

DANIEL ROWLAND

Man of Truth and Power

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The Annual Lecture (1971)

The Evangelical Library of Wales

176 Cathays Terrace

Cardiff, CF2 4HZ

15p

The Christian realities of truth and power are much talked about, and are even the subjects of debate at the present time but their inter-relationship is by no means clearly seen. In connection with this pressing matter the life and ministry of Daniel Rowland has much to help us, and we need that help desperately.

TRUTH and Power are sometimes divorced by evangelicals as if they just cannot be combined. Those who make this division all too often regard truth as arid doctrinal precision and therefore the greatest enemy of power, which in turn is regarded as unusual experience and influence to be sought and cultivated at the expense of truth. This is but to caricature both truth and power and to complicate the issue of their inter-relationship. Holy Scripture reminds us that the power of God is the gospel and the hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces is none other than God's own Word. Truth and power are thus inseparable and not incompatible. "What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

However, this does not mean that they can be equated. Truth and power are sometimes confounded as if the one were the other. When power is thus made to stand for truth, then what is true is not what is written in Scripture but what anyone may feel, and the more unusual and extraordinary one's experiences may be, the more sure one may be that they are true. Experience becomes the final court of appeal.

On the other hand, truth is sometimes equated with power as if the latter were but the correct, lucid and even lively exposition of the former.

The consequences of both these deviations in this matter are sad and dangerous. When power erases the norms and canons of truth, then strange fire can be both offered and experienced by its devotees. When truth replaces power, the Biblical distinction between 'preaching in word only' and, as well as in word, 'in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance' is forgotten.

These brief comments should serve to convince us of the urgency of our study, but also of the help to be gained from one in whose life and ministry truth and

power can be seen distinctly and harmoniously. Most contemporary Christians have never seen truth and power combined except in the smallest measure. This is not the work of any man. God alone effects this union. While truth is God's revealed will which we have by His gracious preservation, power is His presence, staggeringly and sovereignly manifested, which we do not have. Let anyone who thinks differently weigh the present in the light of the past!

God is usually pleased to give us His presence with His Word through His ordinance of preaching—but never apart from the one who preaches. Paul in describing the nature of true preaching to which we have referred in 1 Thessalonians 1, adds 'as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake' (v.5). The preacher may be able to grasp and express truth,, but unless he be a man of God he will not be clothed with the Spirit of God.

The relationship is made up of these elements—a man, truth and power, but the One Who mingles them is God Himself. This is summed up in Jeremiah 5.14, 'Behold, I will make my words in thy mouth fire, and this people wood, and it shall consume them.' This is what happened in Wales two centuries ago through Daniel Rowland—Man of Truth and Power.

Though information about him is sparse and scattered and much of it is difficult to verify, Daniel Rowland appears to us two hundred years later as a man sent from God, filled with the Spirit of God, a contender for the faith delivered to the saints, and a seeker of the Lord's return to Zion, His Church. In taking a theme such as this we are involved in the necessity of being selective, even with reference to the biographical fragments that remain about Rowland. His rich personality and endowed ability and spiritual stature must have poured itself forth in numerous papers, of one kind or another. We know

that this is so because following his death his son, Nathaniel, sent his papers to the Countess of Huntingdon with a view to their being prepared for publication. Soon after receiving them she herself was called home to her heavenly rest and when a search was made for the papers they could not be found, nor have they been found since. Much as we might lament this, ought we not to take this as a providential indication to us by the God who gave him to the church, of how we ought to view this man? For as we look two hundred years back, what we see most clearly, more clearly than anything else, is the great and mighty work that God did through him. This is his memorial in the church, as one raised up of God and wielded, as a sharp threshing instrument having teeth, in the ministry of the Gospel to the mighty reviving of the Church and the extension of the sway of the Gospel. This then will be our theme—man of truth and power. For where these two elements are present in the preaching, truth and power, there you have always a great and a God-glorifying revival.

This much is certain, that Rowland himself would have desired no more than to be thus remembered. He disliked self-exhibition. He objected greatly to the procedure of having his portrait taken, albeit at the request and provision of the Countess of Huntingdon herself. And he thus explained his feelings to the artist. 'I am only a bit of clay like thyself. Alas, alas, alas—making the picture of a poor old sinner, alas, alas'. Morgan, his best biographer, says 'his countenance altered and fell at once—this is the reason why the picture appears so heavy and cast down'. Even at the risk of seeming to incur the displeasure the artist evident) felt on that occasion it is only that an outline of his life, though it be the barest outline, should be placed on record here. And after we have done this we shall turn to our main theme and its parts.

