



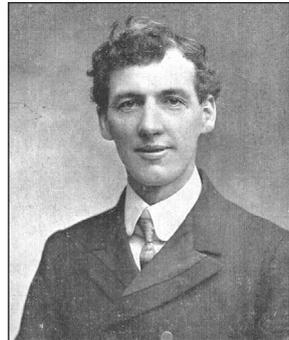
REMEMBERING 1904

A Personal Account of Revival

Rev. Dafydd Job

This account is based on diaries, letters and notes that were made during the revival of 1904. It is not intended to be a story, not just history, but an account of God's dealings with His people. We need to understand this in terms of what Scripture tells us about the way God deals with us, so that we might be able to seek God ourselves. We should realise that because God moved in 1904, and He is the same God today, we want him to move in a mighty way in our day. Maybe He will not move in the same way as in 1904, clearly there are differences between then and now. In 1904 almost everybody knew the stories of Scripture, whereas today many children have not even heard of these things and the truths of the Bible are largely unknown to people. In one sense this is not my account - would to God that it were and that each one of us had our own personal account of God's reviving power in our lives.

When referring to the revival of 1904 some things immediately spring to mind-the name of Evan Roberts and places such as Loughor, for example-but revival was not confined to a few special places or just to one man. Many accounts of what happened are known only in heaven, but some events were recorded at the time and it was my privilege to look through boxes of papers that had lain untouched for many years in the attic of my parents' home. They belonged to my grandfather who had been a minister in Bethesda in North Wales where the revival had been powerfully felt. He was pastor at Carneddi, one of the Calvinistic Methodist chapels amongst many others in the village.



Evan Roberts

God's Preparation

In Bethesda God prepared His people for blessing, although it is often assumed that the Holy Spirit comes suddenly and unexpectedly. Of course, Scripture does contain accounts where this was so, but when we look back it is not without some preparation taking place. God in His infinite wisdom and power has the right to bless those whom He wishes to bless and to move in His own sovereign way. He is not bound by rules as we are, or as the world is, but generally speaking God does prepare people for blessing, just as John the Baptist was sent to prepare the way of the Lord - and then He came. It is not surprising that the Holy Spirit fell upon the apostles at Pentecost for they had been prepared while they had been with the Lord. Nor is it surprising that it was to the house of Cornelius that Peter was sent, because God had been working in his heart for some time beforehand.

When we consider Bethesda we can ask, "Why did God work so powerfully there?" To our way of thinking it was not the most obvious place for Him to work. It was a sprawling village a few miles from Bangor and most of the population were poor quarry workers in the Penrhyn slate quarries. There was nothing special about the area and yet the revival took hold there in such a way as to make it a centre from which it spread to many other places. To understand what happened we need to go back before 1904. Bethesda was a religious village, indeed its name was taken from the Congregational chapel that was built there many years earlier; and amongst the many other places of worship that had been established by the beginning of the nineteenth century there was one small Calvinistic Methodist cause. During the course of that century, however, it grew steadily and set up seven other 'daughter' churches in the area around Bethesda. Most of the population were church members of one sort or another and some

churches had known revival, notably in 1859. Many of the people were cultured, there were many choirs, and there were good theologians amongst the church elders. People read the Bible regularly and often prayed.

In 1898 the Calvinistic Methodist church called as its pastor a man who was becoming a national figure. Preachers in those days were regarded as heroes of their time and were known throughout the land, almost like the 'pop-idols' of today. Wales had its poet-preachers - those who were famous for their poetic gifts and the new minister, Rev. John Thomas Job (1867-1938), had won the chair at the National Eisteddfod in 1897. He went on to win the crown in 1900 for a long poem on William Williams, Pantycelyn, and in 1903 he won the crown for the second time. Rev. Job was on good terms and shared correspondence with leading politicians, academics and churchmen of his day. With such a man as their minister, surely the church members had every right to think that religious life was in a fine state in Bethesda, but "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble" [James 4:6].



