



# **THE REVIVAL IN WALES**

## **Awstin and other Special Correspondents of the Western Mail**

The "Western Mail," a popular newspaper during the Welsh Revival, assigned various reporters to chronicle its progress each day. The principle reporter was Mr. T. Davies, commonly known by his pen name 'Awstin.' The reporters were eyewitnesses and generally very sympathetic.

Their articles were collected into six 32-page pamphlets. These make very fascinating reading as they follow the ministry and travels of Evan Roberts. They are essential reading for all studying the grass-roots activities of those glorious days.

## TRECYNON

### Sunday November 13

Sunday morning, Evan Roberts with five young ladies were driven by Mr. David Hughes, Loughor, to meet the train at Swansea for Aberdare. These young ladies were Misses. Pricilla Watkins, Mary Davies, Livinia Hooker, Annie M. Rees, and Mary Davies. The five were from Gorseinon, and most volunteered to go with Evan Roberts. Some have done excellent work with the Revival in different parts of England, Scotland, and Ireland, as well as Wales, in the course of the last eighteen months.

The expectation of the church at Brynston, Trecynon, Aberdare, had run very high because of articles in the Western Mail. But it was an expectation to be greatly disappointed. The appearance of the young ladies with the Missioner displeased the people, and all their sympathy was extinguished. The service was better attended than usual, and owing to that, the disappointment of the best people of the church was very acute. Having been in a chapel all night at Loughor, the Revivalist and his helpers looked pale and worn out. This was a disadvantage, because the audience did not know that their appearance was due to being in a fervent meeting for such long hours. Roberts refused to go into the pulpit, although requested to do so by one of the Deacons. He stood before the table in the Deacons' Pew, laid hold of the Bible in his left hand, pressing it to his bosom, talked incessantly for a considerable time on his four great revival points, and swung his right hand continually. Apparently little was his success. However, after one of his lady helpers rose to give her testimony, things slightly altered. The ring of reality in her voice and the intensity of her feeling touched the people's hearts. But the audience dispersed in a mixed attitude — some were surprised at the strange method of the young preacher, others did not know what to say, and a few scoffed.

Being that an Anniversary was held in a church close by, no afternoon service was announced at Brynston, so that the people might attend the Anniversary. But, seeing the crowd, the doors were thrown open. The Missioner with his helpers attended and conducted the service on the same lines as in the morning. He pressed hard on the people to confess Christ, but with little success. At last one got up and attempted to confess, but failed to say a word. "Thanks," said Evan Roberts "I shall never forget your face". This cleared the way to some degree, and a number confessed Christ before the end. Opinions as to his procedure varied greatly. One said, "Is not this young man awfully daring?" "He differs from all other religious teachers," said another. And a third remarked, "I cannot make out that he is feigning, for there is some reality about him." It is to be noted, however, that very few were taken up by him in the afternoon service. Yet, there was one extraordinary element in this and the morning service, namely — some of the most shy young boys and girls felt a burning desire to say something about Christ, and others felt themselves poor; and were conscious that the things spoken by Evan Roberts suited their spiritual needs. One thought that the Revivalist was mentally impaired, yet he felt something in the meetings different from anything he felt before. The conscience of the people was touched in a quiet and unaccountable way. At the close of the afternoon meeting, Roberts made a solemn appeal to the people to take the matter of the evening service to God in prayer, and ask Him to be present and bless them with the influence of the Holy Spirit.

A great number came to the evening meeting, and the influence was deeper and more general. The morning meeting was characterised by a melting influence on boys and girls of about 15 to 18, as suggested above, and the afternoon service had a different spiritual effect; but the evening meeting differed again. A kind of terror reigned in this, and very few, if any, were daring enough to criticise. The people seemed to expect something great to occur.

Mr. Roberts had understood the state of the people, for he said to his host, Mr. David Davies, 37, Windsor Street, Trecynon, Sunday night, "There will be a blessed place here before next

Sunday, and wonderful things will occur here Wednesday and Thursday night” His words became literally true.

A special request was made for him to stay in the place for another day, with which he complied. Monday morning, he wrote to Dan, his brother,

*DEAR DAN,*

*The Aberdare friends have asked me to stay here for another day. As for the future I know not what to do. I am simply in the hands of the Holy Spirit. We had three meetings yesterday at Brynision. I think and believe the Holy Spirit has begun His work here. O! pray that the place may be saved. This is a grand sphere to work in. I shall not be at the above address to-night; but you may send a telegram there.*

*The chapel was crammed to the door last night. And there was very good singing. But people came from curiosity — some to despise — some to mock. Young ladies gave out hymns to sing, others testified, whilst others confessed Christ. Yesterday afternoon, 5 boys stood up for the first time to profess and confess our Lord Jesus Christ.*

*Give the news to Sydney Evans. Things are going on very well. And we pray God to pour his Holy Spirit upon us this week. You pray also.*

*Best love to the ever onward marching Band,*

*Yours, in the Lord,*

*EVAN J. ROBERTS*

### **Monday, November 14**

The largest chapel at Trecynon (Ebenezer Congregational) which will hold 800 to 1,000, was thrown open for Monday evening's service. At the time the meeting was announced, there was no sign of anything exceptional. Only a few had come together, and the coldness of the spiritual atmosphere was such, that no one present expected a fervent meeting. Before long the congregation increased, and when the five lady helpers of Evan Roberts arrived, a slight change of feeling came over the people.