AN UNREGENERATE ORATOR

First of all then, a biographical sketch of the life and ministry of Daniel Rowland. He was born in the year 1713 at Pantybeudy, in the parish of Llancwnlle near Llangeitho, Cardiganshire. He had an elder brother, John, and both sons were intended for the ministry by their father who was the vicar. On the death of his father in 1731 his elder brother, John, succeeded him while Daniel completed his education at Hereford Grammar School where his attainments were of a high standard. At the tender age of 20 he was ordained in London and for the purpose he walked there. He then became curate to his brother who was now the incumbent not only of Llancwnlle but also of Llanddewi Brefi and Llangeitho. Daniel Rowland began to preach in north Carmarthen-shire in a place called Ystradffin. His parishioners were thrown into ecstasies by the brilliancy of his wit and the sweetness of his disposition—but by no more at this time. The influence of the Book of Sports that was published during the dark reign of Archbishop Laud, and which the incumbent had to read in the church on the Sabbaths was everywhere evident throughout Wales and it appears that at this time Daniel Rowland himself was in the forefront of Sabbath-breaking, revelry and perhaps even drunkenness in the very parish of which he was a minister. Then one day he went to Llangeitho to preach and found a very, very small congregation. The reason was soon made known to him and it was that the majority of the people were going to a nearby place called Blaenpenal to listen to the ministry of a godly dissenter by the name of Mr. Philip Pugh. Daniel Rowland, no doubt disappointed by the smallness of his congregation, determined to choose the themes on which Philip Pugh was preaching and he did so to gain a congregation. He selected such texts as 'the wicked shall be cast into hell' and 'the great day of His wrath is come'. He exposed

the danger and the evil of sin and the certainty and unending awfulness of the wrath to come. He called upon those who heard him to redeem the time and devote themselves to God. Crowds flocked to hear him, many were brought under a godly sorrow for sin before he himself was.

CONVERTED

Daniel Rowland's own conversion happened in the following way. Griffith Jones of Llanddowror, the pioneer Gospel reformer in Wales and founder of the Circulating Schools, came to preach at Llanddewi Brefi in 1735. Daniel Rowland went to hear him with some of his parishioners. Griffith Jones could not help but notice a young man who stood out most blatantly in the congregation and manifested an arrogance and defiant spirit as he preached. This young man was Daniel Rowland. Griffith Jones was so moved by what he saw, that he stopped in the midst of his sermon and was induced there and then to pray for this young man that God would remember him, bless him and use him in the salvation of many souls. Prayer was heard and the preaching blessed and Daniel Rowland was awakened, smitten and healed in Christ. He now preached more vigorously than before. Many hundreds—and this is the first revival which took place under his ministry—many hundreds were brought to cry to God for mercy. They were unable to stand erect as he preached and were actually prostrated before the presence of God in the churchyard at Llanccwnlle, the church being full.

Now he soon became personally acquainted with Philip Pugh who urged him not to preach the law without the Gospel. Morgan reports this conversation in this way. Philip Pugh said 'Preach the Gospel to the people, dear sir, and apply the balm of Gilead, the blood of

Christ to their spiritual wounds, and show the necessity of faith in the crucified Saviour'.

'I am afraid', said Rowland, 'that I have not that faith myself in its vigour and full exercise'. 'Preach on it', said Pugh, 'till you feel it in that way. No doubt it will come. If you go on preaching the law in this manner you will kill half the people in the country. For you thunder out the curses of the law and preach in such a terrific manner that no-one can stand before you'. This is the testimony and advice of an aged saint of God who discerned the need of young Rowland but also of the nothing-short-of-amazing events in those days.

By 1740 Rowland had preached throughout South Wales and penetrated into the north with much blessing though amid much persecution. He wrote to Howell Harris in October 1742—and this will give us an insight into the spirit of Daniel Rowland—

'Oh what am I that my ears and eyes should hear and see such things. Oh, help me to bless the God of heaven. I hope His kingdom begins to come. Oh, Satan, be packing, fly, fly with trembling, lest the God of Israel come at thee. Oh Lord, chastise him, Amen, Amen. Lord, down with him. Let his kingdom be shattered and himself trampled under the feet of Thy church'.

Here is a glimpse of this great soul in the joy and humility, the sound convictions and those high soaring concerns and confidences in prayer that made him a man of God.

