

Revivals And Church History :: National Welsh newspaper: November 15th 1904, "Spread of the Revival"

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These newspaper articles are provided to encourage Christians throughout the world to pray for, and to live expectantly of, a new revival in our day and age. As a young Christian living in South Wales I avidly read these Western Mail accounts and visited the locations of the scenes described, and my heart leapt at the prospect that God would do it again. It is my prayer that you too will know such encouragement from reading these accounts. However, these articles were, for the most part, written by unconverted men, and read in isolation will give you a one-sided view of the revival. There is a danger of outright rejection that this was a move of God, or a blind acceptance of the emotional, with no spiritual discernment of the true, life changing work of Grace that rocked a nation. Either reaction would be a great loss to the furtherance of the work of God, so please read these few words with an open and a warm heart, and then be astonished and full of praise at the things our God did for the people of Wales in 1904.

November 15th. 1904.

SPREAD OF THE REVIVAL

IMPRESSIVE SERVICE AT TRECYNON. STIRRING SCENES IN THE CHURCH.

Modest almost to the point of despair was the beginning made by the Evan Roberts revival mission at Trecynon on Monday evening, and the omens pointed to orthodox quietness rather than the exuberance of emotional fervour which has characterized in such a remarkable degree the revival services at Loughor. When the service was timed to commence at Ebenezer Chapel the empty pews were more numerous than the people and there was a coldness in the air which boded ill for a successful meeting. Those that know Trecynon, a little village which nestles on the borders of Aberdare, with its traditions of religious zeal, will be most surprised to know that Ebenezer was not besieged on such an occasion, and, perhaps at the same time, they best appreciate the remark of a village stoic that, "The fair at Aberdare was a powerful counter attraction".

Instead of finding an eager throng outside of the chapel (writes one of our representatives), I was surprised to see only some half dozen groups of miners and their wives and sons gathered together, as is their wont, on the occasion of the ordinary weekly prayer meeting. Later in the evening the reason for this sparse attendance became obvious. The service had been started so early that workmen had not been given sufficient time to go to their homes from their work and change their working clothes, for those they considered better fitting a religious service. While the few who had seated themselves in the chapel awaited the arrival of the young revivalist- An elderly man seated beneath the gallery offered up a prayer, and a young man who was seated in another part of the building recited the words of the popular Welsh hymn, "Diagwyl rwy ar byd yr hinos", the first two lines of which were being repeated when the five young ladies from Loughor, who have played so prominent a part in the mission with their speech and song, walked up the aisle and seated themselves on the 'set fawr'. One of them possessing a sweet mezzo-soprano voice with a singular tenderness sang "Happy Day", and the early coldness was already beginning to thaw under the influence of the intensifying fervour with which the refrain was sung and sung again.

FULL OF EMOTION.

The melody was in full swing when Mr Roberts took his seat beneath the pulpit, before uttering a word he approached the old man who had been the first to pray, and grasped his hand. The building by this time was filling rapidly. Evan Roberts looked pale, but was full of animation. While another hymn was being sung he walked up and down the aisle, swinging his arms and clapping his hands. At times he gave a short sharp spring off his right foot, and smiled joyously on the people around him. There was no conventionality, no artificiality or affectation in his manner. The expression on his open, at times attenuated and distinctly intellectual face was that of a man with a mission, and remained one of so many portraits to be found in Welsh homesteads, of men who were leaders in the two previous religious revivals in Wales.

Speaking in Welsh, he discarded the stereotyped preface so commonly in vogue among preachers in the Principality, and straightway declared the faith that was in him, he had not come there, he said, to frighten them with a discourse on the terrors of everlasting punishment. His belief was that the love of Christ was a powerful enough magnet to draw the people

e. That was his own personal, experience and he had found a joy which was far beyond human expression. No one but the true believer knew what it was like to have a light heart and unalloyed happiness. Denominationalism did not enter into his religion. Some people said he was a Methodist. He did not know what he was. Sectarianism melted in the fire of the Holy Spirit, and all men who believed became one happy family. For years he was a faithful member of a church, a zealous worker, and a free giver. But he had recently discovered he was not a Christian and there were thousands like him.

A NEW LIGHT IN HIS LIFE.

It was only since that discovery that a new light had come into his life. That same light was shining upon all men if they would but open their eyes and hearts. Reverting to Sectarianism, he said, that while sect was fighting against sect the devil was clapping his hands with glee and encouraging the fight, let all people be one with one object, the Salvation of Sinners. Men refused to accept the gospel and confess because, they said, of the gloom and uncertainty of the future. They looked to the future without opening their eyes to the infinite glories of the present. They talked of the revival of 1859, why? There would be perpetual revival if men would only keep their hearts open instead of closing them to every influence. If anyone had come there that evening to make an impression, he advised him or her to refrain. Unless they felt that they were moved to speech or song let them keep their peace. He did not come there to glorify himself. Glad tidings had come to Loughor regarding a mission among Gypsies in their encampment near that place. The soul of a Gypsy was of no less value than that of any other human creature.

Such was the substance of Mr Roberts address. He spoke for an hour and a quarter under evident restraint and in quiet confident style. He made no attempt at rhetoric and was never at a loss for a phrase or a word. Those who might have come to scoff and did not remain to pray must, at any rate, have been deeply impressed by the profound earnestness of the young man, and there is no doubt his absolute sincerity and conviction.

FELL BACK IN HER PEW.

Immediately he had resumed his seat two elderly women rose simultaneously, one speaking in Welsh the other speaking in English. The voice of her who spoke the latter language rang out clearly and a common thrill trembled through the assembly as a breath of wind runs across the sea. Her last words were, "I love my Master because I know what He has done for me", and then she fell back in the pew. A young woman came forward with the Bible in her hand and was preparing to read when Mr Roberts asked the people to sing "Duw mawr y rhyffedodian maith", the stirring words of which were repeated several times. After reading a portion of scripture the young man knelt down in prayer, and an impassioned fervour spread into all parts of the crowded chapel.

After some more singing led off by one of the five young ladies from Loughor, an elderly man gave some reminiscences of the great revival of 1859, "I am a child of that revival", he said. He told his hearers how in those stirring times publicans took down their signboards, how people gathered in the woods and the open fields to worship.

Speaking for the second time, Mr Roberts said that Policemen on Loughor were having an easy time, and the publican deplored the loss of customers. He knew of one young man who had left a public house with the remark, "I am going to hear that lunatic" meaning him (Mr Roberts). That man came to the service and left a penitent convert. Another man had suddenly dropped on his knees in front of a pint of beer inside a Loughor public house.

During the remainder of the night men and women broke forth in prayer and song, and a meeting that had opened so coldly was in a white heat of religious enthusiasm before the last word had been said.

REVIVALIST AT DOWLAIS.

Something akin to spiritual revival has been experienced during the last month at Hebron Welsh Baptist Chapel, Caeharris, Dowlais, where the nightly special meetings conducted by the pastor (Rev. Ceinfryn Thomas) have been productive of remarkable scenes and most gratifying results. Only a few weeks ago the Rev., gentlemen immersed no fewer than forty two persons of both sexes at one service, whilst on Sunday morning twenty five more were baptized.

Re: National Welsh newspaper: November 15th 1904, "Spread of the Revival" - posted by crsschk (), on: 2003/9/13 10:1

Quote:

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