The Life and Times of Griffith Jones of Llanddowror

by David Jones, Vicar of Penmaenmawr

Preface.

The object of this volume has been explained elsewhere, and little remains to be said here. The author, however, would like to repeat his conviction that the study of the religious history of Wales in the eighteenth century is calculated to serve important purposes.

It offers subjects for deep reflection to all, both Nonconformists and Churchmen alike. To ponder over its lessons in humble earnestness might, under God's blessing, lead to an active desire for Christian reunion on the part of those who are now in a state of separation, and, we fear, sometimes of antagonism. The religious condition of Wales can hardly commend itself to those who are imbued with the spirit of the intercessory prayer of Christ; and there is some ground for apprehension lest Welsh Christianity should fail to maintain its efficiency, while it is thus "a house divided against itself." There may be, and doubtless, there sometimes has been, a kind of union worse than division; but few will deny that there is a union which, beyond all dispute or comparison, is preferable to disunion. Towards the attainment of that, it is the duty and privilege of every Christian teacher and worker to contribute his share, however humble. It is the ideal state of the Church militant; it will be the actual state of the Church triumphant.

Among the first steps necessary to bring nearer the broken fragments of our Christianity, must be placed a true estimate of the loss of power and efficiency incurred by our present anomalous and wasteful condition; a due appreciation of both the ideal and the practical value of unity; the spirit of discernment wherewith to determine the relative importance of things that differ, and to guard with jealousy that which is essential; a disposition to emphasise points of agreement rather than of difference; an earnest endeavour to approach the question in the spirit of the Apostolic counsel: "*Let nothing be done through strife or vain-glory; but in lowliness of mind, let each esteem other better than themselves*"; a full recognition of the bond and basis of union that already exist, and a godly yearning for the restoration of a closer Christian fellowship and communion among all that "*love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity*."

It must, however, be admitted that we are not as yet "within measurable distance" of Christian reunion, though both time and circumstances seem ripe for a full and frank discussion of the subject. If brought about under healthy conditions, and by the constraint of the higher impulses of religion, it cannot be doubted that it would be followed by incalculable blessings. Looking at it, as we necessarily do here, from the point of view of the reunion of Churchmen and Nonconformists, we feel convinced that each side would greatly profit by it, as each would contribute its own special strength to the resultant Church. The freshness and the vigour, the initiative and the elasticity, the sense of the privileges and the responsibilities of the lay members, which the Nonconformists would bring with them, would be an unquestionable gain to the Church of England; while the respect for order and authority, the conservative instinct inherent in so ancient a body as that Church, and the spirit of wise toleration and comprehensiveness

which a long experience has taught her, would, if we mistake not, be joyfully welcomed by a large number of thoughtful Nonconformists. Each would, in some degree, supply the deficiencies of the other; and the fusion of the two elements, under favourable conditions, could not fail to strengthen our common Christianity, and to equip it for the more effective discharge of the tremendous responsibilities with which it stands face to face at the present moment.

We believe that a better acquaintance with the men and the movements discussed in this volume may tend, in some measure, to soften the asperities of religious life and controversy in Wales, and to work in the direction of reunion. It will concentrate attention on "the parting of the ways;" and it may be well for us all to recollect why and how they became divided. It will show, if we mistake not, that there were no sharp contentions, leading to abrupt separations from the Church, or disclosing irreconcilable divergences from her doctrines. The extract about to be given was an accurate statement in the time of Griffith Jones; and it applies with even greater force to the Methodist secession, which occurred seventy years later. And if the Church can show that the original causes of dissent have very largely disappeared, it is, theoretically, a distinct gain to the cause of reconciliation and reunion; though it is readily admitted that the question is by no means so easily solved as thus suggested, inasmuch as other obstacles have arisen during the interval that has since elapsed. Referring to the Dissenters of his own day, Griffith Jones wrote that:

“It was not any scruple of conscience about the principles or orders of the established Church that gave occasion to scare one in ten of the Dissenters in this country to separate from us at first, whatever objections they may afterwards imbibe against conformity. No, Sir, they generally dissent for no other reason than for want of plain, practical, pressing, and zealous preaching, in a language and dialect they are able to understand; and freedom of friendly access to advise about their spiritual state. When they come (some way or other) to be pricked in their hearts for their sins, and find, perhaps, no seriousness in those about them, none to unbosom their grief to, none that will patiently hear their complaints, and deal tenderly by their souls, and dress their wounds, they flee to other people for relief; as dispossessed demoniacs will no longer frequent the tombs of the dead. For though the Church of England is allowed to be as sound and healthful a part of the catholic Church as any in the world, yet when people are awakened from their lethargy, and begin to perceive their danger, they will not believe that there is anything in reason, law, or gospel that should oblige them to starve their souls to death for the sake of conforming, if their pastor (whose voice perhaps they do not know, or who resides a great way from them) will not vouchsafe to deal out unto them the bread of life.”[1]

