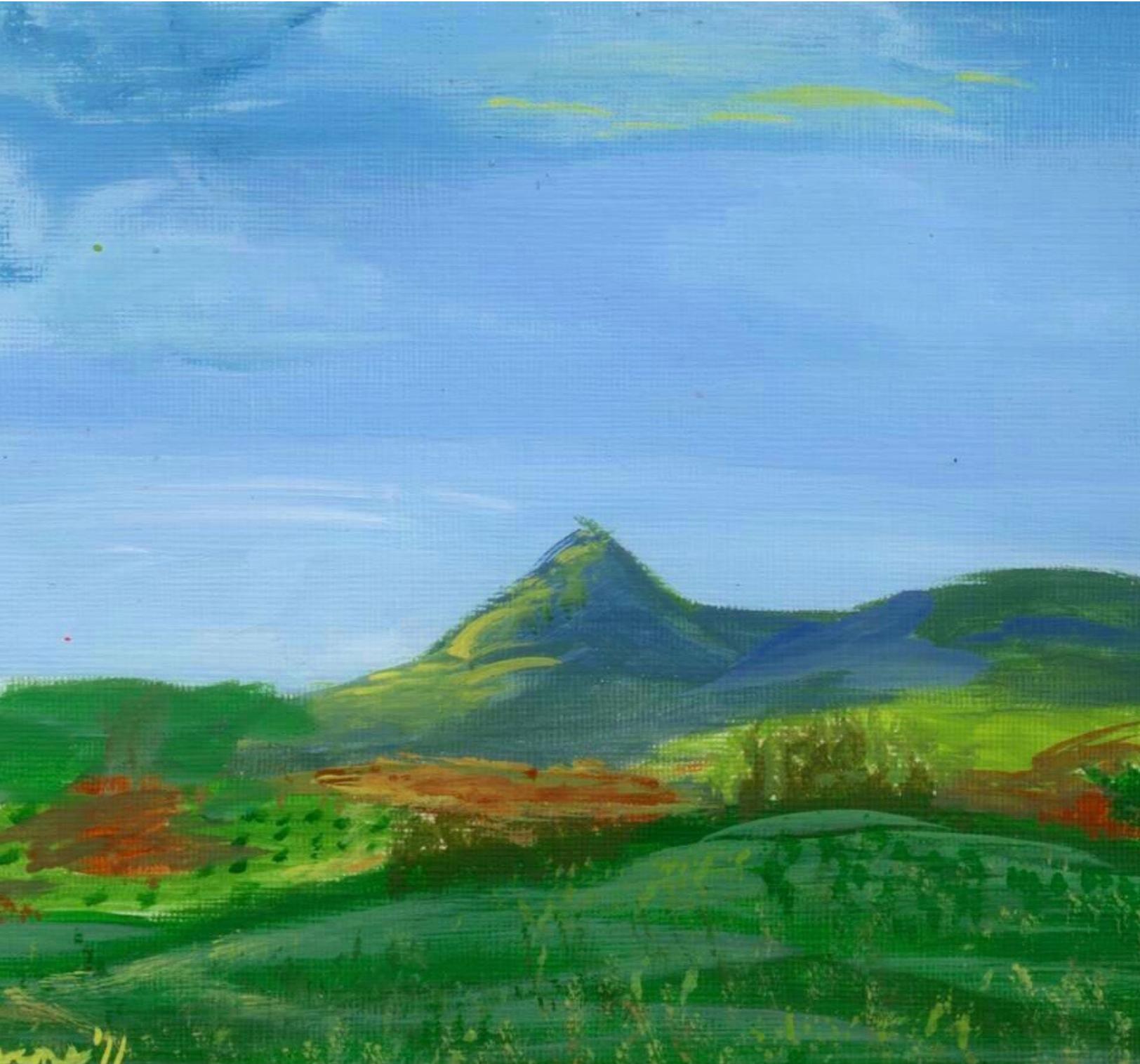




THE SOUNDING MEGAPHONE

Issue 17, April 2019



**Hello readers. Welcome to the 17th issue of The Sounding Megaphone. We will look at two great revivals of the past, The revival of 1853 and the Welsh revival. Thank you for reading. We are taking a break for the summer as usual. God bless your families and yourselves.
Shawn Stevens**



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The Revival of 1859

When the great outpouring came, worldly men were silent with an indefinite fear, and Christians found themselves borne onward in the current, with scarce time for any feelings but the overpowering conviction that a great revival had come at last. Careless men were bowed in unaffected earnestness, and sobbed like children. Drunkards and boasting blasphemers were awed into solemnity and silence. Sabbath-school teachers and scholars became seekers of Christ together. All this came suddenly, and many thought it strange. 1

How does one tell the story of the 1859 Revival? How do you begin? Where did it start? Everyone involved stands back and points to heaven. When it came, it came like a hurricane. It came like a mighty flood. It came even before people realized that it was here. When it did come, it was known far and wide for what it was, a heaven-sent move of God. If there was ever a year that Ireland saw revival, it was the year of 1859.