As this is the first great meeting of his first journey, it would be well to insert here the account by the Western Mail correspondent:

*Modest almost to the point of despair was the beginning made by the Evan Roberts revival mission at Trecynon this evening, and the omens pointed to orthodox quietness rather than to a repetition of the exuberance of emotional fervour which has characterised 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 assembled, and there was a coldness in the atmosphere which boded ill for a successful meeting. Those who know Trecynon—a little village which nestles closely 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 will best appreciate the laconic remark of a village stoic that “the fair at Aberdare was a powerful counter-attraction.*

Instead of finding an eager throng outside the gates of the chapel I was surprised to see only some half-dozen small groups of miners and their wives and sons gathered together, just 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 commenced so early that workmen had not been given sufficient time to go to their homes from their work and to change their working clothes for those which they considered to be better befitting a religious service. While the few who had seated themselves in the chapel were waiting for the arrival of the young revivalist an elderly man sitting beneath the gallery offered up a prayer, and a young man who was sitting in another part of the building recited the words of the popular Welsh hymn, "Disgwyl 'rwyf ar hyd yr hinos," the last 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 in the "set fawr." One of them, possessing a sweet mezzo-soprano voice of 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.

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 upon the people around him. There was no conventionality, no artificiality or affectation in his manner. The expression on his open, attenuated, and distinctly intellectual face was that of a man with a mission, and reminded one of the portraits to be seen in so many 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. 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 in reality what it was to have a light heart and unalloyed happiness. Denominationalism did not enter into his religion. Some people had 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 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. It was only since he had made 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 their hearts. Reverting to sectarianism, he said that whilst 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 having opened their eyes to the infinite glories of the present. They talked about the revival of 1859. Why, there would be a perpetual revival if men would only keep their hearts open instead of closing them to every influence. If anyone had come there that evening with the intention of making 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 from Loughor concerning a mission among the gipsies in their encampment near that place. The soul of a gipsy was of no less value than that of any other human creature.

Such was the substance of Mr. Roberts's address. He spoke for an hour and a quarter under evident restraint, and in a 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 with the profound earnestness of the young man, and there is no doubting his absolute sincerity and conviction.

Immediately he had resumed his seat two elderly women rose simultaneously, one speaking in Welsh and the other 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 rhyfeddodau maith," the stirring words of which were repeated several times. After reading a portion of Scripture the young woman knelt down in prayer, and an impassioned fervour spread into all parts of the crowded chapel.

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

The great success of the meeting impelled the people to induce him to stay another day.

## **Tuesday, November 15<sup>th</sup>**

Tuesday, November 15th, was a wonderful day in the history of Trecynon. Immense crowds gather from all directions and it was obvious some great and powerful religious forces had been disturbed to a degree never experienced since 1859. The intense moving power of these prophesied an outburst of spiritual energies which would move the whole Principality. People of strong spiritual intuitions who were present recognised the power in operation at the meetings, and ventured to predict great things. They inferred that the movement was full of the divine, before it could be characterised with such powerful influence. What draws these crowds?" they asked. "The human instrument is not eloquent, learned, extraordinarily gifted," said they, "and yet he holds the people spellbound, and leads them to forget all but spiritual things. For all this, only one reason can be given, namely, that the man is under the influence of the Holy Spirit." Such was the talk of the most godly people who had come to Trecynon this day from various places.

The Western Mail wrote:

*The gatherings at Trecynon, Aberdare, conducted by Mr. Evan Roberts, of Loughor, and the five young singing evangelists who accompany him are attracting crowds, not only from the immediate neighbourhood, but mixed companies of the sceptic, the doubtful, the curious, the zealous, the enthusiastic, and the stern believer in the advent of the revival from distant towns and villages; and when the silver-tongued orators of Welsh pulpit and pew shall have caught the infectious spirit of these pioneers of the movement there can, in the present state of expectancy, only be one result—an upheaval of religious forces which will undoubtedly electrify the Principality.*

*Ebenezer Chapel, where today's proceedings were conducted by Mr. Evan Roberts, is the Welsh Congregational Chapel so famous in connection with what was known as Edwards Morgan's revival in 1859, and although Aberdare does not appear, as yet, to have particularly joined Trecynon, there can be no doubt that before the week is out similar services will be held there.*

