

# At School and in the Mine.

by J. Tudor Rees

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*The sermon tells the story of Evan Roberts' life, from his early days as a student to his career as a collier, highlighting his strong faith and commitment to his spiritual life.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 34:17, Psalm 119:105, Proverbs 22:6, Isaiah 43:2, Colossians 3:23, 1 Thessalonians 5:17

**Topics:** "Faith And Works", "Divine Protection"

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## Description

J. Tudor Rees shares the inspiring story of Evan Roberts, a humble and diligent young man who displayed kindness, dedication, and a strong work ethic in all aspects of his life. Despite his uneventful beginnings, Evan's unwavering faith and commitment to God shone through in his actions, from helping his mother at home to diligently working in the colliery. His deep religious devotion was evident in his daily practices of prayer, Bible reading, and hymn singing, even in the midst of his demanding work in the mine. Evan's remarkable escape from a colliery explosion, where his cherished Bible was scorched but remained a symbol of his faith, further illustrates his unwavering commitment to God and his miraculous protection.

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## Transcript

His was an uneventful life. School and play, play and school; that was his daily programme. "Have you been 'mitching' from school to-day, Evan?" said his mother one day, when the boy returned home earlier than usual. "Oh, no," he replied quietly; "I have nowhere else to go but to school." He was always fond of books, and the bookcase in his home at Loughor to-day contains many a story-book which he bought with his weekly pennies.

The characteristics which he displayed at school he exhibited at home. He was ever the first to assist his mother in her domestic duties. "He was always a good boy," said Mrs. Roberts to me, when I visited her at Loughor quite recently. "Whenever I wanted him to do anything for me he never refused. And he was always so kind and sympathetic. He always had a lot of friends as a boy, and was never tired of assisting them in anything. Although always fond of studying, he used to play as much as the other boys.

His schooldays were nearly over, and the lad was anxious to be earning something. But his mother's heart was sad, though he knew it not. "I have another son to serve God now," she said, after Evan's birth, and she had silently nursed the hope that some day he would become a minister. How, she knew not; but she hoped and hoped, and prayed oft and long. Her prayer was not to be answered for a score of years.

Evan's father was employed at the Mountain Colliery, Gorseinon, about two miles distant. One day there was an accident at the pit, and Roberts, who had charge of a "district," had his foot crushed. Evan heard the report while at school, and rushed home to see if it were true. Yes; it was true enough, and the doctors said it would take four months before Roberts could return to work.

He had been laid up for a little while, when the manager of the colliery sent to ask him to endeavour to get back to the mine, and bring one of his sons to assist him. Here was Evan's chance, and father and son set out together. Not being able to walk about much himself, Mr. Roberts simply gave the orders, and Evan did the running about. In a month or so the injured foot got all right, and Evan then became "door-boy," opening and shutting the doors in the pit. Later he became a "knocker" at the bottom of the shaft, and ultimately a full-fledged collier.

With the pride of the unselfish lad that he was, he took home his weekly earnings to his mother, and out of the "pocket--money" he had given back to him he purchased books. Even while working in the pit he was very religious, and was always praying, reading his Bible, or singing hymns. Everyday he took a Welsh Bible down the mine with him and in his spare moments read from its pages. When not in use, the Bible was placed in a niche in the workings.

On January 5th, 1898, an explosion occurred at the colliery in which Evan worked, and his precious Book was blackened and scorched by the fiery blast. That Bible is to-day one of the revivalist's most valued possessions, and as his sister opened the brown paper in which the broken pages are stored, and gave me a few burnt leaves, tears welled up in her eyes.

It was just seven years before that the explosion happened, and the sister's tale of Evan's escape--for he was quite unhurt--was singularly touching. Another souvenir of his early days that was shown me was his shorthand Bible.

"He learnt shorthand without any teacher," said Mrs. Roberts, with a touch of pardonable pride. "He bought the books himself, and spent many an hour in this room with his Bible." And as I scanned the unique Volume, marked "Evan Roberts, Island Villa, Loughor," I detected the traces of its having been much used.

Just at this time the youth became an active worker in the Methodist chapel, and one incident alone is enough to prove his real interest in things religious.

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Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/j-tudor-rees/at-school-and-in-the-mine/>

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