In 1859, the small village of Straid, in Northern Ireland, had a population made up of primarily farmers and weavers. In the centre of the town was a Congregational Church pastored by

the Rev. James Bain. The church had engaged itself in much prayer and this emphasis was increasing in intensity. They desired to see, and interceded for, an outpouring of God's Spirit upon their land. 2

The answer to their prayers came in greater magnitude than any of them could have expected. In early April of 1859, Bain began hearing reports of "strange things" which were occurring elsewhere in Ireland. What was happening? An unprecedented spiritual hunger was rising in the hearts of many Irish. They began flocking to churches and to open-air meetings. Family worship became common. Religious formality was being replaced with heart-felt passionate Christian expression. Alongside of this, multitudes of onlookers were coming under deep conviction of sin. One writer comments, "On some the conviction of real, present, terrible danger came like a thunderbolt, and they were compelled to shout for mercy in total disregard of place or circumstances." 3 Their regard for God outweighed their regard for men.

One example of this kind of thunderbolt could be seen in the town of Coleraine. A boy was under deep conviction of sin and was seen this way by his schoolmaster. Because of the intensity of the experience, the boy

was sent home and told to call upon God in private. Another boy, who was converted the previous day, was sent along with him. On the way to the home, the two saw an empty house and they decided to pray inside it. After a time, the troubled boy experienced a tremendous spiritual release, coupled with a sacred peace. Returning to school, the boy announced to his schoolmaster, "I am so happy! I have the Lord Jesus in my heart!" 4 Later that day, the schoolmaster looked out the window at the playground and witnessed a number of students on their knees, bowed in prayer. He was overcome with emotion and he asked if the newly converted boy would go out and pray with them. The boy did go out and he began calling for his schoolmates to pray that the Lord would forgive their sins, for the sake of Jesus, Who had borne their sins on the cross. The schoolboys began crying bitterly and the sound carried into the school and others inside came under great conviction. The sound of this carried over to a nearby girl's school and many there began weeping and praying as well. Clergymen were called for and they began ministering to the troubled souls. The school was not closed until 11:00 o'clock that evening. 5

Another significant day in Coleraine was June the 7th, when a large open-air meeting was held. The minister

preached on the lost condition of man and on the grace of God found in salvation. The audience was so greatly affected by his message that many began crying out loud, oblivious to their surroundings. Many were seen lying prostrate on the ground. The minister began moving through the crowd trying to help those under conviction. He comments on one young man:

He lay on the ground, his head supported on the knees of an elder of one of our churches. His eyes were closed; his hands were firmly clasped, and occasionally very forcibly pressed upon the chest. He was uttering incessantly a peculiar deep moan, sometimes terminating in a prolonged wailing cry. I felt his pulse, and could discern nothing very particular about it. I said, softly and quietly in his ear, 'Why do you cry so?' ... 'Oh!' He exclaimed, high and loud, in reply to my question, 'my sins! my sins! Lord Jesus, have mercy upon my poor soul! O Jesus! come! O Lord Jesus, come!' I endeavored to calm him for a moment, asking him to listen to me whilst I set before him some of the promises of God to perishing sinners. At first I thought that I was carrying his attention with me in what I was saying, but I soon discovered that his soul was filled with one idea, – his guilt and his danger; for, in the middle of my

repetition of some promise, he would burst forth with the bitter cry, 'O God, my sins! my sins!' At length I said in his ear, 'Will I pray?' He replied in a loud voice, 'Oh, yes!' I engaged in prayer, and yet I doubt whether his mind followed me beyond the first sentence or two. 6

The minister stood up and found that people were pressing all around him, calling for him to come and help others. He did so for the next two or three hours, praying "God guide me." 7 On the following day, the townspeople sought out the minister on behalf of those who had not yet found spiritual release. A decision was made to hold another evening meeting and, again, the audience was overwhelmingly affected. Persons, who came under deep conviction, became known as "stricken ones." A building was used to shelter the stricken ones until they found spiritual release. 8

One group of people who were stricken under strong conviction during the 1859 revival were religious people. One writer describes it this way:

Many whose religion was an outer moral garment, or a mere plausible sham, have been disturbed in their supposed security, have been brought into deep distress for their sins, and especially for their own loathsome hypocrisy; have been enabled to present to a heart-searching God the

sacrifice of a broken and contrite heart, have received grace from on high to cast themselves upon a loving and beloved Saviour and are now advancing rapidly in the divine life. 9 So, the moving of God's Spirit was not only seen in conviction of sin but also in conversion.

Not only did God move in Coleraine, He also brought revival to the town of Ballycarry. A Rev. John Stuart comments:

The first effect of the revival was, that 'fear came upon every soul[:]' Then was our church filled to suffocation, and we were obliged to take to the open fields to declare the message of mercy to a hungering and thirsting population. The hitherto unoccupied pews were ardently sought after. All were engaged. The aisles were filled with forms crowded with anxious hearers, and now preaching became a luxury. I had pastor's work to do. I had living men and living women before me. They came to the sanctuary on the sole errand of obtaining the 'bread of life.' Every Sabbath was a day of 'sweet refreshing.' On every weekday evening '[...] they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD harkened [,] and heard [...],[...]' and there were '[...] added to the church daily such as should be saved.' 10

With occurrences such as this, it was

evident that God was blessing Ballycarry.