A VISITATION

By this time he had been following the advice of Philip Pugh and sounding out the freeness and greatness of divine grace in Jesus Christ. One Sunday morning in Llangeitho a great revival broke out. Rowland was reading the litany and he reached those expressive words

in Welsh 'by Thine agony and bloody sweat, by Thy cross and passion, by Thy precious death and burial, by Thy glorious resurrection and ascension and by the coming of the Holy Ghost good Lord deliver us'. He became aware himself of the powerful inwardly-melting love of God in Christ that came over all his frame and was passed on to the whole congregation. Many were prostrated, suffused by the love of God shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto them. It was during this period of blessing that he only noticed the length of time he had been preaching when the sun began to stream in at the westward-facing windows of the church. He had begun to preach with the sun in the east and he himself was totally unconscious of the passage of time. What perhaps tells us more about the authority and unction of the preaching—no-one in the congregation was conscious of the passage of time either. This is what happens when God visits His people.

By this time the Societies had been instituted and were flourishing and we hope to refer a little to them later. But at this point we must mention the tragic division which took place between Howell Harris and Daniel Rowland about 1751. The doctrinal implications of this will be mentioned a little later but it caused real bitterness to arise as the Methodists divided themselves into parties owning the name of their particular champion. Harris withdrew to Trefecca until 1763 when on the invitation of his old associate he rejoined them at the time of another revival which had broken out in Llangeitho on the occasion of the first use in public of a volume of hymns of William Williams Pantycelyn in 1762. This particular division between Rowland and Harris was brought to an end, as far as its tragic consequences were concerned, by another visitation of God which bound the Methodists together yet again by His manifest presence.

MORE THAN 3,000 AVERAGE CONGREGATION

John Rowland, Daniel's brother, seemed quite content to give Daniel every liberty and so Llangeitho became the base for his ministry and for some fifty years (he died on 16th October 1790—his 77th year) his congregation never went below 3,000. This is an amazing fact when it is remembered that Llangeitho was nothing more than a village in the mountains in a farming community. The average was between 3,000 and 5,000, more being present on the monthly sacrament Sundays than on the others and Howell Harris records that by 1763 it had become 10,000. Fifty years of ministering and a congregation composed of such numbers! Where did they come from? Perhaps the more important question is, Why did they come? Well, they came from all over Wales, on foot, on horseback and some from the Lley Peninsula came over Cardigan Bay by boat. Horses were tethered at the hedgerows or let loose in a field near Llangeitho as if an army had been quartered there. They came in groups or singly and usually met at a little mountain spring two miles from Llangeitho—Mynydd Bach it was called —where they refreshed themselves and worshipped. Then they came over the hills to Llangeitho singing and frequently Daniel Rowland, awake through the night seeking a message of God, would say to himself: 'Here they come, bringing heaven with them'.

I shall take two instances which will give us an idea what was really happening at this particular time. An old preacher called John Williams from Dolwyddelan walked to Llangeitho and on arriving there he felt so tired after the journey that he considered going to bed rather than chapel. However he went to hear Rowland and he was preaching on Isaiah 25:6. Here is the text
`And in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees

well refined'. John Williams says of this preaching

`You never heard such a thing in your life. He began to tap the barrels of the covenant of grace and to let out the wine, well refined, and to give to the people to drink and it flowed over the chapel. I also drank and I became as I may say quite drunk and there I was, and scores of others, in an ecstasy of delight, praising God having forgotten all fatigue and bodily wants'.

There are many other such statements as these. I have yet to hear of one who went to sleep under Rowland's preaching. Such was the presence of God that even natural restrictions, bodily fatigue, hunger and thirst, were quite forgotten. The other instance is recorded by Thomas Charles:

`I went to bear Mr. Rowland preach at New Chapel . . . A day much to be remembered by me as long as I live. Ever since the happy day I have lived in a new heaven and a new earth. The change a blind man who receives his sight experiences doth not exceed the change I at that time experienced in my mind.

The earth receded, it disappeared,
Heaven opened to my eyes,
My ears with sound seraphic rang.

Then I was first convinced of the sin of unbelief or entertaining narrow, contracted and hard thoughts of the Almighty. I had such a view of Christ as our High Priest, of His love, compassion, power and all-sufficiency, as filled my soul with astonishment—with joy unspeakable and full of glory. My mind was overwhelmed and overpowered with amazement. The truths exhibited to my view appeared too wonderfully gracious to be believed. I could not believe for very joy. The glorious scenes then opened to my eyes will abundantly satisfy my soul millions of years hence in the contemplation of them. I had some idea of

Gospel truths before floating in my head, but they never powerfully and with divine energy penetrated my heart till now. The effect of this sermon remained upon my mind above half a year, during which time I was generally in a comfortable and heavenly frame. Often in walking in the fields, I looked up to heaven with joy and called that my home, at the same time ardently longing for the appearance of the glorious Saviour to take me forever to Himself'.

