of the whips used by the Ku Klux Klan. Pastor Kent is explaining to Bishop A. J. Tomlinson, General Overseer of the Church of God, that this is one of the straps from which he had received about sixty lashes. This strap is about one-half inch thick and is fastened to the end of a baseball bat.



Grady R. Kent standing before Gene Talmadge, Governor of Georgia, giving his testimony. Brother Kent was being interrupted by Dr. Newton who appears at extreme lower right. Dr. Newton asked the floggers, at extreme lower left of photograph, if Reverend Kent's testimony was true. The large group in the background are ministers who appeared to oppose the granting of clemency to convicted floggers. Bishop A. J. Tomlinson, General Overseer, Overseer of Georgia, are among the number.



Grady R. Kent in the home of Brother Joe Latham a few hours after he returned from the woods where he was maliciously beaten. The church had gathered to pray for him. All through the day numbers of people came to hear his story. The Lord heard the prayers of His children and Brother Kent preached in his pulpit that night. Instead of fleeing the country, Pastor Kent joined hundreds of earnest seekers after God and there was no let-up in the greatest revival that ever swept that country. Thousands jammed the church house and streets to hear Brother Kent tell in detail his experience of being beaten for Christ's sake.



In the waiting room of Governor Gene Talmadge of Georgia in the city of Atlanta, Pastor Grady Kent and General Overseer, A. J. Tomlinson, are discussing preparation for the clemency hearing of the "flogging" before the Governor of Georgia. This is the first picture of the General Overseer in connection with the famous "flogging conflict." Bishop Tomlinson took great interest in all the proceedings and remained throughout the trial.

form, a deathly silence fell upon the congregation. I came from the chair to the pulpit, stood in silence for a moment and looked over that silent congregation. I turned my head from one side of the building to the other, peering to the extreme back of the tabernacle, and fastened my eyes upon some of the men who had beaten me the night before. They, too, were waiting to hear what I had to say. I thought within myself, "If you men only knew my heart and knew my Christ whom I serve and teach, you would desire to take back every lash which you gave me," but it seemed as if they still wanted to take my life. Oh, as I lifted my voice to speak it seemed as if a greater experience came into my life and into my speech that night. It seemed as though my soul magnified God and His greatness. At midnight while writing this book, I can feel that mighty and glorious power that I felt on that night! Oh, if you were only here tonight you would know just what I mean. As I spoke that night under the anointing and power of the great Holy Ghost, God filled that tabernacle with His glory. The fear of God came down, men became afraid, so afraid that some of them ran home. Oh, I tell you, there was no little stir in the town of Egan. These experiences made me think of the acts of the Apostles. Only the people around Egan can tell you about this. These were surely Bible experiences.

That night after service these cruel men tried to capture me again. The officers chased them away and tried to arrest them but were unable to do so. I then began to think again, "Will I have to suffer another cruel whipping or will it be death?" I knew I was

beaten so badly that I could not stand the lashes of those straps again and live, unless God would perform another miracle. My life then seemed to find no rest. I was reminded again of the days of old when the Scribes and Pharisees and Elders would not let Paul and his co-workers have rest, but continued to beat them and chase them from city to city for the sake of the Church of God.

This made it impossible for me to live with my family for more than two months. My neighbors and friends took care of my wife and children while I stayed in secret and unknown places. Only a few of the brethren in whom I put the utmost confidence would know where I would be at nights. Sometimes even they would not know. Only those with whom I stayed would know. I would see my family only every few days when I could slip in. I could fill my appointments at church only by not letting anyone know when I was coming. The Church would just gather together for its regular meetings and I would walk in and preach for them. Then sometimes I would be forced to slip out and get away as quickly as possible. It seemed as if that blood-thirsty mob was just determined to take my life, but God would always make a way for me to escape.

