

Pillar of Fire in Houston, Texas

(Taken from the sermon *Testimony*, November 29, 1953 p.m., West Palm Beach, Florida, abridged)

I was at Houston, Texas, having a meeting. We were having somewhat about eight thousand in a coliseum, and Mr. Bosworth and I was together, my brother here. We're having a lovely meeting. Raymond Richey and many of the churches around was sponsoring the meeting, and there came a man... (I have plenty of critics. We know that. We're bound too. If Jesus had them, well, I've got to have them too and so have you. We all have them.)

But there was a man just out of the seminary, and he was a very smart, brilliant man. He was a doctor, had just got his degree, and he was a Baptist minister. His name was Doctor Best, and he was a very brilliant young man. He had a nice tabernacle there and a very fine following. And some of his people was coming over to the meeting. And so he took the side to say that there was no such a thing as divine healing.

Well, Mr. Bosworth in fixing the itinerary and the advertisement, and Mr. Richey and many of the other ministers had hung a sign out in the street said, "Miracles every night."

Well, Mr. Best said, "Well, that was ridiculous, and there was no such a thing as divine healing." And he put a challenge in the paper. Instead of coming to us, he put a challenge in the paper and said, "William Branham is a religious impostor... he should be run out of the city, and I should be the man to do it."

So I didn't think it sound very Christian in my brother, but that was all right. And Mr. Bosworth came and said, "Brother Branham, look at this." And he'd challenged me to debate the subject of divine healing with him openly before the people.

Well, I'm not a debater. I don't believe in fussing. I preach the Gospel. If the people believe it, why, all right. If they don't, that's all I can do about it. Now, you never make anything by fussing and debating. Don't never do it, 'cause you just make enemies. That's all. I've seen too much of it.

So Mr. Bosworth, he came and he said, "Brother Branham, look at this."

I said, "Brother Bosworth, just let it alone. We got thousands of people to be prayed for, and why would we fool with one person who doesn't believe, when there's thousands waiting to be prayed for who does believe? Why fool with it?"

Well, the next day the minister put in the paper, a great headline in Houston Chronicle, and he said, "It goes to show what they're made out of. They're ashamed and afraid when the real Gospel is laid out before them, to debate the subject. It shows what they're made out of."

Well, here come Brother Bosworth to my room again. He said, "Looky here, Brother Branham. Are you going to take that?"

And I said, "Why, Brother Bosworth, it won't do any good. The Holy Spirit is with me. He promised me He would do, and I have the anointing to pray for sick people, and I just won't fool with it."

He said, "Let me do it. It's a shame. The public will think that we're just a bunch of people that just flying about. There's no Scripture to it or nothing. We owe it to the public."

I said, "I only owe the public what God told me to do."

And he said, "Well, Brother Branham, it's not right. I can produce hundreds of Scriptures and that man hasn't got one Scripture in the Bible to stand on, let me prove it."

Well, I thought of Caleb, you know, when that old fellow that had the sword and said, "Joshua put this in my hand when I was forty years old; I'm eighty today; I'm just as good a man today as I was when Joshua give me the sword." Well, I thought, "That was pretty gallant of him being in his seventies and Mr. Best in his thirties, just fresh out of the seminary."

I looked at him and I said, "Brother Bosworth, I don't want you to go down there and fuss with that man."

"Brother Branham, I wouldn't fuss with nobody. I wouldn't do it, but I know one thing: I know what the Word of God teaches. Now, I think you owe it to say something about it."

I said, "All right. You go do it then, but you promise me you won't fuss."

He said, "I promise."

Well, like a little child with Christmas anticipations, down the steps he went. The reporters were waiting. They wouldn't let them come to the room up there, and so I said I wouldn't fuss with him.

So Brother Bosworth, he went down, and then, of course, you know how the newspaper can write. Great big headlines "Ecclesiastical Fur Will Fly," and they really decorated it up real good. But here's what made me know that someday the great Church of God is coming together. You're going to forget your differences. When communism goes to forcing you right hard, don't worry, you'll come together. God has a way of doing things. So when the great press come on, there's a strange...