John Thomas Job

The people of the area were to learn something of their frailty in the first years of the twentieth century. While Lord Penrhyn, the owner of the slate quarry, lived in resplendent luxury, the conditions for the workmen and their families were dire. His father had built up the industry until it was exporting slate all around the world and, as the profits rolled in, Lord Penrhyn just enjoyed it all. The quarry workers, however, were paid a pittance and there was extreme poverty, illness and harsh conditions for all but a few. Things came to a head in 1900 when the workers decided that enough was enough and called a strike. It lasted for three long years and at that time there were no benefits they could claim. People were reduced to starvation and families were broken up as about a thousand men left the village to look for work elsewhere, many in the coal mines of South Wales, while others emigrated to America. But some decided to try and break the strike and about two hundred went back to work in the quarry - and they were hated for it. People were set against each other, as Lord Penrhyn rewarded those who agreed to work with wonderful conditions, even building new houses for them. Their children were no longer starving, while all around the families of the striking workers had nothing. Even today the houses built by Lord Penrhyn are known as 'Tai'r bradwyr', 'Traitors' houses'. There was great bitterness and hatred between people throughout the village.

At Christmas 1901 many workmen came back home to Bethesda from South Wales and riots broke out, when the new

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houses were stoned by angry crowds. Lord Penrhyn called for military aid to stop the riots and this increased the bitterness still further. Inevitably these feelings entered the chapels of Bethesda and caused deep resentment. Rev. Job later recalled that one member of his church was a wonderful man on his knees in prayer and often heaven seemed to come close when he prayed in their meetings. Yet he was one of the strike-breakers and Rev. Job knew that if he called him forward to take part in a prayer meeting the whole congregation would walk out. They were a wonderfully respectable and religious congregation but their so-called Christianity could not deal with the intense hatred that lurked in their hearts. Now they were being humbled and brought low.

And what about their minister? Rev. Job's gifts as a 'preacher-poet' had made him nationally famous and successful but he too was humbled and brought very low. In 1894 he had married a beautiful girl named Etta Davies from New Quay, and they had three children but, due to the prevalence of disease in Bethesda, they lost first one daughter at a year old, then a second at two years old. By that time Etta had contracted tuberculosis and she died in the same year. So Rev. Job was left to care for their son, who also became very ill. In his diary for April and May 1902 entry after entry contains the words, "Nursing little Aneurin", until the little boy died. So within two years Rev. Job, the man everyone envied and even idolised, had lost his wife and three children. What use was national acclaim in the face of such loss?

The people and their pastor had to endure much suffering. How do we react when God seems to deal harshly with us? Do not run from the chastisement of God. It sounds wonderful to sing hymns such as "I asked the Lord that I might grow in faith, and love, and every grace," but what does God do to John Newton, the hymn-writer, in the later verses? He empties him of all self until he sees that he is nothing. Only then is he prepared and ready for God's blessing. Humbling is essential if God is going to bless. He wounds, but He binds up. There is an old Puritan prayer which says, "Let me learn by paradox that the way down is the way up; that to be low is to be high; that the broken heart is a healed heart; that the contrite spirit is the rejoicing spirit; that the repenting soul is the victorious soul; and to have nothing is to possess all; that to bear the cross is to wear the crown; that the valley is the place of vision." The people of Bethesda were brought very low and that was one reason why God found such fruitful ground for His Spirit to work there. Let us not allow pride to be a hindrance to God's work in our midst.

The People's Response

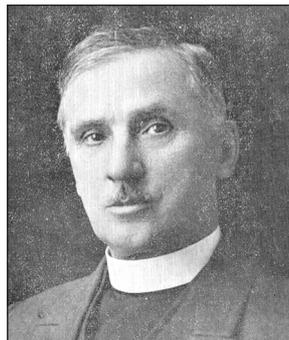
It is important to note that in their time of difficulty the people in Bethesda turned to God. A recent survey in this country stated that people claimed that suffering was a good reason why we should not believe in God. The question of why does God allow suffering caused many to decide not to believe in Him, yet, when the people in Bethesda suffered, they felt that the answer was to seek God. Why did they look to God to send revival? Listen to the words from Rev. Job's diary on the day after his second daughter died: "This has been the darkest week of my life. I have been forced into terrible depths. I called on God, 'Spare her', but that was not His will. I am like a vessel in the tempest at the mercy of the waves. Etta is away and I had to bury sweet Non without her mother seeing her." Was this cause for bitterness? Listen to this next entry; "Yet He must have a glorious reason for all of this, or else I must throw my Bible overboard. But I would rather drown with the Bible in

my hand than live without it. O Lord, keep dear Etta." Again at the end of 1902, the year after the last of his children died, he wrote, "Thus another year full of mercies has past. Etta, Olwen, Non and little Aneurin are in your heaven. Guide me to them, to the quiet haven, in your own good time." These were not the words of a bitter man, but of a man who in suffering turned to God.