One night while coming from a tent revival it seemed that they spied me getting into a car. I was out on this night, but I did not go alone. There was a brother and his family who followed the car in which I was riding. All of this was unknown to me but we discovered that we were being trailed by automobiles. The car I was in speeded up, the car following us

speeded up and we were by this time out on a lonely country road trying to escape and dodge those cars. Finally we got some distance ahead—so far in front of them that we had time to get over a hill and out of their sight. It seemed that God had that location for us to stop for there was a road where we could turn around. I got out of the car in which I had been riding and into the other car and it turned around and went in the direction from which we had come. This confused the chasers so much that they didn't pay any attention to our car as we met them. We escaped victorious another night. Then I went into a secret place. However, that night I stayed in the midst of their community, almost next door to some of the mob. I had a good night's rest and they did not know I was there. I suppose I was in bed while they were out hunting me. Anyway, I wasn't bothered after finding a place to stay that night. After more than two months of this, my trouble seemed to cease. I then had one of the largest baptismal services that had been in that country for many years. There were forty-five baptized on that Sunday. By this time those men had seemed to cool off from their anger and indignation against me, as some of them stood on the banks of the creek and watched us go through this great baptismal service.

All of this trouble did not stop the Church of God and its last days message. I praise God that the Church is still moving on at Egan, Georgia, and just a few days ago I made a visit to the Church and stood in the same old pulpit. As I looked over the congregation a lump came into my throat for I saw those precious men of God, some of them gray headed now.

The glory of God shined in their faces. They had not forgotten those great days when God was sending down the latter rain. It made me feel good to see the brothers and sisters in the Lord who helped me to bear my afflictions in those days. They know what it is to have the real Bible tribulation.

On September 11, 1939, my time expired, and I took my family and left the little church and those dear and wonderful saints, as I felt my hands were clean and the blood of all people in Egan was off me. I felt that I had done my duty, and what God had required of me. It broke my heart to leave the people at Egan church, but my family and I moved to another location where I was called to serve as pastor. This place was at the Capitol of the World for the Church of God, Cleveland, Tennessee, where I am now residing. I am serving my third term with victory and great success with the wonderful people of the Church of God over which A. J. Tomlinson is General Overseer. These years have been sunshine in my life. It is grand to be at the Headquarters of the Church of God, over which A. J. Tomlinson is and was General Overseer, with the leaders and the finder of the Church of God this side of the Dark Ages in the Fields of the Wood. This finder is none other than Bishop A. J. Tomlinson, the General Overseer of the great Church of God, a man who was chosen to find it and to present it to the world. This proof can be found in the 132nd Psalm, also Psalm 65:4 and Isaiah 60. The 60th chapter of Isaiah proves that at the same time the Church of God was to come out of the Dark Ages, and arise and shine, the airplanes would rise and fly. "Who

are these that fly as a cloud and as the doves to their windows?" Isaiah was speaking of those great zeppelins flying as clouds floating through the air. The doves spoken of represent the airplanes flying to their lighting destination, which prove that the Church of God over which A. J. Tomlinson is General Overseer is the one to arise to finish the work in these last days, and to carry the truth into all the world. The Lord spoke through David of old and said, "Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth." Psa. 60:4. God has revealed to us the great ensign or the flag, and we made it according to Bible colors with the scepter which represents power; the star to show the world where Christ can be found and the fulness of His gospel; a crown which He will give them that will endure to the end; a square on the flag represents the city wherein they can live; the white shows that they must be washed white in the blood of Christ before entering into that city; the white shade through the red represent that only through the blood of Christ can a man be washed white; the purple color represents royalty as Peter has spoken in 2 Peter 2:9. The flag itself and all its emblems and colors represent the nation of God that keepeth the truth. Paul said in 1 Tim. 3:15 that the Church of the living God was the pillar and ground of the truth, and God has said He would give the flag to the body that would keep the truth. The word "display" in Psa. 60:4 means to wave and show it to the people, and this is to be done because of the truth. Now Moses' work and law were only a shadow of that which was to come and these four colors—red, white, blue, and purple in the

flag are the four colors which Moses always hid in the tabernacle, which was a demonstration that they were to be brought to light and used to demonstrate in another day. This was to come and is now being shown to the world to represent the whole truth.