That was why they came.

Rowland's itinerating brought him into conflict with the ecclesiastical authorities and this perhaps goes as far back as 1741 when a curacy was licensed at Ystrad Ffin and he was deprived of that preaching station in north Carmarthenshire. In the following year his licence to preach at Llanddewi Brefi was revoked. All this time he was allowing methodist societies to meet in chapels of ease and in 1746 his name appears on the deeds of Soar Chapel, Cil-y-cwm—a dissenting chapel in Carmarthenshire.

When his brother was drowned at Aberystwyth in 1760 Daniel's own son was preferred before him and so father became curate to son. Three years later in 1763 the Bishop of St. David's revoked his licence for Llangeitho 'because he would not refrain to go about preaching for three years'. The Bishop's messengers came into the church at Llangeitho during the conducting of a service and handed the notice to Daniel Rowland. The record is that he read it before the congregation quite solemnly and said that he would never enter that place again, but would leave it as an habitation for owls. He went out and with his back to the church he preached to the crowds outside the church. The Bishop was not acting incorrectly and for Bishop Ryle as he does to accuse the Bishop of St. David's of a blundering exercise of episcopal power is an attempt to save face. The charge has to be

laid against the existence of the ecclesiastical laws rather than against their exercise. But by this time the methodists were meeting in an unused barn at one of Daniel Rowland's two farms. They had begun to gather there in 1757. Whenever Rowland was preaching in Llangeitho they would always go to the church to hear him and he frequently went to this barn to speak to them. In 1763 when he was cast out of the church they built a new chapel for him and this is the one which Thomas Charles refers to. A chapel had been built for the methodists themselves in 1760 but once Rowland came to them it was obvious that a larger one was going to be necessary and it is here that he ministered until his death, living in the rectory still by the permission of his son.

John Thornton, a philanthropic member of the evangelical Clapham sect heard of Daniel Rowland and sought to have him restored to the ministry of the Established Church. He offered him a living in Pembrokeshire at Newport but the price which Rowland had to pay for this was far too high. He would not have been able even to preach once in Llangeitho. He would have had to reside in Newport in Pembrokeshire and he soon found that canon law could not force him to be married to Newport, Pembrokeshire, when his heart was in Llangeitho so there he stayed until 1790 when he died.

ASSOCIATIONS

He was ever active in preaching, not missing a Sunday even in his last illness, in the Association and in the Societies. The quarterly Associations were for all the preachers and exhorters, the first day being given over to a discussion of beliefs, and the establishing of societies, and the second day to dealing with the matters of doctrine and discipline which related to the societies. The first general association met at Watford, near Caer

philly in 1743, and George Whitefield was the moderator, Daniel Rowland being regarded as his deputy whenever Whitefield was not able to be present. Rev. David Griffiths of Nevern, suggested that in Rowland and William Williams were sufficient gifts for the administration of a kingdom.

In the monthly associations, which were more restricted to the locality from which they gathered people, Rowland himself always presided. Questions of doctrine and discipline were discussed in his presence. Some have suggested that William Williams was the great master of spiritual religion and uncovering conditions of soul. This is no doubt true but it perhaps casts a rather bad reflection on Daniel Rowland who himself was by no means unable to acquit himself in those matters. On one occasion someone was questioning a person and evidently Daniel Rowland suspected that this person was not a believer at all. As he sat by and listened, he said to the person conducting the questions, 'Take him by the tail and you'll find out whether he's a sheep or a wolf'. And this man turned on him and said, 'where do you find that in scripture, Mr. Rowland?' 'There', said Rowland, 'a wolf—he bites'.