*Perhaps the greatest mystery of the whole movement at present is that the central figure of the revival, Mr. Evan Roberts, is not gifted with the remarkable eloquence generally the attribute of a man who sways multitudes. As I heard a man remark, wonderingly, "We have*

*plenty of better speakers, and, possibly, abler men, but they do not seem to be imbued with the same power as he wields in drawing these immense crowds and keeping them together. At present I can only account for it by the fact that he comes from the midst of the Loughor fire."*

That is just it. He neither preaches nor harangues; he simply talks, pleads, exhorts, explains; tells his own story simply and winningly, and smilingly invites. He does not even give out the electrifying Welsh hymns with the effect which many can impart to the stirring words; but he is evidently sincere, and he prays with the fervour of a man whose heart is deeply moved. The young ladies who accompany him are not professional singers; but are manifestly touched with the spirit of singing pilgrims, and, in summing up the strangeness of the power thus introduced, one can only be reminded of the story of the humble origin of the disciples of old, as "the fishermen of the Sea of Galilee." But the spontaneous striking up of a hymn or the starting of an address in Welsh or English, or the uttering of a devout prayer by men or women in the congregation, in the body of the chapel, or the gallery, from pulpit, big pew, or anywhere that may be occupied by the person who rises, naturally tends to infuse enthusiasm and decentralise the work.

The morning prayer meeting at Ebenezer lasted three hours and a quarter was wonderful, and all that took place in it was only a seething outburst of spiritual spontaneity. The whole neighbourhood had been aroused to such an extent that people remained home from their work for the express purpose of attending this prayer meeting. People who had come long distances the previous day had remained in the village overnight in order to join. Evan Roberts declared that the Holy Spirit was the only Conductor of the service. Roberts took no part except offering a prayer.

Long before 7, the time announced for the night meeting, the chapel was crammed. The Missioner was there before time, and it was evident his whole nature was stirred by the sight.

As the Western Mail said:

*At the night meeting, announced for 7pm, there, was a full chapel before the time fixed, and Evan Roberts, now and then rising and pacing the "set fawr," seemed agitated with expectancy. He got up at five minutes to seven and gave out a hymn of the Church Militant—Heavenly Jesus, ride victorious, and, after took the words for the text of an address lasting nearly half an hour. Then he invited the congregation to sing Marchog Iesu yn llwyddianus, and the tide of feeling seemed to rise gradually as the meeting proceeded. To any spiritually-minded man, it was now evident that most of the people were nearly bursting with emotion, and that before long this would be poured out. One of the young ladies in the Deacons' Pew started singing "O happy day that fixed my choice.*

And the congregation joined heartily in the refrain, which was repeated again and again.. The singer stopped, and stated she had that day visited some gipsies, and that two of them had accompanied her to that meeting. It was a happy day for her, and she could not help singing "Happy day, happy day, when Jesus washed my sins away," and commenced singing again. That had a wonderful influence on the people. Now, a spontaneous outburst of prayer and praise took place. and the "repeats" were more fervent than before, indicating clearly the influence of the words and the music, as well as the feeling, upon the congregation. A man in the gallery afterwards prayed.

Mr. Roberts then delivered a brief address and appealed to sinners and backsliders to join the Church of God. A response promptly came. He remarked it was not for ministers or deacons to do the work of the Churches alone, but for all to work together, and then the revival—of which they were now only opening the gates—would come. Would any "backslider" get up and re-join the Lord's Church? They need not be afraid of the term "backslider." Coming back was the great thing.

Promptly came the response, The fervour of the meeting intensified, and some impassioned prayers were offered, and speeches delivered. A man rose in the congregation, and spoke a few words in a low voice, and spontaneously the crowded congregation sang Gwaed y Groes sy'n codi fyny.

Without repeating the full verses, the now thoroughly roused congregation sang the refrain of the next verse. An old lady rose in the body of the chapel and delivered an impassioned Welsh appeal to all to join the people who could sing "O happy day," and a man—seemingly a workman—at the lower end of the chapel, gave out, voluntarily, the hymn, "Ni fuasai genyf obaith," which led to fervent singing of the well-known "repeat" O rhyw anfeidrol gariad.

By this time the pulpit, or, rather, rostrum, of the chapel was filled, as well as the pews, and while the conductor of the meeting was walking about quietly filled with joy, now in the gallery, now in the aisles, four local ministers sat in the rostrum, thoroughly enjoying the service and joining heartily in the singing.

Presently there was a moment's silence, and a North Walian rose and shouted, "Thank God for Llwynffortun, the only man who in days gone by took an interest in the gipsies," and then proceeded to speak at some length, raising and lowering his voice in the cadences of the Welsh "hwyl," as the old lady already referred to had done. While he was proceeding a girl's sweet voice rang out with the words and music of "Gwaed y groes sy'n codi fyny," and the congregation joined magnificently.