We couldn't fit in that coliseum anymore. We couldn't stay in that place we were at. We had to go over and rent the big Sam Houston Coliseum, seats around thirty thousand. And that day they come in by special plane, special trains until that place packed completely full of people. They didn't care whether they was Methodists, Baptists, whether they were Pentecostal Oneness, Twoness, Threeness, or Church of God, or whether they was riding a one hump camel, two hump camel, or whatever it was. There was one thing in common, and that was divine healing was at stake, and every man believed in it and here he come to take the part of it. That's what it takes. Wait till Christianity comes to that spot, and you'll find all the Methodists, and Baptists, and all of them looking just alike then, everybody coming right together, pressing into the Kingdom of God.

That settled it with me that day, when I looked back there and there was thousands of all different descriptions of people setting there from all kinds of churches, Catholic and all, everybody placed together.

I told Brother Bosworth, "I wouldn't go down that night. No, I don't want to hear it." And my brother was with me, and my wife, and little girl.

He said, "Well, you just stay up in your hotel." I was staying at that time at the Rice Hotel. When it got time to go, I just couldn't hardly stay away. So I got in the cab, and a couple of police come and so they taken me down. And I pulled my overcoat up like this, and we went way up in balcony thirty. And I got a seat up there just before all the crowds got packed in.

And I was setting there with my coat up, my wife and boy setting there. Well, when he come up for the discussion, the moderators and so forth come to the platform. Mr. Cy Ramsar, who used to be Paul Rader's song leader, was leading songs for us. Very much of a diplomat on the platform, he was leading the singing, and just before he turned the service over to the moderator, he said, "I was reading in the paper the other day where that someone said that William Branham ought to be run out of the city a religious impostor. If you people of Houston would put more time running bootleggers out of the city than you would do a religious man like that, your city would be better off." And a great roar went up all through the place.

I thought, "Well..." And I looked at Brother Bosworth... I admired him. And he walked out, and Mr. Best when he come over, he went and hired photographers to come take his picture. And he wanted to take his picture. He said, "I'm going to skin that old man, and take the hide off of him, and tack it on my study door for a memorial to divine healing." Quite a statement for a child of God to say, you know. And so he wanted to take the picture, so they hired the Douglas Studios in Houston, Texas, to come, take his picture.

And so Mr. Bosworth who'd never been in a debate before...thought they would just stand and give Scriptures and discuss them. So Mr. Bosworth had a great load of Scriptures wrote out. And Mr. Best said, "No, you go up and say what you're going to say in thirty minutes. Then I'll say what I've got to say in thirty minutes." So well, they agreed on that. I was setting listening wondering what was going to take place.

Well, when I seen my Brother Bosworth walk out there coolly, knowed just where he was at, with no doubt in his mind, he said, "Dr. Best, we're sorry that we have to have discussions like this, but

you had a statement in the paper that Brother Branham was a religious impostor and there was no such a thing as divine healing.

"Now, our subject tonight to discuss is not Brother Branham; it's whether divine healing is in the Bible or not. That's what the debate is for. That's what we signed up for: Whether divine healing was taught in the Scriptures. The gifts of God will prove themselves, but this is what we're teaching whether divine healing is in the Bible or not. I have (I forget how many Scriptures there, a hundred or two)... This is Christ's present attitude towards the sick is just the same today as it ever was. If you'll take one of those Scriptures, and by the Scripture disprove it, then we won't have any discussion. I've lost the debate, and I'll set down, if you can take the Scriptures and prove that Christ's present attitude isn't just exactly the same towards the sick now as it ever was." And he offered him a paper.

Mr. Best said, "I'll take care of that when I get up there. You go ahead with what you're going to say. I'll take care of that."

And Mr. Bosworth said, "Then Mr. Best, I'll ask you one question, and if you'll answer me 'yes' or 'no,' I'll set down. Was the redemptive Names of Jehovah applied to Jesus, 'yes' or 'no'?" I never thought of that myself. That settled it. That's all.

He said, "I'll answer that."

He said, "I'm asking you to answer me now. We don't have to discuss it, if you say 'yes' or 'no.'" Of course he couldn't. Certainly not. If the redemptive Names of Jehovah was not applied to Jesus, He was not the Christ or the Son of God; He wasn't Jehovah-jireh, the Lord's provided Sacrifice; and if He was the Lord's provided sacrifice, Jehovah-jireh, He was also Jehovah-rapha, the healer, the same yesterday, today, and forever. That settled it.