HIS DEATH

Before his death he intimated to the people to whom he was preaching that he expected to be called home. These were his words: 'I am almost leaving and am on the point of being taken from you. I am not tired of the work but in it. I have some presentiment that my Heavenly Father will soon release me from my labours and bring me to my everlasting rest but I hope that He will continue His gracious presence with you after I am gone'. To his family he expressed the hope that he should not be disturbed by their crying but he wished to die in a quiet manner. He added, 'I have no more to

say by way of evidence of my acceptance with God than I have always stated. I die as a poor sinner depending fully and entirely on the merits of a crucified Saviour for my acceptance with God'. The news of his passing spread rapidly throughout the whole country, and the land mourned. Preachers used the occasion to remind the people of what they owed to God through his ministry. There was one lad of 16 years of age who had often wanted to go to Llangeitho but had never felt that he was strong enough to make the journey. He turned into a chapel on this Sunday and he heard the text given out: 'Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel' and the news came home to him of Rowland's death. This is what he writes: `Though I was but a lad 16 years old, yet I wept a great deal, thinking I should never see nor hear the celebrated Rowland. My intention of going to Llangeitho was very strong and my expectation of receiving some great blessing under him was ardent; consequently my disappointment was great and my grief inexpressible'. That was John Elias of Anglesey.

Would that we could have heard him. Instead let us turn and look at the 'man of truth and power', in order that we who have only heard of these things with the hearing of our ears, might hear him, though dead, speaking to us. We shall consider our theme in the following three parts: truth first of all; then truth without power; and truth and power.

MAN OF TRUTH

In his elegy to Daniel Rowland, William Williams refers to his ministry as follows. 'After preaching for some years the stormy law, and wounding very many, his tone changed, he proclaimed full, complete, perfect salvation through the Messiah's death on Calvary. Henceforth the power of his sweet doctrines nurtured faith by

revealing the Mediator, God and man, as the foundation of free salvation; the One who freely redeemed, by His precious blood, all the treasures of heaven for a poor believer'.

Now clearly there are here primary principles of Gospel truth regarding the person and work of Christ, the way of salvation, the nature of faith. These were not only preached by Rowland, but defended by him and sometimes the same people who were enlightened by his ministry were also the objects of his rebuke. This was the case with none other than Howel Harris himself. Harris, so he tells us, himself had been denouncing the doctrine of election as being the doctrine of the devil, to the gratification of many carnal clergymen in Brecon- shire. On hearing Rowland at Gwenddwr preaching on Proverbs 8:31 this is what he writes: 'He was the means whereby I was brought to the knowledge of the truth about Christ . . . and to see the wondrous effects of free grace. Truly this is the only wholesome preaching. Today was an extraordinary day to my soul'. Later however Harris fell into heresy regarding the person of Christ and it was this that was the doctrinal cause of the division between Rowland and Harris which has been referred to. Daniel Rowland published a pamphlet repudiating Harris' views but not mentioning him by name. That pamphlet was called 'A conversation between an Orthodox Methodist and a mistaken one'. Here Rowland's soundness regarding Scripture and the Sonship of Christ is evident. The conversation was a dialogue. This is what the orthodox Methodist (Rowland) has to say about the nature of Scripture: 'You say that the Father has become incarnate, like the Son?' The answer is 'I do. This is how it has been revealed to me'. Says Rowland, 'Revealed! What revelations are these?' This is opposed to the revealed word of God which says to us: 'Could there be a clearer understanding and firmer avowal of

the ultimate and supreme authority and completeness of the Word of God, beyond which there is no further revelation?' His concept of power was not a concept of further light above and beyond what had already been revealed. Then with regard to the doctrine of the Person of Christ he upholds the credal statement that was made in the Council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D. He is 'One person, two natures, without confusion, change, division or separation of the natures'. Williams is right in saying that he opposed Sabellianism which is a heresy denying the existence of God in three persons. What Sabellius taught was that prior to the incarnation of the Son, there was but the Father who then became the Son, and then after the ascension the Son ceased and Father and Son became the Spirit. He was basically a unitarian. Daniel Rowland exposed and opposed all this. He also opposed Patripassianism which teaches that the Father suffered as did the Son. This was Howel Harris' error. He opposed Eutychianism which is the teaching that, the two distinct natures, of the person of Christ fused into one divine-human nature. Daniel Rowland opposed all this upholding the truth regarding God and man and the foundation of salvation. Williams credits him with opposing all thoughts of anti-trinitarianism. Similarly he records that he planted throughout the churches the doctrines of divine grace and opposed the views of Richard Baxter, Arminius and Pelagius, all of whom ascribed to the sinner some activity of his own in co-operating with God in his salvation; Rowland maintained the true nature of grace, showing that salvation is by grace, through faith. Williams says that he opposed Sandemanianism which reduced faith to mere assent and stripped it of the element of feeling, and Antinomianism which placed the Christian above obedience to the law in the matter of sanctification. He once sent an exhorter who had been teaching this error in the societies

to revisit all the places where he had been, and undermine what he had taught with the truth in this matter. Rowland's theology, says Williams, came from the 39 Articles, the Westminster Larger Catechism but chiefly the Bible. He championed the reforming principles of Hus, Jerome, Cranmer, Ridley and Calvin.

