Pentecost Is God's Pattern

By D. M. Panton

Joel, the first of the Jewish prophets, held up the immense beacon light of the descent of the Holy Ghost: *"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions; and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out My Spirit"* (Joel 2:28-29).

For eight centuries it remained unfulfilled – until Pentecost. Meanwhile revival after revival swept through Israel. Generations came and went, and prophets greater than Joel arose and passed. Vast religious upheavals and political revolutions, followed by fresh violence and atheism, came and went, in the seething ocean of human history.

Exactly so is it now. Nineteen centuries have passed since the first shower. We await the second, to be accompanied by the marvels with which it was originally identified (Joel 2:30). Revival after revival has swept the church of God for nineteen centuries, and such may be repeated at any moment.

"When the waves of the last agony of a submerging world break, yet once more, and louder than ever, goes forth the call of a vast and infinite compassion." *"Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered"* (Joel 2:32).

Threatening to Become a Corpse

Revival is a fresh inrush of Divine life and power into a body threatening to become a corpse. It is heaven coming to the desperate need of earth. Therefore the fearful spiritual lapse of this generation may, in the love of God, be a ground of hope rather than of despair. The revival under Hezekiah (2 Chron. 29), as wonderful a movement as ever swept a land or transformed a generation, arose upon a moral midnight. Pentecost was God's enormous gift of blessing after the Temple had become a carcass for eagles.

It was on the midnight of the Dark Ages that the Reformation convulsed Europe and changed the history of the world. The generation which saw Wesley and Whitefield has been described thus: "Death in the churches, rottenness in public morals, infidelity coming in like a flood."

Before the revivals of 1859-60 the lands it visited lay under a pall of reckless waste, an unparalleled fever for riches, deepening doubt, and alarming ungodliness. And it was then World War I lay just below the horizon that this century opened with "marvelous revivals, unprecedented in power and results in the memory of man."

And it is so to the end, for in the very climax of the Day of Wrath, and on the background of the last judgment, "all Israel" – numbering at least many millions – pass at once into salvation.

Phoca PDF

Pentecost – God's Pattern

Revival – as was supremely shown at Pentecost – is the arrival at a given spot of a Person of the Godhead. It was vividly so revealed in the Welsh Revival. "A sense of the Lord's presence," Mr. R. B. Jones writes, "was everywhere." It mattered not where one went, the consciousness of the reality and nearness of God followed. It was by no means confined to the revival gatherings. It was felt in the homes, on the streets, in the mines and factories, in the schools, yes, and even in the theaters and drinking saloons.

The strange result was that wherever people gathered became a place of awe, and places of amusement and carousal were practically emptied. Many were the instances of men entering public houses, ordering drinks and then turning on their heels leaving them on the counters untouched. The sense of the Lord's presence was such as practically to paralyze the arm that would raise the cup to the lips.

Football teams and the like were disbanded, their members finding greater joy in testimony to the Lord's grace than in games. The coal mines became places of praise and prayer, where the miners gathered to worship ere they dispersed to their several stalls. Even the children of the day schools came under the spell of God.

The consequence is inevitable. The Divine presence rocks souls like an earthquake, and shakes the whole human to its foundations. Whitefield thus describes what he constantly saw: "Their bitter cries and tears were enough to break the hardest heart. Some were struck pale as death, others lying on the ground, others wringing their hands, others crying out almost as if they were in the sharpest agonies of death. They seemed like persons awakened by the last trump, and coming out of their graves to judgment. I myself was so overpowered with a sense of God's love, that it almost took away my life."

Phoca PDF