The flag was not for the early Church period but only to be used in the latter part of the Church in these last days. Isaiah 11:11, 12 prove that the Church must first go through the dark ages before the rise of the Bible ensign. Isaiah 13 shows that the ensign or flag would be given for the purpose of bringing God's people out of church confusion which is known over the world in the word "Babylon," and to bring people out of this confusion. He told them in Isa. 13:2, "Lift ye up a banner upon the high mountain, exalt (amplify) the voice unto them, shake the hand, that they may go into the gates of the nobles." The word "hand" is singular showing there is only one hand stretched over the land. He wanted this hand to be shaken or made noticeable so the people would see it, that they might come into the Church of God. The ensign is to show the world where the Church of God is. God, speaking through Isaiah in the 18th chapter and 3rd verse, says, "All ye inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the earth, see ye, when he lifteth up an ensign on the mountains; and when he bloweth a trumpet, hear ye." This is spoken to the world and every living thing on it to see when the ensign is lifted or when it has come to light, and "hear ye" when he bloweth the trumpet. "Hear ye," means for the world to take notice to it when His ministers preach. It will pay all men

to take heed to this last days message of the Church of God and its doctrine because of God. God, Himself, one time used a special type of cloth, which was called swaddlingbands. This was used for the purpose of keeping the shepherds from being confused, because the shepherds did not see the star. This cloth was a sign unto the shepherds so they would know which baby in Bethlehem was the Christ. No doubt there were many more babies in Bethlehem besides this one, so God used a special kind of cloth for an ensign to show the right Baby. Only the Wise Men saw the star and the cloth was the ensign to the rest of the world.

On the day I stood before the Governor of Georgia in the still and silent chamber, the people were waiting for further words from my lips. My mind flashed back to my younger days, when only a boy. There was some kind of spirit moved upon me. I was in a room of my home all alone, when I looked over and saw the Bible. I walked over and gently lifted the old Book from the table, walked down the hall, out on the porch and in the corner of the porch sat an old gray-haired man, whose days were nearly spent. I walked up to him as he sat watching me and said, "Grandfather, I wish I knew what this Book means." And with a soft voice he replied, "Study it, verse by verse, and some day you will understand it." I walked away from him with a desire in my heart to know the meaning of that great Book. I laid it back in its place on the table, but I remember God dealt with me on that day. I was too young to understand, but as I grew, there was something about that which continued with me. Every few years that same spirit would come back

and arouse me. The thoughts of God grew mightily in my mind. I had a desire to be a servant of God, but still I did not know that so great persecutions lay in wait for me. As I stood that day I told the Governor how, when I became 21 years of age that this spirit moved upon me and I saw the great need, first of all, to make peace with God. I also felt and saw the need, as God moved upon me, to go tell the world of the Lord Jesus Christ, this salvation and the joy and happiness there is in serving Him.

At that time of my life I was stirred more than ever before. I cried and prayed unto God for the great experience of sanctification, a second work of grace, that I had heard preached mightily from the lips of Spirit-filled men, and proved by God's Holy Word. On one Sunday morning just before Christmas, in a little lonely church house, with about one hundred people present, I received this wonderful and glorious experience of sanctification which brought into my heart joy unspeakable. My soul rejoiced and magnified God. I had never before received such a glorious experience in God although I was happy when I first found Him. I wanted to be sure to follow the Bible. I was taken to the river and baptized in the Bible way—"In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," as commanded by our Lord Jesus Christ in Matt. 28:19.

Readers of this book, I wish to let you know that the 20th verse of this same chapter has been fulfilled in my life up to this present day—"Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

After I had received the good experience of sanctification, I began to seek for the gift of the Holy Ghost

as taught in the Scriptures with the evidence according to Acts 2:4. It was on one Saturday night about 11:00 o'clock, after I had prayed and praised God about two long hours, that God wonderfully gave me the baptism of the Holy Ghost. It seemed to me that I had reached heaven. Immediately I was made to know that God was ready for me to make known that God was ready for me to make known to the world this glorious salvation and the mighty healing power that heals all manner of diseases, that we now had entered into the latter rain, and that these were the last days in which God said He would pour out this same Spirit upon all flesh. Men and women, servants and hand-maidens, old and young, alike may have this same experience of the Holy Ghost.

