

Presteigne Baptist Church and the 1859 Welsh Revival

Radnorshire is a small county of 25,000 inhabitants and has long since ceased to be Welsh in language. For many reasons it has not been so well supplied with an enlightened ministry as some of the other counties.

The strongest religious movement in this county is felt at Presteigne, Knighton and the neighbourhood. The following extracts from a letter written by the Rev T. L. Davies the Baptist minister at the first named place will be read with interest.

The first symptoms of the work appeared at about four months ago in a revival of the spirit of prayer. That branch of the Church of Christ over which I preside resolved about that time to hold prayer meetings every night to plead with the Lord for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. "Oh" was our cry "that thou would rend the heavens and that thou would come down that the mountains might flow down at thy presence!" These meetings were attended with an unusual power. We felt that God of truth was with us, and that He was about displaying His power in the salvation of many souls.

in the latter end of November (1859) it was proposed that we should hold united prayer meetings. This met with a hearty approval of all the Dissenters in the town and the Baptists, Primitive Methodists and the Wesleyans soon met successively at their respective chapels, without any semblance of sectarianism.

All deeply felt the necessity of prayer - of united prayer and effort for the conversion of precious souls; and hence the house of prayer became a delightful resort. We all wished to pray. We are all delighted to pray. We were all impelled to pray by an unseen power.

Those who had a few weeks before very little inclination for prayer meetings and very seldom attended them now flocked to them and are among the foremost in promoting the work.

At a crowded meeting held at the Baptist chapel, after sermons by Mr Cowdell and Mr Huff and a few words by myself, twelve came forward in deep distress, and eight found peace. "Being justified by faith they have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ". On the following Sunday night at the same place ten more appeared in the deepest distress about their soul's salvation and most of them found peace. But I never felt the influence of the Holy Spirit so powerful as on the following Tuesday night at the same chapel.

After several of the Brethren had engaged in prayer add a short address had been delivered an invitation was given to all who were concerned about their souls salvation and to come forward to the communion table. Nine moved out while we were directing them to the Saviour. The Holy Spirit descended upon us not indeed as a rushing mighty wind yet as the gentle zephyr till it filled the whole place. So powerful was the influence that none of us could speak for some minutes we all gave vent to our feelings in floods of tearful joyful tears.

The revival is very powerfully felt at Stansbatch, a little place about four miles from here. Upwards of thirty have been recently converted there. We have union prayer meetings there also. At one of these, not long ago, eleven declared themselves on the Lord's side. At this meeting the wife of a man had been recently converted meekly said that she had found peace in the Lord Jesus. She was converted in answer to her husbands prayer.

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