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CHAPTER SIX

FOLLOWING THE SPIRIT

Sarah Jane Lancaster and the first Australian Pentecostal assembly, 1908-1934

Wherever we look in the first twenty years of Australian Pentecostal history, the imprint of Sarah Jane (Jeannie) Lancaster (1858-1934) can be found.¹ It is not, at first glance, obvious. Her ministry was humble and unobtrusive. No published photo of her appears in over 25 years of printing and distributing magazines, books and tracts. Articles written by her were rarely signed. Yet she did publish the photos of others and always gave credit to other writers when she published their works. She was not ambitious for position or human acclaim. Much of what she did was deliberately kept discreet. Yet her influence extended from east to west, from north to south. There are many members and pastors of Pentecostal churches today whose forebears were won by Jeannie Lancaster. From Perth to Cairns, she was involved in evangelism, church planting, preaching and prayer. She proclaimed the Word on street corners. She handed out tracts. She talked with strangers. She conducted meetings in halls and houses. She communicated with people of all ages. She edited a magazine. She published thousands of tracts. She engaged in welfare work with the poor. She prayed for the sick. She encouraged people to be filled with the Spirit. She eschewed the things of the world for the things of God.

¹ For details of Lancaster's early life see Appendix Ten. In my earlier volume, I refer to her as 'Janet' Lancaster. There now seems to be no satisfactory evidence that she or others used this name. She regularly signed letters as 'Jeannie Lancaster'. See *Confidence* October 1908, p.18; also personal correspondence to Leila Mullin, 2 March 1931.

Perhaps most significant of all, she was a woman of integrity, prizing love, sacrifice, unity and honesty above all else.² Australian Pentecostalism is her enduring legacy.

In 1909, after decades of rivalry between Victoria and NSW, Canberra was finally chosen as the site for the nation's new capital city. That same year, the first 'picture palaces' were being built, introducing what was to become a favoured means of entertainment for millions of people. And it was in 1909 that a North Melbourne Temperance Hall was purchased by Jeannie Lancaster and some friends and renamed Good News Hall, the meeting place of the 'Pentecostal Mission.'³

Lancaster had been baptised in the Holy Spirit on 2 April 1908, having already come to a strong conviction that she was to practise divine healing.⁴ She now needed a meeting place for her new-discovered ministry. The Hall was opened on New Year's Eve, 1909, with an all-night prayer meeting. Then 'for six weeks such a glorious revival continued night and day,' wrote Lancaster, 'that we never entered our home again. Our furniture was sent for and willing hands soon adapted various rooms to living purposes.' There were extraordinary claims of healing and Lancaster claimed in later years that even the dead were raised to life again. Soon a fully operating assembly was established.⁵

Lancaster was not at first glance the sort of person to lead a congregation. Of medium height and buxom build, she normally wore a full-length dress and kept her hair tied in a bun. She was motherly in her appearance, so much so that, though like the other women at the Hall, she was often referred to as 'Sister,' many people referred to her as 'Mother' or 'Mummy' Lancaster.⁶

² A small example of her integrity lies in the publishing of a letter in February 1928 pointing out that a healing testimony printed two months previously, although largely true, had been exaggerated. See GN 19:2 February 1928, p.32.

³ GN 17:0 September 1926, p.10; GN 19:3 March 1928, p.9.

⁴ For further details see Appendix Ten.

⁵ GN 17:9 September 1926, p.10.

⁶ GN 17:3 March 1926, p.12 ('the next day, mother came down...'); GN 18:2 February 1927, p.11; GN 18:8 August 1927, pp.16f ('With love to Mummy ...'); GN 19:3 March 1928, p.12 ('Mummie, dear...'); GN 22:6 June 1931, p.5; GN 23:1 July 1932, pp.11f; GN 23:4 April 1932, p.11 ('Now, dear Mother, ...'); GN 23:12 December 1932, p.5 ('Please remember me to dear Mother ...'); GN 24:2 February 1933, p.9; GN 24:3 March 1933, p.7 (Here she is referred to both as 'Mother' and 'Sister'). Other women at Good News Hall were consistently referred to

Towards the end of her life, Baptist minister Gordon Bennett said —

I have known our Sister, who is affectionately known to many as ‘Mother,’ for over twenty five years: during that time, she has been a gracious, loving and helpful ‘Mother’ to many of God’s children and to many who did not know God.⁷

Ivor Warburton, one of her most devoted adherents, described her as looking like a washerwoman.⁸ She clearly won people’s hearts —

She was a woman of God. She could only talk of the Spirit-filled life. She was a wonderful woman. I can hardly express it. I suppose she had faults, but we could never see them.

She was a lovely old darling, a sweet old dear. She was shortish and plump, motherly and sweet. Everyone loved her.

Mummy Lancaster, as they used to call her, was ... a woman of God. She was not a forceful preacher, but a good one. She knew the Word of God.

She preached the word in quiet style. She was gracious and compassionate. She did not make an issue of doctrines. Getting Christ into the hearts of people was what she was about.⁹

Lancaster was strong-minded and strong-willed. One man described her as a martinet.¹⁰ But she had a deep and sincere affection for those who worked with her.¹¹ Her habit of calling people ‘dear ones’ became universal in the work.¹² She was humble — she rarely reported on her own activities, preferring to speak of the works of others.

Good News Hall seated about 300 people, and was usually attended by about 100 on Sundays. Across the front of the building, above the platform, was boldly painted the text, ‘The Lord God Omnipotent Reigneth.’ During the

as ‘Sister.’ See Chapter Twelve for examples of this.

⁷ GN 23:7 July 1932, p.18.

⁸ Ivor Warburton, personal interview..

⁹ Ivor Warburton, Mrs Henderson, Robert Davis and Jim Mullin, personal interviews.

¹⁰ P.Duncan, ‘Lecture to Students at Crusade Bible College,’ Fullarton, SA: 1965.

¹¹ At the death of one of the faithful women in the church she wrote, ‘A highway shall be there ... and thou, dear heart, with joy shalt walk thereon ... Good night, dear heart, ‘twill not be long.’ — GN 24:3 March 1933, p.16.

¹² See GN 17:3 March 1926, p.12; GN 17:4 April 1926, p.9; GN 19:5 May 1928, p.13; GN 19:9 September 1928, pp.11,13; GN 21:10 October 1920, p.10; GN 22:2 February 1931, p.13.

week there was plenty of activity.¹³ The Hall was always open for prayer and prayer meetings were held regularly. The building had a number of smaller rooms including a living apartment for the Lancasters. Consequently, people would often go there to stay for a few days or even a few weeks. During this time they prayed and studied the Bible, seeking deeper spiritual experience. There was a Bible, Book and Tract Room.

Good News

During 1910, Lancaster visited every State of Australia. Evangelists were sent out, many of them women.¹⁴ That same year, she began to publish a free periodical called *Good News*.¹⁵ For 25 years this magazine was circulated throughout Australia. Before long, a printing plant was set up and it was produced at the Hall. Although only six issues were published in the first three years, in 1923 it became a monthly publication, with a subscription price.¹⁶

There was a four page loose supplement for young people. Few photographs appeared in its pages and few of the features were written by Lancaster or her assistants. In most cases, articles were reprinted from overseas Pentecostal magazines. The doctrines expressed were generally sound and, from a Pentecostal point of view, orthodox. Its circulation reached 3,000 copies per month — a high rate for a religious magazine of this kind.¹⁷ James Self, who worked at the Hall as the printer of the magazine for many years, described it as containing ‘the cream of other Pentecostal papers.’¹⁸

One pastor recalled —

I suppose there was never up to that time such a challenging evangelical organ

¹³ See GN 18:9 September 1927, p.10 for a summary of activities.

¹⁴ For the role of women such as Florrie Mortomore, Edie Anstis and Ruby Wiles and the establishing of additional assemblies see Chapter Twelve.

¹⁵ See GN 1:1 April 1910.