The earnest and devoted men, whose labours contributed towards the formation of Welsh Methodism, and imparted a new life to the older Dissenting communions, were firmly attached to the Church of England, and regarded her to the last with tender affection. And if the course of the evangelical revival brought to light serious defects in the administration of the Church, for which she has not yet paid the full penalty, it also provoked suspicion, distrust, and even active hostility on the part of some of the Dissenters of that time. And even among the revivalists themselves, a spirit of dissension broke out comparatively early in the history of the movement, and continued to mar its progress for many years. Neither side, in truth, had a monopoly of Christian virtues. Both the Church and Nonconformity received an accession of spiritual power through the revival, and both, alas I impaired its efficacy through the perversity and pertinacity of human infirmities.

We have, almost unconsciously, fallen into a reverie on Christian reunion. But reunion in the present temper of Christian bodies in Wales is hardly possible; neither is it perhaps advisable, las it would apparently bring but little gain, and might even bring loss. Reunion will doubtless come in God's good time; but it is not unlikely that our share in its accomplishment will be limited to the tedious and toilsome though essential task of preparing the way for it of rectifying past errors, of atoning for past blunders, and of exorcising the prevailing spirit of religious strife and sectarianism. Meanwhile, there are great duties lying hard at our doors. The pressing necessity of meeting the growing indifference and irreligion of our land requires no illustration or enforcement here; it is recognised and lamented on all hands. And the fact being so, the Church need not wait for the arrival of reunion, before applying herself to a task for which her position and her privileges render her primarily responsible. Among her first and greatest needs is the enlistment of the active and intelligent sympathy of the great body of her own lay members, and a well-defined sphere in which that sympathy can be exercised effectively on her behalf. She has the experience of a long past, with both its failures and its successes, to guide her; and we cannot help thinking that she may profitably learn a lesson from the state, at least in the matter of bringing her organisations into better accord with the rights of her lay members, and the altered conditions of the times.

The state has done this with incalculable benefits. That what was suitable in the sixteenth century is out of date in the twentieth, is no less true than trite. The extension of political rights in this country has been concurrent with the development of loyalty and respect for law. The sense of responsibility has increased with the acquisition of power. Our monarchy exists to-day in more than all its ancient prestige and authority, and has suffered no diminution of its value as a force in the government of the country through the admission of the masses to a share in its dignity and responsibility. It has fearlessly taken the people into its confidence, and has been nobly rewarded for the trust. Distribution of power has resulted in the consolidation of empire. The freedom of the subject guards the stability of the throne. The analogy between the state and the Church in this matter is both fair and forcible; and the latter might, with unquestionable advantages, follow the example set before it by the former. It cannot be said that, at present, the laity of the Church are in full possession of their rights, as members of the body of Christ. To admit them without delay would probably result in a great and immediate accession of strength and influence to the Church, and would indubitably bring into activity new forces which, in due time, would add immeasurably to her popularity and efficiency.

The writer of the following pages has neither authority nor desire to write an eirenicon; but he has endeavoured throughout to maintain an eirenic tone and temper. The period under review is not one that a Welsh Churchman can look back upon with complacency, or would specially select in illustration of the services which the Welsh Church has rendered to the Welsh people. And, moreover, when an attempt is made to bring home the charge of inefficiency against the Church, her critics seldom fail to choose the eighteenth century as furnishing the most flagrant instances of neglect and incompetency. It is readily admitted that there are facts not a few in the history of that period, which Churchmen find it impossible either to defend or to excuse. But there are other facts of substantial importance, which group themselves around the names of Griffith Jones and his fellow-workers, and which, when they are set forth in their proper place and proportion, modify very materially the portrait usually drawn of the Welsh Church in the eighteenth century.

