

**PENTECOSTAL
OUTPOURINGS**

PENTECOSTAL OUTPOURINGS

REVIVAL AND THE REFORMED TRADITION

Edited by Robert Davis Smart,
Michael A. G. Haykin, and Ian Hugh Clary



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Pentecostal Outpourings

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Contents

Foreword – <i>Steven J. Lawson</i>	vii
Introduction – <i>Robert Davis Smart</i>	ix

Part 1: Revival in the British Isles

1. “The Power of Heaven in the Word of Life”: Welsh Calvinistic Methodism and Revival – <i>Eifion Evans</i>	3
2. “Melting the Ice of a Long Winter”: Revival and Irish Dissent – <i>Ian Hugh Clary</i>	29
3. “The Lord Is Doing Great Things, and Answering Prayer Everywhere”: The Revival of the Calvinistic Baptists in the Long Eighteenth Century – <i>Michael A. G. Haykin</i>	65
4. Revival: A Scottish Presbyterian Perspective – <i>Iain D. Campbell</i>	100

Part 2: Revival in America

5. Edwards’s Revival Instinct and Apologetic in American Presbyterianism: Planted, Grown, and Faded <i>Robert Davis Smart</i>	133
6. “The Glorious Work of God”: Revival among Congregationalists in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries – <i>Peter Beck</i>	164
7. Baptist Revivals in America in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries – <i>Tom J. Nettles</i>	194

8. Revival and the Dutch Reformed Church in
Eighteenth-Century America – *Joel R. Beeke* 230

A Concluding Word—A Call to Seek God for Revival Today
Robert Davis Smart 254

Contributors 259

Foreword

Addressing the subject of revival from a Reformed perspective, Martyn Lloyd-Jones (1899–1981) commented, “There is no subject which is of greater importance to the Christian church at the present time than that of revival. It should be the theme of our constant meditation, preaching and prayers.”¹ Lloyd-Jones’s deep-seated conviction concerning the crucial importance of revival never wavered throughout his life and ministry. It is what he longed for and sought for the times in which he lived.

It is this very emphasis upon revival that needs to be recaptured in the present. More importantly, its reality needs to be experienced in the church. Biblically and historically speaking, the term *revival* represents the powerful work of the Holy Spirit in which there is recovered a new awareness of the holiness of God among His people. This heightened knowledge brings in a new season of the conviction of sin, which, in turn, leads to heartrending repentance. This lowly humility ushers in an awakened love for Christ. Believers begin to pursue personal holiness. Love for other believers intensifies. The gospel spreads like wildfire. Sinners are brought to faith in Christ, and the church is enlarged and empowered.

The magisterial Reformer John Calvin (1509–1564) described such a season of vibrant renewal that comes to the church during a time of spiritual declension:

The restoration of the church proceeds solely from the grace of God, who can remove its barrenness as soon as he has imparted strength from heaven; for he who created all things out of nothing, as if they had

1. D. M. Lloyd-Jones, foreword to *Revive Us Again*, ed. Philip E. Hughes (London: Marshall Morgan and Scott, 1947), 5.

formerly existed, is able to renew it in a moment. . . . We are renewed as soon as the Lord has sent down the Spirit from heaven, that we who were “wilderness” may be cultivated and fertile fields. . . . Whenever, therefore, the church is afflicted, and when her condition appears to be desperate, let us raise our eyes to heaven, and depend fully on these promises.²

This sovereign work of revival is needed in every generation. The church always stands in need of the restoring work of God that replenishes its members and reenergizes its ministries. In times of spiritual lethargy, God often sends seasons of refreshing by the power of the Holy Spirit. These extraordinary times advance the church in her mission and witness in the world.

May this book, *Pentecostal Outpourings*, make a much-needed contribution to the church in recovering its vision for a heaven-sent work of grace. May the sovereign Head of the church, Jesus Christ, use these pages to lead His people to prepare themselves to be the recipients of the renewing power of God in this hour.

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2. Commentary on Isaiah 32:15 in *Calvin’s Commentaries* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1989), 7:420–21.

Introduction

Robert Davis Smart

There are two dreadful signs of a generation in decline that ought to concern us; namely, it neither knows the Lord *nor* the great works He has done (Judg. 2:10). So that another generation may arise with knowledge, we have compiled this new deposit of theological and historical interpretations from the Reformed perspective of those seasons in redemptive history wherein God has made Himself known and advanced His kingdom through revival.

We live in an age when the default option is unbelief and when authentic revivals are contested with other narratives and doubt. This is why the Reformed perspective on these extraordinary outpourings of God's Spirit is helpful. Whereas revival has often been associated with a humanly engineered series of meetings to convert the unsaved and with a fanatical experience that has little to do with the gospel and biblical theology, it is important to offer a brief definition by way of negatives first.