Mr. Best got up, and turned around, and kind of shook his fist two or three times, and set down. And so Mr. Bosworth stood there and just laid off Scripture. I never heard it like that in my life, just as coolly, and placed everything to a place where Mr. Best didn't even have one place at all to go to in the Scripture. He just was just tied so perfectly, till there was no angle to get out of it. He was just tied down.

Mr. Best got up when his time come, and Mr. Bosworth was a very, very polite way, said, "Mr. Best, all right my brother, the platform's yours now." The moderator give him the platform.

Mr. Best got up there and laughed two or three times and preached a very good Campbellite sermon. I'm a Baptist; I know what Baptist doctrine is. So he preached a Campbellite sermon on the resurrection. He didn't even believe the miracles that Jesus Christ did. Lazarus died again. He preached it all in the resurrection when this mortal puts on immortality. Of course, any Christian believes that there would be a resurrection, but if there is no attributes of the resurrection, if there is no earnest of the resurrection, then there is no resurrection. If there is no divine healing, then there is no resurrection. Now, you couldn't disprove that if you could by the Scripture. I'm arguing the points of Christ. See? Because we have the earnest of our salvation, which is the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Is that right? That's the down payment, the earnest which holds it secure in heaven for us. And then if there is no divine healing to make a cancer-ridden body come normal and well again, there is no resurrection of the dead; we have no earnest of it at all; there's no plan made for it. So that settled it.

Mr. Best commence to going on, and the audience actually laughed at him. And so he said, "Let me see that divine healer come forth and perform." He got real angry, and he said, "Let me see that divine healer come forth and perform."

Mr. Bosworth said, "The very idea, Mr. Best, you calling Brother Branham a divine healer. Why, never in all of his life did he ever claim to be a divine healer, very much contrary. He only preaches divine healing through the atonement, just exactly like what I proved to you. And you've not even mentioned one Scripture that I said or come to any of it. You never done nothing but preached on the resurrection of the dead, and we all believe that." So there it was. It was up the audience to make their choice.

He said, "Let me see that divine healer."

He said, "Brother Branham wasn't to be brought in this. The subject is whether divine healing is taught in the Bible and you can't say one word against it. 'Cause if you can, say it now." So there wasn't nothing to be said, 'cause there wasn't no way he could go, 'cause it was all covered over with the atonement and everything. So there it was. There wasn't nothing to be said.

He said, "Let me see that divine healer."

And Mr. Bosworth said to him said, "Brother Best, do you believe that God saves the soul?"

He said, "Yes."

"You teach that through the atonement?"

Said, "Yes."

"Would you want to be called a divine Savior? If Brother Branham, by preaching divine healing, is a divine healer, then if you preach salvation, you're a divine Savior."

Oh, he got really on the air then, and so he begin to blow up and down and said, "There's nothing in the world... decent thinking people don't believe in such nonsense. Baptists don't believe in no such a thing."

"Whoa, beg your pardon," Brother Bosworth said. "Brother Branham was rocked in a Baptist cradle."

"Oh, he's a backslidden type. Real true honest Baptists don't believe in no such."

Brother Bosworth said, "Would you excuse me just a moment? How many setting in this vast audience that belongs to these fine Baptist churches with all these Baptist ministers setting along here... how many of you in this audience could prove by a doctor's statement that you've been healed by divine healing, the power of God, in Brother Branham's meetings these last few weeks." And three hundred stood up. "What about those?"

Mr. Best hit the pulpit with his fist and said, "People can say anything, but that don't make it right."

"Here the Word teaches it, and there's the testimony of it. Now, what about it?"

And he said, "Let me see that divine healer."

Then Mr. Richey got up... asked the moderator if he could speak just a moment. "I know every one of these Baptist ministers. Is this the attitude of the Southern Baptist Convention towards divine healing? Is this the attitude that the Southern Baptist Convention takes toward divine healing?"

Nobody would answer. He said, "I'm asking you, brethren. Did you all send this man here, or did he come on his own?"

They said, "He come on his own."