That the task attempted in this little work is imperfectly done, no one is more ready to acknowledge than the writer; but if it helps to promote the sacred interests of truth, it will

so far serve the purpose for which it was written. If it enables the reader to form a fuller and juster estimate of the good and gifted man whose life and labours it attempts to set forth; or if it succeeds in showing that the Welsh Church, even in the eighteenth century, was not altogether so unworthy of her mission as she has been generally represented, but that, even in that era of apathy and neglect, she conferred great benefits upon the Welsh people, and that there were many among her clergy who grappled manfully with their duties, under manifold and trying difficulties; or if it helps to impress upon the present generation of Welshmen the fact that the religious awakening of that age came, not as some unexpected, unasked-for supernatural manifestation, but in response to the prayers and preparations of faithful men, and that spiritual forces are still the most powerful and essential to purify and elevate the life of a people; or if it recalls to reflecting minds another fact of no less significance, namely, that the moral and intellectual progress which has marked the history of Wales during the last hundred and fifty years, received its original impulse from a movement, of which the principal aim as well as the immediate result, was the religious education of the people; or if it serves to remind the Church and the country of their great indebtedness to the evangelical revival, which saved our Christianity from drifting into Arianism, or rationalism, and which, if it did not actually avert[2], certainly rendered impossible in this country, such a revolution as that which, at the close of the eighteenth century, devastated France, and destroyed much that was precious, along with what was worthless and noxious; or if it tends to bring home to the Christian conscience in Wales the great hindrance to the success of the gospel occasioned by our divisions and dissensions; and the imperative need of closing our ranks, in order to meet the indifference and the unbelief which appear as not unlikely to issue from the present divided state of our Christianity; or if it serves, be it ever so little, to "*turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers*;" if, in short, it contributes its share towards any of these ends, the writer's purpose will not be unattained.

The author has spared no effort to obtain information at every possible source, and begs to record his sincerest gratitude for the ready help he has received. Among those who are no longer in the land of the living to whom he is indebted, he would gratefully mention the late Bishop of St. David's, Dr. Basil Jones; the late Archdeacon Griffith; the late Rev. J. B. Herbert, and the late Mr. Joseph Joseph, of Brecon.

He also gladly acknowledges his obligations to the authorities of the British Museum, for their most courteous assistance in searching out Welsh books in that vast repository of literature; to the Rev. E. McClure, the editorial secretary of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, for his kind permission to search the Minutes and abstracts of letters belonging to that Society; to Sir John Williams, Bart.; to the Rev. Thomas Jones, the present rector of Llanddowror; to Mr. C. Morgan-Richardson; and lastly, to his friend and colleague, the Rev. E. D. Lloyd, for help in drawing up the Index, while the book was passing through the press.

In transcribing extracts, the writer has not deemed it necessary to retain the archaic orthography of some of the originals; and he has endeavoured, in almost every case, to give exact and full reference to his authorities.

Penmaenmawr Vicarage, May, 1902,

Footnotes

[1]*Welsh Piety* 1740-41, p.12.
[2]See "*The Evangelical Revival in the Eighteenth Century*" by Canon Overton; Longman, Green, &Co, 1886; p.140.

Contents.

Chapter 1. Introductory.

The religious history of Wales in the eighteenth century has not yet been written. It deserves, especially from Churchmen, far more serious attention than it has hitherto received. It offers an inviting and an instructive field of study, not only to the historian, but to the ecclesiastical statesman, and to the educational and religious reformer. It is true that that field has already been ably explored from sundry points of view; but a painstaking and exhaustive research into all the facts, and a due estimate and co-ordination of the various forces which were at work during that period, have yet to be undertaken, before the student can obtain a fair and full view of their conflict or co-operation, in the production of those results, which began to assume their ultimate form about the close of the century. The spiritual, moral and educational condition of the Welsh people at the commencement of the century; the first movement that was made towards the revival of religion, and the removal of the general ignorance which prevailed; the great services which the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge rendered to the cause of education and the dissemination of religious literature in Wales; the genesis and progress of the evangelical revival; the attitude towards it of the bishops and clergy, as well as of Churchmen and Dissenters generally; the forces that operated during its progress towards its partial alienation from the Church within which it began, until the final separation of the main body of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists in the early years of the last century; the literary movements of the second half of the eighteenth century; the financial poverty of the Church, clerical absenteeism and pluralism, the bilingual problem, the occupation of Welsh Sees and other high positions, as well as many of the most

important parochial benefices, by Englishmen, in their bearing upon the life of the Welsh Church during the period under review; these are some of the questions which demand a careful investigation and an impartial treatment, before a just and comprehensive view can be obtained of the development of the religious condition of Wales in the eighteenth century.