In addition to moving at Ballycarry, the Lord moved mightily in the district of Balleaston. A Rev. A. Pollock describes: *The joy of converts, the cry of penitents, the wailing of friends, reminded me of the building of the second temple, when some shouted and others wept. Our tokens were soon all given away, which never happened before. About one hundred had to be provided for on the Sabbath morning, and we could not persuade the people to disburse. On Sabbath morning the house was filled to overflowing, and with little preparation, it was no easy task to ascend the pulpit. I addressed them from the words 'Get thee up, eat and drink; for there is a sound of abundance of rain.' The Holy Ghost was there indeed, as a mighty rushing wind. Many were moved; and in the evening the green was filled, and no man can tell the number of souls which were added to the church. The young converts wished to go to the first table, and sit together. We saw their eyes beaming with the light of heaven; their faces shining like angels; their hearts heaving with the love of Jesus, and their hands clapping with joy before the God of Jacob. Such a table! It was a foretaste of heaven. 11*

As revival moved from district to district, there would be much more heaven for

Ireland to taste.

Revival, such as this, could not be contained in one district. The Lord was moving on a large scale and souls were continually answering His call and streaming into His kingdom. The Rev. William Magill comments on how, one day, a concerned man came to him. The man told him that his daughter was strangely ill after attending an all-night prayer meeting. She was anxious for her own salvation and he feared that she had become mentally unstable. Magill came to the home and describes the scene in these words:

Before reaching the house, I heard her voice in loud and earnest and continuous prayer. When I opened the door and looked in, I saw her mother and two sisters, all on their knees and in tears. In the centre of the group, the picture of woe, was the 'stricken one,' with eyes upturned to heaven, and face covered and seamed with tears. Her arms were now extended to their utmost length, as if to grasp some distant and coveted object, and then brought together with violence as she clasped her hands, as if in mortal agony, whilst from her lips there burst forth words of fire, as living streams from a burning mountain. 'O Christ, help me! Lord Jesus, save my guilty soul! O Jesus, come; come soon, and give relief to my guilty soul! O thou

quicken Spirit, come! Oh, create in me a new heart, a clean heart! Oh, take away this hard and stony heart, and give me a heart of flesh!’ Then as her eyes rested on me, as I stood riveted to the spot, witnessing in silence this exciting and wonderful scene, – for I never had heard such prayers before, – she exclaimed, without rising from her kneeling posture, ‘Oh, here is my minister! I knew I would have no peace till he came. Oh, come; come pray for my guilty soul!’ I knelt beside her and prayed, her voice accompanying mine all the time, while her expressions at intervals were so rich, varied, and scriptural, that I had often to pause, and then to follow instead of lead, as text after text from Old and New Testament, prophet and psalmist, Christ and apostle, were changed into beautiful and impassioned prayer. Such asking, seeking, striving to enter the ‘kingdom,’ I never saw before. It was, indeed, Mercy knocking her loudest knocks at the door of the heavenly mansion, so that the Lord Himself, startled by the peals which rouse up all the inmates, comes quickly, and with a smile opens the door, and takes her by the hand and brings her in. The struggle is over. She rises up, and begins the song of triumph! What a change – a perfect transformation! The cloud is passed away, and God, like the sun in his glory, is lifting up on her the light of His

countenance. Her eye, as she sings, is lighted up with strange and unearthly fire. Her voice is no longer tremulous and plaintive, but now rings like a trumpet; while her whole face is covered with a smile, such as we might suppose an angel to wear. 12 Freshly converted, she desired to sing the 51st Psalm and, afterwards, she said to her family that she and the minister would now pray for them. One of her sisters came under the same intense conviction that she had undergone and after similar, heart-wrenching appeals to God, was also saved that same day. 13 During the course of this revival, there would be more stirring accounts of others coming to Christ. One woman, after being in the town of Dundrod, experienced a beautiful salvation. She was known for being a good person and was very familiar with the Bible. She was considered to already have a blameless life. After her new experience with Christ, she said, “I thought I was a good girl, but I was all wrong. I never was on the narrow way until now.” 14 She was now converted to a life that was on fire for God. She traveled throughout the country, warning those who were spiritually careless and comforting mourners. One day, she crossed paths with a wild, reckless man who scorned revival. She gently laid her hand on his

shoulder and said to him, "Archie, won't you come? I know you'll come. Come to Jesus. I see it in your eye, you are coming. Pray, Archie, pray for the Spirit." 15 Under this influence, he melted and together they kneeled and prayed to God. He arose with a newborn freedom and, not long after, was proclaiming salvation to others in an open-air meeting. 16

The revival spread and in Derry there were more gripping accounts of people coming under intense conviction. In one case, a girl envisioned herself to be in hell for three hours. In this state, she was crying to Jesus for mercy. A look of hopelessness was on her face.