¹⁶ Compare 1:1 April 1910 with 1:6 October 1913. See also 15:1 February 1923, p.20; 18:1 January 1927, p.10. By 1923 the cover featured a traditional drawing of Christ with a halo and light emanating from him. The title of the magazine was embellished with subheadings such as, ‘Behold I come quickly!’ and, ‘The fields are white unto harvest.’ In later issues (1924 onwards) further decorative devices were added — a harvest field, bunches of grapes and various scroll effects surrounding a table of contents.

¹⁷ GN 19:6 June 1928, p.12.

¹⁸ James Self, personal interview, n.d. recorded.

edited and published in Australia. It was taken from all the leading Pentecostal papers of the day but it was new to Australia. It caught the imagination. The message proclaiming the full gospel was one that was so true, so Scriptural and backed by such zeal and energy and appeal that it was a voice crying in the Australian wilderness.¹⁹

Good News was sent interstate and even overseas. Its correspondence columns regularly included letters from every Australian State and occasionally from New Zealand, India, Africa, England and the United States.²⁰ Its influence was largely responsible for the early spreading of the Pentecostal message throughout Australia. Over and again, there were reports of people coming to Christ or being baptised in the Spirit through reading the magazine. Often people made special visits to the Hall to find out more — many times travelling from country areas.²¹

Apart from regular editorials, few of Lancaster's own articles appeared and when they did, they were often unsigned and hard to identify. In spite of a disclaimer that writers were 'allowed latitude to express their own thoughts,' the editor accepted responsibility for the overall content and general character of what was printed.²² The magazine tended to cover topics such as the baptism in the Holy Spirit, divine healing, Christian living and — most commonly of all — the second coming.²³

Lancaster's editorials show evidence of wide reading and well-informed opinion. She kept close watch on events around her, both locally and internationally, and was not afraid to interpret them biblically. A fascinating piece published in March 1924, argued persuasively that a kind of madness had settled on the world.²⁴ For a start, people were ignoring God, stubbornly refusing to recognise that 'storm, sword, drought, or pestilence (were) marks of

¹⁹ P.Duncan, 'Lecture,' 1965.

²⁰ GN 16:5 May 1925, p.10; GN 17:8 August 1926, p.19; GN 19:11 November 1928, p.11; GN 25:12 December 1934, p.19; GN 22:3 March 1931, p.13; GN 24:1 January 1933, p.7; GN 24:6 June 1933, p.9.

²¹ GN 22:8 August 1931, p.11.

²² eg GN 19:8 August 1928, p.10.

²³ See Appendix Two and Chapter Thirteen for an analysis of articles and topics.

²⁴ 'Retribution,' GN 15:3 March 1924, pp.3ff.

His displeasure.’ Then, Japan had to be seen as a serious threat to Australia.

How is it that politicians everywhere — while ardently desiring peace — commit their countries to policies which must engender strife? There is only one answer: ‘They are mad.’²⁵

A doctor had recently diagnosed Russia’s leaders as all being of unsound mind. And while Singapore was clearly a strategic Far East base for both America and England, the British Government had decided to abandon it. Was this common sense or madness? An American editor had pointed out that Italy’s bombing of a Greek town was ‘insane.’ So, concluded Lancaster, ‘we may expect to meet little but madness in the world from now on until our King comes.’ As Jeremiah prophesied, the nations would drink the cup of God’s fury and ‘be mad’ (Jeremiah 25:15f).

In October 1928, newspaper reports of a hurricane in Bavaria, a devastating flood in China, a collapsed dam in India and a terrifying storm in Haiti were all seen as warnings of God’s judgement. Similarly, a burst dam in Los Angeles was a parable of the need to sound the warning of God’s wrath. It was time to ‘get on the solid foundation, Christ Jesus,’ before it was too late.²⁶

In March, 1929, she commented on a report from Germany that people there were going to be invited to renounce Christianity; on a visit by a ‘modernist’ Anglican to Melbourne, who denied many basic biblical teachings; on the creation of a sovereign papal state in Italy; on the suggestion that the locusts of Revelation chapter nine were a prophetic depiction of aeroplanes; and on the upsurge of lawlessness in American cities.²⁷

There is no doubt that the theme of the Second Coming of Christ was dear to Lancaster’s heart. In one of her few signed articles, entitled ‘Behold He Cometh,’ she describes a kind of dream in which she saw many signs around the world heralding Christ’s return.²⁸ Another signed piece was entitled, ‘Anti-Christ: That Wicked One,’ in which again world events were evaluated

²⁵ GN 15:3 March 1924, p.4.

²⁶ GN 19:10 October 1928, p.11.

²⁷ GN 30:3 March 1929, pp.6f.

²⁸ GN 30:1 January 1929, pp.7f.

according to biblical prophecies and which concluded with the question, ‘Will you be ready when the Bridegroom comes?’²⁹

Baptism in the Holy Spirit

Lancaster’s other great theme was the baptism in the Holy Spirit. She strongly believed in the need to be filled with the Holy Spirit with the sign of speaking in tongues. It was important to pray earnestly for this, and not to give up until the Spirit came. Picking up a number of reported comments from Melbourne pulpits on Pentecost Sunday 1930, characteristically, she took the positive aspects and used them as a springboards to encourage people to believe God for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit —

What if there came to a waiting, praying, united Church today another Pentecost! What changes would result! Fear and timidity would yield to confidence and holy boldness. The sense of weakness would be replaced by the consciousness of power. Outside the Church society would feel the impact of new spiritual forces, and no longer would the awakened Church be despised and ignored.³⁰

While baptism in the Spirit was a gift, sincerity and obedience were still be necessary in order to receive.³¹

It was a feature of Lancaster’s style, that she often engaged the reader in dialogue. In an article on speaking in tongues, she proposed a hypothetical objection that it was sufficient to praise God in one’s own language, and then responded, ‘Sufficient for you perhaps, but not sufficient for God ... You don’t want tongues anyhow? Well, Paul the apostle did.’ And then, ‘Must it be written of you, dear friend,’ she asked, ‘that you cannot receive God’s Spirit? Do you refuse to speak in Tongues [sic] as the Spirit gives utterance?’³² In an article commenting on the views of a correspondent about eternal hellfire, she wrote, ‘Fair and softly, friend ... Why do *you* suggest that God IS [sic] going to

²⁹ GN 23:4 April 1932, pp.12f.

³⁰ ‘With the Churches,’ GN 21:8 August 1930, pp.10ff.

³¹ ‘The condition for receiving the Holy Spirit was to keep the commandments of Jesus,’ E.Ridgway, *Ask for the Old Paths; or Back to the Bible Way*, Foster, Victoria: published by the author, n.d., p.20. See also pp.8ff. Ridgway places a greater stress on the need to keep God’s commandments before receiving the Spirit than Lancaster was wont to do.

³² J.Lancaster, ‘What’s the Use of Tongues?’ GN 1:6 October 1913, pp.8ff; GN 24:7 July 1933, p.5.

be eternally punishing? He does not hint at such a monstrous thing Himself.³³

Lancaster's influence was expansive. By 1925, there were congregations to be found in Adelaide, Ballarat, Brisbane, Cairns, Mackay, Melbourne, Nambour, Parkes, Perth, Rockdale and Rockhampton together with numerous home groups in places like Burnie, Freeburgh, Heidelberg, Lilydale, Springvale and Wonthaggi.³⁴ She personally visited virtually all of these at some point, teaching, encouraging, praying and exhorting, as she did.

Divine healing

From the beginning, there were numerous reports of healing, visions and supernatural experiences through Lancaster's ministry. Whatever interpretation is to be placed on these reports, there is no doubt that Lancaster herself believed them to be true, which lends favour to their credibility. Adherence to the truth was a major quality of her life. She doggedly stood by her conscience and refused to be diverted from it: integrity was one of her outstanding characteristics. When praying for the sick, she would usually practise laying on of hands or anointing with oil.³⁵ Her son-in-law, W.A.Buchanan told how his mother was healed of a long-standing and serious illness after visiting Good News Hall and being anointed with oil. He himself was delivered from a swelling in his throat. His sister Kate was healed of rheumatism and persistent headaches.³⁶

An Oakleigh woman reported that her little son, who was born with deformed fingers, was now normal. Another told of release from a nervous disorder and another from kidney stones. A baby whose life was threatened was, four months after healing prayer, healthy and putting on weight. Ruby Lewis, a little girl with a nasal growth, was 'quite delivered'. Jessie Smart was so weak she could not get to the Hall on her own for anointing, but friends took her and after prayer the pain left her. A.Hultgren was at the point of death with

³³ GN 1:6 October 1913, p.16.