Into the "big seat," and, at the earnest invitation of others, on to the rostrum went a clerical-looking gentleman, Rev T O Thomas, formerly schoolmaster of Bedlinog, who, without announcing or being announced, read a portion of Scripture, and fired his hearers by declaring that he had just come from Loughor, where he had been "in the midst of the fire." He had spent Sunday there, and could testify to that which was being done. He was, he said, keenly interested in it. He remembered an old woman praying for this revival before this young man (pointing to Mr. Evan Roberts) was born.

Needless to say, the touch of the "fire" kindled a kindred fire in the congregation, and the service was still further strengthened when Mr. Roberts once more declared that the revival was coming - they were only "opening the gates," and asked them to sing "Duw mawr y rhyfeddodau maith."

He interspersed maxims and exhortations, even in giving out the hymn, and then came the deep roll of "Ond Dwyfol ras, niwy rhyfedd yw.

Thus were the proceedings continued until a late hour.

To attempt a true detailed description of this meeting is beyond the power of a human being. Although Evan Roberts left on Wednesday, a wonderful outpouring of the Holy Spirit was experienced at Trecynon in the days which followed, resulting in scores of conversions, including sceptics, backsliders, drunkards of the worst class, and self-righteous persons. One noted agnostic burned all his books, and went about to other places to offer Christ to sinners. The churches were completely renewed throughout the district.

## MOUNTAIN ASH

### Monday, November 21

The Revivalist now stands in the place where he had a few years previously worked for a number of months

Contrary to his original intention not to go until next Saturday, Mr. Roberts arrived shortly after 10am, in obedience, he said, to a summons from the Holy Spirit during his stay at Abercynon. Although the news of his coming was only slightly known, people were seen wending their way in the direction of Mountain Ash, along the mountain slopes; and large throngs congregated at the railway station to receive the young revivalist and his lady supporters.

They proceeded at once to Bethlehem Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Chapel, where a service was held forthwith. The building was quickly crowded to its utmost capacity. The service was opened with a fervent rendering of "Saw ye the Saviour?"

After numerous repetitions of the few closing lines, Mr. Roberts proceeded to address the congregation. According to his wont, he walked to and fro. In a deep voice he briefly narrated the history of the revival, which, he said, with a solemn look upwards, was the outcome of a call from God to His people on earth. To him no credit was due for the great manifestations of religious awakening traversing the country, for he was only giving vent to the devotional fire instilled into him by the Divine Hand.

No sooner had the last words fallen from his lips than the tall form of a young lady was seen in the gallery, and the vast gathering was thrilled with the singing of "O rest in the Lord". It was a stimulating and effective rendering, the singer being, a well-known soprano. The audience joined and words were repeated many times, and the emotion of the congregation was greatly intensified. The emotion was now at its highest point and the congregation evidently under some spell which it would be futile to try to describe.

In the afternoon, it was hopeless to think of entering Bethlehem; so an overflow meeting was held at Bethania. This, again, was crammed in a few minutes. Both were crowded long before the time of starting. Mr. Roberts, after speaking for a few minutes at Bethlehem, went to the other place, where he spoke in the same terms as at the morning service. The proceedings were marked with great fervour, interspersed with spontaneous prayers and singing. "Dyma gariad lel y moroedd" ("Here is love in copious torrents") was sung, with telling effect.

In the evening 3 meetings were held, but owing to the limited accommodation hundreds were obliged to return home. What has been said as to gatherings in other places may be repeated and the services were characterised by the same enthusiasm. On all hands it is said the "fire" has been smouldering for a long time, and that the great outburst could not be long deferred.

In the course of a conversation Rev. D Anthony, pastor of Providence Chapel, Mountain Ash, said the movement was only in its infancy, and before long there would be such a wave of religious awakening as the world had not seen for a long time, as the atmosphere was charged with it.

### Tuesday, November 22

Not only is the religious revival going on with vigour and zeal wherever Mr. Evan Roberts appears, but the "fire" is spreading amazingly where he has been, and also among people in



districts from which visitors have attended Mr. Roberts's meetings. News from Aberdare is that there were no fewer than a dozen great meetings held during to-day and evening in Aberdare alone, and from Porth and Pontypridd come tidings of a new life in Churches seemingly in no way directly connected with the movements of Mr Evan Roberts. Yet it is unquestionable that, although not the actual cause of the revival, his movements and indirect influence inspire others to help forward the realisation of the yearnings with which so many of the Churches are possessed for greater spiritual life and activity.

At Trecynon and Aberdare the revival inaugurated by Mr. Roberts's mission increased immensely in power during this week, although Mr. Roberts has not been there since last Wednesday. The communion service at the Welsh Congregational Chapel, Aberdare, on Sunday last is described as the most impressive ever held within the memory of anyone present. At Heol-y-felin, Aberdare, arrangements have been made for what will, undoubtedly, be an extraordinary and impressive sight next Sunday, when between 90 and 100 adults will be publicly baptised by immersion. At Abercynon the great gatherings on Monday and Tuesday were inspiring in their fervour.