Pentecostal Outpourings demonstrates that revival is a sovereign gift from God in which, for a special season, His normal and true work of advancing His kingdom is sped up or quickened so that more is accomplished through His servants in a shorter period of time. Revivals cannot be merited by us but have been secured by another—Jesus Christ. Jesus tells His disciples that His righteous life and atoning death won for us “the promise of My Father” (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4). When Jesus ascended to the Father and sat down at the right hand of God, He poured out His Holy Spirit at Pentecost. This once-for-all historical and redemptive event was not the last time Christ poured out His Spirit in redemptive history. Subsequent outpourings of the Holy Spirit, working by and with the Word, are reviewed in this volume in order that we may seek God earnestly to revive His church once again soon.

Although the authors prize true revivals, we have taken special care to demonstrate that revivals are mixed with counterfeit Christianity and require wise leadership. Quality leadership in the midst of revivals requires discernment, as evil still seeks “to work us woe.” As subsequent outpourings of God’s Spirit are expected and difficult to interpret, to explain, and to promote, a Reformed perspective on revival will prove helpful until Jesus comes again in glory.

Pentecostal Outpourings depicts these special seasons of mercy in such a way that readers will hope for revivals once more as well as learn from past revival leaders. Wisdom warns against the folly of making so much of the past that we become ungrateful for God’s providence in the present. “Do not say, ‘Why were the former days better than these?’” warns the writer of Ecclesiastes. “For you do not inquire wisely concerning this” (7:10). The intent of our book is to promote the knowledge of God, the gospel of Christ, and the great outpourings of the Spirit through a variety of Reformed authors reflecting and applying historical and biblical lessons for today’s Christian leader.

Each chapter is differentiated by a certain Reformed tradition, historical context, and regional culture where revival occurred, yet each fits within an overall Reformed and biblical interpretation of revival. The authors share a similar motive with the contemporaries of the Great Awakening, who were interlaced in an international and interdenominational network to promote and pray for the advance of the gospel through revival and reformation.

Part 1 begins with revival in the British Isles. In chapter 1, Eifion Evans explains the importance and emergence of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist witness through eighteenth-century evangelical leaders. He helps the reader understand what is meant by *revival* and traces the “consolidation and decline” in the nineteenth century to express the relevance of revival for a church in declension and for the church today.

Ian Hugh Clary focuses in chapter 2 on two Ulster revivals and their relationship to Irish Dissent and includes a briefer discussion of revival among the Methodists during the Evangelical Awakening and the Baptist community in the early part of the nineteenth century. Clary evaluates them and shows their importance for giving a sense of origin and identity to Irish Dissent while demonstrating the value of revival to Irish Protestantism overall.

In chapter 3 Michael A. G. Haykin traces the transition from the English Calvinistic Baptists’ initial aversion to revival to their promotion of it at the end of the eighteenth century. He explains the reason for the Baptist

rejection of the Evangelical Revival (also known as the Great Awakening) and shows how Andrew Fuller and John Sutcliff played a major role as leaders, promoting, defending, and praying for revival thereafter.

In a similar way Iain D. Campbell expresses a resistance to the notion of revival among Scottish Presbyterians today in chapter 4. After stating the duty of reformation as distinct from the desire for revival, he accomplishes three objectives. He describes the histories of revival in Scotland, gives perspective on them from within the Scottish Presbyterian tradition, and offers applications for today.

Part 2, “Revival in America,” begins with a reminder of the influence of Jonathan Edwards, and two authors offer their perspectives on this important theologian’s ecclesiological participation—one viewing Edwards as a Presbyterian, and the other as a Congregationalist. In chapter 5 Robert Davis Smart shows how Jonathan Edwards’s revival instinct and apologetic became intertwined with the history of American Presbyterianism’s rise and fall, her schisms and unions. He demonstrates how the longing for successive outpourings of the Spirit and Edwards’s defense of their legitimacy and value faded in popularity among American Presbyterians by the nineteenth century.

In chapter 6 Peter Beck introduces the reader to two Congregational leaders, separated by sixty years, who sought God for revival and were used in revivals. Beck argues that Jonathan Edwards and Asahel Nettleton, representing the First and Second Great Awakenings, respectively, “blaze a trail the modern church must take once more.”

Turning from the Presbyterian and Congregational histories, in chapter 7 Tom J. Nettles surveys the Baptists and revivals in America during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. After surveying the salient revivals and the Baptist leaders God greatly used, he ends with an important word for today—namely, that revival became a thing of the past when an emphasis on the individual’s “immediate decision” and human engineering replaced the previous two centuries of doctrinal knowledge and commitment to genuine revival.

Finally, Joel R. Beeke traces the great works of Christ in the Dutch Reformed churches in the eighteenth-century New World in chapter 8. He accomplishes this by examining the roots of this movement in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Dutch Further Reformation and then exploring the revival theology of Theodorus Jacobus Frelinghuysen, showing how it appears in the theology and experiences of ministers of the Dutch

Reformed Church later. He concludes with lessons for modern-day ministers and Christian laypeople.

We join with the psalmist in urging fathers to teach their children, “that the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born...that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God” (Ps. 78:6–7). We pray with another psalmist, “Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?” (Ps. 85:6).