³⁴ See Appendix One and various issues of GN.

³⁵ Usually ordinary olive oil was used. Those praying would apply it to the forehead of the sick and then pray for them. No healing power was attributed to the oil: it was viewed sacramentally as a symbol of the Holy Spirit.

³⁶ GN 1:5 January 1913, pp.19ff.

pneumonia, but refused to take medication. After a visit from one of the women at Good News Hall, he showed dramatic improvement. A man who had been ‘stone deaf’ for 85 years, declared that he could now hear a clock ticking. Another suffered with severe heart trouble and could not climb two steps without pain, but after being anointed with oil, could ‘run up and down two or three flights of stairs without noticing them.’ A thirteen-year-old girl contracted appendicitis. After laying on of hands she felt relief. Five months later she was still free from pain. ‘God sent dear Mother (Lancaster)’ to a woman who had not been able to kneel in prayer for many years, and she was healed.³⁷ Ruby Anstis had a badly broken arm which remained swollen and bent for months. After Lancaster prayed for her, the arm became normal.³⁸

H.McLennan told how a specialist had advised that her little daughter needed ten weeks’ complete rest. She took her to Good News Hall for anointing and prayer. Within a week she was back at school and 18 months later was brighter than ever.³⁹ M.G.Parker told how the Lord had given her surprising strength and energy when she was weak and down to 48 kilograms in weight.⁴⁰ In 1929, Margaret Clapp testified to having been healed from cancer four years’ previously in Ballarat, Victoria.⁴¹ George Christian thanked God for healing him from cancer ten years previously.⁴² A mother brought her six-year-old son who had been in an iron frame for twelve months. After anointing with oil and prayer in the name of Jesus, he began to walk and was soon running and jumping without support. As a result, his older brother and sister were baptised in water and his mother was baptised in the Spirit.⁴³ Emily Huston, 62 years of age, reported how she had suffered from rheumatoid arthritis for five years, spending many weeks in hospital and being forced to use a wheelchair to get about. On 12 May 1930, she was brought by ambulance and wheeled into

³⁷ GN 1:6 October 1913, pp.5ff.

³⁸ GN 16:4 April 1925, p.20.

³⁹ GN 16:8 August 1925, p.12.

⁴⁰ GN 17:1 January 1926, pp.5f.

⁴¹ M.Clapp, ‘Can My Heavenly Father Remove Cancer?’ GN 20:12 December 1929, p.14.

⁴² GN 22:6 June 1931, p.7.

⁴³ GN 21:6 June 1930, p.10.

Good News Hall. That same night she walked out on her own.⁴⁴ A mother related how her daughter's arm had been broken in two places but had healed perfectly. There was no shortening of the limb and there was now normal freedom of movement.⁴⁵

The testimonies continued to pour in month after month — healing from ulcers, rheumatics, pneumonia, injury, bronchitis, abscesses, epilepsy, cancer, curvature of the spine, deafness, a perforated ear drum, leukemia, inflammation of the bladder, constipation, insomnia, asthma, failing eye sight, depression, a septic throat.⁴⁶

Sometimes, healing occurred at a distance. Nellie Robson from Queensland suffered from dengue fever and neuralgia and became blind in one eye. Encouraged by correspondence from Good News Hall, she prayed for healing and her health was restored.⁴⁷ A young man admitted to hospital with bronchial pneumonia recovered dramatically — ‘At the time prayer was offered (at Good News Hall) he was made instantly whole.’ May Wilson was suffering unusual pain in her third pregnancy. Although doctors had administered chloroform on the two previous occasions, this time, ‘her little one was delivered painlessly.’ M.Hart was crying with pain from an abscess on the tooth. She wrote a brief request for prayer and before she could send it, the pain diminished.⁴⁸

Sometimes, this healing was the result of ‘anointed handkerchiefs’ being sent to the sufferer. Taking a cue from Paul's experience,⁴⁹ people often asked for handkerchiefs to be anointed and prayed over to take to sick friends.⁵⁰ Even a

⁴⁴ ‘A Miracle of Healing,’ GN 21:7 July 1930, p.4.

⁴⁵ GN 21:10 October 1930, p.13.

⁴⁶ GN 16:9 September 1925, p.14; GN 16:12 December 1925, p.4; GN 17:2 February 1926, pp.7,12; GN 17:6 June 1926, pp.7f; GN 17:12 December 1926, p.15; GN 18:1 January 1927, p.12; GN 24:8 August 1933, p.8; GN 24:9 September 1933, p.9; GN 25:1 January 1934, p.7.

⁴⁷ N.Robson, ‘Showing Mercy unto Thousands of Them that Love Me,’ GN 1:5 January 1913, pp.23ff.

⁴⁸ GN 1:6 October 1913, pp.5ff.

⁴⁹ Acts 19:11-12: ‘God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them.’ (NIV)

⁵⁰ GN 19:6 June 1928, p.6; GN 24:6 June 1933, p.2; GN 24:8 August 1933, p.8. This practice was also adopted in Richmond Temple and Glad Tidings Tabernacle. See G. and I.George,

copy of *Good News* magazine could be an instrument of healing. Before the magazines were posted out, hands were laid on them and prayer was made to God that when they touched the bodies of sick people, they would be made whole.⁵¹ There were frequent testimonies to this effect. Lillian Jarrett told how after laying the magazine on her body there had been no recurrence of an illness she had endured for a year. A mother told how she laid the magazine on her daughter's throat while she slept and how next morning painful ulcers had gone. On another occasion she brought healing to her swollen knee by the same method. A woman who feared she had cancer laid the 'little paper' on the area of pain and suffered no more while another woman with a bad back found relief through sleeping on the magazine! A reader in Eagle Creek, Oregon, USA, wrote, 'I could tell you of many wonderful healings in our family through this precious paper,' and went on to report relief with various family members from colds, earache, toothache, headache, influenza and physical deformity.⁵²

Year after year, the reports continued. One woman wrote —

You will remember anointing for paralysis the young girl whose mother and father sought the Lord? This morning she prepared lunch for her mother and myself with her own hand and is now using her foot to work the sewing machine. Glory to Jesus.⁵³

Another testified that a fibroid tumour of ten years' standing had gone instantly when she prayed. Her ticket of admission to hospital was no longer needed.⁵⁴

Another told of a young man who had been in a plaster cast for five weeks in 1921 because of tuberculosis in the spine. In faith, he had removed the cast and for the previous three months had been picking and lumping potatoes. In 1924, Lancaster reported that the man was still 'well, strong, and happy, and seeking

personal interview, 12 June 1990.

⁵¹ GN 17:8 August 1926, p.19; GN 19:6 June 1928, p.6.

⁵² GN 17:8 August 1926, p.19; GN 18:10 October 1927, p.11; GN 19:6 June 1928, p.6; GN 19:12 December 1928, p.14; GN 20:3 March 1929, p.15; GN 22:2 February 1931, p.7; GN 24:1 January 1933, p.7.

⁵³ GN 9:1 February 1923, p.15.

⁵⁴ GN 9:1 February 1923, p.6.

