

Lifting Up The STANDARD

“When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him” (Isaiah 59:19).



Challenging And Encouraging God's Remnant To Remain Faithful

Revival???

As a young Christian, saved at the age of twelve, I became very interested in the subject of revival. I studied what God had accomplished through men like John Wesley, George Whitefield, D. L. Moody, Charles Finney, and many others. What I read was thrilling to me; however, over the years I have come to the conclusion that I may have received some slanted information about what actually took place.

Considering Revival Influences

A revival usually influences the behaviour of many people; however, the influence will differ in direct accordance to who is the spiritual leader at the time. For example, during what we call the **“First Great Awakening”** Jonathan Edwards was influencing people. His sermons and writings were saturated with Bible doctrine. Edwards has left us with a wealth of biblical insights. The Yale edition of Edwards' Works stands at twenty-seven thick volumes and that does not include the full extent of his writings. We may not agree with everything Jonathan Edwards said, wrote, or did, as is true of every leader used of God. However, one thing is evident, God used Jonathan Edwards. **His ministry spanned thirty-two years.**

During what we call “The Second Great Awakening” Charles Finney was influencing people. Once again, we may not agree with everything Finney taught or did; however, it is obvious that God used him. His sermons and writings were saturated with Scriptures. Finney said the secret of God working was simply prayer. **His ministry spanned fifty-three years.**

During what we call “The Welsh Revival” of 1905, Evan Roberts had a major influence on people mainly because the newspapers of the day promoted him; however, **Evan Roberts' ministry lasted only six months.** The fact is, R.A. Torrey was used of God to spark the fires of revival in Wales, over a year before Evan Roberts came on the scene. In Cardiff, Wales it was estimated some 35,000 were turned away on the last day of the meetings under the ministry of R.A. Torrey.

Torrey's evangelistic tours took him to Australia, New Zealand, India, Great Britain, United States and Canada. Torrey wrote approximately forty books and his practical writings on the Holy Spirit, prayer, salvation, soul-winning, and evangelism are still favorites of many Christians. His first book was **“How to Bring Men to Christ”** (1893). His last book, **“Lectures on the First Epistle of John,”** was published in 1929, after his death. **Torrey was actively involved in the work of the Lord for over fifty years.**

What Really Happened In Wales?

Before dealing with this question I want to say that after extensively studying the life of Evan Roberts, I believe he was a sincere person with a desire to have God's power on his life; however, he was led astray by the Keswick theology that was taught at that time. The unscriptural teaching of what they call "*the baptism of the Holy Spirit*" led to the many unscriptural things Evan Roberts taught, and the things he did.

Who Is Telling The Truth?

We have only the information of people from over a hundred years ago to form our opinions about Evan Roberts. Some have described Evan Roberts meetings using words such as "*confusion reigns,*" "*without order, without purpose, and without decency,*" and "*hysteria.*"

In his book entitled "The Welsh Religious Revival, 1904-5" J. V. Morgan said,

"Now that the excitement of the Revival is over, and the nation has regained its sanity, we are able to look more analytically upon the career of a man who, for a brief period, loomed largely in the imagination of the people. As to Evan Roberts, it can be safely said that people were moved more by the mystery of the man than by his cause."

On the other hand, W.T. Stead was a newspaper editor at the time of the Welsh revival. He described the meetings very differently. In his newspaper report he said:

What I saw in Wales - 1904

"December 10th. I went down to Cardiff, and was joined there by the Rev. Thomas Law, the Organizing Secretary of the National Council, and Gipsy Smith. I cannot do better than reprint here these first clear impressions of what I found going on in South Wales. The vast congregations were as soberly sane, as orderly, and at least as reverent as any congregation I ever saw beneath the dome of St. Paul's. I think I am justified in saying that both Mr. Law and Gipsy Smith are absolutely at one with me in the conclusions which I embodied in my report to the Daily Chronicle of Tuesday. I also saw the special emissary despatched by the Rev. F. B. Meyer for the purpose of spying out the land, and heard from him the impression produced on his mind by what he had seen and heard."

We may be quicker to listen to Mr. Stead because he is saying what we want to hear, and he used men like F. B. Meyer and Gipsy Smith to support his position; however, we will examine the situation looking at Evan Robert's own testimonies and thereby get some insight to the man, his message, and his methods.