As I was speaking to the Governor on that day, I related to him in a few words how God moved upon me to preach this very Gospel for which I had received the awful beating from this brutal and cruel group of men. In my heart I had no evil feeling toward them. I only said, "They should not be allowed to give such persecutions to God's people and to His Church." Although, if it takes such persecutions and sufferings to promote the way of Christ and His church, I feel honored to bear the afflictions of this ungodly mob. I am indeed happy right now.

This is not all the trials and persecutions I have had. When I first began my ministry, I had only a bicycle to ride from city to city and preach this glorious gospel. I did not fail to express to the people that God truly was pouring out the baptism of the Holy Ghost in these last days. After ten months of travelling and

preaching in this way, God impressed me that I should quit my job and devote all my time to Him. I hesitated to a certain extent, but the pressure was on me the more—I must go.

My wife at that time was not pleased with my way of religious belief because she was taught against holiness, but I told her I must go. She chose to go back home to her mother and father, which was indeed a great test for me, but this experience worked mightily in me. I chose rather the way of the Lord. It was hard to have my wife and babies leave me, but I felt I must obey God. I prayed for her and asked God not to let this separation be for long, and as she returned to her home I went to the little lonely church house where we so often met to worship God, which was the Church of God over which A. J. Tomlinson is General Overseer. After service I walked up in front of the pulpit and said to the pastor and beloved saints who were gathered there, "Tomorrow I must be on my journey. I must tell the world of this great salvation and the Church of God and I would like to have all of you gather around and pray that God will make my life and my ministry a blessing everywhere I go." They prayed and I prayed and God came down in our midst and gave the witness that He would be with me.

On the morrow I started walking down the highway to my destination. I had no money for bus or train fare. God was leading me. I was willing to walk wherever He wanted to use me. The day was windy and cold. My clothes were thin but still I journeyed on step by step. I stopped at a little store and purchased a loaf of bread and some cheese with my fifteen cents.

I sat down on the road bank to eat my lunch. I was cold, but I must go. A one-seated car drove up and the driver asked where I was going. I told him that I was going somewhere in or near Atlanta. He asked me to ride if I didn't mind sitting in the rumble seat. I accepted his offer even though I knew I would nearly freeze. Sure enough when I had reached the place where God was leading me, I was nearly frozen. I could hardly walk for some time, but God always works at both ends of the line. He had already prepared for me everything that was needed to have an old time revival. The worshippers had moved out of a building and only the seats and piano were in the church. People in the community were praying for God to send someone there. I knew then that I was in the will of God.

After receiving permission to use the building, I commenced to tell the people that a revival had started and I began to preach this glorious gospel of the Church of God in these last days. The people came and were stirred. I had found favor with God and man and this was the beginning of that great revival that was conducted in Atlanta, Georgia, on Kirkwood and Tyre. This revival was known to be one of the greatest and mightiest revivals that was ever conducted among the holiness people. There was a great number of people saved—hundreds of them, a great number sanctified and filled with the Holy Ghost. The revival grew mightily. The power of God fell and kept falling. People were slain under the power of God. It was in this revival that a little girl lay under the power of God for forty-eight hours. News of this incident was published extensively and many read of her experience. The peo-

ple of the city and throughout the South were stirred. Crowds grew, the multitudes came. The church doors were kept open night and day to accommodate the people who were coming for miles to see the mighty power of God. It was amazing to me, almost more than I could believe, that God had poured out His power so mightily in my first revival. Something came up in my throat, tears poured from my eyes, as I looked upon the great glory of God that shined upon these bright faces, slain under His mighty power.

Talk and persecution began to arise among the people. Some began to think it was hypnotism. The people in the neighborhood of the revival called doctors of the city to have the folks examined and as they entered the church house, they made such exclamations as, "This is none other than the power of God." They would shake their heads and rise to their feet. One doctor in particular, W. H. Holbrook, made special tests. Dr. Holbrook was a well-known physician and of high standing. After he had examined the girl he stood before the congregation and said these words, "Folks of Atlanta, this girl has a real case of old-time salvation, and I wish all of Atlanta could get a dose like this."