An attempt is made in the following chapters to ascertain the position which Griffith Jones occupied, and the part which he played in relation to these questions. We are fully aware that the attempt can at best be only a partial success, for he has now been in his grave for well nigh a century and a half. Apart from the information which can be gleaned out of his own writings, all that can be authentically known of him at this distance of time, as far as we are aware, is almost entirely derived from a sketch of his life and character, consisting of twenty-four pages, and published in 1762, the year after his death. The other early memoirs of his which we have seen are little more than reproductions of this.

It would be unprofitable to enquire here, at any length, into the question why a biography of so remarkable a man was not published before the facts of his life had faded from the minds and memories of his countrymen. There may have been several reasons for this, and among them the fact that, after his death, those who were in full sympathy with his principles rapidly declined in number and influence within the Church, while the leaders of the evangelical revival, who largely entered into his labours, came to be looked upon by those in authority with increasing suspicion and disfavour.

Be that as it may, the loss entailed by such an omission or neglect is great and irreparable. We should like to know all about one who played so conspicuous a part in the history of his Church and country. We are, however, fortunate in the fact that most of his somewhat voluminous writings, though scarce, are still accessible. Some of these, and especially his letters, of which there are nearly two hundred extant, either in print or in manuscript, and his Welsh Piety, or the Annual Reports of his Schools for twenty-four years, besides affording us occasional glimpses into his personal and private history, contain varied and valuable information on matters of the highest moment, connected with the educational and religious condition of his countrymen in his time, and with his own efforts to improve that condition. No other contemporary witness is so competent. No one studied so anxiously the needs of the people, or laboured so extensively to benefit them. He lived through sixty years of the century, and worked as a Clergyman for fifty-three years, under nine successive Bishops of St. David's; he was a trusted correspondent of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge for forty-eight years, when he was its principal agent in the noble work it did for Wales; he saw the first twenty-five years of the evangelical revival, and was on more or less intimate terms with its principal leaders; his preaching excursions and his Circulating Schools brought him in contact with a large number of Churchmen, both clerical and lay, through the length and breadth of the land; and he was the means of circulating among his countrymen an enormous number of Bibles, Prayer Books, and useful religious publications. He was "the greatest Welshman of the century"[1] and when he gives his opinions on matters in which he was interested, we know that they are based on the intimate knowledge and experience of one who held personal communications with fellow-labourers in almost all parts of the country.

For these reasons, the force of which, we hope, will appear in the following pages, the lessons which may be derived from the life and labours of Griffith Jones are of great and permanent importance. He was a remarkable man, and accomplished a remarkable work. Unaided by the prestige of high birth, academical distinction, or a position of dignity in the

Church; criticised and opposed by many of those who should have been his foremost supporters; scarcely ever free from the burden of bodily suffering; he laboured nobly for fifty-three years in the ministry of the Church, till there were but comparatively few parishes in the whole of the Principality which had not directly felt the influence of his life and teaching. He was, indeed, faithfully supported by a small band of earnest and wealthy friends, by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and by many of the parochial clergy and people, when once they began to realise the great benefits that might be derived from his Schools. But the main burden rested upon his own shoulders. He was a man of manifold talent and capacity, of strong and sturdy character, of fertile resources, of inflexible purpose, and of indefatigable industry. He was a man of gentleness and courage, of discretion and decision; and though he was, above all things, a man of faith, his aims were always practical. He did not work in the dark. He well understood the magnitude of the task that was before him, the nature of the opposition. that he had to encounter, and the type of men among his brethren who, moved to an unworthy jealousy by his success and popularity, and relying upon the imperfect knowledge of the affairs of their dioceses possessed by the bishops, sedulously misrepresented his principles and his methods. He complains also of the hostility of those among the people who used to make profit from the irreligious and profane habits that had grown up in those days of ignorance and profligacy, but whose vocation ceased to be in demand under the influence of his Schools. These things he saw and felt. But he was undaunted either by the magnitude of the task, or the multitude of the obstacles which arose in his path. He stood firm to his purpose, trusting in God and in the righteousness of his position, and encouraged by the confidence of those who supported him through evil and through good report. He exercised a noble self-restraint under trying circumstances. He said nothing and did nothing that could be justly construed into disloyalty or irregularity. He was profoundly attached to Church order and authority, while he was no less profoundly moved by a sense of individual responsibility. He often found it difficult, and almost impossible, to reconcile both in the efforts he was making to serve loyally both the Church and the spiritual interests of the people. And when we bear in mind the opposition he met with from an influential section of his brethren, and the want of recognition and encouragement on the part of the bishops on the one hand, and the great demand for the Schools on the other, his success in avoiding any serious collision with the authorities of the Church can only be attributed to his consummate tact and wisdom, though it must always be remembered that he never forfeited the confidence of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, which was a tower of strength to him throughout his laborious career. His faith in God, in the mission of the Church, and in the power of the Gospel to fulfil the needs of his benighted countrymen, remained immovable under all trials and discouragements. He lived to see his efforts crowned with almost unparalleled success, and it is not too much to say, that what is noblest and most permanent in the religious life of Wales today is due, in a large measure, to the labours of this apostolic man.