However, at the end of three hours, she fell into a trance and underwent a dramatic transformation. The Rev. Richard Smith described it in these words:

Her face resumed its natural appearance; it then became unnatural once more, but in a different manner; the radiance of glory overspread it, and for four hours she seemed to be in the regions of the blest. Of the 'visions' she had during that time she never wished to speak, and I never encouraged her to do so, for I knew her mind to have been strung to an ecstatic pitch; but I rejoice to say that she continues steadfast in the faith of Jesus, and is an example of humility and love, and all the other graces of the Spirit. 17

More unusual occurrences, such as these, were springing up everywhere. On July 3rd, a Rev. Andrew Long held three meetings, two in Monreagh and one in Drumennon. He comments in these words:

The divine influence came down upon the people at each service throughout that interesting day. There were many physical manifestations. Upwards of one hundred persons lay prostrate in the pews, and agonized in prayer, till three o'clock next morning. Many of the cases were quite unusual. One young female continued to sing a sweet, mournful air, apparently her own, to words that occurred to her at the moment, all about Jesus, and all as beautiful as if arranged by the finest poet. She seemed unconscious, and sat in her pew all the time with her eyes steadfastly gazing upwards. Never did I, or any of that awe-stricken audience, listen to sounds so unlike those of earth. It was like an angel's song. Her voice seemed to be attuned by some celestial power; and its clear, sweet, symphonious tones, led us all to feel that the place was like the very gate of heaven. 18

There would be more dramatic conversions. A Rev. J. M. Killen, commenting on God's work in Comber, tells the story of the conversion of a hardened, elderly woman. This woman was known for

her carelessness and her cursing. She was adamantly opposed to revival. One day, something happened. She was found rolling on her kitchen floor, writhing in agony. A doctor was brought in but he ran from the home, exclaiming that this was a case for a clergyman, not for a doctor. Killen visited her and, after a while, her screaming subsided and she settled into a calm. She later chose to embrace Christ and was filled with peace and joy. Killen comments that:

... she is now one of the finest specimens of Christian character, and a mother in Israel, I have ever known, – distinguished by her strong faith, her ardent love, and her Christian meekness, her sweetness of temper, and an almost uninterrupted realization of her Redeemer's presence, combined with a very profound reverence for Messiah's character, a strong desire to promote His glory, and an almost extreme sensitiveness lest she should do anything to forfeit the enjoyment of His love. 19

These are beautiful testimonies of true conversion.

Another soul who experienced a dramatic conversion was Mr. Haltridge. Although married to a Christian wife he, himself, was not a Christian. One day word came to him that his son had been powerfully affected by the revival. Shaken up by this, Mr. Haltridge went to

his home and shut himself up for eight hours. His son was brought to him and laid on the sofa, crying under intense conviction. At times, during the next twenty-four hours, they were not sure if the son was dead or alive. At one point, Mr. Haltridge heard his son exclaim, "God be merciful to my wicked father!" 20 On a subsequent Sunday, as Mr. Haltridge was leaving the house, his wife insisted that he come with her and their daughter to church. During the service, listening to a beautiful hymn, God began dealing powerfully with him. He began trembling and fell over, upon his wife. For the next two hours he lay there and was oblivious to his surroundings. When he awoke, he was told that he had been crying for mercy. He was surrounded by people who were praying for him and they helped him up and took him home. He had difficulty in walking and they laid him on the same sofa that his son had lain on. His son now led family devotions in the home. Mr. Haltridge testified of receiving peace and said, "I now felt such love to my fellow-men, that I thought I could stand on a mountain-top and take the whole world in my arms. And as Christ told his disciples to begin preaching at Jerusalem, I was called upon to speak at meetings held in that place which has been the scene of my former life." 21 Salvation

had come to the Haltridge home. Not only was salvation a fruit of this revival, but also there were some remarkable healings. One woman, who was nearly blind, was healed. For ten years, prior to her healing, she had not been able to read the Bible. After her healing, she was able to read her Bible once more. 22

Not only were people affected in their homes and their churches, but also at their places of work. One mill was actually stopped because its employees were too overwhelmed with God's dealings with them to carry on with their work. Men were smitten even while working their machinery. Strong men and former scoffers found themselves powerless. They could be seen kneeling and praying, some of them with their wives and daughters bent over them. Other workers, from a rock quarry, came out to visit the revival meetings in Comber. Many were impacted and a deep anxiety settled upon them. Killen was invited to the quarry to speak with them. All work was shut down, and the workers listened to Killen for two hours. Many turned to the Lord and, out of ninety-six families represented, ninety established family worship. 23

The most joyful things resulting from the 1859 revival were, of course, the dramatic testimonies of changed lives. A Mr. Gibson comments that "All classes and all ages caught the

heavenly fire. Within the church, a cold formality, an apathetic and unimpressionable decorum, were exchanged for a living and vigorous piety; ..." 24 Gibson further describes the spiritual relief and release that many experienced:

It is that of sensible relief, a lightsome and liberated feeling, of which the chief ingredient is the assurance of forgiveness prompting the outburst of rapturous praise. The fountains of the soul seem to be opened, and forth flows, in unrestrained exuberance, the gushing fullness of its joy. The bodily sensations correspond with the inward ecstasy, and even the plainest features glow as with an unearthly beauty. The heavy load, the incubus that weighed down all the spirit's energies, is lifted off, and there is a buoyancy and elasticity proportionate to the depressing burden. The newborn happiness seeks audible expression. The language of the lips is all in unison with the serenity that reigns within. 25

How do you tell the story of the 1859 Revival? You start by telling of the salvation which came to multitudes of Irish men and women. Salvation which came, in many cases, after intense conviction of sin and intense realization of a person's need for God. It was a conviction which made schoolboys kneel in the playground. It

made the religious loathe their hypocrisy. It made souls stretch their hands to heaven and cry, "Oh, Christ. Help me." That help came as an outpouring of love and deliverance. An outpouring which revived and quickened the human heart to life and spiritual freedom, and the testimony of it, has rung loud in Ireland. May God do a work as deep and beautiful in us today.