And while these things are going on all around Mr. Evan Roberts continues his unostentatious mission in Mountain Ash. In the morning, three chapels were full, drawing crowds which overcrowded Bethel and its vestry, and filled the English Presbyterian and Welsh Congregational Chapels—all three at the same time.

He was present at Bethania (Congregational) in the morning, and the service was exceedingly important, the "arddeliad" of the Spirit, as it is so idiomatically described, being remarkable. It was an exceedingly powerful meeting. People of all ages took part, and one young boy made a deep impression on the audience. There is no difference of nationality in the meeting - English as well as Welsh throw themselves heartily and spontaneously into the service. An Irishman also bore a remarkable testimony of how he had been saved from perdition.

The afternoon services were full of the same sweeping influences. Evan Roberts addressed the audience at Bethel, and expressed his great joy at the success of the Revival. The scenes were different in many respects from those elsewhere. Some were so moved by the prayers of others as to rise to their feet and shout, the interjections being running comments on the prayers themselves, but it was more like the "hwyl" of a great "cymanfa" that the usual Welsh fire elicited by these revival meetings. Still, there was great enthusiasm, and Mr Evan Roberts himself said he was a different man from Monday, when he felt somewhat depressed. To-day he was buoyant in spirit, and in his address once more laid stress on the absolute necessity for relying not upon him, nor any human being, but upon the Spirit. Later he dwelt upon the importance of praying for a baptism of the Spirit, to infuse life and to invest each person with power to work for the Lord.

In the evening, when the 3 meetings referred to were held simultaneously, the chapels could not contain the huge crowds. there were striking scenes. At Bethel there was at first an apparent lack of voluntary service in prayer, and the response to Mr Roberts's appeal for prayers on behalf of the two young men who had gone to start a meeting at Tyntetown was somewhat slow, the intervals being filled with Hymn singing. Suddenly there stood up in the aisle a man attired in corduroy, who bore powerful testimony to the value of religion, and prayed that the influence of the revival might spread to England.

Later a young Turk elbowed his way to the front and managed to send a note to Mr. Roberts, When read Mr. Roberts asked the friends to invite the young foreigner to the platform, but before introducing him asked the huge assembly, 'Would you like to hear a cry from Macedonia?' and when surprise had given way to cries of "Amen" Mr. Roberts said, "You shall hear it now!" The congregation began singing "Dioich iddo," and when the singing ceased the

stranger began, in broken English, but otherwise with a wonderful flow of words to explain the pleasure he felt at being permitted, as a saved Turk, to give his testimony to people who had the privilege of living in a Christian land. He stated that he first heard of the love of a crucified Christ from a young black girl from Macedonia in his own country—in Turkey.

Proceeding to give illustrations of matters which created surprise in his mind in this country, he said some in this “land of the Bible” dared to say there was no God. In one instance, he said, when working in the coal pit at Cilfynydd, Pontypridd, he had as a fellow-workman one of such men. When he (the speaker) prayed, as he usually did, before partaking of his meal, that man asked him, “What good has that done you?” his reply was, “No good to my body, but I am better in Spirit.” Presently he heard the timbers crash. There was a scream, and the colliers present would understand what he meant by that scream. Men rushed to the face of the coal, and then the first he heard crying out “Lord, save me, was a man who just previously had said that there was no God. The man who had been injured asked him (the speaker) to tell the man’s wife to bring up their children in the religion of this converted Turk. There were men who fought against this movement to-day, and against the spread of the Christian religion, but God would remove the stumbling-blocks. He then gave illustrations of the good that could be done by private conversations—more could be done by a simple act of kindness than by public speaking or even singing. The Turk then sang an English hymn, in the refrain of which the vast assembly heartily joined. Then he made another startling statement. He said he would sing a verse of the same hymn in his own Turkish language, because there might be one or two Turks present who did not understand either Welsh or English. “It was surprising,” he said, “what numbers of them were scattered here and there in the collieries.” He then sang the Turkish hymn, the refrain being taken up by the audience in English.

One man in the audience fervently prayed the Lord to move the people in those crowded congregations to go into the streets of Mountain Ash to sing the Gospel into the hearts of sinners, and there was every evidence that before the night was over the suggestion would be carried into effect.

I ought to have mentioned earlier that during the afternoon a lady in the congregation asked for prayers for the spread of the revival to Llantrisant, and then sang the sweet hymn, “To save a great sinner like me.”

It was understood that Mr. Evan Roberts would confine his services to Bethel at night, but during the interval he suddenly disappeared, and was away for some time. ‘When I left, in order to visit the English Methodist Chapel and Bethania, I met Mr. Evan Roberts in the street, bareheaded, in the cold, snowy air, returning from a surprise visit to the English Methodist Chapel, “Mae’r Ysbryd yn, eu plith nhw” (“The Spirit is among them”), he said. When quietly reminded of the danger of going about bareheaded on such, a cold night he smilingly said, “I don’t think of it,” and immediately returned to Bethel, where he infused his own energy once more into the proceedings.