In the following pages, our aim has been to allow Griffith Jones, as far as possible, to tell his own story; and whenever an appeal is made to external testimony, we confine ourselves, for the most part, to contemporary authorities. Our conclusions may be often erroneous, but we have in all cases endeavoured to supply the reader with the data on which they are founded, so that he may be in a position to form his own judgment. We have come across very little to indicate the attitude of Griffith Jones towards the Nonconformists of his time, or theirs towards him. To state that he received every sympathy and co-operation from them in his great work, as has been frequently stated, is almost as much in excess of all the contemporary evidence that we have seen, as the statement, also often made, that only a few of the clergy sympathised with him, comes

short of ascertainable facts. Griffith Jones himself alludes to the behaviour of “some pious persons of a separate Protestant Communion (divested of all bigotry and partial regard to party interest),” as having “shown a Catholic love and zeal to the advancement of our holy religion in the Church of England, by the ready and unasked-for contributions of some of them; and others as having “encouraged the Schools to proceed in the method they are settled in, that is, in everything agreeable to the rules of the Church.”[2] On another occasion, he says that “it is evident that the best and most catholic Christians of all denominations, though they differ from others in some points, are not so forward for promoting party interest as they are on all occasions to assist and rejoice to see their Master's cause thrive in the power of it, among those they disagree with in lesser things. It would be ungrateful to conceal such instances among Dissenters (though not many) who have contributed to the present undertaking.”[3] From these extracts, it appears that some, “though not many,” of the Congregationalists were favourably disposed towards his Schools; but the Baptists were opposed to them, and we learn from one of his correspondents that they — the Baptists — “brought their incendiary on purpose to sow sedition among them.” On the number and spiritual condition of the Dissenting bodies in Wales at the beginning of the eighteenth century, we have lightly touched in the body of this work. It has been contended by Dr. Thomas Rees, and others after him, that the number of Dissenters in Wales was larger at that period than is usually believed. We can only repeat here that, if it was so, the fact only increases their responsibility for the moral condition of society at that time, which, as is allowed on all hands, was unsatisfactory. That there were earnest men among them is freely admitted; but the heavy indictment brought against those to whom the interests of religion were specially committed in those days, must in justice fall upon them as well as upon Churchmen in due proportion to their numbers.

It is, indeed, but too true that the general character of pastors and people in those times, both within and without the Church, was deplorably low. Spiritual deadness and indifference prevailed almost everywhere. The description given by Griffith Jones and other good men of the period of which we are writing, is sufficient evidence on this point. There was profane swearing, desecration of the Lord’s Day, drunkenness and debauchery, scepticism and unbelief, and a profound ignorance of almost the elementary principles of religion. Griffith Jones himself speaks of the state of things existing in his day as of “recent” growth. It was the result of the troubles and confusions of the Civil War, and of the violent reaction which set in after the Restoration. The picture which those good men drew was, indeed, a dismal one. But it was drawn by faithful and fearless hands; by men whose standard of religion and morality was a high one. They were thoroughly awakened themselves, and their great purpose in life was to awaken others.

Their spiritual vision was keen; their love of souls was strong; their appreciation of Gospel truth was whole-hearted; their conscience was enlightened and tenderly responsive to the call of duty. And, moreover, the ignorance and the rudeness which so generally prevailed, threw into bolder relief the corruptions of the age. There was no refinement about them; they stood out in their naked coarseness. And we are tempted to ask in passing, What would be the attitude of those good men towards the state of things among us now, were they to rise from their graves, see things as they are with their own eyes, and judge by their own standard? It may well be that they would find the superiority of our religious condition by no means proportionate to our self-complacency.

