

Where Is the Mocker? -- Unique Service at Seacombe.

by Gwilym Hughes

The sermon emphasized the importance of personal cleansing and sincerity in worship, challenging attendees to confront their past and seek a deeper relationship with God.

Scripture: Psalm 24:3, Psalm 51:10, Proverbs 28:13, James 4:8, 1 John 1:9

Topics: "Repentance", "Consecration"

Description

Gwilym Hughes preaches at a unique service in Seacombe, where the Welsh revivalist, Mr. Evan Roberts, addresses a fervent congregation with a message of repentance and consecration. Roberts challenges the attendees to confront their past sins and urges them to seek cleansing and purification from God. He calls out mockers and skeptics, emphasizing the importance of true worship and sincerity in prayer. The service culminates in a powerful address on the need for more consecration and dedication in the Christian life, leading to moments of confession, prayer, and worship.

Transcript

Where is the Mocker? -- Unique Service at Seacombe.

SEACOMBE, CHESHIRE, Tuesday. April 4, 1905.

To-night the Welsh revivalist, Mr. Evan Roberts, is on a visit to the Welsh population who, to the number of many thousands, reside on this Cheshire side of the Mersey. At 5 o'clock an enormous crowd of visitors from Liverpool are assembled outside the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Church in Liscard-road. They are early for a 7 o'clock meeting, and yet they are too late, for the chapel has been full for some time, and arrangements are being made for overflow meetings.

Scanning the congregation, I judge it to be on the whole a gathering of suburban sweldom, with a fair sprinkling of visitors from the North Wales counties. Ministers are here from as far south as Aberystwyth, and the Vale of Clwyd has sent a large contingent. The Rev. Lodwig Lewis, the pastor of the church, opens with a prayer of remarkable fervour. Some of his phrases are unique, and reflect the attitude of the public mind here towards the young missionary from Loughor -- "Forbid, O Lord, that there be to-night any hindrances to the operation of Thy Holy Spirit. Ease the burden that weighs on Thy prophet, and sustain him with Thy strength. Many prophets of old have been unequal to the burden. Sustain this young prophet,

Lord, and help him to give us Thy Message. He is young, he was unknown. From the mountains sendest Thou him with a message of joy to a perishing world."

Suburban swelldom or not, these Welsh people of Seacombe and Liscard are full of the spirit of the revival. As in Wales, so here, the eloquence of the women in speech and in prayer sweeps everything before it. A whole chapter of St. John with its touching picture of the incidents of the upper room and the Last Supper, has just been reverently recited from memory by a lady with rare elocutionary power, and now we are listening to a passionate prayer by a servant girl, who has the broad Snowdonian dialect.

English? There is heard scarcely a word other than Welsh at these Liverpool meetings. We are in England, but the bilingual difficulty is far less acute here as yet than we have seen it at Glamorgan gatherings, and yet at every meeting scores are present of nationalities other than Welsh, athirst for some of the spirit that has come in copious showers on the people of Wales.

Sometimes we learn something of the identity of those participating in the services. On Friday at Anfield a grey-headed lady in the set fawr, who once or twice essayed to pray, was the daughter of the great John Jones, of Talvsarn. As I write now, we are listening to an impassioned prayer offered by the youngest daughter of the no less eminent divine the late Dr. Owen Thomas, of Liverpool.

We were all looking forward to a bright and sunny service when the missionary, shortly after 7 o'clock, faced the expectant congregation. So many fervent prayers had already been offered for the removal of hindrances, and such an intense spirit of reverence seemed to dwell in the hearts of all present, that there seemed every prospect of our hopes being realised. The missionary started in a pleasant mood. "Lord, who shall dwell in Thy tabernacle?" "You can all answer," he remarked; "those who walk uprightly, who work righteousness, who do that which is just, who have truth in their hearts, who backbite not with their tongues."

A cloud gathers on his brow. He suddenly ceases to speak, closes the Bible, and surveys the congregation. Then, after a deep and solemn hush, painfully prolonged, he declares in a low voice, audible, however, in every corner of the building: -- "There are some of you here tonight who cannot look back at your past; the thought of it horrifies you. Why? Because you have not walked uprightly. Because there is something in your past you would hide, but it has not been hidden. You may hide it from men. Don't waste your time in trying to hide it from the Almighty. Once let it be hidden by the Almighty, and it will not be revealed through all eternity. Otherwise, everything must come to light. YOU have need to wash your hands."