Evan Roberts' Public Ministry Lasted Only Six Months

As previously mentioned, after only six months of ministry, Evan Roberts was off the scene. He retired to the home of Mrs. Jessie Penn Lewis for what was originally intended to be a one week period of rest; however, he was not to be heard from for nearly twenty-five years.

According to Owen Roberts, (Glory Filled the Land Wheaton: International Awakening Press, 1989, pages 195-96), Evan Roberts did not even attend his mother's funeral. He did have a brief ministry campaign at the Moriah Chapel of Loughor, in 1929-30, and then spent the remainder of his years in deep depression and isolation, dying in 1951 at the age of seventy-two.

In an address at the 1970 Ministers Conference of the Evangelical Movement of Wales **Martyn Lloyd-Jones, who had treated Roberts medically**, believed that Roberts crossed the line from the spiritual to the psychic and it was this which led to a breakdown from which he never recovered.

“It was not that he had 'tricked' others, he himself had been misled. There was wonderful revival but it did not last, for the Bible was largely ignored, visions and new revelations were paramount, church elders and ministers were condemned as heretics if they did not yield and conform to new methods; spiritual leaders were often ignored. Church leaders surrendered control to novices and the inexperienced out of fear of stopping the revival. A few years after the revival Evan Roberts came to see that ‘the bold claims he had made in the past, were enough proof that he had been deceived...from now on he would distrust mystical experiences’. Roberts grew more and more discouraged as he saw some groups of converts following after cults in which they barked at the devil, danced and swooned, or followed healers or prophetesses.” (IM, Pentecost – Today, 163 ref. to Jones, Life of Roberts, 173 - Ibid, 165, ref. Jones, 158)

Evan Roberts Promoted “The Baptism of The Holy Spirit.”

In B. P. Jones book, **“Instrument of Revival**, on page thirty-nine he reported,

“One day, after having spent some time on his knees in his tiny room, he [Evan] went out to his mother. Placing his hand upon her shoulder, he said with a tremor in his voice and a strange light in his eyes, ‘Mother, you have been a Christian a good many years and a good Christian mother you have been. But Mother, there is one more thing that you need...Ma’am, the one thing more that you need is the Baptism of the Holy Ghost.’” (emphasis added).

Evan Roberts was a victim of the Keswick theology that teaches that once a person is saved he needs what they called *“the second blessing.”* They believe that if after salvation one does not have another encounter with the Holy Spirit, he or she will not progress into holiness or the *“deeper”* things of God. This teaching stems from taking Scripture out of context and can send a sincere Christian on a trip of seeking the *“second blessing.”* Some even taught that once you received this *“baptism of the Holy Spirit”* you would never sin again.

It seems it was the desire for this special blessing that drove Evan Roberts in the direction that he went. Roberts claimed to have had an out-of-body experience. It was reported in The Overcomer Magazine that Roberts said,

“It happened about one o’clock in the morning, when someone touched me and I was caught up; whether in body or out of the body, I cannot recall, but I went higher and higher.” (Roberts, Glory Filled the Land, 183).

No Need For The Bible Just Follow The Spirit Leading.

In an interview with journalist W.T. Stead, in response to Stead’s questions concerning the role of the Spirit in the revival meetings, Roberts replies:

“Obey the Spirit – that is our word in everything. It is the Spirit alone which is leading us in our meetings and all that we do...why should I teach when the Spirit is teaching?” (Roberts, Glory Filled the Land, 183).

In his book, An Instrument of the Spirit, on page twenty-six Jones relates the following story.

*“When they felt they needed guidance, Evan wrote down four questions in shorthand and placed them on two small Bibles in the Lord’s presence. They came back in fear and trembling to that room to collect God’s answers, but there were none. **Then a voice spoke to Evan:** You asked who should go and where and when and how. First you should have asked God, Shall we go? The good Lord permitted them to go ahead, but they had learned a vital lesson for missionaries.” (emphasis added).*

Evan's unscriptural behavior continued throughout his life and ministry. David Matthews wrote a book "I Saw The Welsh Revival." David Matthews, according to his eyewitness account said, Evan asked God for a taste of the agonies of Gethsemane. Matthews believed that his prayer was answered before his eyes.