"I thought so. Baptists believe in divine healing. Certainly they do. He come on his own." So that settled it with the Baptist, Southern Baptist church. It was Mr. Best his own self.

So then he kept saying, "If I see that miracle worker. Let me see him come down here... Let me see him hypnotize one of these people, and let me see him a year from now and see if he is still hypnotized," and all like that, you know, just going on. So he said, "Come up here. I want you to take my picture." And he stood there, then he put his finger under that saintly old man's face, said, "Now take it," with his finger shaking. They took the picture, and he drew his fist and shook it under his nose, said, "Now, take it." And they took his picture like that. So they took six, 9x10 glossies of him like that.

They went back. There set the "Look," "Life," "Time," "Collier," and all those, the "Chronicle," and all those magazines and papers setting there.

Then Brother Bosworth said, "Well, now the meeting as far as I'm concerned is finished. Mr. Best cannot answer one question against divine healing, besides he has miserably quit. How many thinks so? Say, 'Amen.'" And just one great scream went over the building.

Then he got real angry, and walked around, and slapped the minister, and just about half way across that platform. And then they had to separate him. So then he walked back. Said, "Bring me that divine healer."

Brother Bosworth said, "Now, Brother Branham is setting in the meeting. I know he's here..." ('cause he'd seen me up there) "Now if he wants to come and dismiss the audience, all right, but under such a fuss as this, of course, no, he couldn't pray for the sick. If you want to see healing come, come over tomorrow night. They'll be going along all along... I know he's in the meeting."

I was setting still. My brother was setting there, he said, "Now, you set still. You said you would."

I told him, "I'm setting still."

And while I was setting there like that, I heard Something going, "Whoo." I knew He was near. I raised up. My brother said, "Set down."

My wife said, "No..."

I looked and there It was. Just then, everybody was looking around. No one knew I was up there; and there just thousands of friends there. And I looked back, people looked, like one big scream. Poor, dear, loving people, they'd seen so many things done that week... 'Til several ushers, hundreds of them, held their arms together and made a line, the people trying to touch your clothes to be healed. Brother, this is not something easy. I'm human. I've got children at home, and mother's trying to push their little kids through those ushers arms to touch your clothes when you're passing by. God will reward faith as that. He will. Sure.

And I walked down to the platform. I said, "Brother Best."

He said, "As a man I admire you. In your doctrine you're wrong."

I said, "That's mutually felt. I admire you, Brother Best, and you got a right for your ideas. I don't want any of this people, any of Brother Best's people or any of the Baptist people, anyone to feel bad towards Brother Best. Don't do that. He's our brother, and he just doesn't see it like that. He just believes it his way, and he's got a right to believe it his way. Remember, his mother loves him just the same as my mother loves me, and your mother loves you. He's somebody's boy, and he's got a right to his belief. So don't feel hard at it. Mr. Bosworth just proved by the Word that the doctrine is sound and in the Bible, and Mr. Best could not prove it."

So Mr. Best just turned around and started off the platform. Then he turned back and looked and set down.

I said, "Now, I have never said that I was a divine healer. Never. My books are published in about seventeen different languages, and I guess I'm in contact with several million people, but never have I said a divine healer. I don't heal people. The only thing I do is preach divine healing by the cross and by the Bible.

"Now, when I was a little boy, my mother said a Light hung over me when I was a baby. My people were Catholic before me and my mother and father went to no church. We were Irish on both sides, immigrated from Ireland. We were in there. They didn't go to church. I was born in a little mountain cabin and when I was just a little bitty boy, It begin to deal with me. Down through life It always spoke, and many, many times and thousands of people have seen It. It comes in like a Light. It tells me things.

"And when He met me, He told me that it was the Spirit of Lord Jesus Christ that done just exactly the same things that Brother Bosworth and them has said tonight. Jesus didn't claim to do any healing. He said, 'What the Father shows Me I don't do nothing. I can heal nothing, but I do just what the Father shows Me by vision; that's what I do.' And you know that's the truth, isn't it? Every Bible reader, scholar knows that's the truth.

"He walked through the crowd. He perceived their thoughts. He knowed what they was thinking about. He knowed what was wrong with them. He knowed the woman at the well, and He talked to her a little bit, where her trouble was. He knowed Nathanael's trouble, and He knowed where a fish

had a coin in its mouth. Just as God would show Him, He would do. He didn't claim to be a healer. In the resurrection of Him, He's the same yesterday, today, or forever.