Why did He do this? Part of the answer lies with his parents. He had been brought up in the little village of Llandybie near Ammanford and his parents were godly people. Many ministers stayed at their home while preaching at the chapel where his father was an elder. One of his uncles, Thomas Job 'Conwil', was a noted character and one of the great preachers in Carmarthenshire, and he too was a godly man. His mother, in particular, was a very godly woman whose textbooks were the Bible, the hymnbook, James Hughes' Commentary (a Welsh kind of Matthew Henry) and the volume of the sermons of David Charles of Carmarthen, John Jones 'Talsarn' and William Thomas 'Islwyn'. Her last words on her death bed were, "Draw me, and I will run after Thee." Surely under influences such as these he could not but have seen God as someone to turn to in adversity. When the world does not know where to turn, we cannot over-estimate the need to tell people where the answer can be found. At least let us be faithful to teach our children, to point them in the right way and give them a godly example to follow. While still a child, Rev. Job learned to lean upon God.

In a report on the churches of Bethesda in 1903 a church secretary wrote, "We are longing very much for a dawn in the slate industry but whilst waiting for that let us not forget to look to the God of all grace for a powerful visitation from on high. Only the latter can transform the fabric of the community." They felt that the need was for revival - not for Lord Penrhyn and the problems of the slate industry to be sorted out, although that would be a blessing, but the real need was for revival. Why was this? The churches had kept alive the memories of past revivals. There were people who remembered 1859 when the power of God had been felt very strongly. When the '59ers' prayed, people could hear something in their praying which showed there had been a shaking by God. In particular, they spoke of one Sunday that was still known as 'Sul mawr Evan William'. He was not a well-known preacher but it was a 'great Sunday' when sixty-nine adults and twenty-two children were brought to faith and into the church. Just as Joshua after Israel had crossed into Canaan brought stones from the river Jordan and set them up as a sign saying, "When your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean ye by these stones? Then ye shall answer them, That the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord" [Joshua 4:6-7]. So Joshua set up the stones as a memorial for his children and his children's children to remember what God had done. So, too, the people in Bethesda recalled 1859 and other revivals 'as stones' to remind them what God had done in the past. And we also need to bring to light God's deeds in past ages so that we and our children remember to seek Him yet again.

Another factor influencing them at that time was hearing what God was doing in other places. Rev. Job's wife came from New Quay in Cardiganshire and the minister who officiated at their wedding was none other than Rev. Joseph Jenkins, the man who under the hand of God was used as the instrument in awakening the young people when the revival began in 1904. The Spirit of God moved powerfully there early in the year and in May the late Etta's father wrote to Rev. Job saying, "My dear



Joseph Jenkins

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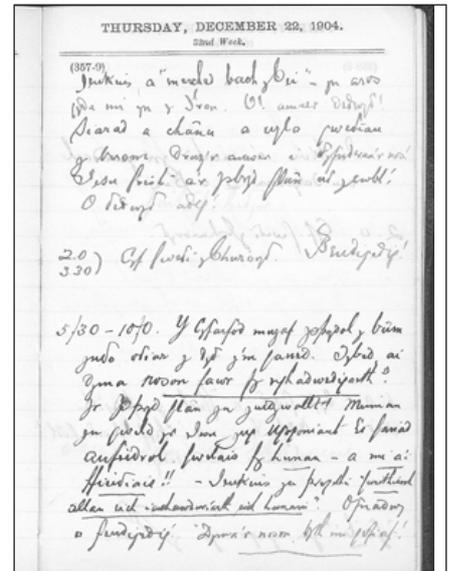
son-in-law, I have been thinking for days and weeks of writing you a letter to break my silence and give you some news of the revival which has broken out here especially amongst the young people - although its gentle effects have been felt amongst the older people and middle-aged as well." He went on to give examples of particular people such as Florrie Evans who lived next door but one to him and who had been the first to come under the effect of the Holy Spirit. Undoubtedly the letter moved Rev. Job's heart and he must have shared the news at the prayer meeting in his church and with the leaders of the other churches in Bethesda. Later on, after the revival began there, he wrote, "There has been a quiet pleading amongst God's people for some months." In fact, Rev. Job visited New Quay that summer, preaching at services on 28 August, and he saw at first hand what God was doing there. In October he again travelled south and stayed with two fellow ministers who had been heavily influenced by the revival. No doubt their conversation would have included the events taking place in Cardiganshire and hearing what was happening there was itself a means of raising longing and even hope that God would do the same in Bethesda. We should find out what God is doing in other parts of the world and how He is blessing people in various places. Do not be jealous of it, but rather use it as a gymnast uses a springboard to leap over seemingly impossible obstacles. When the idea of revival seems too difficult for us, learning of God's activity in other areas can be a springboard to help us plead with God.