Another prolonged silence ensues. The missionary, with lowered brow and piercing eyes, seems to be scrutinising the congregation into its very heart. "Ask the Lord" -- His words are scarcely above a whisper -- "Ask the Lord to bury your past, but before doing that you must confess Him. We must be cleansed ere we can truly worship a God Who is holy. The Welsh poet said,

'Daw dydd o brysur bwysu

Ar grefydd cyn bo hir'

(a day of severe testing will soon overtake religion). Heaven be praised, that day has come. God is cleansing and purifying the temples these days."

A little later the missionary again speaks. "Fear reigns in many hearts here -- a fear of judgment, a fear of light. Some of you are trying to deceive the Almighty this very minute!

Suddenly he stands erect, and with eyes flashing and voice full of anger loudly exclaims, "Where is the mocker to-night? * (It was not until I returned, about midnight, from this meeting, to the Liverpool Press Club, that I realised the full force and meaning of this query of the missionary. At the club I met the representative of the Daily Mail and the Daily Dispatch, both of whom had been at the Seacombe meeting. An hour before Mr. Evan Roberts arrived," so ran the story they related to me, "we were joined in the chapel by Mr. -- , the representative of -- , a well known Socialist organ. This was his first revival meeting. He treated the incidents lightly, indulged in sneering and sarcastic remarks at the expense of the worshippers, and generally played the part of the scoffing sceptic. Judge then our surprise when we heard that startling~ query of the Revivalist

'Where is the mocker?' But our surprise was turned into sheer amazement later, when shortly after the sceptic had left us, Mr. Roberts suddenly cried out, 'It is clear now. We shall do everything for He is receiving our worship now!' I give the incident without comment. -- Gwilym Hughes.) He may have come here to laugh and mock. How sayeth the Psalmist, 'The Lord will mock them'? Some are here mocking the work of the Lord and despising the Blood of the Covenant. (A pause). Will no one here utter a prayer that this mockery be removed?"

In rapid succession, for the next fifteen minutes, prayer after prayer in English and Welsh ascend. "God be praised, it is beginning to lighten," remarks the missionary at last, "Let us all pray that all the obstacles here to the spirit of true worship be removed, and, as you pray, believe."

The congregation kneels, and silent prayers are offered. The silence, the hush, is awe-inspiring. A woman in the audience who starts a Welsh hymn is commanded to cease, the missionary remarking, "No matter how great our thirst is for a successful service, Heaven is still more athirst. Some of you want to sing with great hwyl, but the Spirit forbids. Before we can get hwyl we must get purity, else we shall be building on the sand.'

After a vivid word picture of the omniscience of God, the revivalist, who has the entire audience hanging on his lips, remarks, "Some of you fled into the darkness in an endeavour to escape from God. You have been found out, and to-night God is turning your darkness into light. Oh! that the day would come when every unworthy servant is swept out of the church, or that he is made worthy. Oh, that the Lord would send an angel down to expose the hypocrites that are in this congregation."

Five minutes later, to all appearances, the hindrances are all gone, for the revivalist makes no further reference to them, but proceeds with an address of great power on the need of more consecration and strenuousness in the Christian life. A pathetic reference to Gethsemane brings Annie Davies to her feet with a sweetly pathetic rendering of "Cof am y Cyfiawn Iesu" to the air of "Flee as a bird."

"There," exclaims the missionary, as the singer resumes her seat, "We shall do everything now. Sing, confess, pray, for He is receiving our worship now." The congregation received the announcement with evident relief, and presently we are listening to inspiring renderings of "Dyma Gariad," "Marchog Iesu," and other old favourites.

There is a novelty in the test to-night, conducted by the Rev. John Williams. "All who desire to live better lives, to become more consecrated to the Lord and His work," is the first query. It is put in Welsh and in

English, and when hands are raised the Rev. gentleman fails to see one that is not lifted. There are many, however, who are not church members. Of some it is said, after inquiry, that they do not desire to surrender just yet. Only one conversion is announced.

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