"Now, if I testify of the truth, God will testify of me. If I do not testify of the truth, God will never have nothing to do with a lie. God will always testify truth though.

"I'm not out here just to be seen. I'm out here, not by choice, by a long ways; I wanted to be a... Well, I was a game warden in the state of Indiana, and I loved my job. I was borned for the wilderness and wilds. I certainly... It wasn't my choice to preach the Gospel, but woe unto me if I preach it not. It was God's choice. I run from it and tried to get away from it and everything. It was Him Who brought it. If I tell the truth, God will testify the truth."

And I no more than said it, Something went, "Whew!" Here He come, sailing right down where I was. And this photographer run out and took a picture, when he seen me turn white in the face. And he took a picture. I said, "God has spoken."

And that's all Catholic people and all setting there saw It, looked at It. Many of them begin to scream and fainting. Come right down, a Pillar of Fire, moved right down to where I was at. He shot the picture. One of the men of the studio was a Jew; his name was Ted Kipperman. The other one's name was Mr. Ayers; he's a Roman Catholic. And oh, he just wrote a awful thing in the paper about me the day before that. He said I was a hypnotizer and I don't know what all.

And so on the road home that night, taken the negatives, going in to have them developed for Mr. Best, he said, "I might've been wrong. What do you think about that, Ted?"

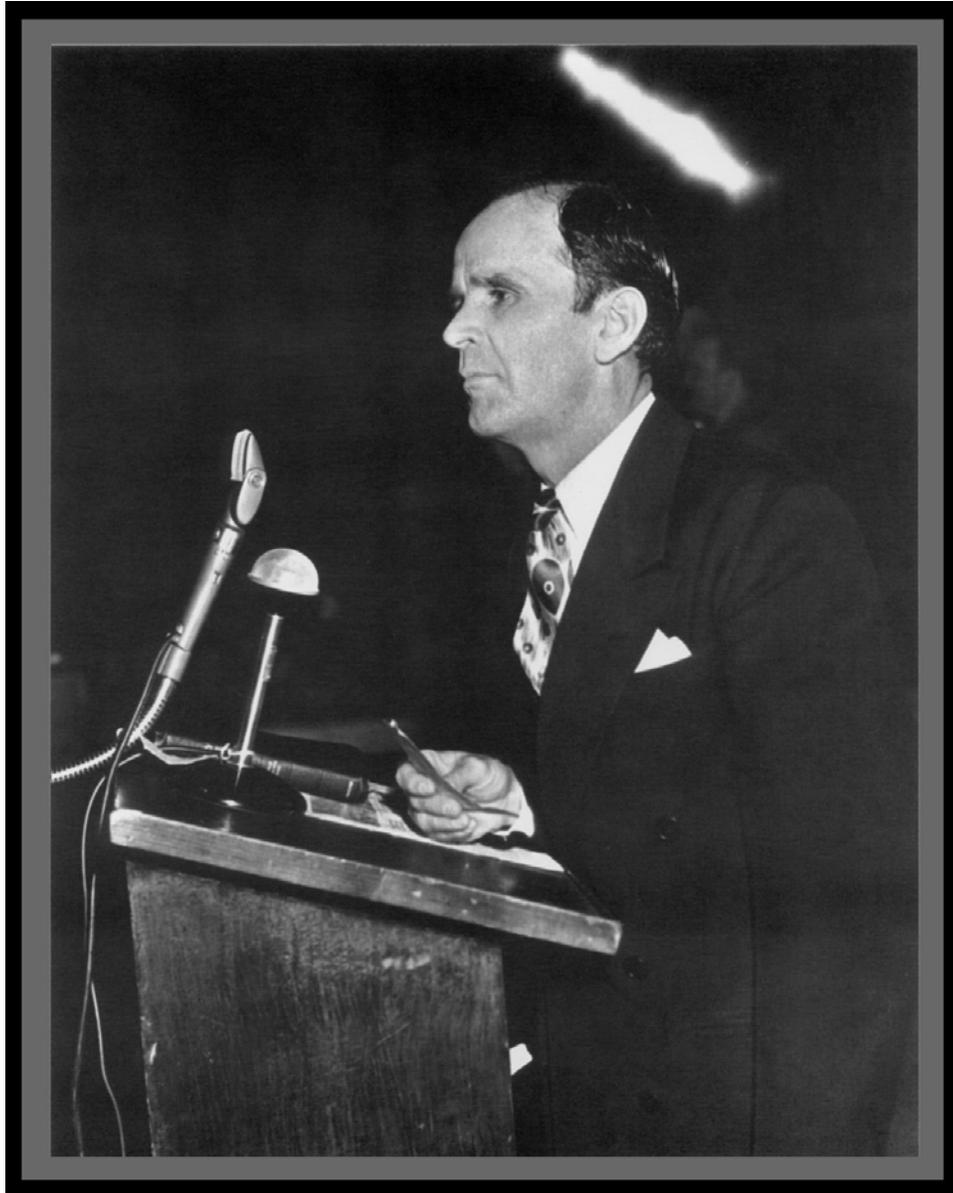
Ted said, "Well, I'm Jew. I don't know nothing about it."