## CWMDARE

**Thursday, December 1**

In Ancient Rome Christianity was cradled in persecution and found asylum in the catacombs. The thought of those secret services, in a far-off time, came into my mind as I tried to imagine an underground revival service I was about to attend at Nantmelyn Colliery, Cwmdare, whose managing director had given permission to see the effects of the "revival" underground.

But what a difference to-day. There is no need for secrecy now. Only yesterday there might have been scoffers; to-day there are none. The very atmosphere tingles with a new emotion, and the faith which of old thrived under the persecution of Ancient Rome thrives to-day under the encouragement of all the forces of modern Wales. Scarcely three weeks ago the "Western Mail" held up the lamp of the revival, then burning steadfastly at Loughor. To-day the whole of Wales is ignited. Not alone in sacred buildings and in streets that echo with the pilgrims' hymns, but far down in the bowels of the earth, in the dark coal seams which spread abroad the commercial fame of Wales, a kindlier lamp has been kindled. Christianity calls it the greatest safety lamp ever invented for mortal souls.

I went down to the prayer meeting at the Nantmelyn Colliery, 450 feet below the surface, with the manager, a staunch Methodist, for my guide. The workmen on the night shift had gone down half an hour earlier so as not to interfere with the operations of the pit. 70 yards from the bottom of the shaft, in the stables, we came to the prayer meeting. One of the workmen was reading Matthew 6 to about 80 comrades. He stood erect amongst the group, reading in a dim fantastic light that danced with the swinging lamps and vanished softly into the surrounding darkness. A number of lamps were attached to a heavy post closely wedged to support the roof, and around the impressive figure the colliers grouped themselves. Some were in the characteristic stooping posture, others half-reclined against the side of the road, with their lamps fastened to their pockets; others stood in the middle of the passage. Earnest men all of them; faces that bore the sears of the underground toiler; downcast eyes that seemed to be "the homes of silent prayer"; strong frames that quivered with a new emotion.

What must the thoughts of these men have been as the words of the Gospel fell on their ears in this stable transformed into a temple, with the perils of their occupation crowding around them? If the minds of men are moulded by environment, surely they could be subjected to no more impressive experience than this.

Presently the reading of Scripture stopped, and there came the familiar Welsh hymn "Gwaith hyfryd iawn a melus yw. It must have penetrated the whole of the workings of the colliery. It echoed along the low roofs and narrow walls, and when the last echoes were dying away - ever so far off, it seemed - a supplicatory voice broke upon our ears. One of the colliers was speaking. "It is not enough to pray," he said, in Welsh, "because if we do not also watch the promises which we make in our prayers will remain unfulfilled. The motto of every true Christian is 'Watch and pray.' Look at that ship leaving port. Though she be bound for some definite destination she will never arrive unless her compass and helm work in unison. So it is with us. It is easy to cause the roof of a chapel to fall in as the result of prayer; but of what avail is such praying without the necessary watch to walk along the right path?" The speaker went on to refer to attributes of the Christian, and, after alluding to the coldness in certain parts of Aberdare towards the revival, he concluded: "In years to come some of us will be sorry to have unheeded the salutary counsels given at the Nantmelyn stable." "Amen's"~ punctuated the short address, and then the congregation joined in singing the tender verse *Dyma gyfarfod hyfryd iawn.*

Such was the simple service of rugged men: honest, earnest, plain. It was kept up until the commencing of the night's work, 'and not once, but many times, was God's blessing asked for the honest and proper execution of the work. I stepped into the cage to return, followed by the haunting echoes of the hymn that pleads for a blessing "Dan dy fendith wrth ymadael.

## RESOLVEN

**Tuesday, Jan. 17**

Resolven had the privilege of welcoming Mr. Evan Roberts to-day in his Neath Valley itinerary, and the straggling little colliery village made the occasion worthy of the visit. Morning, noon and night the chapels were crowded, and the meetings were of a character that belied any impression which might be abroad outside the "zone of fire" that the religious enthusiasm awakened by the fire has even begun to show any symptoms of abatement. In a parish where the entire population does not exceed 3,000 souls it was found in the evening that the Congregational Chapel, capable of accommodating 2,000 people, was much too small, while in the afternoon the Methodist Chapel was so crowded an hour or more before the service was timed to begin that an overflow meeting became a necessity. Scores, if not hundreds, travelled down to Resolven from the neighbouring village of Glyn Neath, and many were disappointed to find that they had arrived too late to get beyond the doors of the chapels.

For 2 hours or more before the arrival of Mr. Roberts there had been an unbroken series of prayers and testimonies and the singing of hymns, the service being remarkable for the prominent part taken by converts known only very recently as men of loose conduct. Religious fervour at white heat when the revivalist made his appearance, and as he ascended the pulpit it was obvious that the spirit of curiosity had suddenly become predominating. No one was quicker to realise this than Evan Roberts, and my experience of the revival meetings is that Mr. Roberts finds the conflict with curiosity growing harder and harder.

