

Pentecost In The Principality

By E. W. Lawrence (London)

There is a current of warm water, known as El-nina, that washes the South American coastline about Christmas time. Some years ago it came in greater volume than ever before, so that some parts of that continent that had not known rain since the year 1551, were visited with torrential showers, and the once thousand miles of desert was transformed into a paradise in an incredibly short space of time, and millions of seeds that had lain dormant in the ground through the decades of drought, sprouted up and grew.

It was like that with the revival that came to Wales in 1904, and it can be said, as in Solomon's Song, "The winter is past . . . the flowers appear on the earth, the time of the singing of birds is come . . ." (Cant. 2:11-12). The revival took a long time to work its way into popularity's realm, and started with a young man of 26 years, Mr. Evan Roberts, who has recently been called to his Heavenly Home.

Eight-hour Meetings

During the second week of November, 1904, Mr. Roberts was holding meetings at Loughor, South Wales, and one newspaper reported: "The district has been in the grip of an extraordinary spiritual force. . . . The churches are united. The prayer meetings are so crowded that the places of worship are inadequate to contain them." And some of these reported meetings lasted eight or more hours. R. B. Jones used to say that the outstanding feature of those days was the universal and inescapable sense of the presence of God, as when Isaiah saw the Lord, high and lifted up, His train filling the Temple's sacred precincts. But just as in a later day Isaiah was to cry, "Oh that Thou wouldest rend the heavens, that Thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at Thy presence" (Isa. 64:1), so in 1904 were the heavens above to be rent in twain, and the Welsh mountains melted before the sanctifying presence.

A sensitiveness as to the Lord's presence was manifest everywhere, and by thousands of people. "It created the spiritual atmosphere," said R. B. Jones, and wherever one went this consciousness of God's holy presence and reality followed. While pre-eminent in the meetings, it was not confined to them, but was manifest wherever people congregated, in homes, places of amusement, business houses, mines and factories. It was not confined to those of adult ages: children in the Day and Sunday schools fell under the sacred sense of the ever present Omnipotent Lord.

One child of 4 years in a primary class held up her hand to call the teacher's attention, and on being asked what she wanted, replied, "Please teacher, do you love Jesus?" It did not end there. That was used of the Spirit to lead that teacher to Christ, and she in turn became a missionary in India. When another asked, "Do you know what has happened at Rhos?" one child was heard to say, "No, I don't, except that Sunday comes every day now . . . Jesus Christ has come to live in Rhos now."

Mass Conviction

One outstanding experience in this particular realm was seen in one of R. B. Jones' meetings in Angelsea. Isaiah chapter six was his theme, and the light of God's own holiness was turned upon the hearts and lives of the members of that congregation. "Conviction of sin and its terrible desert," he reported after "was so crushing that a feeling almost of despair grew over all hearts. So grievous a thing was sin, so richly and inevitably did it deserve the severest judgment of God, that hearts questioned. "Could God forgive? Could God cleanse?" The experience of the young prophet was shown to them, the live coal touching their lips. There was hope! God could both forgive and cleanse. It is said that this vision so completely overwhelmed them that they were beside themselves with heavenly joy. "The whole place at that moment was so awful with the glory of God," wrote Jones, "the holy presence of God was so manifested that the speaker himself was overwhelmed; the pulpit where he stood was so filled with the light of God that he had to withdraw."

**"O Holy Ghost, revival
comes from Thee,
Send now revival, start
the work in me,
Thy Word declares, Thou
wilt supply my need,
For blessing now, O Lord,
I humbly plead."**

The revival was irresistible, and in South Wales, where Evan Roberts' work lay, its reports made up the chief features of the press for many months. No building was large enough to contain the crowds attending his meetings, and it is said that the people queued up for the afternoon and evening meetings even before the morning and afternoon meetings were concluded. Today the difficulty is in getting people into Churches, then the difficulty was in getting them out.

While praise held the place of pre-eminence during the revival, prayer also found an important place. One notable feature of those days was many different people engaging in prayer at one time, yet without the least confusion.

The Lord's people were in themselves revived and brought into a deeper experience of grace. Churches swelled their ranks, and the irreligious were converted in their thousands, so much so that the magistrates and police authorities were given a real "holiday." Men and women deeply sunken in shame and crime, whom the arms of the law could neither reform, control or intimidate, found transformation through the grace of God.

"Brother Tom" was one such. Once the terror of his district, and a frequent 'case' before Brigend Magistrates, he found deliverance in Christ, and this trophy of grace became indeed one of the princes of God. One revivalist said he never heard from human lips anything to surpass or equal what he had heard from this dear man of God, and who but a few years earlier was a complete moral wreck.

The revival manifest its presence in the realm of song. It was the custom for a choir to lead the singing, but during the revival the congregation became the choir. Their singing was spontaneous and unaccompanied. Anyone who felt led of the Spirit could announce a hymn but no choice out of spirit with the meetings was ever made. "The assembly is its own organ," one said of those days, "as a thousand sorrowing or rejoicing hearts found expression in the sacred psalmody of their native hills."

Time limits to the meetings were forgotten. Meetings closed when they were ended. "Clocks were completely out of action." During this 1904 awakening, human leadership was also dispensed with. The Blessed Spirit Himself took control, and it has been more than once pointed out that frequently the official "leader," Mr. Evan Roberts among them, often entered the meetings when they were in full swing, a visible proof that the Spirit's work was not in any degree dependent on them.

Evan Roberts himself was most careful to make people realize that it should not be thought the work depended on him. "People must not rely on me," he cried, ". . . they must rely on Him alone Who can minister to their needs." When you go to a window, you do not go to look at the glass, but to look through it. "Look through me," he cried, "and see the Holy Spirit."

Our American brethren—the Lord bless them—use the word "revival" to denote what we term an evangelistic campaign. But theirs is not the true New Testament definition of revival, for one thing an evangelistic campaign is organized beforehand, and is worked up, and has a human leader, but revival is brought down from Heaven. Revival is the Holy Spirit's Own work—He moves where He listeth.

Preaching By-Passed

Preaching took a very minor part in the 1904 awakening in Wales. One pastor said he had not preached for close on a year. Even Mr. Evan Roberts gradually ceased speaking in his meetings, leaving the coasts clear for spontaneity in prayer and song by all, as and when they felt led of God. Some who were intimately connected with this revival felt that this is to be deplored. It is, however, not the present writer's purpose to discuss the pros and cons of that, but to state the facts as they are. The little Mr. Roberts did say, however, was most valuable.

Mr. Roberts continually set before the people what has since been known as "The Four Points," which, briefly summarised, and in my own language, are as follows:

1.—Do you desire an outpouring of the Holy Spirit? If so, on your knees at once with confession for your own sins.

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