

Revivals And Church History :: BEND US LORD... Excerpts from Evan Roberts.**BEND US LORD... Excerpts from Evan Roberts. - posted by EAGLEFLYING (), on: 2018/2/16 20:19**

Evan Roberts and the Welsh Revival.

Though only 26 years old, Evan Roberts had no time for youthful entertainment and pleasure. "Day and night without ceasing, he prayed, wept and sighed for a great spiritual awakening..." Roberts writes, "...for ten or eleven years I have prayed for revival. I could sit up all night to read or talk about revivals." Eventually Evan Roberts was turned out of his lodging by his landlady who thought that in his enthusiasm he was possessed or somewhat mad. "He spent hours praying and preaching in his room until the lady became afraid of him, and asked him to leave."

'May God give us some more spiritual madness and enthusiasm like this.'

EVAN ROBERTS & THE WELSH REVIVAL

(1904)

In the years preceding the Welsh Revival which broke out in November of 1904, there were very definite signs of coming glory, especially in the 10 months leading in to it. There were many who were soaked in prayer and who had a living expectation that they were on the verge of great revival. A number of hungry saints had read Andrew Murray's book *With Christ in the School of Prayer*. God had prepared a people and had carefully moulded a number of vessels to lead a nation back to God. Many were prepared, many were used, but Evan Roberts was certainly to become the most prominent and the one we shall look at here.

Evan Roberts was born of very godly devout and hard working parents in 1878. He was one of 14 children and one of seven sons. Their home, called 'Island House' was situated on the banks of the river Llwchwr in Loughor, a small village in Glamorgan in South Wales. Near Loughor was the coal mine where he went to work with his father. He was just 11 years old at the time which of course brought an end to his school education. He was a 'door boy' which entailed opening and closing doors for the drams carrying coal up and down the shafts. The old Welsh preachers would refer to those dark and dangerous mines as a picture of Hell or the darkness of men's depraved hearts, to which those like Evan who worked down underground, could well relate.

From his earliest days Evan was of a most serious and solemn nature. He was a constant student of the Bible and was never found without it, either in his hand or pocket. Once in an explosion in the mine his Bible was scorched but Evan was unharmed. When manning these mine doors he would often give the passing miners a written text of scripture to meditate on and would later ask them what they had learned. This boy intended to be a preacher. His separation from all the boyish fun of others of his age around him was just a mark of how serious he was about this. He had no outstanding gift to speak or expound the scripture that anyone could see, but the blamelessness of his life was apparent to all.

He faithfully attended every weekly meeting at Moriah Chapel, the large Calvinistic Methodist church which his family attended. Moriah was one of several Nonconformist chapels in Loughor. After an Elder challenged young Evan concerning faithfulness in attending God's House he made it his habit to attend without fail. The Elder had queried how Evan would feel if he were absent when the Spirit of God fell, so there was not a night of the week when he was not at some meeting. In 1902 he left work in the mine and began an apprenticeship with his uncle as a Blacksmith going about his business faithfully and almost un-noticed, but his desire in the pursuit of the call of God became very evident.

He had held back for years in stepping forward for ministerial training because he knew well how such theological schools had killed the spirit of many. Prior to the revival, academic qualifications and learning came to be more emphasized for the ministry than a spiritual life and fervency. Eventually he was recommended for the ministry by Moriah Chapel in 1903 which meant the trial of his preaching skills in Moriah and other associated chapels. It also meant that his personal experience with Christ and his call to the ministry would be scrutinised by mature godly men. It is of interest to note that George Muller's writings on faith and prayer had left quiet a mark upon him in his walk with God. In these days as he prepared for ministry he was praying much in faith that God would baptise him with the Holy Spirit.

He was no victim of higher-criticism or modernism but believed in the depravity of man's heart, the eternal punishment of Christ rejecters and of the miracle working power of God to save sinners through the atoning blood of Christ. He preached obedience, holiness and subjection to Christ.

Initially he was deeply depressed over the state of the church generally as it was a sad failure in comparison to Scripture. But one night while trying to prevail with God in prayer and before breaking through, he fell asleep. In the middle of the night he awoke suddenly with unspeakable joy in the very presence of Almighty God. For four hours he spoke to the Lord face to face as a friend would. From that moment he knew God was going to work in the land. A similar burden of prayer came to him every night for the next 4 months. It would be wrong to say that this was the beginning of his prayer for revival for he had been praying for the previous 11 years that God would send revival to Wales and for 13 years for a personal filling of the Holy Spirit.

