

Moral Condition of Neath.

by T. Mardy Rees

The sermon highlights the moral condition of Neath and the efforts of Seth Joshua and others to bring revival and blessing to the town through prayer and the conversion of notable individuals.

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 7:14, Psalm 51:10, Proverbs 3:5, Isaiah 41:10, Matthew 6:33, Romans 8:28, Ephesians 2:8, Philippians 4:19, James 4:10, 1 Peter 5:7

Topics: "Revival Needed", "Gods Grace"

Description

T. Mardy Rees preaches about the moral condition of Neath, emphasizing the town's corruption and the desperate need for a revival of religion. Seth's dedication to prayer and seeking God's blessing for Neath is highlighted, along with his unwavering faith in the face of difficulties. The sermon also focuses on notable converts at the Mission, such as Tom Thomas, Charlie the Gipsy, David Thomas, and Maggie the Nuts, showcasing the transformative power of God's grace in their lives. Additionally, Evan Rees, one of the founders of the Sunday School, shares a powerful testimony of overcoming challenges and opposition while serving the Lord.

Transcript

Moral condition of Neath. -- Prayer for blessing, -- Seth saves the Neath Y.M.C.A.-- Some notable converts at the Mission. -- Ton Thomas (Twm y Glomen), Charlie the Gipsy, David Thomas (Dai Mali), Maggie the Nuts. -- Evan Rees, one of the four Founders of the Sunday School. -- Jim Currie's escape. -- The last goat in the house and the reward.

The moral condition of Neath weighed heavily upon their souls. "This town is corrupt," "This town is wicked," are entries often met with in Seth's diaries.

14 Feb. 1887 (Monday). We spent a precious time in prayer at two o'clock to-day. We are praying for a general revival of religion in Neath."

Sat. 2 Feb. 1889. We all agreed to lay hold of God for blessing upon Neath. My soul is much exercised. I could not eat my dinner to-day on account of it."

Friday, 15 Feb. There is a growing desire to see God's work revive. I feel sure God is not going to leave us much longer without His Divine blessing upon Neath."

6 Aug. do. The deadness, of things weighed me down. I was not better until I wept away the heaviness and had much prayer."

At the close of 1889 he wrote: -- "God has permitted me this year to see 455 souls seeking Christ." The previous year the total was 348, of whom 219 came forward at the weeknight services. Souls were saved at the 7.30 prayer meetings on Sunday mornings.

Seth gave short shrift to those who yielded a good work because of difficulties.

"Thursday, 13 Feb., 1890. Attended the annual meeting of the Y.M.C.A., * (Footnote: Jubilee services in connection with the Y.M.C.A. were held at Groll Road Chapel, October 13 1925, when Dr. Orchard, London, officiated.) Queen Street. Took the chair, and was helpful in hindering an effort to extinguish the Association altogether because of its £100 debt. I feel the Y.M.C.A. has a good work to do, and those who talk of burying it should go and bury their unbelief."

27 Feb. I am convinced that utter indifference has settled down upon the well-to-do of this town. My heart is heavy while I think of the money-hunger shown by so many professors of Christ."

His self-criticism was quite as impartial: " Have been led into close communion to-day. I find I am far too leaky. I get and lose too soon."

Who can enumerate all the brands plucked from the burning at the Mission? Where can one find more interesting " human documents" than are to be found there? How difficult to select examples from such a host? The following were once " broken earthenware," but were wondrously restored by Grace early in the history of the Cause: --

TOM THOMAS, locally known as "Twm Glomen (Tom Pigeon), one of the early converts, has remained faithful to this day. Before his conversion Tom was a terror to the police of the town and was continually before the magistrates for fighting and drunkenness. " I have paid in fines enough to cover the cost of the old Town Hall."

On the last day of March, 1922, I called at his house to enquire after his health, for he had been captive for some weeks. Hearing my voice at the door he invited me into the parlour, where he was resting. "You see I am a bit of a gentleman to-day, living in the parlour," he said. " Come on to the fire, for it is a desperately cold day. March is going out like a lion, isn't it?" "Yes," I answered, "but you have a comfortable place here." " True, but it was not like this with me forty years ago.

Then I had no furniture except a few boxes. I was the biggest sinner in Neath. This is not bounce, remember, but the naked truth, and if grace saved a man like Tom Thomas, no man need despair." " Yes, you had a wonderful change," I remarked. "Unto Him be the glory for keeping me without a fall. Bear in mind that I have met with a thousand temptations during my pilgrimage, but I have been unceasing in prayer and work in order to keep the Tempter away." "And how were, you converted?

Tell me about it." " With pleasure. Thank God that the Joshuas ever came to Neath. One Saturday night--it was the fair week in 1882--Frank Joshua was singing in the Square, 'Where is my wandering boy to-night?' and although at the time I was under the influence of drink he got me. I had a godly father, whose Welsh Bible was always on the table beside the loaf of bread. I felt guilty, because I had caused the old people so much trouble, but I was brave and refused to be conquered by a hymn like that.

I went back to the public house and had more beer. Then I took my Sunday allowance in a jar and went home. I fell asleep on the hearth but sometime during the night I heard a voice saying 'Tom, Tom, thou art gone far enough.' Thinking it was the voice of my poor wife from upstairs I turned on my side and went to sleep again. Once more I woke and heard the same words Then the voice sobered me, and I cried, 'Lord, is it Thou? Have mercy upon me and I will never touch the beer again.'