The picture that emerges is therefore that Rowland was in his preaching an able and a balanced theologian, who contended earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints.

TRUTH WITHOUT POWER

In spite of all that we have said, he was not satisfied really with 'truth enunciated and defended, and in one of his sermons he referred to people who think 'the Word of God is enough to give life without the Spirit of God'. He was once in Bristol with his son, Nathaniel, who was himself an able preacher and a talented minister. Nathaniel on this occasion was the preacher with his father in the congregation. He was not so favoured as usual with the Divine presence and his sermon was somewhat cold and lifeless. Daniel Rowland returned to his lodgings restless and distressed on this score, and exclaimed to his hostess—'Dead, Dead!'. 'Who is dead?' she asked. 'All are dead', he replied.

Christmas Evans related the circumstances at one association meeting and Rowland's concern as to the absence of power from on high. The preaching of the previous night had been without such unction from above. Daniel Rowland was to preach at ten o'clock after a fellow minister. The first sermon fell on the congregation without visible effect. Before Rowland preached he called upon a man in this way. 'David you must go shortly to prayer before I preach and disperse the thick cloud that is over us. You must not be more than three or four minutes; for the long prayer we have had here

at the beginning failed to disperse it'. His associate prayed in this manner—Lord Jesus for the sake of thy blood and agony hear me. Thy servants have been here trying to winnow the preceding evening and also this morning but they could do nothing. Lord not a single breath of heavenly wind has yet blown on this meeting. Wind, Lord, wind, gracious Lord. The wind is now, as ever, in thine hand. Amen'. Rowland preached and in preaching, as always, he looked for influence and blessing from God. The wind came with great impression and happy effect.

One other instance perhaps more clearly shows his awareness of the need of the unction of the Holy Ghost and his great longing and desire for such a sensible presence of God upon both preacher and hearer. Griffiths of Nevern used to attend the sacrament services at Llangeitho and on one such Sunday, much to his surprise, he found Rowland still in bed. His anxious enquiry as to Rowland's state met this reply. 'Very, very painful. I am not ready. I have nothing from the Lord to say to the people! I was looking up for divine help in preparing my discourse all last night and had no sleep'. Griffiths, bearing in mind the anticipations of the congregation, pressed him to arise but Rowland was still far from ease of spirit. He continued lifting up his heart in prayer unto God for aid. Griffiths urged him again to rise. At length Rowland spoke 'Go my son and begin the service and I will be after you just now'. Griffiths tells of the effect of that sermon—'He soon came after me to the chapel and he went like lightning into the pulpit full of the Holy Ghost and the heavenly treasure. He was not ten minutes into his sermon before the gracious influence came from above upon him and the vast assembly. The people were overcome with feelings the most keen and powerful; some were filled with intense joy and others with the deepest sorrow'.

Truth and power were well combined in this man because he continued throughout his ministry to seek God earnestly. In the letter to Howell Harris dated 20th October 1742, mentioned earlier, he speaks of himself in this manner . . . what am I? A painted hypocrite, a miserable sinner! I know all the to's and fro's and ups and downs that are in religion; but the blessed liberty remaining for the children of God is still hidden from me . . . I wish I could skip and leap over all mountains of pleasure, laziness, hardheartedness, unbelief—and rest upon the breast of the beloved and never, never enough- praised Jesus'.

HIS PREACHING

As to his manner and mode of preaching we may learn a little from Christmas Evans again. Evans gives this description in a letter dated October 1835, just 100 years after Rowlands conversion.

Having thus roused the congregation with some uncommon thought (Rowland) would divide his text and then proceed with the first division, bending his head down a little as if to glance at his notes on a piece of paper in front of him. Now we are coming to the most difficult part of the description because we cannot make a dumb image speak or a dead man alive. I will however borrow the another similitude in order to give some idea of the manner of his most energetic eloquence. It shall be taken from the trade of the blacksmith. The smith first puts the iron into the fire, then blows the bellows softly, making some enquiries respecting the work to be done, the horse shoes to be made, the plough shares to be steeled and the coulter to be repaired: but ,his eye during all this time is fixed steadily upon the process of heating the iron in the fire; as soon as he perceives it to be in a proper and pliable state he carries it to the anvil and brings

the weighty hammer or sledge down on the metal and, in the midst of the stunning noise and the fiery sparks emitted from the glowing metal, he fashions and moulds it at his will.