The fame of this revival grew greatly. It was during this revival that God began to work with my wife and caused her to want to come back to me. She wrote me letters to come for her and my three babies. It was wonderful to me that God had moved into her heart. Immediately I made arrangements to go for her. Then she began to travel with me, side by side. This indeed brought more joy and happiness in my life and in my ministry.

Dr. W. H. Holbrook, who was so thrilled over this revival, was led of the Lord to purchase a house car and give it to me that my wife and I might travel together in this great battle in which we are still enlisted. My happiness in God grows sweeter all the way.

May God bless those who read this, my story, and encourage you to stand firm in all battles until God gives the victory. Amen.

THE END



GRADY R. KENT, Chief Bishop of The Church of God—1962

SIXTY LASHES AT MIDNIGHT

1962 Addition

Greetings Reader:

I have drawn from the scripts of my writings many of my experiences before 1957 that I feel will be encouraging to the man or woman who has to suffer the trials of this life and will help him, after he has done all to stand for Christ, to stand.

The greatest trials of all my life that the enemy has brought my way began in 1957, in the month of February; however, I will not have room to give this testimony in my book, **Sixty Lashes at Midnight**, but it may be obtained in other writings at your request.

On February 13, 1957, it fell my lot, and I was divinely appointed of God as the Chief Bishop and Servant over His House, The Church of God. I am leading The Church of God on to great victories and heights. Neither powers nor principalities move me, for the scripture says that, if we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him.

The following two chapters are some more true experiences of my life, and if the reader will go to the scriptures in the book of II Corinthians, chapters 11 and 12, and first read, and then compare the writings, he will know that my persecutors are the workers of the enemy, Satan, himself, who brought the great conflict into the life of the Apostle Paul.

“Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” I Timothy 3:12.

TRIBULATIONS

“Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you false-

ly, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad: For great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." Matthew 5:11-12.

Many rejoice in the persecutions and conflicts of those who pioneered the early Church and the New Testament, and even the Apostle Paul stated: ". . . I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ sake: for when I am weak, then I am strong. I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest Apostles, though I be nothing." I Corinthians 12:10-11.

As touching the sufferings of Christ and the Apostles, I feel that I know them in the fellowship of their suffering.

Were they ministers? So am I; in labors night and day. Many times I have preached practically all night; one time, from sun down to sun up. And in the late hours of the night I was teaching the scriptures to those who had journeyed from afar and nearby. I preached as many as four hundred messages in one year, using more than eight hundred hours of preaching.

I was in journeying and weariness for many days and nights without food, in cold and nakedness, without clothes to keep me warm — I had only a shirt and trousers without coat or underclothes. My wife and children, without sufficient food and clothes, were compelled to eat green apples to live. Many times my meals were eaten in the blackberry patch. But none of these things stopped me from going forth with the gospel. In my long journeys and weariness, I slept on the ground and on stone tables beside of the road in order to save my little means to do my church work where I was going.

I was in reproaches by my enemies, in bondage often, in bonds by authorities from persecutions from my enemies. Other times I slept under a large church flag on the ground for as long as two weeks. At times my food was poisoned, as people later confessed to this fact. I was often in perils of false brethren, in perils of my countrymen, in perils of the desert, in perils of waters, in perils of the air, in storms, and all of these for the sake of the gospel.

Men have drawn straws to take my life and placed guns in my side while I was sleeping to destroy me; but, out of all these, the Lord delivered me.

Once I was taken by a mob, who on the way blasphemed me, pushing my hat down on my head, smiting me on the mouth, and telling me they were not going to have my religion in their community.

I was brought before four judges by the people, and the Lord delivered me out of their hands. Once, I was taken to the woods and stripped of all my clothes, and, as seventeen men surrounded me, two of them lashed my back with approximately sixty lashes. The whips were four feet long, four inches wide, half an inch thick, dipped in tar and sand, fastened in the end of a baseball bat. I was beaten until the flesh could be raked off my back, and for many years after, I continued to shed blood from these wounds. Even until this day, I bear holes and scars in my body. Then again, I was forced to live in the woods and hide away, being chased from city to city by people, because they did not believe in the gospel which I was preaching.