God's best.'⁵⁵ Another man with heart trouble and catarrh who had been told he might drop dead at any time and rarely rose before 10.30 am was now, after anointing, rising at 6.30 am and coping with hard work.⁵⁶

Any need was considered a fair subject for prayer and faith. 'Grandma' Abrahams knelt in a barren, stunted field and prayed for a crop to grow in the midst of a drought and saw an unprecedented harvest.⁵⁷ A young man cutting thistles at Echuca and a farm hand in Rochester reported how God kept them from being attacked by a bull or troubled by snakes.⁵⁸ Several people testified to being cured of smoking.⁵⁹ A woman named Rosie told how, after 18 years of addiction to opium, she had not touched it for over a year. She had now been baptised and filled with the Spirit and was speaking regularly at open air meetings.⁶⁰ Often, there were reports of financial needs being met.⁶¹ One man who wanted to travel around preaching the gospel prayed successfully for a horse.⁶²

Sometimes, complaints were seen as demonic. For example —

I would like to tell you what the dear Lord has done for me. I came to Good News Hall with bad nerves and I asked the Lord to heal me and He did! Glory to His name. I also had evil spirits in me and I asked God to cast them out in Jesu's name and He did ...⁶³

A frail little two-year-old who weighed only ten kilograms and whose flesh was wasting away from marasmus began to improve steadily and within three weeks was running about and playing. The cure was the result of exorcism — 'We anointed him with oil in the Name of the Lord and he soon began to

⁵⁵ GN 9:1 February 1923, p.7; GN 15:6 June 1924, p.7..

⁵⁶ GN 9:1 February 1923, p.8.

⁵⁷ GN 20:12 December 1929, pp.14f.

⁵⁸ GN 22:2 February 1931, p.13; GN 22:6 June 1931, p.15..

⁵⁹ GN 22:9 September 1931, p.7.

⁶⁰ 'Rosie's testimony,' GN 23:12 December 1932, p.5,

⁶¹ eg GN 24:2 February 1933, p.10.

⁶² GN 24:6 June 1933, p.8.

⁶³ GN 1:6 October 1913, p.5.

vomit. We realised the evil spirits were coming out ...⁶⁴

After a particularly graphic letter from Charles Mortomore, in which he described seeing demon spirits like bluish, wriggling creatures, Janet Lancaster commented —

This statement concerning evil spirits may seem strange to Western ears, but to the dwellers in the East is nothing new ... The demi gods of Heathen mythology are not ‘myths’ but actual beings, half god — half man, the impious offspring of the sons of God (Gen 6: 4) ... but through all the bitter conflict Jesus IS Conqueror ... Jesus commanded the unclean spirits and they came out of the man... ‘In my name they shall cast out demons.’⁶⁵

Having been prayed for, people were often encouraged to demonstrate their faith by acting as if they were already healed. A woman with diabetes was told to thank God for her healing, to eat anything as though she was well and to leave the rest to God. Later she told excitedly how her diet was back to normal without ill effect.⁶⁶

The use of medicine

Although she herself seems to have given little direct instruction in the matter, it was evidently Lancaster’s belief that taking medicine was incompatible with faith in God. While not everyone agreed with this and many people did seek medical aid, others refused to do so.⁶⁷ Fred Lancaster, Jeannie Lancaster’s grand-son, tells how he had a migraine attack once and a friend wanted to suggest he take an aspirin but was tentative about doing so —

We never went to doctors until I cut myself and was bleeding. I suppose Mum prayed but she also got the doctor. They were strong on divine healing. It was almost a sin to go the doctor. But their attitude was that if you took a pill you had failed God. I respect that high profile my mother taught us as kids.’⁶⁸

⁶⁴ GN 1:6 October 1913, p.5.

⁶⁵ GN 1:6 October 1913, p.10.

⁶⁶ GN 18:6 June 1927, p.17.

⁶⁷ Charles Greenwood shared this view, although he dissented from Lancaster on several other issues. Greenwood, *Life Story*, 1965, p.45

⁶⁸ F.Lancaster, personal interview, 18 December 1993.

This attitude to medicine comes out again and again in the testimonies of healing published in *Good News*. John Russell told how he had contracted rheumatic fever and pneumonia with pain ‘like toothache’ all over his body. After a week, his wife finally sent for a doctor who prescribed some medication. He refused to take it. After three days, the doctor gave up on him and told him that without treatment he would die. A few weeks later, Russell was preaching in an open air meeting when to his great delight the doctor drove past. ‘He is the doctor who attended me and said I could not live without taking his medicines,’ he told his hearers, ‘yet here I am, perfectly healed by God.’⁶⁹ Another man even threw out his ‘cough lollies’ and affirmed, ‘I have not touched medicine of any description since.’⁷⁰

Harry Hultgren was drifting in and out of consciousness with pneumonia. An elder prayed for him and he claimed to be healed but was still very weak. Furthermore, his family had been told that a spiritualist medium had predicted his death. They urged him to see a doctor. He yielded to their urgings and was examined both by a general practitioner and a specialist. Neither found evidence of any infection or illness.⁷¹ In 1920, he severely burned one hand at his place of work. Again, he refused medication, anointed his hand with oil and prayed for healing. The next day there was no trace of any injury.⁷² In 1922, he was suffering with tuberculosis but refused to take any medicine. Again, he submitted to family pressure and on 11 February, finished up in a hospital for incurable cases. Here, he had ‘another great battle for refusing remedies,’ but the first Sunday after Easter was discharged from hospital, evidently recovered. Four years later, there had been no recurrence.⁷³ On another occasion, when he was 65 years old, he had two of his fingers crushed in a factory accident. He refused to allow his fingers to be washed in water with

⁶⁹ GN 15:5 May 1924, pp.7f.

⁷⁰ GN 18:7 July 1927, p.7.

⁷¹ H.Hultgren, ‘Did the Medium Know,’ GN 17:5 May 1926, p.7. Members of the Hultgren family are still involved in Pentecostal work.

⁷² H.Hultgren, ‘God Heals Burns,’ GN 17:7 July 1926, pp.5f.

⁷³ H.Hultgren, ‘An Incurable Consumptive Healed,’ GN 17:9, September 1926, p.6.

disinfectant in it. Within two weeks, he was back at work.⁷⁴

Often, this attitude required enormous faith and determination. In April 1918, one woman accidentally chopped off the top of her thumb just beneath the nail. Six years later she told the astonishing story of how initially, she had simply put it back on and bandaged it. After a few days, it turned completely black. Then part of the severed bone worked its way out through the skin, new flesh started to grow from the bottom part upwards, and ‘in a short time, nothing could be (seen) of the accident.’⁷⁵ Another man was dying with pneumonia. His family finally called a doctor who told him his lungs and heart were affected and he would never leave his bed alive. ‘God had no ... help when He created man,’ came the reply, ‘and He doesn’t need ... help to mend man.’ Fourteen years later, the man was still testifying to his medicine-free healing.⁷⁶

At times, refusal to use medical help seemed foolhardy. On 5 January 1925, three-year-old Joshua Rowston of Orange, NSW, was bitten on the foot by a black snake. Both parents laid hands on him and ‘commanded satan [sic] to leave in the name of Jesus.’ The next day, Joshua’s foot was swollen and very painful. That night, on the basis of Mark 16:18 they prayed again⁷⁷, he slept well and next morning the foot was almost normal. Three months later the whole family testified to his healing, pointing out that ‘no doctor was called, neither was any ligature used.’⁷⁸ May Mansell told how she had brought her little daughter home from hospital, with a leg infected by tuberculosis, removed the plaster cast and watched an abscess drain for twelve months with no medical application other than bathing. This was a severe test of her faith, but now two and a half years later, little Joan was fully recovered, except that her leg was bent. But Jesus would fix that, too.⁷⁹ Nothing was too big or too

⁷⁴ H.Hultgren, ‘It Pays,’ GN 17:6 June 1926, p.6.

⁷⁵ ‘The Great Physician,’ GN 15:5 May 1924, pp.6f.

⁷⁶ ‘A Derelict Rescued,’ GN 17:1 January 1926, pp.6ff.

⁷⁷ Mark 16:17-18 — ‘And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover’ (AV).

⁷⁸ L.Rowston, A.T.Rowston and John Rowston, ‘Taking up Serpents,’ GN 16:5 May 1925, p.9.