Though some of the later Nonconformist writers have, as we believe, misunderstood or misconstrued some of the facts, by relying, it may be, upon insufficient or untrustworthy evidence, it is only right to state that, in their treatment of Griffith Jones, they have

invariably done justice to his eminent character and abilities, and have ungrudgingly acknowledged his great services to the country. But we believe that an appeal to trustworthy contemporary sources of information, will correct several impressions that have been produced respecting some points in the career of Griffith Jones, and the religious history of Wales in the eighteenth century. It is not true, for instance, as we have already intimated, that the clergy were almost universally opposed to Griffith Jones' Schools, and that only a few of them were men of religious earnestness and activity[4]; it is an exaggeration of the fact to say that "the Nonconformists gave him all the assistance in their power;"[5] it is not true to say that, when he was on his preaching tours during the Easter and Whitsuntide holidays, he was ejected from Parish Churches, and compelled to preach outside, owing to the hostility[6] of the clergy of those parishes, for it was not his habit to enter another man's parish without invitation or permission; it is not true that the schoolmasters he employed were mostly drawn from the ranks of Nonconformity[7], because, it is alleged, he could find none worthy or competent among Churchmen; it is not true to say that little or nothing had been done to remove the ignorance and reform the morals of the people, and to revive spiritual religion in the land, before the rise of Welsh Methodism about 1736. Nor is it true to say, as has been contended by a different class of modern writers, apparently from a misunderstanding of the purport of Dr. Saunders work, published in 1721, namely, that the depressed state of the Welsh Church in the eighteenth century was principally due to the poverty of its revenues. These allegations have been made, and some of them have been so often repeated, that they have come to be too generally believed among us. But they are not only unsupported, but distinctly refuted by contemporary evidence. We yield to no one either in our respect for the great leaders of the evangelical revival in Wales, or in our gratitude for the blessings which that movement brought in its train; but it is neither necessary nor just to vindicate their character, or to extol their labours, at the expense of ignoring or depreciating the labours of others.

Of the existence of what has been termed the Anglicising policy in the Welsh Church in his time, Griffith Jones bears ample testimony. He deplores and deprecates it, and describes its results as inimical to the influence of the Church, and to the spiritual welfare of the people. It is almost the only subject in the discussion of which his great self-restraint threatened to desert him. His opposition to that policy was one of the chief arguments urged against him by his adversaries. It was not so much the poverty of the Church, poor as she undoubtedly was, that was responsible for her feebleness and inefficiency in those days, nor was it the indifference and in competency of the rank and file of the Clergy; but it was the want of leaders to sympathise with them, to guide and encourage them to make due provision for the great educational and spiritual needs of the people. It is on record that, in spite of discouragements from influential quarters, many of the Welsh Clergy nobly responded to the invitations of Griffith Jones to introduce his Schools into their parishes, though he was only an ordinary incumbent, unknown to most of them. Their income was, doubtless, miserably poor; the great majority of them had to serve two or more churches; and there is nothing to show that they received help or guidance from the Bishops, who were oftener than otherwise absentees from their dioceses at this most critical period in the history of the Church. But notwithstanding these heavy drawbacks, we call attention to the following interesting facts, derived from *Welsh Piety*.

Of these Annual Reports of the *Circulating Welsh Charity Schools*, there are twenty-four numbers, in thirteen of which only are printed letters from correspondents given. But those letters are only selections in each case, from a much larger number received by him in the course of the year. In those thirteen numbers, there are letters from nearly three

hundred different Clergymen, about 128 of whom describe themselves as ‘Curates,’ 104 as ‘Vicars,’ or ‘Rectors,’ and the remainder as ‘Ministers.’ This is a fact of considerable importance, for more than one reason. But we should by no means conclude that there were only three hundred Clergymen among Griffith Jones’ correspondents. In the first place, it is presumable that there were communications from Clergymen among those withheld from publication in the thirteen numbers of *Welsh Piety* in which letters are printed. And in the second place, no letters at all are published in the eleven remaining numbers of *Welsh Piety*, though we know that they had been received as usual. If we reckon the average number of Clergymen, whose names appear for the first time in ten of the numbers wherein letters with names and addresses are given, we find that the average for each number is eleven. If, to the above three hundred Clergymen, we add this average of eleven for the years in which no letters are given, as we may reasonably do, we have over four hundred Clergymen in Wales, who co-operated more or less with Griffith Jones, in supporting the Schools, and in securing their efficiency. This is a creditable proportion of the Welsh Clergy at that time. But it is a significant fact, that we have been unable to discover among the number more than two (both from the Diocese of Bangor) who occupied dignified positions in the Church. The above facts effectually dispose of the charge of general apathy and indifference to the spiritual welfare of the people, which has been freely preferred against the Clergy of those times. They also dispose of the fanciful theory that poverty was the main obstacle to the efficiency of the Church in the same period. It was not poverty, but the want of leadership. It was the poorest among the Clergy that saved the Church from sinking into deeper depths at that critical period. These facts are incontrovertible, and the interests of truth are not served by ignoring or concealing them.