I have lived to see judgment pronounced on many of those who mistreated me. The Lord says, "Vengeance is mine," and also, "Touch not mine anointed."

Once I was stoned out of a city, and once I was stoned in the pulpit. At many of my revivals, men mistreated me and threatened to take my life. I have seen judgment come upon them, and they have lost their lives by some mishap of justice. Many times I have been in distresses for Christ sake. Beside all of these things, my ministry has been witnessed by signs and wonders of the Lord and many miracles.

DELIVERED FROM CERTAIN DEATH

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." Psalms 23:4.

Speaking of deliverance, I have seen God's hand, because I was there. I feel that in my testimony I should add a few other types of miracles that have caused me to know that I am divinely moved by His Spirit. It is not that I want to boast, but that I love to make known God's work, especially when I am involved.

Once, on a certain occasion, I was in Salt Lake City, Utah, during World War II. The ticket agent and I were arguing as to which train I should ride to Phoenix, Arizona. I wanted to ride the one that would make connection with the streamliner out of Los Angeles, Calif., but he wanted to sell me a ticket on another route. He flatly refused to sell me a ticket, giving no explanation as to why he did not want me to go my way. So, I eventually submitted, and, on my way to Phoenix, the conductor gave me special favor and stopped the train on the desert at a small place called Tollison. The train was not supposed to make stops at these little places; therefore, people ran to the train excited, and some gentlemen favored me with a ride over the State Overseer's home. On my arrival all of the saints were gone, and I

waited, sitting on the porch, until after midnight. When the saints returned, they came to me excitedly. They had been to Phoenix searching for me in the hospitals. The reason for this was that the train, on which I was supposed to have ridden, and the one on which I had wanted to ride, had derailed some distance out of Phoenix, killing and wounding many people. And, here I saw the hand of God in the ticket agent as he refused to sell me a ticket.

Another time in my life, I saw the hand of God. This was in the year of 1945, at the close of Bible Training Camp. The State Overseer of Texas, Brother Vandergriff, had scheduled me to go home with him for a revival at the Bay City Church where Brother Earl Cowen was the pastor. Brother Cowen was driving his car, and, when we were ready to leave, his niece for some unknown reason became upset to the extent that she flatly refused to ride back in the car and preferred to ride the bus. She was still unable to explain her reason later. At this point, there was a decision to be made as to who would ride in the car and the Texas truck. I preferred Brother Vandergriff, but he and all the others decided that I should ride in the vacant seat in the car instead of the truck.

The last time we saw the truck was at the foot of Mont-eagle, Tennessee, where the truck and car stopped for water. Brother Vandergriff handed me a jar of water, and all loaded up to leave again. Looking out of the back of the truck, Brother Vandergriff waved goodbye to us as we went around. In just a few hours, a long freight train plunged into the Texas truck, scattering it for more than a mile down the tracks, grinding and cutting the people asunder. Five were killed and others seriously injured. Here, again, I saw the hand of God.

Again, I saw the hand of the Lord as five of us were riding across the desert from Las Vegas to Salt Lake City. We developed fan belt trouble. Soon the fan belt broke, and the heat of the motor boiled away all the water when we were at least fifty miles from any water. Having no water in the car, we would have been stranded if it had not been for the hand of God. I worked at making a fan belt from two old fan belts, but it was necessary to have water. Here is what happened. God let a black cloud hover over the desert with a downfall of rain. The desert soaked up the water as fast as it fell; however, in the asphalt road, there were little potholes beaten out by car wheels, and these holes were filled with water from the rain. I took a little patching box and jug down the highway as I dipped up the water. Using this method to fill the radiator, we were soon on our way.