In September 1904 aged 26, he moved to Newcastle Grammar School for preliminary studies. It was here that he would have a meeting with God that would be as significant as Moses meeting God at the burning bush.

Seth Joshua, pioneer Evangelist for the Calvinistic Methodist Forward Movement, had been mightily converted back in 1882 at a Salvation Army meeting when he knelt at an old wooden seat and cried unto God for forgiveness and salvation. Those were days when Salvationists had invaded the valleys with a revival spirit. They held open-air meetings and the salvation lasses played their tambourines amidst testimonies and shouts of "hallelujah." The CM Forward Movement had been founded by denominational leaders as an aggressive attempt to reach the Welsh communities which were unmoved by the power of the Gospel. The Forward Movement certainly carried something of the spirit of those Salvationists and so did Seth.

Those who knew him called him a "Man of God" for he was wholly dedicated and consecrated unto God. He was a man that God could use. He was not bound by typical trends of religion or tradition. For some time he had been greatly concerned about the emphasis on education rather than an emphasis on a real spiritual experience and walk with God as the singular qualification for ministry. He continued with a deep burden and prayer laid upon him by God that He would "take a lad from the coal-mine or from the field, even as He took Elisha from the plough, to revive His work."

When Seth came to Newcastle Emlyn to hold a campaign, the Principal of Evan Roberts's school encouraged all the boys to attend the meetings. At these meetings Evan was much impressed with the fervour and message of the preacher as he sat night after night intently listening to this messenger from God. The campaign ended without any unusual manifestation or sign that God was about to do a great work. Seth Joshua thought the ground seemed hard and the people unresponsive. Even Evan found his own heart to be somewhat hard and cold. The Evangelist moved on to his next place, a small neighbourhood on the coast of Cardigan Bay, but there were some very definite workings of God in the hearts of the people. A group of the students from the Grammar School made plans to travel to these meetings

with Evan among them.

As they travelled they sang "It is coming; it is coming; the power of the Holy Ghost. I receive it; I receive it; the power of the Holy Ghost." After the first early morning meeting Seth Joshua prayed asking God to "bend them". This prayer became Roberts' prayer in a powerful way. Now he prayed "bend me Lord" with all his heart. Soon this would become the prayer of a nation. In the next morning meeting young Evans fell upon his knees and then lay prostrate asking God this one thing "bend me, bend me". He was sweating profusely as he travailed in prayer and groaned in spirit. That day he died, he became a new man, another man. It was a virtual baptism of fire in which God did bend him. These meetings continued for several days with other young friends having similar experiences. Evan was now given over to prayer for a great spiritual awakening in Wales. It became impossible for him to carry on his studies. He asked God for others who were filled with fire who would stand by him in the task ahead, they were soon given to him. He made initial plans to step out in faith with this little band in evangelistic labourers from county to county but it seems the Lord restrained him from such.

During these weeks there were those looking on who felt Evan was losing touch with reality, becoming fanatical and extreme. They were very concerned about him. One of the nights Evan and Sidney were up in the middle of the night travelling in prayer for souls when their hostess came and rebuked them for the noise at such an unusual time.

It was in the Sunday morning meeting as Evan Phillips preached on "Father the hour is come" that Evan had a vision of the church in Loughor with young men sitting in rows and he was preaching to them. The Spirit of God was commissioning him to go and speak to them. Finally he yielded to God's will. After speaking with his Principal he left Newcastle Emlyn on the 31st of October for Loughor by train. All he had was the Holy Spirit. No one was expecting him in Loughor and no meetings were arranged. His family were sceptical of his enthusiasm and his minister slow to arrange a meeting but finally he persuaded the various older ministers in the area to allow him to speak at their churches that week. The first meeting was a youth meeting held on the Monday night. There were just seventeen present. As he testified of what God had been doing and was about to do he exhorted them to prepare themselves for a baptism of the Holy Ghost. At first the meeting was hard but finally the power of God came down and all who were not saved were instantly converted and the others yielded themselves unreservedly to God.

The next day news of the deep effect and change in the lives of these youth spread. Night after night meetings were held with more gathering in as he went from church to church. The people prayed, listened, repented and rejoiced. His message to sinners was repent, his message to the saints was be filled with the Spirit. By the end of the week the community was astir. Meetings went on for 5 hours, many lay prostrate on the ground under deep conviction of sin and agony of soul until they received salvation. The following week, meetings continued to 5 in the morning with sleep, food and normal activities forgotten.