END NOTES

1. Anonymous quote, found in William Gibson, *The Great Revival in Ireland in 1859* (Goshen: Pioneer Books), 9.
2. Tom Shaw, "The 1859 Revival in Northern Ireland" *Christians Unite*. 2006.
<http://articles.christiansunite.com>.
3. Anonymous quote, found in William Gibson, *The Great Revival in Ireland in 1859*, 10.
4. *Ibid.*, 12.
5. Mr. Arthur, quoted in William Gibson, *The Great Revival in Ireland in 1859*, 12-13.
6. *Ibid.*, 15.
7. *Ibid.*, 15.
8. *Ibid.*, 15-16.
9. William Gibson, *The Year of Grace : A History of The Revival in Ireland, A. D. 1859* (Boston: Gould and Lincoln, 1860), 244.
10. John Stuart, quoted in William Gibson, *The Great Revival in Ireland in 1859*, 17.
I have corrected his misquotations of Scripture.
11. A. Pollock, quoted in William Gibson, *The Great Revival in Ireland in 1859*, 17-18.
12. William Magill, quoted in William Gibson, *The Great Revival in Ireland in 1859*, 19-20.
13. *Ibid.*, 20.
14. Anonymous quote, found in William Gibson, *The Great Revival in*

Ireland in 1859, 24.

15. Ibid., 24.

16. William Gibson, *The Great Revival in Ireland in 1859*, 24-25.

17. Richard Smith, quoted in William Gibson, *The Great Revival in Ireland in 1859*, 32.

18. Andrew Long, quoted in William Gibson, *The Great Revival in Ireland in 1859*, 36.

19. J. M. Killen, quoted in William Gibson, *The Great Revival in Ireland in 1859*, 38,39.

20. William Gibson, *The Year of Grace : A History of The Revival in Ireland, A. D. 1859* (Boston: Gould and Lincoln, 1860), 102.

21. Mr. Haltridge, quoted in William Gibson, *The Year of Grace : A History of The Revival in Ireland, A. D. 1859*, 103.

22. William Gibson, *The Year of Grace : A History of The Revival in Ireland, A. D. 1859*, 204.

23. William Gibson, *The Great Revival in Ireland in 1859*, 40-41.

24. Ibid., 41.

25. Ibid., 11-12.

Boston: Gould and Lincoln, 1860.

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EVAN ROBERTS AND THE REVIVAL OF WALES

Dear Friend, God loves you. Therefore, seek Him diligently, pray to Him earnestly, read His word constantly. Yours in the gospel.i Evan Roberts (1878 – 1951)

It has been said that “Revival is not some emotion or worked-up excitement; it is an invasion from heaven that brings a conscious awareness of God.”ii Wales experienced just such a heavenly invasion in the blessed years of 1904 and 1905. In the years leading up to this, God was preparing a man whom He could work through during these momentous years of Wales’ spiritual history. The humble Evan Roberts was raised up as a minister after God’s own heart, to move and minister in the flow of revival. During his childhood, Roberts was known for being a well-mannered, religious child. His experience of becoming a Christian can be pinned approximately to his thirteenth year. As he grew in his experience and faith in God, Roberts was viewed as being peculiar. For one reason, he was obsessed with prayer. It seemed that Roberts was continuously drawn to communing with God. His family became concerned when, on some occasions, he would decline his meals so that he could go to his room and

spend more time with God. Other times, when the family had gone to bed, Roberts would stay up for hours, engaged in prayer. This reached the point where Roberts was spending hours on his knees every evening. Much of the time when Roberts was praying, he would be completely silent. One of his goals was to reach a stage in his spiritual walk where his entire life would be one continual prayer.iii As a result of his life of prayer, Roberts gained great sensitivity towards spiritual things. For example, he sometimes seemed to know when people were praying for him. He was known to be in conversation with someone at one moment and, then, detach himself from the conversation with the remark that people were praying for him at that very moment. All of his attention would then be focused on this, and it seemed as if he could even sense and understand the prayers that were made on his behalf. Then, after a time, he would come back to the conversation. It would later be found out that people were indeed praying for him at the very moment when he sensed that they were.iv Roberts’ sensitivity to spiritual things grew out of his special closeness and communication with the Lord. In the spring of 1904, he began to have some incredible spiritual experiences. One evening, Roberts was

contemplating the spiritual state of the Christian world and he lamented that Christianity seemed to be such a failure. That very morning he was awakened at 1 A.M. by the Lord and he had an amazing spiritual experience. His senses were filled with joy and awe and, for the next four hours, he had intense communion and vivid communication with God. Amazingly, this experience repeated itself every morning for more than three months. After this four hours of communion, Roberts would sleep. It was not uncommon for him to then awake at 9:00 A.M. and, again, be ushered into intense spiritual communion, which sometimes continued until noon or later. His family became concerned about why this much of his time was being occupied and would ask Roberts for an explanation. He would reply that the experiences that he was having were too divine to be described in an understandable way. Roberts claims that, as a result of these experiences, his nature changed and he began to see everything in a new light. On that first morning, God spoke to him, telling him that God was going to move in Wales and also the world.v