I got up, opened the back door, and hurled the jar of beer which I had for Sunday against the wall outside and said, 'There, Satan, take that as the first clout from me, I have received many from thee.' Praise God, I have never looked back since. But I was tried severely. Passing the T----- public house, my old mates made fun of me at the head of the procession. ' Look at Tom leading; he is a beauty to lead. Give him a fortnight and he'll be back.' They poured beer on my head from a window upstairs, but I controlled myself and said, ' Thank God, it's outside me, boys, and not inside.'

My dear wife and the baby in her arms were drenched with beer too, but we are nothing the worse to-day for such a treatment. The following summer I had to go to camp with the Volunteers and they gave me charge of the beer. I prayed earnestly for help to resist, for I would be in the smell of it every day, and thanks be to Him, He kept me. I was called all kinds of names by those with whom I used to drink. A bully came to me one day and would have hit me had I not been cautious.

'Forgive me this once, Lord,' I said, and I landed him one till he went sprawling. Then I was sorry, but he got up a better man. I knocked religion into him, for he joined the Salvation Army and became an officer."

CHARLIE THE Gipsy and his family were brought into the Kingdom by Seth and Frank. Charlie had a tent on Cimla Common. The children, Elvira, Tilly, Sally and Seth, were treated to their first Sunday dinner by Mrs. Seth Joshua. The Gipsy was a well-known character at the Mission.

DAVID THOMAS (Dai Mali) became one of the brightest spirits at the Mission. He was born at the Merra, and when he came to Christ could neither read nor write. His first prayer in public lives in the memory of some of his old comrades. "Lord, Thou hast a big job on hand now that Thou, hast brought me to religion; I can't read nor write. Thou must teach me "The prayer was answered speedily, for several members, as well as the Joshuas, taught the new recruit, and in six months " Dai Mali." could read very well and write a little. His continued application filled all, with wonder. In the open air he was most effective, for he had been redeemed from low depths of sin. As a collier he worked at Court Herbert, and soon after his conversion, the overman, Thomas Williams, noticed that Dai's boots had seen better days. "Dai," said he, " these boots are too small for me although made to measure. I wonder will they fit you? " " Fit me, Mr. Williams, I am sure they will, for I have asked the Lord to have mercy on my poor feet." " Call for them, Dai, at my house on your way back from work." One evening David Thomas entered the ring at an open-air service and said: "Lord, make us shining Christians; we have been shining long in the service of Satan. Yes, Lord, shining like (what shall I say?) - shining like blacking"

"Did I ever tell you the story of the conversion of MAGGIE THE NUTS? " asked Frank one day.

No, but I should like to hear it."

Maggie was a strange character, a vendor of nuts and other things, which she used to hawk about in a basket. Before her conversion she lived in a lodging house in an old part of the town, and was addicted to drink. Late one night, and in a drunken state, she returned to town and found the front door of the lodging house locked. Knowing of an old outhouse in the backyard she crept into it through the window. As soon

as she reached the floor she felt herself instinctively in the presence of a strange animal. Poor Maggie felt the nose of the beast and its warm breath. In her terror she dropped on her knees and prayed: O Lord, save me and I'll never touch the drink again.' The animal withdrew from her and Maggie huddled up in the corner began to sing one of our Mission hymns. Some time during the night the owner of the animal woke up and heard the singing of the unfortunate woman. He got out of bed and listened. To his horror the hymn came from the outhouse where he had placed his performing bear. Terrified, he opened his bedroom window, and spoke soothing words to Bruin. Then he rushed down stairs and unlocked the door where his strange pet was lodged. To his utter amazement he found in the far corner the hapless singer and the bear lying down quietly. ' You can thank God, my woman, that you are alive,' said the man. ' I have,' answered Maggie, I know He has saved me from the bear and He has saved my soul the same time."

"Did you ever hear anything more thrilling?" asked Frank, "and Maggie kept her vow except once. She slipped on one occasion through strong drink, but afterward was a beautiful Christian. Her fall was atoned for, and her restoration was complete and, touching. She had great faith and in her way rendered remarkable witness."

Frank preached a funeral sermon in memory of Maggie and another well-known character, Caroline Lloyd, who passed away about the same time.

EVAN REES was converted in the tent at Alexander Street, and has occupied a prominent position as officer from the start. He was one of the first four to found the Sunday School. His own class of girls was gathered from the meanest streets in the town. The proprietor of the " House of Lords " acted vilely toward the missionaries and threw half a gallon of beer at them. All the members of that family died in distress. Evan Rees when young worked at Treforest and remembers a publican there, an ex-champion, challenging Seth Joshua against anyone in the county for three things -- running, wrestling and boxing. This aged and highly respected officer of the Church cannot mention the names of the two brothers without tears in his eyes. He is our authority for the following incident: --When the brothers were holding an open air service before the White Hart, a pickier who knew Seth at Treforest came up in drink. He entered the ring when Seth was speaking and began to defame the evangelist in vile terms. Seth listened patiently and then asked. "Well, Jim Currie, have you finished? You know very well, Jim, that if I could put my Christianity aside for five minutes how you would look." That was enough, for Jim made his escape as quickly as possible, and the service proceeded, not without some amusement.

While Evan Rees was at Seth's house one morning a man in poor circumstances came to the door for assistance. "Mary," said Seth to his wife, "I am giving away the last goat. The Lord will provide." Walking down the street a little later Seth met a gentleman who shook him by the hand and left a sovereign in it, "Here, Mary, paid sixty-fold already."

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