"Falling on the floor near the pulpit, he [Roberts] moaned like one mortally wounded, while his tears flowed incessantly. His fine physical frame shook under crushing soul-anguish. No one was allowed to touch him. Those seated close to him frustrated any attempt at assistance which many willing hands would have gladly rendered. The majority of us were petrified with fear in the presence of such uncontrollable grief." (David Matthews, I Saw the Welsh Revival: an Eyewitness Account of the 1904 Revival in Wales (Kimmell, IN: Pioneer Books pages 43-44).

Evan Roberts Said;

"I should like also to emphasize that the higher you go in the spiritual life the harder is the battle, and the more difficult it is to know the difference between the devil's voice and the voice of God. This is my difficulty now, how to know the difference between the two voices. The devil sometimes can make his voice very much like God's voice." (Phillips. Evan Roberts: The Great Welsh Revivalist and His Work, page 433).

The reason Roberts felt that way is because of his lack of understanding the importance of comparing everything with the Word of God. Jesus said, "*Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth*" (John 16:13). When praying to His Father Jesus also said, "*Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth*" (John 17:17). The Holy Spirit and the Word of God are always in total harmony.

It is interesting that in 1912, seven years after Roberts vanished from the forefront of activities, he co-authored the book "The War On The Saints" in which he and Jessie Penn-Lewis dealt with "**The Work of Deceiving Spirits Among the Children of God.**" It was apparently an effort to warn others of his previous state of spiritual deception and confusion. In a letter published in the Overcomer Magazine, Roberts referred to The War on the Saints as his unnamed biography.

For Many Years Evan Roberts Was Actively Involved In Religious Things

He had been actively involved in the church most of his life. From the age of thirteen he went to church five nights a week as well as Sundays; however, at the age of twenty-six he said "*he had recently discovered that he was not a Christian.*" On November 14, 1904, Evan Roberts was interviewed by a reporter from the Western Mail News. During that interview Evan Roberts told the reporter,

"For years he was a faithful member of the Church, a zealous worker, and a free giver. But he had recently discovered that he was not a Christian, and there were thousands like him."

Evan Roberts refused to preach a negative gospel

"Martyn Lloyd-Jones claimed that any preaching which soothes, comforts and pleases those who have never been brought to fear God, nor to seek His mercy, is not preaching which the Spirit of God will own ... present day preaching does not even annoy men and women, but leaves them precisely where they were, without a ruffle and without the slightest disturbance ... The church is regarded as a sort of dispensary where drugs and soothing mixtures are distributed and in which everyone should be eased and comforted... Before men and women can be converted they must be convicted of sin by the Holy Spirit. (Iain Murray, ML-J the First Forty Years, p206).

Evan Roberts Had Visions And Heard Voices

Evan Roberts Interview ((The Story of the Welsh Revival, New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1905)

"Can you tell me how you began to take to this work?"

"Oh, yes, that I will," said Mr. Roberts, "if you wish to hear of it. For a long, long time I was much troubled in my soul and my heart by thinking over the failure of Christianity. Oh! it seemed such a failure—such a failure—and I prayed and prayed, but nothing seemed to give me any relief. But one night, after I had been in great distress praying about this, I went to sleep, and at one o'clock in the morning suddenly I was waked up out of my sleep, and I found myself with unspeakable joy and awe in the very presence of the Almighty God. And for the space of four hours I was privileged to speak face to face with Him as a man speaks face to face with a friend. At five o'clock it seemed to me as if I again returned to earth."

"Were you not dreaming?" I asked.

"No, I was wide awake. And it was not only that morning, but every morning for three or four months. Always I enjoyed four hours of that wonderful communion with God. I cannot describe it. I felt it, and it seemed to change all my nature, and I saw things in a different light, and I knew that God was going to work in the land, and not this land only, but in all the world."

"Excuse me," I said, "but, as an old interviewer, may I ask if, when the mystic ecstasy passed, you put on paper all that you remembered of these times of communion?"

"No, I wrote nothing at all," said Mr. Roberts. "It went on all the time until I had to go to Newcastle Emlyn to the college to prepare for the ministry. I dreaded to go for fear I should lose these four hours with God every morning. But I had to go, and it happened as I feared. For a whole month He came no more, and I was in darkness. And my heart became as a stone. Even the sight of the Cross brought no tears to my eyes. So it continued until, to my great joy, He returned to me, and I had again the glorious communion. And He said I must go and speak to my people in my own village. But I did not go. I did not feel as if I could go to speak to my own people."