Thus Rowland, having glanced at his notes as a matter of form, would go on with his discourse in a calm and deliberate manner speaking with a free and audible voice; but he would gradually become warmed with his subject and his voice became at length so elevated and authoritative that it resounded through the whole chapel! The effect on the people was wonderful; you could see nothing but smiles and tears running down the faces of all the people. Joyful exclamations were at that time uttered by the vast assembly. And all this arose from the flame of his voice and the grandeur of his matter; and his animation arose from the flame that was in the sublime thoughts which he delivered. This first flame of heavenly devotion, under the first division, having subsided he would again look at his scrap of notes and commence the second time to melt and to make the minds of the people supple until he formed them again into the same heavenly temper. And thus he acted six or seven times, as some say, in the same sermon.'

AND ITS EFFECTS

In March 1743 Howell Harris wrote to George Whitefield and in that letter he gives this description of the things that God was doing in the ministry of Daniel Rowland.

'I can't tell where to begin to tell you what great things He is doing daily among us . . . I was last Sunday at the ordinance with brother Rowland where I saw, felt and heard such things as I can't send on paper any idea of. The power that continues with him is uncommon. Such crying out and heart breaking

groans, silent weeping and holy joy and shouts of rejoicing I never saw. Their "Amens", and crying "Glory in the highest" etc., would enflame your soul was you there. 'Tis very common when he preaches for scores to fall down by the power of the Word pierced and wounded or overcome by the love of God and sights of the beauty and excellency of Jesus; and lie on the ground, nature being overcome by the sights and enjoyments given to their heaven-born souls that it can't bear, the Spirit almost bursting the house of clay to go to its native home. Some lie there for hours, some praising and admiring Jesus, Free Grace, distinguishing grace, others wanting words to utter. You might read the language of the heart running over with love in their heavenly looks. Their eyes sparkling with the fire of love and joy and solid rest in God; others meeting when the Word etc., is over to sing and you might feel God there among them like a flame; others falling down one after another for a long time together praying and interceding and you might see and feel it is the prayer of faith and that they are worshipping a God that they know and love and delight in, and that now no veil is between. Others lie wounded under a sense of their piercing Jesus so that they can hardly bear it . . . others mourning and wailing for the Comforter, and such love and simplicity that a spiritual eye must see and acknowledge that God is there. This is but a very faint idea of it for what words can express spiritual things? But methinks I see you bow the knee and cry "I can bear no more; I understand how it is." (Rowland's) congregation I believe consists of above 2,000 whereof a great part are brought to glorious liberty and walk solidly in clear light in the continual enjoyment of God without a moment's darkness. Many others walk in solid faith rejoicing in the hope and expectation of the clearer manifestation of God's glory

and the glorious liberty of His children . . . In some of our private societies the Holy Spirit is uncommonly powerful indeed . . . everywhere there is a reviving . . . there are eight counties open to you and thirsting to hear you and opposition ceases.'

`YOUR LOOSENED TONGUES EMPLOY'

Rowland's attitude to these phenomena is worth noting. Of those days in Llangeitho he himself has this to say.

'There is such a power as I never felt before given me in preaching and administering the Lord's Supper. The Lord comes down among us in such a manner as words can give no idea of. Though I have, to prevent nature mixing with the work, openly discountenanced all crying out, yet such is the light, view and power God gives very many in the Ordinance that they cannot possibly help crying out, praising and adoring Jesus, being swallowed up in God; and thus I was obliged to leave my whole congregation, being many hundreds, in a flame . . . this is our condition generally every Sabbath.'

`AND LEAP YE LAME, FOR JOY'

As to 'jumping whilst praising God' Rowland seems himself to have been in some doubts respecting it and this may have occasioned his silence regarding it. Whilst William Williams openly expressed approval and justified the practice Rowland made no comment either one way or the other. Many of his friends in England were concerned that religion might thereby be degraded. Thornton was very anxious to have the practice stopped and wrote several times attempting to prevail upon Rowland to that end. Rowland would have said nothing but felt he must make an answer to Thornton. His reply was along these lines: 'You English blame us the Welsh and speak against

us and say "Jumpers, jumpers". But we the Welsh have something to allege against you; and we most justly say of you, "Sleepers, sleepers" '.

These were by no means the chief characteristics of the Revivals but they were sufficiently in evidence as to earn the disapprobation of not a few critics. Owen, another biographer of Rowland, records an interesting account of the reply of William Williams to one who argued against loud praising and jumping. Williams had sought to justify these practices from Scripture but was met by the criticism that the procedure was unbecoming and many of those who participated were seen to be untouched by the revival as they fell away and lived lives as irreligious as ever.