God's Blessing

What was the result in Bethesda? The free churches decided to organise a series of meetings in November 1904 to be held at Jerusalem, the most central chapel in the village. A Wesleyan minister, Rev. Huw Hughes, was invited to preach for four nights. The first meeting on Monday was satisfactory and on Tuesday afternoon the vestry was opened for women to come and pray. Over two hundred turned up and an awesome time was spent in intercession as a spirit of prayer descended upon them. That evening Rev. Hughes preached again and God's presence was apparent to such an extent that Rev. Job wrote in his diary for that day, "Revival has come! Thank God!" When the doors were opened for prayer on Wednesday afternoon over five hundred women came, and people began gathering for prayer over an hour before the evening service started. After Rev. Hughes preached, an extra meeting for the young people was held and it lasted for three hours as they felt an awareness of God's presence. This was repeated on Thursday night when Rev. Hughes preached for the fourth time, and on the next two nights prayer meetings were held. Rev. Hughes was invited to continue the following week and he preached on the first three nights, then another minister led the services on Thursday and Friday. Every night of that week God's power was felt - it must be added, by the church people of the village rather than those outside. It was the 'so-called' Christians who were coming under the power of God. Rev. Job wrote in his diary, "Jesus is here", and the whole attitude of the people was transformed for months afterwards.

Yet, although there had been two weeks of awesome blessing, it was seen as only a beginning, as a first wave, because they anticipated still more. Afternoon prayer meetings and evening preaching services were held every day for three weeks. Then Rev. Joseph Jenkins came to Bethesda from New Quay together with Florrie Evans and Maud Davies and three young girls from Talsarn who were fired by the revival there. On Wednesday night a remarkable meeting took place when Rev. Jenkins preached on the phrase, "As you will, so let it be", which had been uttered in the prayer time before the service began. He took up the words and pleaded that God

should have His will amongst His people. Rev. Jenkins stayed overnight at Rev. Job's home, then they spent the next day in fellowship and prayer, praising God for the great movement of the Spirit especially amongst students at Aberystwyth. The meeting on Thursday 22 December was described by Rev. Job as "a hurricane of the Holy Spirit - the night will forever be etched on my memory and



A page from Rev. Job's diary
22 December, 1904

my heart." A meeting for prayer preceding the service lasted for an hour and a quarter and then Rev. Joseph Jenkins preached on the text, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" [Philippians 2:12-13]. His theme was God working in us and he remarked that many people wrongly assume that while God needs to work in us in order for us to be converted, we then have to work out its implications for ourselves. But he said, "No - it is God who does everything", - both to will and to do. God brings us to faith and it is He who continues working in us to sanctify us and enable us to become more like Jesus. God takes hold of man's will and makes it captive to Christ. The Holy Spirit turns man's nature, as a tide of the sea, towards holiness.