May I ask," I said, "if He of whom you speak appeared to you as Jesus Christ?"

"No," said Mr. Roberts, "not so; it was the personal God, not as Jesus."

"As God the Father Almighty?" I said.

"Yes," said Mr. Roberts, "and the Holy Spirit."

"Pardon me," I said, "but I interrupted you. Pray go on."

*"I did not go to my people, but I was troubled and ill at ease. And one Sunday, as I sat in the chapel, I could not fix my mind upon the service, for always before my eyes I saw, as in a **vision**, the schoolroom in Lougher, where I live. And there, sitting in rows before me, I saw my old companions and all the young people, and I saw myself addressing them. **I shook my head impatiently, and strove to drive away this vision, but it always came back. And I heard a voice in my inward ear as plain as anything saying, 'Go and speak to these people.'** And for a long time I would not. But the pressure became greater and greater, and I could hear nothing of the sermon. Then at last I could resist no longer, and I said, 'Well, Lord, if it is Thy will, I will go.' **Then instantly the vision vanished, and the whole chapel became filled with light so dazzling that I could faintly see the minister in the pulpit, and between him and me the glory as of the light of the sun in Heaven.**" (emphasis mine).*

"And then you went home?"

*"No; I went to my tutor and told him all things, and asked him if he believed that it was of God or of the devil? And he said the devil does not put good thoughts into the mind. **I must go and obey the heavenly vision.** So I went back to Lougher, and I saw my own minister, and him also I told. And he said that I might try and see what I could do, but that the ground was stony and the task would be hard."*

"Did you find it so?"

*"I asked the young people to come together, for I wanted to talk to them. They came and I stood up to talk to them,' and, behold, **it was even as I had seen in the church at Newcastle Emlyn.** The young people sat as I had seen them sitting all together in rows before me, and I was speaking to them even as it had been shown to me. At first they did not seem inclined to listen; but I went on, and at last the power of the Spirit came down and six came out for Jesus. But I was not satisfied. **Oh, Lord,' I said, 'give me six more—I must have six more!'** And we prayed together. At last the seventh came, and then the eighth and the ninth together, and after a time the tenth, and then the eleventh, and last of all came the twelfth also. But no more. And they saw that the Lord had given me the second six, and they began to believe in the power of prayer."*

More Visions

Following this burden for souls, Evans began praying for a hundred thousand souls and had **two visions** which encouraged him to believe it would happen. **He saw a lighted candle and behind it the rising sun.** He felt the interpretation was that the present blessings were only as a lighted candle compared with the blazing glory of the sun. Later, all of Wales would be flooded with revival glory. **In the other vision,** Evan looked up to see what seemed to be **an arm outstretched from the moon, reaching down into Wales.** He later told a friend,

"I have wonderful news for you. I had a vision of all Wales being lifted up to heaven. We are going to see the mightiest revival that Wales has ever known – and the Holy Spirit is coming just now. We must get ready."

The Beginning of Pentecostalism

One of the results of the revival of 1905 was the beginning of the Pentecostal movement. A large percentage of the 150,000 who were reportedly saved in Wales became dissatisfied with the traditional churches and joined the newly formed Apostolic and Pentecostal Fellowships. This movement was referred to as a revival out at Azusa Street, Los Angeles, from which the Pentecostal Movement, and the tongues movement spread on a global scale.

As perviously stated, following my accepting Christ as my Saviour, I became very interested in the subject of revival and studied the lives of men used in past revivals. Now, I am not sure how much other misinformed information about other revivals I may have swallowed, and so decided to go to the only reliable source which is the Word of God.

I have spent several years studying the great revival written in the Book of Nehemiah and will share some of my findings in this material. I apologize for not having done my homework before promoting Evan Roberts in a positive manner in previous days; however, let's be careful not to throw out the baby with the bathwater. I want to repeat, *"I believe he was a very sincere person with a desire to have God's power on his life; however, he was led astray by the Keswick theology that was taught at that time. The unscriptural teaching of what they call "the baptism of the Holy Spirit" led to the many unscriptural things Evan Roberts taught and the things he did."*