⁷⁹ GN 23:9 September 1932, p.5.

small to bring to the Lord. When one woman had a broken needle impaled in her hand, her friend prayed and the needle came out.⁸⁰

Even when healing did not seem to come, people refused to give in. One lass told how the Lord had healed her of a cough, the result of a nervous condition. The next Sunday at church she wanted to cough, but remembered she was healed and stuffed her handkerchief into her mouth to prevent it. It was ‘only Satan’ trying to make her cough, she said.⁸¹ The reason people were not healed, wrote Florence Holman, was that their faith wavered. Only firm faith would be effective.⁸² And healing did not always come as readily as it might. R.Close was travelling with his wife Emmy through outback New South Wales in missionary work among Aboriginal people when he became very ill with rheumatics. Although they prayed much, he suffered for days, while they remained trapped in the wagon by rain, living only on water and bread and butter until a kindly neighbour gave them some milk.⁸³ Edwin Ridgway’s daughter suffered polio as a child but was never given medical treatment. It was only when she became an adult that she underwent surgery.⁸⁴ Tom Henderson was another who was not healed. After months of suffering from ‘a grievous complaint’ he ‘fell asleep’ as did ‘Brother’ Purvis, following ‘a sharp battle with the enemy.’⁸⁵ The well-loved ‘Blind Dolly’ did not receive her sight.⁸⁶ Nor was Ada Boaler released from her wheelchair.⁸⁷ Lancaster’s nine-year-old grand daughter Esther May (‘Blossom’) died in April 1933 at the age of eleven after ten weeks of illness.⁸⁸ And death was the only relief ‘Sister’ Adams, wife of Philip Adams, found after ‘a protracted painful illness of several months.’⁸⁹

⁸⁰ GN 16:9 September 1925, p.14.

⁸¹ GN 15:7 July 1924, p.4.

⁸² GN 23:9 September 1932, p.6.

⁸³ GN 16:7 July 1925, p.11.

⁸⁴ I.Ridgway, personal communication, 4 June 1998.

⁸⁵ GN 16:8 August 1925, p.13; GN 17:6 June 1926, p.15.

⁸⁶ GN 16:9 September 1925, p.17.

⁸⁷ GN 21:10 October 1930, p.16.

⁸⁸ J.Lancaster, ‘Waiting for the Trumpet Sound,’ GN 24:4,5 April-May 1933, p.16.

⁸⁹ GN 24:3 March 1933, p.16.

Opponents were quick to pounce on these apparent failures as proof of the errors of Pentecostalism. Alan Price, a detractor of the Pentecostal work in Maryborough, Queensland, in 1927, claimed that wherever Pentecostalism was to be found, there would be ‘quite a formidable list of premature and avoidable deaths.’⁹⁰ In a little booklet sold in Queensland in the 1920’s, A.E.Bishop pointed out that many ‘of the choicest of saints’ had not been healed, because it was clearly not God’s will that they should be.⁹¹ Yet, while Lancaster freely acknowledged that some did not receive healing, there are no recorded significant cases of misadventure.

There were two fundamental reasons behind Lancaster’s healing ministry. One was a conviction that divine healing was clearly taught in Scripture. *Good News* frequently carried teaching articles on the subject of divine healing. Lancaster clearly approved of the Anglican James Moore Hickson’s healing missions and there are frequent references to him in the pages of *Good News*.⁹² In an article published by Lancaster, Hickson simply pointed out that Jesus healed the sick when on earth, because God was in Him and with Him, and that the only hindrance to the ‘outflow of Divine healing’ was human unbelief. When Christ suffered for us, it was not only for our sins but also for our sicknesses —

⁹⁰ Alan Price, ‘Pentecostalism,’ leaflet, Melbourne: Austral Printing and Publishing Co, n.d., p.6.

⁹¹ A.E.Bishop, *Tongues, Signs and Visions, not God’s Order for Today* Chicago: The Bible Institute Colportage Association, 1920, p.17.

⁹² GN 12:8 September 1923, p.8 quotes a report from the *Brisbane Courier* [sic] headed, ‘Wonderful Cures,’ and reporting healing from a twisted leg, infantile paralysis, cataracts, partial blindness, rheumatism, deafness, eczema, cardiac problems, violent headaches, muteness and other complaints — GN 16:11 November 1925, pp.15f. An English layman, Hickson visited Australia in 1923 and conducted healing missions all over the country. Thousands of people thronged cathedral altar rails seeking healing and many claims were published of positive results. The Australian bishops approved and in 1924 issued a pastoral letter endorsing both Hickson’s ministry and divine healing. While some were sceptical of the healing claims, it was generally agreed that a great deal of good was done. Stephen Judd writes — ‘Virtually every parish [in the Sydney diocese] received spiritual reinforcement and revitalisation by the mission. Even the most sceptical and nervous were challenged to deepen their understanding of the merciful and healing power of the Creator. Hickson, who earnestly believed in God’s willingness to intervene for a faithful people, encouraged Anglicans to incorporate healing into their pastoral ministry... Hickson’s mission did not immediately produce a large homegrown healing ministry. But it did undoubtedly result in a renewed spirit of sympathy and prayer for the sick and suffering ... It also gave a new and bold confidence to those few clergymen in the diocese who saw the healing ministry as an integral pastoral function’ — Judd and Cable, 1987, p.199; Jackson, 1987, p.60; Breward, 1993, p.119.

Christianity has accepted Jesus as the Saviour of the soul, and to a great extent forgotten Him as the Saviour of the body.

But ‘is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by,’ that Jesus Himself took our infirmities and bare our diseases? That He made atonement for us, and by the new covenant has made a way to ‘the Lord that healeth thee’ — even Himself?⁹³

Lancaster could not have put it more simply. In the same issue, she also published a sermon which English evangelist Smith Wigglesworth (1859-1847) preached in Good News Hall in 1922 on the subject of faith. Taking the story of Abraham and Sarah, Wigglesworth argued that just as Abraham believed the word of God above all other evidences, so regardless of how we feel, we must believe.⁹⁴

In a short piece evidently written by Lancaster, there are listed six practical aspects of receiving healing. These are —

1. Healing is a free gift from God (Matthew 8:9)
2. Healing is secured through Christ’s atonement (Job 33:24; Isaiah 53:4; Matthew 8:17)
3. We need to obey the Scriptures and call for the elders (James 5:14). If a wrong attitude prevents us, we must deal with it as wrong attitudes can prevent healing (1 Cor 11:30-32)
4. Our faith must not be in people’s prayers, but in the Lord Himself.
5. Our aim must be God’s glory rather than our comfort (Philippians 2:13; Romans 14:8)
6. Rejoicing and praising the Lord precedes healing (Psalm 40:11).⁹⁵

But it was not only a conviction of the truth of Scripture that motivated Lancaster. It was also a genuine concern for those in need. ‘Our hearts have yearned with compassion,’ she wrote, ‘over the many who knew not that Jesus could heal them, and our prayers and tears have gone up to our Almighty Father that He would work His mighty works here as He has done in other

⁹³ J.M.Hickson, ‘The Healing Saviour,’ GN 9:1 February 1923, pp.2ff.

⁹⁴ S.Wigglesworth, ‘Faith,’ GN 9:1 February 1923, pp.8ff. Wigglesworth was an itinerant English evangelist who twice visited Australia. See Chant, 1984, pp.66ff; S.Frodsham, *Smith Wigglesworth: Apostle of Faith*, Elim, 1949; A.Hibbert, *Smith Wigglesworth — the Secret of His Power*, Chichester: Sovereign World, 1982; J.Hywel-Davies, *Baptised by Fire — the Story of Smith Wigglesworth*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1987.

⁹⁵ ‘Why am I Not Healed?’ GN 22:4 April 1931, p.7.

lands.⁹⁶

Nevertheless, physical health was always secondary to spiritual health. Lancaster told a homely tale of a teenager who scoffed at the idea that God could heal his broken arm. But they prayed and God did heal it. As a result, the lad began to read his Bible. So Lancaster concluded, not with an exhortation to believe God for healing, but with a challenge to encourage others to start reading the Scriptures.⁹⁷

In an anonymous article entitled, ‘The Healing of Disease,’ the writer argued that many people continued to be sick because they persisted in ‘wrong methods of living.’ To receive healing, it was important to discover, if possible, what caused the affliction in the first place. The original cause of all diseases was sin, so it was of primary importance, when seeking healing, to deal with this first.⁹⁸

Doctrinal issues

In spite of Lancaster’s effectiveness as a pastor, there were still some who had grievances. In particular, there was criticism of her leadership, many feeling it was not work for a woman. Some attempt was made to overcome this in 1923 by the appointment of three elders — John Cavill, Charles Anstis and Philip Adams.⁹⁹ A nine-member Council was set up for the Good News Pentecostal Alliance of which John Cavill was president, Winnie Andrews, secretary and Jeannie Lancaster, treasurer. Lancaster accepted the new arrangements with equanimity and grace. As treasurer and editor of the magazine she was, in practice, the leader. Years later, she was still referred to as the pastor.¹⁰⁰ In 1926, under the influence of South Africans Isaac Hugo and F.B.Van Eyk¹⁰¹, she could see the growing need for the various assemblies to develop closer

⁹⁶ J.Lancaster, ‘Open Letter,’ GN 9:1 February 1923, p.17.