"Away with curiosity," were his first words, and his impromptu discourse had not been many minutes in progress before he had the satisfaction of feeling that the spirit of devotion had returned and had taken a firm hold of the congregation.

## HIRWAIN

**Wednesday, Jan. 18**

Hirwain, population about 3,000, was visited by Mr. Roberts to-day. It presented a most animated aspect. Besides the big crowds which arrived by each train from Aberdare, as well as those who walked from neighbouring villages, there was a number from distant parts of England and Wales, together with a few from Australia and India. Morning and afternoon meetings were held at each of the chapels, all of which, to avert the eventuality of undue overcrowding, had been thrown open. Mr. Roberts attended Tabernacle Welsh Congregational, which was crowded to its utmost capacity. During quite twenty minutes the congregation rendered in immediate succession quite an array of songs. Prayer after prayer followed, but it was not until a stranger unbosomed himself in a sobbing voice of an earnest supplication that the meeting became filled with such enthusiasm that the building echoed with "Amen" and "Diolch iddo." A striking prayer was that of a young man, who gave thanks for having given strength to those who had become revivalists at Bangor College, the smoking-room of which had been converted into a place of prayer.

Rev Jones (Ebenezer Welsh Congregational, Trecynon) proceeded to give an address, and a coloured gentleman, Mr. Franklin, who had been an actor for seven years, took the lead in singing "Arglwydd dyma fi." Mr. Franklin addressed the meeting, which he had attended to obtain more of the "fever" for the purposes of importing it to South Africa, where the heathen bowed to wood and stone. Continuing, he said he had come to England to go through a course of missionary training, but chose the stage. Thanks to the Welsh revival, however, he had quitted the stage and, after the necessary training, intended to return to his native country to

teach the Word to the heathen, who were compelled to perpetuate their wood and stone worship by the very persons who went into their midst under the pretence of bringing light to them, but who really poisoned their very life through the sale of spirits that they might make a fortune. He (the speaker) had been told about one missionary who had in that wise made £2,000; but, with the grace of God, he would return to the wilderness of Africa to work for the salvation of those whose worship now consisted of wood and stone.

It got abroad that Mr. Roberts would be at Ramoth in the evening, and the place was filled to overflowing shortly after five. The revivalist arrived at 7.45. The audience had passed the time in prayer and song. Mr. Roberts spoke, and the congregation sang "Wrth gofio'i riddfanau'n yr Ardd." Scarcely had the last note died away than Mr. Roberts opened the Bible with trembling hands. Suddenly his face became distorted with pain. Evidently he was in a stubborn contest with his feelings, for every fibre of his being seemed to twitch with agony, and the next moment he was in a lying posture. For quite ten minutes he lay prostrate, and but for his sobs there was no indication to show he was at hand. All eyes were riveted upon him, and when he got up his face were a smile of majestic calmness. He said he had emerged from one of the hardest ordeals he had ever experienced, and had had a further testimony of Christ's agony in the garden.

### **Thursday, Jan. 19**

As on Wednesday, Hirwain received a stream of visitors, among them those present the previous day from London and elsewhere. The meeting at Nebo was in every respect marvellous. Mr. Roberts arrived at 3.30 to the accompaniment of "O! dwed gawn i gwrdd yn y Nef?" the refrain of which was repeated again and again, the evangelist confronting the vast audience with a beaming smile. Other favourite hymns followed, during which the missionary engaged in silent prayer in the pulpit. In a few moments he proceeded to speak upon forgiveness, absolute freedom in worshipping and the necessity of self-sacrifice. One of the lady evangelists drowned his voice by singing "Dim and Iesu." A striking prayer came from a woman; the congregation outside began to sing, "Tell mother I'll be there," in which those packed in the chapel joined. For fully a quarter of an hour music appeared to swim in and out, till an elderly woman broke in its march by giving a short address.

Mr. Roberts spoke briefly upon salvation, the best proof of the possession of which was readiness to save others. The real source of salvation ought to be the Church, the medium given by God, though it was true he could save direct. It was, however, imperative not to interfere with the operation of the Spirit though sectarianism, which had been too prevalent, so that the propagation of Christianity had been materially impeded. For some 20 minutes the audience gave way to song. Following this a boy of 14 affirmed he could no longer be silent, for the "fire" within him had failed to remain dormant any more.

## **Some Practical Results**

**By Sir Marchant Williams**

**Stipendiary Magistrate for Methyr, Aberdare; Abercynon, and Mountain Ash**

That the Revival directly and immediately contributed to the reduction of the number of a certain class of offences in my district, notably drunkenness and disorderly conduct and language in public streets, can admit of no doubt whatsoever. The Revival appears to have made itself first felt, in the district, at the Trecynon. The Revival still prevails there with full force. Speaking generally, the result has been that the number of cases of drunkenness and disorderly conduct now reported by the police week by week is invariably very small. Formerly, that is to say, before the Revival, the number was usually large.