On another occasion, a mob waited for me to hang me with a rope and to drag me by the neck up and down the road behind their automobile. Yet, God delivered me safely out of their hands, after I preached approximately an hour in pointing out that the men were of this same kind of spirit who persecuted and killed the prophets and the apostles and saints referred to in the Bible. It was in this place that my wife, my children and I lived in perils of rattlesnakes in an old forsaken house which was known by the people of the community as a rattlesnake den. Our bed was a set of springs with nothing but a blanket spread over them. Several big snakes were killed during our stay, but out of this my family and I were delivered unharmed, a thing for which I give God the glory.

Did they handle serpents? So have I. Did they cast out devils? So have I. Did they speak with tongues? So do I. Were the sick healed in their ministry? Let me say that I

have seen an abundance of healings, with the removing of cancers, tumors, TB, ulcerated stomachs, serious growths, and even the dumb made to speak by touching their tongues with my fingers. I have seen invalids healed during my sermons. Have they been touched by angels? So have I. Have they seen angels? So have I. And all of these things are no secret, for hundreds alive today witnessed these scenes.

THE KIDNAPPED PREACHER

I saw a Church of God preacher in garments white as snow,
He traveled o'er the highways and was not afraid to go;
He preached the Word with boldness, as a preacher ought to do,
Some people could not bear it and said it wasn't true.

It was on one Tuesday night, about 11:30 o'clock,
When a 1937 Chevrolet came rolling by and stopped;
Two men came on the platform and asked for Rev. Kent,
And as a blood-washed soldier, out on the porch he went.

They shoved him in the car, and off in speed they went,
Then we were all a-wondering what became of Brother Kent;
They took him to the woods and stripped him of his clothes,
And what all else was done only God in heaven knows.

They beat him and they stripped him and left him all alone,
But Jesus never failed him, He walked with him back home;
We took him in and bathed him and anointed him with oil,
And God looked down and healed him, and said, "Preach on, my boy."

His back was beaten severely, the blood came trickling down,

But yet he said, "God bless them," never wore an angry frown;
He said, "Oh, God, forgive them for they know not what they do,
I left the case with Jesus, for He will take it through."

We prayed and talked to Jesus to show him what to do,
He said, "My son, go further and I'll take care of you;
You've preached the truth at Egan, some people couldn't understand
But when they reach the judgment their blood will be off your hands."

Just what will become of Egan is not for me to say,
But there is One in heaven who will judge them in that day;
He loves the ones who beat him and the ones who had it done,
I hope to meet you all when we gather around the throne.

—Composed by Maude M. Latham



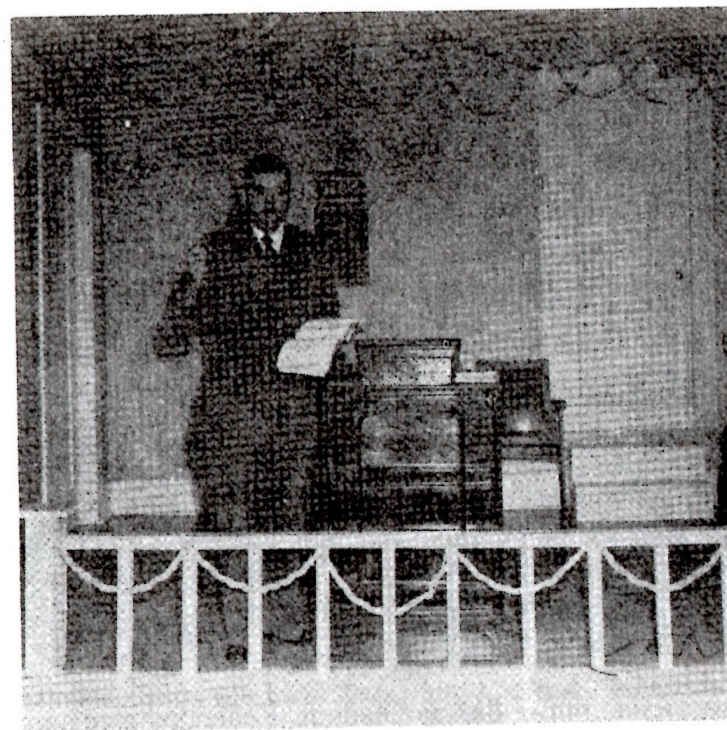
The whips used in the flogging of Grady R. Kent are shown above—one being held by Prosecutor Dan Duke and the other lying on the table. Seated at the left is Gene Talmadge, Governor of Georgia. In the background is pictured a group of the Ku Klux Klan floggers. The Attorney General (standing) made this statement: "God forbid the day when a bunch of floggers can intimidate the free press of a state. These straps were enough to kill an elephant let alone a human being."