⁹⁷ GN 18:12 December 1927, Supplement, p.4.

⁹⁸ ‘The Healing of Disease,’ GN 15:2 February 1924, p.17.

⁹⁹ GN 9:1 February 1923, p.20; GN 12:8 September 1923, p.21; GN 17:10 October 1926, pp.10-12.

¹⁰⁰ GN 16:4 April 1925, p.19; GN 23:2 February 1932, p.19..

¹⁰¹ See Chapter Eight for more on Van Eyk.

relationships through a ‘fellowship tie,’ so she published profiles of each of the three elders. There was no division in their homes. They were all men of the Spirit. And although ‘the winds of persecution’ had blown from all sides, they simply ‘blew them into one.’ The greater the hatred and scorn flung at them, the more they stood together ‘for God and His Son.’¹⁰²

This latter comment was clearly a reference to another aspect of Lancaster’s work which was to prove a stone of stumbling for the rest of her life. This was her doctrinal stance. Although later editions of *Good News* were Pentecostally orthodox, early editions were more controversial. In the formative years of Pentecostal development in the United States, two major schools of thought were represented, namely, the trinitarian and the unitarian (or, Oneness) which resulted in the movement being irreversibly divided within a decade of Azusa Street.¹⁰³ Lancaster presented yet another view. In simple terms, what she taught was that God the Father and the Holy Spirit were one, and that Jesus Christ was God’s Son. In January 1913, an article by ‘A.W.’ made the issues plain —

Here is the key to the mystery. God the Father and God the Holy Spirit are One and the Same Person ...

We acknowledge and worship One God, Jehovah, the Holy Spirit who spake by the prophets, the Father who dwelt in Jesus Christ and who is pouring out His Spirit today (His substance is spirit) ‘upon all flesh’.

We can say with the apostle Paul, ‘To us there is but ONE GOD, the Father, and One Lord Jesus Christ’ 1 Cor 8: 6.¹⁰⁴

Other articles point out the same concept, and go to some length to discount trinitarian teaching. The obvious question that other Pentecostals — and other Christians generally — wanted to ask, of course, was, ‘Who, then, is Jesus Christ? Is He also God? Or is He less than God?’

In an accompanying article by ‘A.S.’, *Good News* goes on —

¹⁰² GN 17:10 October 1926, pp.10ff.

¹⁰³ It is interesting to note that Frank Ewart, an Australian Baptist pastor who had become a Pentecostal while ministering in Canada, was one of the strongest advocates of the Oneness teaching. See Ewart, 1947, pp.50ff; Burgess et al, 1988, pp.644f.

¹⁰⁴ GN 1:5 January 1913, p.15.

Many held various opinions about Christ, so He asked His disciples, ‘But whom say ye that I am?’ And Simon Peter answered and said, ‘Thou are [sic] the Christ’ (that is in Hebrew, the Messiah), ‘The Son of the Living GOD.’ Matt 16: 13-17.

This is the only Apostles’ Creed that Jesus ever commended. There is nothing in the Bible about an equal and co-eternal , ‘God the Son’.

The Son (is) inferior both in Dignity and in Time to the Father. Jesus said — ‘My Father is greater than I.’ John 14: 28 . . . The term ‘God’ is applied to our Lord as Son of God in a lower degree, as it is also used of men. Ps 82:6 ...¹⁰⁵

The article points out that Christ was pre-existent and that God ‘used the instrumentality of His divine Son’ in making the world. God put everything except Himself under the authority of His Son and He must reign until even death is subject to Him. Then the Son Himself will submit to the Father ‘that God may be all in all’ (1 Cor 15: 24-28). Furthermore, in a realistic sense, Jesus did not become the Christ, that is, the anointed One, until the Spirit came upon Him at the time of His baptism. This in no way took away from His pre-existence. Just as He had always been the Saviour, but did not actually bear our sins until He died on the cross; so He had always been the anointed One, but was not actually anointed until the Jordan.¹⁰⁶ In evangelical eyes, all this amounted to a denial of the deity of Christ. It was not enough to call him the Son of God; He must clearly be called ‘God the Son.’

In the next issue of *Good News*, the textual authority of the trinitarian statement in 1 John 5:7¹⁰⁷ was challenged and Pope Leo XIII blamed for endorsing it. An editorial comment, no doubt from Lancaster, noted that the previous issue had been sent out with the prayer that the Father would keep them true to Scripture and that the Spirit would ‘move our pen’ so that they would print nothing contrary to God’s will. They had expected a ‘gale of

¹⁰⁵ GN 1:5 January 1913, p.17. I have not been able to discover who A.W. and A.S. were. No one with those initials figures prominently in the work of Good News Hall. It is tempting to speculate that they were pen names used by Lancaster — that ‘A.W.’ could simply mean ‘A Woman’ and ‘A.S.’ could be ‘A Sister.’ However, as there seems no evidence of the use of pen names in subsequent issues, this may be going too far.

¹⁰⁶ W.Andrews, ‘Mrs McPherson’s “Open Letter” Answered,’ 24 October 1922, p.3; GN 15:12 December 1924, p.19.

¹⁰⁷ 1 John 5:7 — ‘For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one’ (AV). This text is now universally recognised as being insufficiently supported by reliable textual evidence.

criticism from those trained in the traditions of men' in response to their statements about the godhead. But instead of a gale, only 'the gentlest breezes' were felt.¹⁰⁸ This judgement was, unfortunately, both premature and ill-formed. The gales might not yet have touched them, but they would certainly be stirred up. Although Lancaster did not seem to realise it, her isolation from the Pentecostal mainstream was thereafter ensured.

However, she and her fellow-believers were not of such mettle as to change for the sake of expediency. Ten years later, an article in the magazine pointed out—

If we desire to be overcomers we must, according to 1 John 5: 5, believe that Jesus is the Son of God; and when church dignitaries make such confusing statements as, 'I believe that the little Babe of Bethlehem was God Himself, the infinite God Who took on human flesh...' etc., worshippers who desire to approach God become perplexed...

Why are the people not told that there is one God, the Father, and one Lord, Jesus Christ?¹⁰⁹

A statement of faith published in the same issue seems, however, to allow for variety of belief —

Jesus Christ is the Son of God, Who was with Him and in Him before the world was; begotten by the Father — through the Holy Spirit — of the Virgin Mary. He became flesh and dwelt among us. Through Him, God has revealed himself to mankind — Luke 1: 35; Mark 14: 61-62; Rom 1: 3-4; Col 1: 15-16; Phil 2: 6; John 1: 1, 18 and 17: 5; Heb 1:10

The next clause speaks of the Holy Spirit as proceeding from the Father and the Son and says that he is 'of one substance, majesty and glory with the Father and the Son, eternal God.'¹¹⁰ The coming of F.B.Van Eyk in 1926 and the decision to adopt the name Apostolic Faith Mission required further conciliation. Van Eyk was evangelically orthodox and preached accordingly. To accommodate him, the Mission had to modify its earlier stand. There is no

¹⁰⁸ GN 1:6 October 1913, pp.15, 25ff.

¹⁰⁹ Chant, 1984, pp.52f.

¹¹⁰ GN 9:1 February 1923, p. 22.

doubt that Lancaster maintained her own personal views, but they were no longer expressed publicly.¹¹¹ By 1935, a year after Lancaster's death, the new editor, H.Martin, for many years an AFM pastor, could publish an article entitled, 'The Deity of Christ,' in which the writer clearly said, 'The Bible proves conclusively that Jesus is not only the Son of God but God the Son.'¹¹² Whatever convictions Lancaster may have had, the retreat to orthodoxy was by then complete.