The Welsh Church owes Griffith Jones a debt which is incalculable, and second only to what it owes Bishop William Morgan, the principal translator of the Welsh Bible. There are several points of similarity in the history of these two great benefactors of their countrymen. Both sought to serve their Church and country through the language ‘understanded of the people;’ the one by giving them the Bible in their own tongue, and the other by teaching them to read and understand it. In the accomplishment of their respective tasks, both had to rely in a great measure on the assistance of English Churchmen, which was readily and generously granted to them. Both had to carry on their labours in the face of bitter opposition from those among their countrymen who appear to have been more concerned in the extinction of the Welsh language, than in the efficiency of the Church and the salvation of souls, and both met their opponents with almost identical arguments[8]. But there is one striking contrast in the respective careers of these men. William Morgan was duly promoted in the Church for his great services, whereas Griffith Jones received go other reward than the privilege of serving God and His Church. The Anglicising policy, which, in its modern form, was only in its incipient state in the time of the former, had grown into a dominant force in the days of the latter.

Griffith Jones’ labours were arduous and difficult. This little work, we fain hope, will serve in some measure, to give an idea of the man he was, and of the work he did. The more we study and understand him, the more attractive and commanding appears his personality. Humble in spirit, broad and tolerant in sympathy, and moved by lofty ideals, he stood unflinchingly true to his principles. Upon these he would fall back for comfort and courage, when opposed by difficulties, or harassed by persecutions.[9] Far-seeing and consistent as a Churchman, he was also an enlightened and an ardent patriot.

But he was neither merely for the sake of winning the favours of patrons, or the applause of the people, for he had to carve his way to success in the face of opposition from both.

His efforts brought him at first more trouble than popularity, and they never brought him promotion. But he chose his path because it was the only one in which he could efficiently serve his Church and country. His character and his career deserve the closest study of those who aspire to benefit their kindred, of whatever class or creed they may be. He did not live in the nineteenth century, with its abundant facilities for advertisement and communication, with its wealth of resources, and with its means of influencing the legislature in its demands for reforms. It is not easy for us to form an adequate conception of the difficulties he laboured under, of which the worst have wholly disappeared from our path. And yet he succeeded, almost single-handed, in bringing the means of at least the most essential part of education to the door of the vast majority of households in his native Principality. We say advisedly, "the most essential part." We have no wish to exaggerate the nature or the extent of the education which was imparted in his Schools. W e know that it was limited and rudimentary. But he had to clear the ground; he had to combat and conciliate prejudices; he had to create a desire for knowledge in those whom it was intended to benefit; he had to convince, not only the rich, but the poor, of the utility of popular education; and he had to rouse a whole community from apathy and un- concern, to realise the fact that the paramount need of the hour was religious instruction. We say again that he was nobly supported by a few infiuential laymen, and by many of the clergy; but his was the hand that guided and controlled the movement which, within the compass of a single generation, established thousands of schools, and circulated a great mass of religious literature throughout the Principality. Though the education which he gave was very imperfect, we repeat that what he supplied was the most essential part, He educated the moral principle, he trained and developed the. spiritual faculties, he awoke and illumined the conscience, and this he did by instructing the people in the vital truths of the Gospel by means of sermons; catechetical exercises, charity schools, and religious publications; and no education, however elaborate and costly, can be sound or safe, in which this element is ignored or neglected. And this, perhaps, is the most impressive lesson which the present age needs to learn at the feet of Griffith Jones, As an instrument in God's hand, he brought to bear on the degenerate life of the people the powers of the world to come. That was his aim, and he saw the Spirit of the living God moving power. fully among the dry bones of a decayed and decrepit Christianity. "*So I prophesied, as He commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army*" — one hundred and fifty thousand souls, besides those taught in the night schools, who, under his prophetic ministry, had learned to read the Word of God in their own tongue.