It was not long before Roberts saw the fulfillment to this great prophecy. Throughout Wales, there began to be a profound awareness of God. God was manifesting Himself in church services

with overwhelming reality. Into this environment, Roberts came with a strong sense of God's leading and direction. Before long, Roberts was holding meetings himself. These meetings were anything but ordinary or common, compared to the regular religious formality of his day. The meetings were, instead, characterized by prayer, intense conviction of sin, overwhelming joy and release of spiritual and heartfelt worship. At times, Roberts, while in the pulpit, would be engaged in silent prayer for over an hour. Roberts was so overtaken with prayer that his entire body seemed to be completely engaged. One writer commented: ... His prayers, though silent, were extraordinary in power. Another thing that I wish to add in this connection is the hold that his prayer takes upon his whole body. In this, he is the most extraordinary person I have ever seen. One would think that every word is the product of his whole being, body and soul. His sighs seemed to rise from the depths of his spirit and pass along every nerve.vi

His prayers were often cries to God for the bending of the Church, for purity of heart and for the filling of God's people with the Holy Spirit.vii

To be filled with God's Spirit was of great importance to Roberts. He knew conversion. However, the special

filling of the Spirit is an experience subsequent to conversion. Evans set his heart and mind upon this experience and, from the time of his conversion, sought and prayed for it for thirteen years. On one occasion, while listening to the preaching of a Mr. William Davies, he was impacted as Davies questioned his audience, saying; “ ... what if the Holy Spirit descended when you are not here?” viii Roberts said to himself; “I am resolved to get the Holy Spirit.”ix This resolve, combined with his concern that the Holy Spirit might come to a meeting while he was absent, led Roberts to attend church meetings five nights a week.x

The Lord honored Roberts’ resolve and desire to be filled with the Holy Spirit. On September 29, 1904, Roberts attended a meeting in Blaenannerch. He records the life-changing experience that he had that night in these words: Shortly some wonderful influence came over me. After many had prayed I felt some living energy or force entering my bosom, it held my breath, my legs trembled terribly; this living energy increased and increased as one after the other prayed until it nearly burst me, and as each finished I asked, ‘Shall I pray now?’ When someone finished, I prayed. My bosom boiled all through, and had it not been that I prayed, I would have burst. What boiled my bosom? The verse, ‘for God

commendeth His love.’ I fell on my knees, with my arms outstretched on the seat before me, the perspiration poured down my face and my tears streamed quickly until I thought that the blood came out. Soon Mrs. Davies, Mona, New Quay, came to wipe my perspiration. Magdalen Phillips stood on my right and Maud Davies on my left. It was awful on me for about two minutes. I cried – ‘Bend me, bend me, bend me; Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh! When wiping my perspiration Mrs. Davies said, ‘Oh wonderful grace!’ ‘Yes,’ said I, ‘Oh wonderful grace!’ It was God commending His love that bent me, and I not seeing anything in Him to commend. After I was bent, a wave of peace filled my bosom.xi

As a result of Roberts being filled with the Spirit, there were many notable changes to his life and ministry. For one, he now seemed to have an almost inexhaustible source of strength. Along with this, he seemed very free and happy. He lost his sense of nervousness and was filled with courage. Lastly, he had an intense desire for the salvation of sinners.xii God began using Roberts in amazing ways. Roberts saw a vision in which he was instructed to go to Loughor. In obedience, he did go and began holding meetings. He thought that he would be there for one week but,

instead, spent five months in Loughor. In the meetings, there was a great outpouring of revival. As attendees were overwhelmed with an awareness of God's presence, many fell to the ground in agony, bewailing the condition of their souls. Roberts instructed those gathered to pray that God would "Send the Holy Spirit now, for Jesus Christ sake."^{xiii} Roberts instructed that each person in the meeting was to pray this, in turn. They did so, and there was an amazing outpouring of God's Spirit:

When it was about half way the second time, the whole audience gave way before some irresistible influence, and now the state of things is beyond any description. Many groaned in agony, others sighed deeply, some shouted loudly: 'Pray for me,' and a number wept sorrowfully for their sins. The deacon mentioned above was filled this night with the divine influence; and many broke out to pray, sing and speak without being asked,^{xiv}

It was not until 3:00 A.M. that anyone attempted to close that meeting.