Then an invitation came from a church in Aberdare where the proposed speaker had cancelled his Sunday morning engagement. Evan arrived there with three young ladies accompanying him. The congregation was trundling along in normalcy, but not for long. The church elders expected a good service but nothing unusual. The service began with one of the young ladies bursting into song as tears rolled down her cheeks. The young preacher was bent over in his seat shaking as he wept. Suddenly one of the church's proudest members fell on her knees and confessed her sins publicly in agonising prayer. People knelt everywhere. The organ remained silent and the service went on all day. By that nightfall the community was astir and a great host gathered at this chapel. Some were singing "O, the Lamb, the Bleeding Lamb" or "Throw out the lifeline, throw out the lifeline." Others were praying and travailing. Some were sitting, many were kneeling, and others were prostrate. Words of knowledge flowed from the young revivalist. Meetings continued, fire spread and homes were changed. The same thing happened in every chapel in this community that sought God. The services were spontaneous and unorganised. People prayed, testified and sang as prompted by the Spirit of God. Reports began to appear in newspapers which at first were very disparaging but not long after when

reporters were also converted, the papers carried very supportive reports. News of this Welsh Revival now spread abroad to many nations.

At times Evan could preach for hours, other times he gave short direct words (always in the Welsh language). Sometimes he cried, sometimes he laughed and rejoiced. He was of course most prominent; a vessel raised up by God to lead but the revival was everywhere. Many ministers arose to preach and lead their people back to God and into revival. National sports were deserted; theatres were emptied; pubs closed and crime dropped. In Cardiff police reported that drunkenness dropped by 60% within one month of the revival beginning. This revival even invaded brothels and gambling dens. Hardened, cursing miners were suddenly transformed and they would have been regarded to be the hardest people to reach in the land. Agnostics repented and put faith in the Blood of the Lamb for forgiveness. Children prayed down the power of God. At the centre of every prayer, song and the message was Calvary and the bleeding Lamb.

Preachers came from across Britain and the world to see the glory of the Lord fill His temple. When F.B. Meyer, the famous London preacher came to investigate this outpouring, he was urged to preach but refused and sat silent in the School of the Holy Ghost. G. Campbell Morgan scared of being a hindrance finished his preaching engagements and told Roberts he was leaving. When asked his opinion about the revival he said it is "Pentecost continued". William Booth packed his bag and left the revival as quickly as possible. These great preachers and leaders were scared to touch this work of God. They sat idly by while children and old coal miners waxed eloquent in prayer and testimony. True revival is never organised by man, committees or denominations. The fear of God amidst manifestations of righteousness protected the work. Roberts himself strove to keep out of sight and not to hinder God working. He refused to have photos taken of him and refused many international invitations to minister.

Even politicians had to take note. Mr Lloyd George a Member of Parliament (and later Prime minister of Britain) said "...it is certainly the most remarkable spiritual movement this generation has witnessed... seems to be rocking Welsh life like a great earthquake."

This revival especially captured the youth but it never missed or neglected the old. It was a singing revival but the songs were crammed with sound doctrine. It was a time of blessing for the church but the emphasis was on seeing sinners saved. It was indeed a Welsh revival (not a British Revival) but the fire did carry across Britain, Europe and the world by those whose tongue was touched by a coal from of the altar. A desire and love for reading the scriptures resulted from this revival. Holiness of heart and conduct was wrought mightily. Worldly methods of drawing and keeping people in the church were nullified. This was a Heaven Sent Revival. One eye witness said "DIVINE MOVEMENTS have their birthplace in the heart of deity."

Evan Roberts had maintained an unparalleled and active schedule without proper break or rest. It was inevitable that it would take its toll. By January 1906 he had finished a phase of life. He had ministered in South Wales continually as well as in the North and in Liverpool. A great many praised him as an anointed man of God whilst others counted him a deceiver and his revival as false. He had gone through a time of terrible mental strain and fatigue and his body was tired. To the surprise of all he seemed to disappear from the work and sight of all. We have not the space to continue here but there are many great biographies on Evan Roberts and the Welsh Revival available. He finally went to be with the Lord in January 1951.

At a glance, what were the final results of this revival? Within 2 months of its beginnings there had been over 30,000 converts. Within six months 100,000 converts. By the beginning of 1906 who could know? By 1910 its influence was felt in every corner of the globe. Religious systems in Britain tried to explain it all away by claiming it was the product of Welsh

motion but for over 100 years it has been regarded as a major part of the Christian heritage and saints continue to be encouraged and challenged by it.

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