Rev. Job described the sermon as being "full of fiery bolts from heaven" and the preacher was heard in total silence for about twenty minutes and then the whole building was awash with tears. One man, who was overcome by the memory of his father on his knees in prayer for him, cried out for mercy and another went forward and asked the people to sing a hymn,

*"Y Gwr a fu gynt o dan hoelion
Dros ddyn pechadurus fel fi,"*

*"The Man who once suffered the nails
For a wretched old sinner like me,"*

It seemed like another Pentecost had come and Rev. Job described his own experience - "I felt the Holy Spirit as a deluge of light causing my whole nature to quake. I saw Jesus Christ and my nature turned to liquid at His feet, and I saw myself and I abhorred. What more can I say? I can only hope that I am not deceiving myself - but O the love of God in the death on the cross is so wonderfully powerful." What had happened was that the Holy Spirit had been there not to give everyone wonderful feelings, or to give them terrible feelings - the Third Person of the Trinity came to glorify Christ. This is His work, to hold Jesus Christ before people bringing them face to face with the Second Person of the Trinity. What could people do but flee for their lives to the cross? They were brought to the point where it didn't matter who was next to them, all that counted was that each one individually was naked before Christ, until He

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gave them clothing - individually condemned until His forgiveness came to their hearts.

As far as we know the people there were all professing Christians yet they came to a deeper understanding than ever before of their own sinfulness. "I asked the Lord that I might grow . . .". And what did he do? He showed me the sinfulness of my own heart. There is no doubt that Rev. Job had been a Christian for many years and a faithful minister of the Gospel, but he wrote, "Is this the great night of my salvation?" It was as if the veil had been pulled back and he had become aware of a reality he had not known before and an assurance he had not previously experienced.

This was going on within the Christian church and as yet the world outside was not deeply affected. It seems that God had much sorting out to do amongst his people. Firstly, there were professing Christians who realised that they were not truly born again. Theirs had just been a formal head knowledge, and there were young people who had become church members but who now asked if they could renew their membership vows because they hadn't really meant much the first time. Then there were broken relationships within the church which needed to be healed. The strike had caused great ill-feeling between families who had suffered much yet had seen the strike-breakers living well. There was much confession of sin, and mothers who had lost children forgave those whose husbands had been strike-breakers.

As well as this, at Christmas 1904 men who had moved away to find work returned home and some of them had been converted in the revival in South Wales. One in particular, named William Hughes, had been brought under conviction in a meeting led by Dan Roberts, the brother of Evan. He experienced bitter remorse which bowed him down for a long time and he wanted to find somewhere where he could be alone with God. Then one day in the depths of the mine at the coal-face where he worked he lay in the small hole that gave shelter from the passing coal trams and, feeling the air thick with the memories of his days of cursing and drinking, he shouted with all his might a prayer for God's mercy and help. He felt as if a physical burden was lifted from his shoulders and, although tears flowed, the bitterness was gone and amidst the tears were songs of rejoicing and triumph in Christ. When Hughes returned home to Bethesda he added his testimony to the work of God there and Rev. Job described how two men who were former drinking partners of Hughes greeted him across the room in the prayer meeting, saying, "William Hughes, we've been in Satan's service long enough!" "Yes," said Hughes, "but we've turned to a better master now." To which the men replied, "And what a lovely rest home He has prepared for us. We'll never go back to the old master." Has anything like that happened in our prayer meetings recently? God was present, bringing people to Himself and healing the ills of their hearts. And this continued for months afterwards with regular meetings of women, young people and even children praying together and singing God's praises with all their might. When Evan Roberts travelled through North Wales in 1905 he paid a brief visit to Bethesda and testified to the way God had been at work there and how the lives of people were being transformed.

The Fruits of Revival

One of the prominent features of the revival in Bethesda was a spirit of prayer. "And I will pour upon the house of David . . . the spirit of grace and of supplications, and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced" [Zechariah 12:10]. People were brought to a point where they had to seek God, often finding lonely places where they could pray for mercy. One mother rose early to find her nine-year-old daughter already up and

singing "Ar ei ben bo'r goron" ("On His head be the crown") and asking her mother to join her in prayer. The spirit of prayer that was recognisable amongst old people of the 1859 revival was also true of Bethesda in 1904 where people were known to kneel down in the street to pray. Beside the afternoon prayer meetings for women, quarrymen held sessions of prayer and young people met to pray until the early hours of the morning. There was a reality in prayer that had not been known before as heaven seemed to come close. And it wasn't just prayer for their own situation, but for other places as well. For example, Rev. Job received a postcard with a brief request, "Please pray for Edinburgh and also Calabar", and when he conveyed the message to the church prayer meeting a deep spirit of supplication swept through the meeting. We have to confess that we know little of such things in our hearts when we pray.