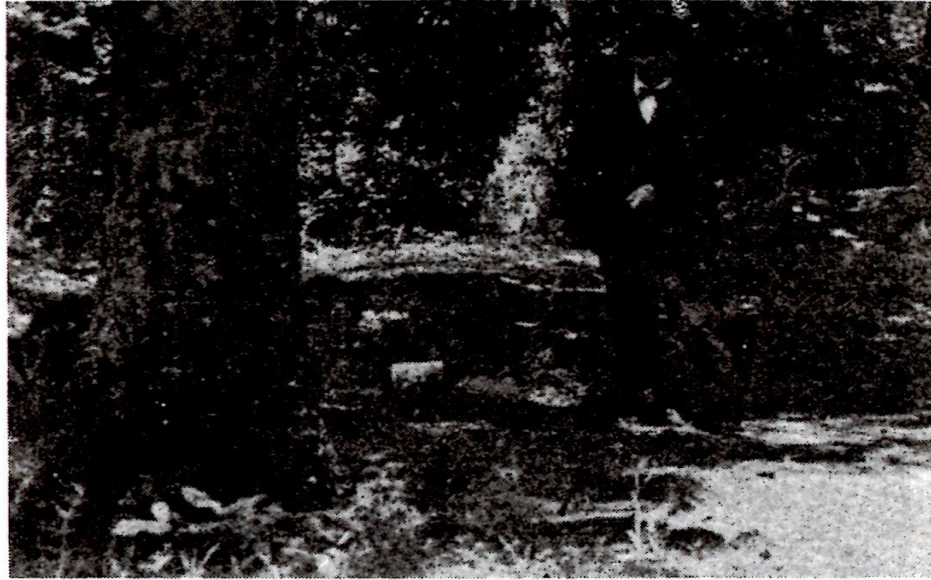
Bishop Grady R. Kent was a man who would go to any length to influence someone to receive the Gospel message of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. Above, he is seen riding a bicycle as a crowd looks on to demonstrate the effect that corps of bicycles could have in attracting attention to the preaching of the Gospel. Brother Kent was famous throughout his life for using material objects to demonstrate the Word of God. He used many inventions of the twentieth century, including the airplane, automobile, motorcycles, and the like, to preach the coming of Jesus Christ.



Public ministry was a continuing part of the call of Grady R. Kent in the Lord's work. Above he is seen in one of his early efforts in the 1940's at preaching on the street. He used various means throughout his ministry to attract the attention of the public to hear the message of salvation. He often declared that since the people who need the Gospel usually don't go to church, he wanted to take the Gospel to them where they were. In this effort, he used the White Angel Fleet of airplanes to attract crowds at airports to hear the Word of God, and he used Highway Gospel Caravans, made up of automobiles and motorcycles, to attract crowds to compel people in the highways and hedges and streets and lanes of the cities to come into the house of God (Luke 14).



An unusually charismatic preacher with a simple, yet profound comprehension of the principles of the Word of God. That is an apt description of Grady R. Kent and his ministry of over thirty years. Above Bishop Kent is seen preaching one of the thousands of messages that enlightened the hearts of hearers throughout the nation and around the world who heard and were entranced by his dynamic, anointed preaching. It was this kind of impact upon the lives of others that led to persecution in his life, epitomized by the cruel beating that he describes in this book.



This picture shows Bishop Grady R. Kent, after many years, visiting the lonely, wooded spot where seventeen men kidnapped and took him on May 22, 1939, to whip and leave to die, all because they did not believe in the gospel which he preached.