He said, "Well, I'm Catholic; we're taught that those things can happen, but it can only happen in a Catholic church."

Now, you're wrong there. It can happen wherever God wants it to happen, whether it's in Catholic church or anywhere He wants it to happen. He's God. He does the choice. He keeps the book.

And so he went in, and he put the pictures in the darkroom to go through the acids to be developed, and after a bit, why, Mr. Kipperman said, "I'm going up and lie down a little while." And so he went upstairs to lie down. And while he was up there, Mr. Ayers smoked a cigarette or two, and went in the darkroom and said, "I'll see. We had to get the picture ready 'cause Dr. Best, the minister, wanted his pictures the next day so he could show it to the people..."

When Mr. Ayers went in... (which is an arch enemy of mine and Brother Bosworth too. He didn't believe it. He wrote a piece in the paper and said I wasn't nothing but a hypnotizer. A goiter had left a woman's throat. He said, "He hypnotized that off of her throat." Oh, my. That shows mental weakness.) So then, when he pulled the first picture out of Mr. Best with Mr. Bosworth, it was negative. God wouldn't permit that taken against that saintly old man. He pulled out the next one: negative. He pulled out all six of them, and every one of them was blank. And when he pulled out the other one, there was the Angel of God on the picture. He had a heart attack.



They sent for me at the Rice Hotel. Of course, there's two men standing at the door in big meetings where they have thousands and thousands of people. There's someone stands at the door. They wouldn't let them in.

Then that night at eleven o'clock, that was sent to Washington, D.C. to be copyrighted. On the following day, it was flown back again. And they called in George J. Lacy. He's the head of the FBI in fingerprint and documents, the best there is in the world, the best in the United States. So being American, we say he was the best in the world to us. And so he's the head of the FBI. And they brought him in, and he took it to the Shell Building under examination of ultra-ray lights and so forth, everything he tried. He went out and he measured the distance, and took the camera to see if it was a double exposure, and he done everything that he could do to find out. And on about the fourth day he said they was going to meet in the Shell Building and announce what it was. So that day he said, "whose name's Branham?"

I said, "Mine." Bunch setting there, a lot of the newspapers and things wanted to see what his report was.

He said, "Stand up." I stood up. He said, "You're going to pass out of this life someday like all mortals, Reverend Branham."

I said, "I'm aware of that, but thank God, Jesus Christ has saved me from sin."

He said, "I've been one of your critics." And so the man when he brought up there, he said, "Reverend Branham, it's always been said that that was psychology. I've heard of your meetings and said that it was psychology, wasn't nothing to it; it was just imagination. When that light would come in, everybody would say, 'There it is. There it is.' And people would say, 'Well that's... everybody just imagined it.'"

(It was took once before by a newspaper, but it wasn't real. They wouldn't let it go, because it wasn't by the American Photographer Association. It wasn't a member of it, so they wouldn't pass it, but this was strictly the American Photographer Association.)

And he said, "Reverend Branham, I have said it was psychology, but the mechanical eye of this camera will not take psychology. The Light struck the lens." Everybody begin crying.