Secondly, revival produced a living, vital Christianity. In terms of numbers not so many were added to the churches in the area compared to other parts of Wales. During the first two months of the revival only about a hundred and forty were added - we would rejoice at such a figure today! But many people were already church members and so there was not that much scope for reaching those outside. However, many realised that their religion had been an outward formality, not that of the heart, and Rev. Job was able to write in the 'British Weekly', "The revival has been the means of infusing a new spirit - a spirit of consecration in the service of Christ into the churches of the district. It has felt already the breath of love from on high amongst us, real and divine, and among its results the spirit of enmity between workmen and families gives way. O the grandeur, the gentleness, the sweet reasonableness of divine love. Verily it is a pleasure to live here now. The society in church is blossoming as a rose under the breath of the heavenly spring. Truly Christ is come to His garden once more. The vast majority of our people are church-going and, with only a few exceptions, enrolled members already, hence we cannot expect very many new members here. A scene was witnessed in Carneddi church the other night when a young man of about thirty-two got up and said he desired to give himself anew as a member, the love of Christ constrained him to do so."

With this vital, living Christianity came holiness of life. There was a marked desire for godliness and a corresponding decrease in crime and lawlessness. Drunkards gave up their revelry and during Christmas and New Year the taverns were empty. The quarrymen took their wages home for their families instead of spending the money on drink and there was a great return to the closeness of family life in general which surely speaks much to the trends in our own society today.

The revival also produced a strong spirit of evangelisation. When Andrew first realised who Jesus was he immediately sent to find his brother Simon to bring him to the Messiah. And the man freed from the legion of demons in the land of the Gadarenes went around telling all the others what the Lord had done for him. So when the Spirit came in power to Bethesda, people had to tell as many as possible. By the time Joseph Jenkins came there to preach, people from the villages and valleys all around were brought in to hear, together with students from Bangor who had heard what was happening. The prayer meetings were full of supplication for family members, for husbands long held under the power of drink and for men who had gone to work in that "terrible place" - South Wales - with all its evil influences. Only three days after the "hurricane of the Holy Spirit" at Bethesda, Rev. Job went to preach at Betws-y-Coed on Christmas Day and took some people with him. The morning service was hard but in the afternoon things began to happen and by the evening revival had come to Betws-y-Coed as well.

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Intense activity followed and in January 1905 Rev. Job preached twenty-eight times, held open-air meetings at Llangefni and elsewhere, lectured twice on Williams, Pantycelyn, led forty-three prayer meetings and four "seiadau" throughout North Wales. He continued like this for several months and inevitably it took its toll on him. In March he received a letter from Joseph Jenkins saying, "Voice has gone and the nervous system is protesting. I must be quiet for a while. It's hard - I've never had such a fever of a passion for preaching before. What a pity that twenty years of sleeping have passed", and Job, too, had to rest for a time because of influenza. He soon recovered and was preaching again whenever he could, both in Bethesda and other places into the summer and beyond. He often took people to sing godly songs or give their testimony, but he always emphasised the place of preaching the Word. This was not always so in 1904, but Job felt it must be central and there were times when the Holy Spirit overcame everything. On the last Sunday of April 1905 he couldn't get further than giving out the text in one service before the church was awash with repentant tears as people were brought through the valley of conviction of sin to a place of praise. On another occasion he was invited to speak on a theological subject at a Presbytery meeting, and did so very well, according to the report. Then he was asked to sing and he chose one of the revival songs based on various people that Jesus called to Himself. Its refrain was:

*"Call me also, call me also,
Sweetest Jesus",*

and as he repeated these words after every verse the listeners dissolved in tears - a miracle indeed for a Presbytery meeting.