The Western Mail of Cardiff printed this report on the revival in Loughor:

A remarkable religious revival is now taking place at Loughor. For some days a young man named Evan Roberts, a native of Loughor, but at present a student at Newcastle-Emlyn has been causing great surprise by his

extraordinary exhortations at Moriah Chapel, that place of worship having being besieged with dense crowds of people unable to obtain admission. Such excitement has prevailed that the road in which the chapel is situated has been lined with people from end to end. Roberts, who speaks in Welsh, opens his discourse by saying he does not know what he is going to say, but when he is in communion with the Holy Spirit the Holy Spirit will speak and he will be simply the medium of His wisdom. The preacher soon after launches out into fervent and at times impassionate oration. His statements have most stirring effects upon his listeners, many who have dis-believed Christianity for years again returning to the fold of their younger days. One night so great was the enthusiasm invoked by the young revivalist that after a sermon lasting two hours, the vast congregation remained praying and singing until half-past two o'clock next morning. Shopkeepers are closing earlier in order to get a place in the chapel and tin and steel workers throng the place in their work clothes. ... ^{xv}

As in this newspaper article, many attributed the revival to Evan Roberts, personally. Roberts reacted strongly against this, pointing out that the glory should go to God for the things that

God was doing. He said:

The revival in South Wales is not of men, but of God. He has come very close to us. ... We are teaching no sectarian doctrine, only the wonder and beauty of Christ's love. I have been asked concerning my methods. I have none. I never prepare what I shall speak, but leave that to Him. I am not the source of this revival, but only one agent among what is growing to be a multitude. I wish no personal following, but only the world for Christ. xvi

This desire to take no credit for the moving of God was the reason that Roberts dreaded newspaper reporters. Repeatedly, he turned down interviews with newspaper men. He also refused to have pictures taken of him except by members of his own family.xvii

God was moving and the Welsh Revival had a profound effect upon Welsh society. The liquor industry suffered large losses during these years, due to lack of business. There were repeated instances of men entering bars, ordering drinks and then, convicted of their actions, leaving the bar without touching the liquor. Also, the people of Wales were known for their strong interest in football. Ministers stopped talking about football from their pulpits, having now been swept up in the spiritual emphasis of the revival.xviii

During the revival, football players were converted and soon were testifying of

this in open-air meetings. Some football teams were even disbanded and stadiums left vacant.xix Even political meetings were postponed because members of the Houses of Parliament were attending revival meetings.xx Professionals and common people alike, were finding tremendous spiritual relief and one young teenage girl remarked; "Oh, what will heaven be like if it is so wonderful down here!"xxi

For many during this time, life was wonderful and one expression of this was the enthusiasm and fervor that people expressed in participating in revival meetings. Sometimes, people would gather an hour or two before the designated meeting time, hungry for the meetings to begin. These would begin as soon as a congregation had assembled. There was no need to wait for any human leader or to abide by any set schedule. Sometimes people would gather at seven o'clock and not leave until three o'clock the next morning. As one crowd was leaving, another crowd would enter the chapel for early-morning prayer meetings. In some cases, factories and shops closed down for up to three days so that people could attend revival meetings.xxii

While enthusiasm and fervor were expressions of the wonderful life in Christ, another expression of this

came in the form of singing. Converts wholeheartedly engaged in worship, shouting out songs to the Lord, not only in church services, but sometimes in the streets. One writer comments on the joy of some Welsh converts in these words: In the awakening in Wales it was the presence of thousands of young converts exulting in the thrill of their new-found Redeemer that carried all before it. These were drunk with the new wine of the Spirit and were oblivious to everything other than their blessed Lord Jesus.xxiii

As people found new life in Christ, it was natural to express that in songs. Some songs were composed during the revival itself. The most famous of these, written by

Dr. William Rees, is the following:

Here is love, vast as the ocean,
Loving kindness as a flood.

When the Prince of Life, my Ransom,
Shed for us His precious blood.

Who His love will not remember,
Who will cease to sing His praise?

He will never be forgotten
Throughout heaven's eternal days.

On the mount of crucifixion,
Fountains open deep and wide
Of the floodgates of God's mercy
Flowed a vast and gracious tide.

Grace and love like mighty rivers
Poured incessant from above.

Heaven's peace and perfect justice
Kissed a guilty world in love.

Let me all Thy love accepting
Love Thee ever all my days.

Let me seek Thy kingdom only
And my life be to Thy praise.

You alone shall be my glory.
Nothing in the world I seek.

You have bought and sanctified me
You, Yourself have set me free.

Although this song is well-known, it is not well-known that Evan Roberts himself composed beautiful poetry and the following are two examples. The first poem is not saying that no one will be lost. It is saying that no one, who comes to Jesus in repentance and faith, will be turned away from Him.

WHOSOEVER WILL COME SHALL
NOT BE REJECTED

Mercy's door is still wide open,
And the Throne of Grace is near;

Let us then go straight to Jesus,
He our feeble cry will hear.

He will grant us full forgiveness,
He will hear us when we pray;

In His Holy Word He tells us
No one will be cast away.

Now for us He's interceding
In His Father's home on high;

Brother, Friend, and Savior is He,
When the helpless to Him cry;

He will lead the weary pilgrims;
He will cheer them on the way;

And His voice declares for ever,
'No one will be cast away.'

Jesus Christ today is calling
From the glorious realms above,

'Come, all nations, come, and welcome,
To the feast of heavenly love.'
Those who seek will find the treasure;
Blessings come to those who pray.
To His Throne we'll go believing – 'No
one will be cast away.'
We must make a full surrender –
'Tis the path that Jesus trod;
Faith in Him alone will lead us
Through the desert, home to God.
In our weakness we'll draw near –
His own arm shall be our stay;
Though we're faint, and weak, and
helpless,
'No one will be cast away.'
Little children, youths, and maidens,
And old men, with one accord,
Come to own Him as your Savior,
And adore Him as your Lord.
His great love and sovereign power,
With His wisdom, seem to say,
In a voice both loud and clear,
'No one will be cast away.'
Listen to Him, wretched sinner,
Listen to the voice Divine;
If thou wilt rely upon Him,
Life eternal will be thine.
Oh! how sad without a Savior
In death's hour to be thy stay!
Sinner, come, Oh, come to Jesus!
'No one will be cast away.' xxiv
LET US WORK FOR JESUS
Let us work for Jesus,
Always, night and day,
To bring back the lost ones
Who have gone astray.