The Revival however, does not seem to have appreciably affected every part of my district, nor apparently the English-speaking population. I draw these conclusions not only from communications by the police, but also from the records of my courts. These show that in February 1905, the total number of cases of drunkenness and disorderly conduct, for example, at Merthyr, Abercynon, and Mountain Ash, was 164; in the corresponding month last year the total was 212. This means a reduction of 23 per cent or so. The reduction would be more substantial were I to take the returns for particular divisions of the district only, and also, I must add, were I to take the returns for an earlier period of the working of the Revival, November, 1904, for instance, and compare them with November, 1903. The latter naturally implies that the good effects of the Revival are, to some extent passing away. They are, I believe, passing away, and will continue to pass away in a small measure; but one's knowledge of the history and character and general effect of the Welsh Revivals of the past leads one to hope and believe that the sudden and mysterious change which this Revival has effected in the minds and habits and aspirations of the great majority of the men and women that have come under its spell will withstand the trials and the temptations of a lifetime.

The full value of the figures given is not made clear as I am unable to state with precision and accuracy the proportion of the decrease in offences already referred to attributable exclusively to the Welsh-speaking population of the district, at whose places of worship most, if not all, Revival services have been held. If one were to judge by the surnames of the people charged with these offences, one would be justified in saying very little of the decrease can be attributed to those that bear names not usually associated with Welshmen. Still, names are even more liable to mislead on in a matter of this kind than figures, and all that I am able to say at present, therefore, is that the decrease has been, on the whole, very substantial, and there is reason for believing the Revival has affected one section of the population far more than the other.

It is but right to add that, oddly enough, both at Mountain Ash and Abercynon there has been a slight increase in the reported cases of drunkenness this month, compared with February, 1904; the increase at Mountain Ash is four, and Abercynon six. This may be due to special circumstances; I have no definite information on the point.

In estimating the value of the figures given for the whole district one has to keep in view the fact that the rigorous and consistent enforcement of the law has, doubtless, improved the manners and habits of the inhabitants of the district, in so far as their manners and habits are manifested in the streets and other public places. The rigidly stern measures adopted in the district for the last three or four years to put down such offences as street fighting and assaults on the police have to a large extent effected their purpose; and the heavy fines imposed for drunkenness and disorderly conduct have at last considerably reduced the number of such offences that one has to deal with; but in full consciousness of these facts, I am driven to admit that the Revival has been far more effective in checking drunkenness than fines of imprisonment.

I have already referred to other Welsh Revivals, and it would not be out of place, therefore, if I were to draw attention to some marks of resemblance on the one hand, and some marks of difference on the other, between the present Revival and other great Welsh Revivals, notably that of the mid 18<sup>th</sup> C, and that of 1859. This Revival of 1904-5 suddenly, without warning of any kind, and from no known cause, began in two or three places just about the same time; this is also true of the Revival that began in the mid 18th C. Howell Harris, Daniel Rowland, George Whitefield, John and Charles Wesley began their public careers as heads of the great Revival of that period just about the same time, and the Englishmen worked for a short period independently of the Welshmen. Harris was the first itinerant field preacher; Rowland came next; Wesley and Whitefield last. Some little time elapsed before these men came to know one another, and to realise that they were fellow-workers in one and the same spiritual movement. The Revival of 1859 likewise began in several places about the same time.

But what distinguishes the present Revival from the other Welsh Revivals is the part filled in it by its leading figure, Evan Roberts. Howell Harris, for example, had a wonderful gift of natural oratory, and was a most impressive preacher; Rowland and Whitefield owed much of their power and influence over large assemblies of people, not only to their natural eloquence, but also to their great command over the various moods and emotions of the human mind; Wesley likewise was a gifted speaker – convincing, searching, and persuasive. And to compare a small man with great men, the leading figure of the 1859 Revival, the Rev. David Morgan, was a fervent and impassioned speaker. But Evan Roberts appears to have no great gifts of speech; and is not a man of commanding personality. His wonderful power over people is simply inexplicable. His words are few and simple; his manner is perfectly natural and unassuming; it is his smile that captivates; and his silence, too, works wonders at all times; nay, his very presence sends a thrill through a vast concourse of people of all ages, of every sex, and of almost every temperament!

A great Englishman once said: "I am being borne along by an irresistible course of mind and am going to enter the only fold of the Redeemer." There is nothing new in this; and there is nothing new in what we see men and women do these days under the influence and in the presence of Evan Roberts. Why they should do so we know not. The cause or causes of conversion concern the psychologist; as a stipendiary magistrate I am concerned more especially with its effects, and these are such in my district that I naturally view the Revival with the deepest interest, and regard Evan Roberts and others who participate with him in the Revival with the deepest respect.