These were exceptions, of course, because generally preaching had to be foremost and while others denigrated preaching and claimed singing and prayer would carry the day, Job said, "Preaching will last, I believe, throughout the days of this world, and I shouldn't wonder if when Christ returns, there will be a preaching meeting on top of Snowdon." And the message preached should be Christ and the cross - a message that he rejoiced to preach, at a time when ministers were being intimidated by scholars who were bringing in literary criticism and claiming that the old Gospel was nonsense. But Job stated, "It's the old message which saves sinners and deals with the problems of this world." In travelling widely in North Wales and seeing revival spread to many places, it was through preaching the Word of God that many were blessed. The Holy Spirit is not bound by our rules and methods, but God has ordained the use of means, and preaching His Word has a central role.

Rev. Job's desire to spread the good news of the revival led him to write to papers giving accounts of what was happening and, unlike most other writers, he imposed no copyright rules on what he wrote. He felt everyone should be free to use it as they wished because it was all part of the Lord's work.

The revival also encountered resistance and Rev. Job found it grieved him most and was very difficult to cope with. When we pray for revival, what do we ask for? In one sense it means allowing God to take control, but that can be used in the wrong way by just saying, "Let go, and let God." But due to the bitterness caused by the Penrhyn strike, Rev. Job knew that some people refused to come to the preaching services and prayer meetings because it meant that they would have to forgive and confess the hate they felt towards the strike-breakers. They thought they were justified in holding a grudge and they were unwilling to forgive or forget. They resisted the revival and they were not touched by it. We may talk glibly about allowing God into our lives but are there not rooms

where we would wish to say, even to God, "Keep out!" Are there some sins we love too dearly? Are there some areas where we feel we have a right to say, "Hands off!" or some grudges we refuse to let go? "Wouldn't revival be wonderful," we all say, and yet it could be true that if true God-sent revival came, we might be the very ones to resist. It is terrible to consider that it was actually faithful church members who were amongst those who resisted the revival in 1904-05. Revival will be costly - for our pride and for our self-respect, and we must be realistic about that.

Finally, one other fruit of revival was a thirst for the presence of God. The work could only be furthered through the power of the Holy Spirit and so in Rev. Job's diaries, after noting what and where a meeting was, he gave his assessment, for example, "Great anointing," or "Great light," or "Jesus is here." At other times he wrote, "Not much light tonight," or "Felt great hardness." They knew the difference between man-made blessing and God's presence. They had a thirst to share the genuine experience with others. Rev. Job went to Liverpool to hear Evan Roberts because he had heard so much about how greatly he had been used in the revival, but, even there one meeting was described as "Wonderful," "Awesome," while another was "Not so much of a Presence." They discerned when God was working amongst them and Rev. Job was disappointed when hardness was encountered, but he longed to see people's hearts being warmed and "the fire breaking through". Some features of the Day of Pentecost are unique, but others may be repeated by God and it is such repeatable things that we want, so that we can say "This is that . . ." which we have heard about. This is that which Scripture speaks of when God in the power of His Spirit comes to us. In 1859 Dafydd Morgan spoke of the terrible feeling of entering the pulpit with a congregation expecting great things - and yet he knew himself that the power was not upon him. In 1904 they longed for the Holy Spirit Himself to come, and surely this is where we are most desperately poor in our generation.

The Felt Presence of God

In the privacy of our bedrooms, when we are alone with God, is He not too distant from us? Or rather, is not my heart too hard to feel Him near? In our prayer meetings, despite some blessing and heavenly dew for which we must be grateful, we have yet to feel the showers and certainly we do not feel the hurricane of the Holy Spirit. In our preaching, evangelism and witnessing, do we not long for Someone else to be present in power, so that our words, rather than falling on deaf ears, would come in demonstration of the Spirit and in power? In Bethesda in 1904, as in many other places, people could say, "The voice of my beloved! behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills . . . For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone" [Song of Solomon 2:8-11]. O that winter would be past in our day! O that we might know something of this! Are we willing to ask God to prepare us, to humble us? And in that humbling not to be bitter but to seek Him alone? Seek Him, do not seek revival for its own sake; we must seek Him because His coming close to us will be revival. "Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, turn, my beloved, and be thou like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bethel" [Song of Solomon 2:17]. And should He come, then the world will make of it what they will, but we must ensure that we will give all the glory to the one and only Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit for His immeasurable grace. May God help us as we seek His blessing.

(Transcribed from an address at Heath Church by Rev. Dafydd Job of Bangor on 8 March, 2004).