So they called me forward to present the picture to me, and I said, "Well, it's not mine. It belongs to them."

He said, "Do you know that's worth a hundred thousand dollars..."

I said, "Brother, do you mean to tell me just what you got through saying? That the first time in all the world's history that a supernatural Being was ever photographed."

And here's what he said. Said, "The old hypocrite..." (he meant the unbeliever)... "The old..." (unbeliever) "has always said, that there was no scientific way to prove a supernatural Being. Now, they can't say that no more. Here's absolutely, scientific proof that there is a supernatural Being." And scientifically proved by this mechanical camera here that took the light of that Angel standing there, and said, "It's absolutely is the truth."

And I said, "Well, if Jesus Christ thought enough of me to come down and have His picture taken by me for the first time in all the world, you think I'm a little enough to commercialize this picture?"

And he said, "No, I wouldn't think that."

I said, "I turn it over to the Douglas Studios."

He said, "There ought to be some kind of an agreement."

I said, "Sure, they can sell it. They can, as long as they keep it cheap enough that poor people can get it."

He said, "Someday, Reverend Branham, you may be dead and gone, but it'll be sold in ten-cent stores."

And I said, "Well, for the glory of God that would be fine."

So then, tonight the picture's here. George J. Lacy is a living today. He's still in this work, and the picture lives on and if I would die this night, what I testified about this scientific world can't say it isn't so, because there's scientific machinery and proof that I've told the truth. And the church of millions of people that's been preached to in the past few years have seen it and watched it, and you know it yourself, that I've told the truth. And God testified that it is the truth. That's right. So the testimony is absolutely true.

Now look, Christian friends, you're looking for something way out yonder to come. You're looking for something way back this a way. Don't do that. It's right here now, right here now. Just as much as you'll ever see is... Only you might see it in greater quantity, but the Holy Spirit is here now which is the Lord Jesus Christ in His resurrection.

January 29, 1950

R E P O R T A N D O P I N I O N

Re: Questioned Negative

On January 28, 1950 at the request of Reverend Gordon Lindsay, who was representing Reverend William Branham of Jeffersonville, Indiana, I received from the Douglas Studios of 1610 Rusk Avenue in this city, a 4x5 inch exposed and developed photographic film. This film was purported to have been made by the Douglas Studios of Reverend William Branham at the Sam Houston Coliseum in this city, during his visit here the latter part of January, 1950.

R E Q U E S T

Reverend Lindsay requested that I make a scientific examination of the aforesaid negative. He requested that I determine, if possible, whether or not in my opinion the negative had been re-touched or "doctored" in any way, subsequent to the developing of the film, that would cause a streak of light to appear in the position of a halo above the head of Reverend Branham.

E X A M I N A T I O N

A macroscopic and microscopic examination and study was made of the entire surface of both sides of the film, which was Eastman Kodak Safety Film. Both sides of the film were examined under filtered ultra-violet light and infra-red photographs were made of the film.

The microscopic examination failed to reveal retouching of the film at any place whatsoever by any of the processes used in commercial retouching. Also, the microscopic examination failed to reveal any disturbance of the emulsion in or around the light streak in question.

The ultra-violet light examination failed to reveal any foreign matter, or the result of any chemical reaction on either side of the negative, which might have caused the light streak, subsequent to the processing of the negative.

The infra-red photograph also failed to disclose anything that would indicate that any retouching had been done to the film.

The examination also failed to reveal anything that would indicate that the negative in question was a composite negative or a double exposed negative.

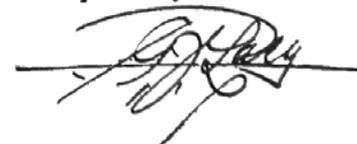
There was nothing found which would indicate that the light streak in question had been made during the process of development. Neither was there anything found which would indicate that it was not developed in a regular and recognized procedure. There was nothing found in the comparative densities of the highlights that was not in harmony.

O P I N I O N

Based upon the above described examination and study I am of the definite opinion that the negative submitted for examination, was not retouched nor was it a composite or double exposed negative.

Further, I am of the definite opinion that the light streak appearing above the head in a halo position was caused by light striking the negative.

Respectfully submitted,



GJL/11