Another teaching concerned the fate of the wicked after death. The traditional, evangelical view has been the eternal punishment and torment of the unrepentant wicked. Lancaster did not agree. She believed in eternal punishment and eternal destruction for sin, but she did not believe that God would be eternally judging. Rather, God's judgement would be eternal in its effects.¹¹³ Any thought of the immortality of the soul or of eternal, ongoing torment was unacceptable. The wages of sin were simply death. Allied to this was the concept that believers sleep until the resurrection. In other words, the common idea that the soul goes immediately either to heaven or hell at death was rejected.¹¹⁴

It is interesting to note that Lancaster's view, commonly known as 'conditional immortality' or 'annihilation,' was held by Charles Parham, the initiator of Pentecostal teaching in the United States.¹¹⁵ It was also the belief of the Irish evangelist George Grubb and of Harold Begbie, whose writings were popular with *Good News* readers.¹¹⁶ T.J.Ames, whose small church in Adelaide was loosely affiliated with Good News Hall wrote a tract entitled *Concerning the*

¹¹¹ See Chapter Eight.

¹¹² H.Proctor, 'The Deity of Christ,' GN 26:6 June 1935, p.11.

¹¹³ GN 1:5 January 1913, p.6.

¹¹⁴ In describing the passing of his wife, missionary H.N.Todd wrote, 'My dear one has fallen asleep until the resurrection morn. (Hail, blessed day!)' — GN 1:5 January 1913, p.6. Also, an obituary for the widow of Philip Adams bids her, 'Sleep well, sleep well, until His Kingdom comes ...' — GN 24:3 March 1933, p.16.

¹¹⁵ Anderson, 1979, p.89; Cerillo, 1993, p.82; Burgess et al, 1988, p.19. Note that Lancaster denied any belief in 'annihilation' but only on the grounds that the word does not appear in Scripture. In reality she side-stepped the real issue by making it a matter of semantics — GN 9:1 February 1923, p.23.

¹¹⁶ 'Religion and the Crisis,' GN 1:6 October 1913, p.4,

*Punishment of the Wicked*¹¹⁷ in which he argued that the Scriptures very clearly taught that the wicked would be punished with destruction at the return of Christ. How then could the Church teach that sinners go to hell as soon as they die and even worse, that they suffer eternally?¹¹⁸ To Ames, the idea of an eternity of suffering was ‘monstrous’ and he wondered that ‘Pentecostal believers, with the love of the Spirit,’ had not cultivated ‘a better understanding of the Word.’¹¹⁹ As there was regular communication between Ames and Lancaster, there may well have been an exchange of ideas. In 1926, Lancaster spoke of his views with approval.¹²⁰ It is also likely that Lancaster was influenced by Seventh Day Adventist teaching. They befriended her in her initial search for help in the realm of healing and in later years she occasionally published material by Adventism’s founder, Ellen White.¹²¹ Nevertheless, Lancaster strongly rejected any suggestion that she believed in ‘annihilation,’ although making little attempt to explain why.¹²²

There was a third distinctive area of teaching which does not seem to have been greatly challenged. This was the view that only certain believers constituted the Body and Bride of Christ and hence would take part in the rapture of the saints prior to His return.¹²³ This was not a matter of salvation. The Christian Church embraced all who confessed their sins and were ‘cleansed in the precious Blood of the Lamb of God.’¹²⁴ And you could not be a

¹¹⁷ T.J.Ames, *Concerning the Punishment of the Wicked*, Elim Pentecostal Assembly Tract, No.23, Adelaide: ABC Printing Works, n.d.

¹¹⁸ Ames, *Punishment*, p.4.

¹¹⁹ Ames, *Punishment*, pp.5,11,12.

¹²⁰ J.Lancaster, ‘First Impressions,’ GN 17:5 May 1926, p.18.

¹²¹ F.Lancaster, personal interview, 18 December 1993; GN 22:9 September 1931, pp.12f..

¹²² GN 9:1 February 1923, p.23.

¹²³ From the late nineteenth century, premillennialism was popular among evangelicals and Pentecostals. Largely popularised through the teachings of the Brethren leader J.N.Darby and the *Scofield Reference Bible*, dispensational premillennialism taught that there would be a ‘rapture of the saints’ in which they would be taken up to heaven out of the Great Tribulation either three and a half years or seven years prior to the Second Coming of Christ, which would in turn be followed by a thousand year millennium. For an overview of various millennial views see my *The Return* Chichester: Sovereign World, 1991. For a thorough discussion of the premillennial view, see D.Pentecost, *Things to Come* Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1981; for a more popular, sensationalist view, see H.Lindsey, *The Late Great Planet Earth* New York: Bantam, 1974.

¹²⁴ GN 16:5 May 1925, p.10.

true believer without ‘a measure of the Spirit.’¹²⁵ But being in the *Body* of Christ was different. ‘A place in the Body is not ours or mine to give,’ wrote Lancaster in 1913. ‘It is “reserved” (1 Pet.1:4) for those for whom it is prepared by our Father; those baptised in the Spirit of God.’ She went on to argue that just as God took Eve from the living body of her spouse, so ‘Immanuel’s Bride’ would be taken from the living members of Christ’s Body. ‘The Bride! She has none within her ranks but members of the Body; those who have been baptised in that ‘one spirit’ [sic].’¹²⁶ Ten years later, she repeated the same viewpoint in clear and plain terms, but added, ‘The manifestation of the Body and Bride, however, is as yet unfulfilled prophecy, about which we cannot afford to be dogmatic.’¹²⁷ Nevertheless there were many who were consecrated and who wanted to be in the Bride, but they were partly overcome by the lures of the world, the lusts of the flesh or the enticements of the devil. ‘If they are in this condition,’ wrote Lancaster, ‘when our Lord comes for His Bride, they will not be in the Bride, but will have to go through the tribulations, which are coming upon the world when the Bride is taken away.’ If, however, during the tribulations they were to get right with God, they would still ‘serve God in His temple.’¹²⁸

A believer was justified by faith and trusting in Christ for salvation. But only those who were willing to present their bodies as living sacrifices, forgoing not only sin, but even good things which needed to be abandoned for the sake of the gospel (Romans 12:1-2) would form the Bride of Christ. Only those who suffered with Him would reign with Him (2 Timothy 2:12). Under the heading, ‘The Bride of Christ,’ an unsigned article in *Good News* used Wesleyan terminology when it said —

It is impossible to get to the mark of the prize without the Holy Spirit which God will give to everyone who asks and obeys. Luke 11:13; Acts 5:32; and impossible, also, without much prayer. Having got to the mark — which is perfection in love

¹²⁵ J.Lancaster, ‘Diversities of Operations,’ GN 20:5 May 1929, p.17.

¹²⁶ ‘The Body of the Christ,’ GN 1:6 October 1913, pp.12f. Note that although this article is unsigned, its language and style is that of Jeannie Lancaster.

¹²⁷ GN 15:5 May 1924, p.5.

¹²⁸ GN 16:11 November 1925, p.20.

— the command is to stand firm. As we yield to the Lord moment by moment, so the Holy Spirit will overcome us; and all our fleshly desires will disappear.¹²⁹

Florrie Mortomore, whose evangelistic endeavours penetrated as far as North Queensland, taught a similar view. So, too, did John Coombe and F.B. Van Eyk.¹³⁰

In one of a series of sermons preached in 1913 on the return of Christ, Coombe argued very strongly for a pre-Tribulation Rapture only of those who were sincerely and wholeheartedly serving Christ. The ‘faithful,’ he argued, will be caught away to meet the Lord; the ‘greater part’ of the Church will be left behind to face a time of Tribulation. Would it be fair or reasonable that ‘triflers’ with the faith should share the glory of the Rapture with faithful believers?¹³¹

William Booth-Clibborn held a similar view. Just as the Pharisees, although Jews, rejected Christ’s first coming, so those who hardened their hearts against the Pentecostal message would not be ready when Jesus came the second time. ‘There is no other means provided,’ he declared, ‘whereby we may be prepared except by the fullness of the Holy Spirit.’¹³²

It is evident that this was a significant development of the Wesleyan view of perfectionism.¹³³ Now, through the coming of the Spirit, not only would the believer be made more holy, but would precede other believers to heaven at the end of the age. Interestingly, this view was not accepted by Pentecostalism generally. As early as 1933, C.L. Greenwood, of the Pentecostal Church of Australia, vigorously refuted it.¹³⁴ Nor did John Adams refer to it in his careful study on the work of the Spirit. For him, to be filled with the Spirit was the

¹²⁹ GN 17:9 September 1926, pp.14f.