Let us work with patience,
Lifting up our cry
Ever pressing onward
To our home on high.
Jesus was a toiler
In this world of pain;
May we all be like Him
While we here remain.
Let us work like heroes
In the Savior's name;
Let us help the fallen,
And the lost reclaim;
Let us do our utmost
To bring souls to God;
Treading on our journey
Where the Master trod.
Let us work till night comes,
In the vineyard fair;
When the day is ended
We a crown shall wear.
Let us work together,
'Neath His banner bright,
Then we all shall see Him
in the realms of light.xxv
Evan Roberts did not found a new
church; he did not start a new
movement; he did not teach a new
theology, nor did he appoint
successors.xxvi What he did do was
live a holy life. He went after God in
prayer and experienced a dynamic
relationship with Him. That relationship
caused him to see everything in a new
light, from a heavenly perspective. He
sought to be filled with God's Spirit,
and God's Spirit came to him and filled

him. That experience of Roberts became the experience of others as God poured out His Spirit on Wales. The wonderful influence of God's Spirit brought men and women to conviction, repentance and joyful relief. Heaven invaded earth. The hearts and souls of men and women were opened. With opened hearts, they received God's love and loved God in return. This is revival. Oh, wonderful grace!

ENDNOTES

- i Evan Roberts, in *A Diary of Revival : The Story of The 1904 Welsh Awakening*, Kevin Adams and Selwyn Hughes (Worcester: Vision Video), CD.
- ii Stephen F. Olford, in John H. Armstrong, *When God Moves* (Eugene: Harvest House Publishers, 1998), 25.
- iii D. M. Phillips, *Evan Roberts, The Great Welsh Revivalist and His Work* (London: Marshall Brothers, 1923), 84-87.
- iv *Ibid.*, 88.
- v Evan Roberts, in *A Diary of Revival : The Story of The 1904 Welsh Awakening*, Kevin Adams and Selwyn Hughes (Worcester: Vision Video), CD. and D. M. Phillips, *Evan Roberts, The Great Welsh Revivalist and His Work* (London: Marshall Brothers, 1923), 120.
- vi D. M. Phillips, *Evan Roberts, The Great Welsh Revivalist and His Work* (London: Marshall Brothers, 1923), 86.
- vii *Ibid.*, 89.
- viii William Davies, in D. M. Phillips, *Evan Roberts, The Great Welsh Revivalist and His Work* (London: Marshall Brothers, 1923), 117.
- ix Evan Roberts, in D. M. Phillips, *Evan Roberts, The Great Welsh Revivalist and His Work* (London: Marshall Brothers, 1923), 117.
- x D. M. Phillips, *Evan Roberts, The*

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- xiEvan Roberts, in D. M. Phillips, Evan Roberts, The Great Welsh Revivalist and His Work (London: Marshall Brothers, 1923), 124-125.
- xiiD. M. Phillips, Evan Roberts, The Great Welsh Revivalist and His Work (London: Marshall Brothers, 1923), 126-127.
- xiiiEvan Roberts, in D. M. Phillips, Evan Roberts, The Great Welsh Revivalist and His Work (London: Marshall Brothers, 1923), 205.
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- xvThe Western Mail, found in D. M. Phillips, Evan Roberts, The Great Welsh Revivalist and His Work (London: Marshall Brothers, 1923), 210.
- xviEvan Roberts, in Frank Bartleman, Azusa Street (New Kensington: Whitaker House, 1982), 32.
- xviiJames A. Stewart, Invasion of Wales by The Spirit Through Evan Roberts (Fort Washington: CLC), 12-13.
- xviii**ibid.**, 64.
- xix**ibid.**, 40.
- xx**ibid.**, 52.
- xxiAnonymous, in James A. Stewart, Invasion of Wales by The Spirit Through Evan Roberts (Fort Washington: CLC), 37.
- xxiiJames A. Stewart, Invasion of Wales by The Spirit Through Evan Roberts (Fort Washington: CLC), 55.
- xxiiiJames A. Stewart, Invasion of Wales by The Spirit Through Evan Roberts (Fort Washington: CLC), 45.
- xxivEvan Roberts, in D. M. Phillips, Evan Roberts, The Great Welsh Revivalist and His Work (London: Marshall Brothers, 1923), 497-498.
- xxv**ibid.**, 536-537.
- xxviBrynmor Pierce Jones, An Instrument of Revival : The Complete Life of Evan Roberts (1978-1951) (South Plainsfield: Bridge Publishing, 1995), xiii.

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Art by Ramona Stevens

I was inspired to paint this piece of art by viewing the cover of the dvd "A Diary Of Revival", copyright 1904 Ltd, distributed by Vision Video Box 540 Worchester, PA 19490.

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