By way of a reply he used a homely illustration which Owen records along these lines:

There were three people, two men and a woman, living on the side of the same hill, who began the world nearly at the same time. Their names were Evan, Thomas and Betty. When they went there to live each of them borrowed £100. They thought that they could in time by thrift and industry be able to repay the money: but instead of being successful the three were very unfortunate. And in the course of time they were threatened with the law: and at last bailiffs came upon Evan to put him into prison. And as they were going they passed by the house of Sir John Goodman who lived on the other side of the hill. They met Sir John himself who asked Evan as to where he went with the bailiffs. "Oh, Sir John, I am obliged to go to prison for a debt. It is just, it is right I confess. For I owe the money but I have no hope of repaying it". Sir John expressed his sorrow and enquired of Evan the size of the debt. "£100, and then there is the costs too", said Evan. Then Sir John said, "I will pay the debt, and the costs too, Evan". He then dismissed the

bailiffs assuring them that he would be answerable for Evan. Poor Evan was of course quite overcome and could but inadequately express his thanks before returning home. Having reached the top of the hill above his house he stopped and there cried with all his might, "Thanks, thanks to John Goodman". Both Betty and Thomas were taken aback at his behaviour and pressed him for an explanation which he happily gave. Neither could do otherwise than also exclaim, "Thanks, thanks to Sir John Goodman". But in course of time they too were called upon to clear their debts and as they had nothing to pay they were both put into prison where they both died. Though they both joined in Evan's rejoicing neither applied to John Goodman.'

Daniel Rowland was well aware of the danger of 'nature mixing with the work', but he was not thereby blinded to the danger of grieving and quenching the Spirit. He had no wish however to defend what he felt could have been the work of Satan as an angel of light, and so preached and counselled so as to promote under the good hand of God what was real.

THE SOCIETIES

At this point a word about the nature of the Societies may be in place. Though Howell Harris and William Williams were the foremost in this work, Rowland was also involved. The Methodist published 'The Constitution, Purposes and Rules of the Societies' in 1742, and the following quotations focus on the essence of our theme of Truth and Power, having an unashamed experimental emphasis.

Objects of the Societies. 1. Heb. 10:24, to provoke unto love and good works. 2. To prevent hardness of heart and backsliding, 1 Cor. 3:2-3. 3. To understand better the deceitfulness of the heart, and the work of

grace within us. 4. To instruct in the work of God and build up faith. 5. To warn against questionings and disputes of words. 6. To guard each other in life and conduct. 7. To glorify God in the presence of one another for his acts of grace. 8. To strengthen each other against common enemies of the soul and to pray on behalf of one another.

Rules of the Society. 1. After the singing of praise, and prayer, let the members relate in the hearing of one another the good and evil experienced since the last meeting. 2. So as to remove all possible hindrances to growth in grace, let even doubts, fears and suspicions be told and then examined. 3. Each member should be prepared to submit to an examination of his experience Refuse admission to no one who can satisfactorily answer the following questions: Are you convinced of sin? Have you been awakened by God's grace? Do you admit your moral inability to do good in and of yourself? Do you accept the imputed righteousness of Christ in salvation? Have you felt the Spirit of God inclining you to surrender yourself to Christ? Have you counted the cost of following Christ? Have you received the testimony or witness of the Spirit? Has the Spirit of adoption followed your sorrow for sin? Do you accept and assent to the fundamental truths of the Trinity, election, original sin, justification by faith, and perseverance in grace as taught in the 39 Articles? Is it the love of Christ that impels you to join our society and are you prepared to abide by these rules?'

The following questions were to be asked of members of the Societies:

'1. Are you assured of faith, forgiveness, and the indwelling of the Spirit? 2. Is your sympathy with other people enlarged? 3. Is your spiritual comprehension of truth and holiness growing? 4. Is your con-

science more sensitive to sin? 5. What spiritual lesson have you learnt since the last meeting? 6. Is the love of God deepening within you? 7. Are you more concerned with the salvation of your fellow men? 8. Does your inheritance in Christ grow more clearly to you?

Thus the place which truth must occupy in the life of the believer and the church is primary and paramount—but it does not occupy it alone. It is to be shared with the known and manifest presence of God in heart and life. This is what we must hold to at this time that 'Truth shall spring out of the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven' and 'glory dwell in our land' (Psalm 85:11, 9).

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