¹³⁰ GN Nov 1923, p.3; GN 17:12 Dec 1926, pp.5f; J.Coombe, ‘The Rapture of the Saints,’ transcript of sermon 31 July 1913. For more on Florrie Mortomore, see Chapter Twelve. For Van Eyk see Chapter Eight.

¹³¹ J.Coombe, ‘The Rapture of the Saints,’ sermon transcript, 31 July 1913.

¹³² William Booth-Clibborn, ‘Who Will be Translated?’ GN 19:8 August 1928, p.13. For more on Booth-Clibborn see Chapter Nine.

¹³³ See above Chapter Three.

¹³⁴ C.L.Greenwood, ‘The Ten Virgins,’ AE 6:11 April 1933, pp.2ff.

norm for everyone.¹³⁵ Lancaster's view would be rejected today by all major Pentecostal denominations. Except for occasional expressions of a similar exclusivism by minority groups, contemporary Pentecostals universally see baptism in the Spirit as giving power for more effective Christian service, but not in any way forming a spiritual elite.¹³⁶

A spirit of tolerance

Lancaster was not afraid to challenge the status quo —

The North Melbourne Pentecostal Mission has never sailed under the flag of orthodoxy ie. it does not accept the creeds ... of any established denomination, but stands solely on the Word of God, requiring a 'Thus saith the Lord' for every article of belief.¹³⁷

On the other hand, there was never any intention to be needlessly controversial or antagonistic —

We have no quarrel with any of God's dear children who differ from us in doctrine, believing that the Father permits these differences that we may receive practice in that greatest thing of all, 'Love'. Therefore, praising Him that by His grace our love is greater than our knowledge, we gladly fellowship all who comply with the essentials of salvation as given in Rom.10:9, recognising that if the Body of Christ are ever to be of one mind (and they are), the unity can only be achieved by meeting together and enjoying liberty of the spirit (2 Cor 3: 17), and that means liberty for my brother as well as for me.¹³⁸

The profundity and depth of this sentiment is outweighed only by its idealism. Nevertheless, recalled one of her associates, 'Mummy was always the same.

¹³⁵ J.A.D.Adams, *The Scriptural Statement concerning the baptism of (or with or in) the Holy Spirit*, North Melbourne: Victory Press, n.d.; the contents of this book appeared as a series in *Good News* from February to May, 1928.

¹³⁶ While Van Eyk saw being in the body of Christ and being the Bride of Christ as one and the same thing, in the 1960s there was some teaching that there was a distinction between these two and that 'ordinary' Christians were in the Body, while only a select group formed the Bride. Again, mainstream Pentecostalism rejected this concept. See Chant, 1984, p.203.

¹³⁷ GN 1:5 January 1913, p.6; Lancaster's independence of thought is indicated also by her conviction that Christ was crucified on a Wednesday, not a Friday. See GN 19:4 April 1928, pp.10f; GN 25:3 March 1934, p.2.

¹³⁸ GN 1:5 January 1913, p.7. See also GN 15:5 May 1924, p.5: '...prophecy, about which we cannot afford to be dogmatic.'

She preferred freedom of fellowship.¹³⁹ She argued that people were free to believe just the Scriptures. Getting Christ into the hearts of people was what she was after, not doctrines.¹⁴⁰ In the statement of faith which was frequently published over the years, there was a continued expression of this spirit of tolerance —

PUNISHMENT OF THE WICKED. We believe in the punishment of the wicked, who wilfully reject and despise the Love of God ... And whereas believers are not of the same mind as to what shall be the manner or form of punishment given to the wicked, it is considered advisable that scriptural language only shall be employed where this doctrine is concerned, all argument being thereby avoided — Matt. 25: 46; Matt. 13: 49-50; Luke 12: 47-48; Rom. 2: 6-9; 2 Thess. 2: 8-9; Rom. 6: 23; Rev. 20: 11-15.¹⁴¹

In 1927, Lancaster printed an article by F.B.Van Eyk in which he roundly asserted his belief in a literal hell and literal fire and expressed amazement at any alternative view.¹⁴² Lancaster's open attitude should have allowed sufficient freedom of thought and the Scripture references given are a combination of those used for either point of view. For evangelicals and other Pentecostals, however, nothing less than an unswerving commitment to a belief in everlasting punishment for the wicked would do. Questions were raised continually.¹⁴³ So Lancaster began to publish a series of Bible studies which were largely composed of quotations from Scripture, covering major aspects of doctrine. The first one was practical, concentrating on conversion, holy living and prayer. The next few covered topics such as baptism in water and in the Spirit, the Lord's Supper, divine healing and the second coming.¹⁴⁴

¹³⁹ This attitude was demonstrated in 1925, when she lamented the death of her 'beloved brother' 74-year-old G.H.Cargeeg, a Western Australian Baptist who had given himself unstintingly to ministry to the sick, but was not Pentecostal — .GN 16:5 May 1925, pp.9,16.

¹⁴⁰ J.Self, personal interview, n.d.; J. Mullin, personal interview, n.d.

¹⁴¹ GN 9:1 February 1923, p.23. According to the Hughes *Notebook* there were '210 positive Scriptures that the wicked shall die, perish, be destroyed, not see life, be consumed root and branch, cease to be etc.'

¹⁴² F.B.Van Eyk, 'Second Coming of Jesus Christ to this Earth,' GN 18:10 October 1927, pp.3ff.

¹⁴³ GN 15:9 September 1924, p.11: 'So many friends are asking questions on doctrine ...'

¹⁴⁴ GN 15:9 September 1924, p.20 to 15:12 December 1924, p.23. The October issue is missing.

But after this, there were no more.

In early 1925, someone asked, ‘Should Pentecostal people divide from one another because they do not agree on every point of doctrine?’ Not unless people make it their business to make it so, was the reply. Well, was there any way in which doctrinal finality could be reached? Lancaster took up the suggestion of ‘a Pentecostal leader’ that the Apostles’ Creed might be a useful basis. Later, she suggested the Athanasian Creed.¹⁴⁵ Nevertheless, we still only saw through a glass darkly (1 Cor 13:8), and it was more important to be built up than to be puffed up! It was astonishing that people who had ‘the unction of the Holy Ghost’ should allow ‘musty, fusty interpretations’ of Scripture to blind their eyes to what it really said.¹⁴⁶

This was the dilemma of Pentecostalism. On the one hand, a dynamic experience of the Spirit spoke with a unique authority. On the other, the rule of Scripture was still paramount. How could the two be reconciled? Where did tolerance end and compromise begin? Was it possible for people equally endowed with the Spirit to remain in fellowship even though holding different views of biblical doctrine? To Lancaster, the answer was clearly ‘yes.’ To others, as she was to learn yet again to her own deep and lasting hurt, such a response was untenable.¹⁴⁷ This dilemma was to emerge more than once over the next two decades. Divine unction could be liberating and unifying. But it could also endow one’s position with a sense of unshakeable authority. The wind of the Spirit might surge like a wild Australian willy-willy through neighbouring properties, but at the end of the day, the fences would all still stand.

¹⁴⁵ GN 20:9 September 1929, p.10 — ‘If believers must have a creed in addition to the Bible, why do they not adopt that of Athanasius? It should be ample ground of fellowship for all believers and, at the same time, give plenty of scope for individual research.’

¹⁴⁶ GN 16:4 April 1925, p.12.

¹⁴⁷ See Chapter Seven.