"*And their works do follow them.*" He was the precursor of those movements, and, In a sense, the creator of those forces, which hate most deeply and beneficially affected. Wales during the last century and a half. He was the foremost among the pioneers of Welsh popular education on an extensive scale; he was the father of Welsh evangelical preaching; he gave a powerful impetus to the revival of Welsh theological and devotional literature, and thereby imparted a new life to the Welsh language; he did much to set forth our noble Liturgy as a medium of true congregational worship; he introduced or restored Psalmody into its rightful place in the service of the sanctuary; his compilation of Hymns for public worship was the first published in Wales, if we except the metrical version of the Psalms by Archdeacon Prys, of which some ten or twelve editions, either bound up with Bibles and Prayer Books, or issued in a separate volume, had appeared between 1621 and 1927, and the *Welshman's Candle* by Vicar Pritchard, of which no fewer than twenty editions; in part or in whole, had been published between 1646, or two years after his death, and 1750; his Manual of Family Prayers, his stirring Treatises on the duty and privilege of domestic devotions, and the extensive example of his schoolmasters, who were enjoined to establish Family Prayers in the neighbourhoods where the Charity

Schools were set up, gave a great impetus to Family Worship, which continued to be a distinguishing feature of religious life in Wales from his time down to the closing decades of the last century; and his Circulating Schools supplied both the model and the materials for the earliest Welsh Sunday Schools. It is also a significant fact that the most eminent among the original leaders of the evangelical movement in Wales were natives of that part of the country, where the influence of his preaching and of his Schools was felt in the earlier years of his ministry; and there is evidence that, humanly speaking, they owed much of their earnestness and efficiency in their evangelistic labours to their personal contact with him and his work. It is almost impossible to over-estimate the extensive and far-reaching effects of his powerful and many-sided ministry on the life of his countrymen. The Welsh patriot and the Welsh Churchman owe him a debt of gratitude, which they can pay him best by imitating his disinterested and unselfish devotedness to duty, and by reverting to the principles which guided and inspired his noble life.

It has been said that Griffith Jones gave much of its force and materials to the Methodist schism of 1811; but it is seldom remembered that he was also largely instrumental in reviving and reinforcing spiritual life within the Church, in rendering her ministrations more efficient, and in strengthening the things which remained. This is a fact of essential importance in estimating his services to the Church. It can hardly admit of doubt that, had his efforts ben heartily supported and supplemented by those in authority, the subsequent history of religion in Wales would have assumed a very different aspect.[10] As it is, he stands forth both as an example and as a warning.

The events of the period we are dealing with constantly force upon our attention great principles and large issues. They bring before us the experience of the past, with both its admonition and its encouragement. Nepotism, pluralism, absenteeism, the appointment to the higher offices of the Church of men who could not minister efficiently to the people in their own language, and the unworthy intrigues, by which grave injustice was done to such men as Griffith Jones, to whose faithful labours the Church owes so great a debt; these things are, to-day, known of all. And they are tremendous sins against the Body of Christ. Have we repented of them? Or have there been attempts at condoning, excusing, or palliating them?

“What, then, must we say of those, who set in places of advantage and privilege and honour, in His very Church itself — refuse to recognise their duties to the poor; neglect the ignorant and the sinful, for whose sakes they were given these advantages; forget to “condescend to men of low estate”; and ‘enjoy’ their benefice or their accumulation of benefices, perhaps some thirty, forty, or fifty years, as though it were only a just reward of their merits, or a fitting opportunity of ‘doing well unto themselves’? What else can we say — but that such conduct, in the individual, is fatal to his own soul; and in the body politic — if it should ever reach such wide dimensions — is the symptom of a terrible disease, which is sure to reveal ere long (as disease always does) the existence of a new set of latent remedial laws. These laws are restorative if possible. But if not, then they effect the removal and destruction of what had become a source of widespread infection ‘*Where the carcase is, thither the eagles are gathered together.*’”[11]

The principle of continuity is one that has, of late, taken a firm hold of Churchmen; and it is a principle of deep and far-reaching significance. There is a continuity of responsibility. “*The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge*.” If our fathers did wrong in the most sacred of trusts, we inherit their guilt, if we have not confessed and renounced their mis-deeds. To be free for the future and its great demands, we must put ourselves right with the past, no matter what shame and

humiliation it may cost us. And it is no less our wisdom to remember the good hand ofour God upon our forefathers. In spite of the sad failings and failures of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the faithful employment of the system, the ministry, and the message of the Church by earnest Churchmen, brought down the blessing of God upon our country. Catechising, religious instruction diligently and thoroughly imparted, the preaching of the Gospel of repentance, faith, and obedience; these were the simple, but divinely appointed means that were used. There was much scepticism and unbelief in the land; but those men stopped not to argue with unbelievers. They depicted sin in its enormity; and they preached Christ crucified in all the fulness of His redeeming power.

They were intensely and uncompromisingly dogmatic. They preached positive truth, and waited for the blessing of the Holy Spirit. And they waited not in vain. There is a continuity of privilege and blessing; and among all the needs of the Welsh Church today, there is none that is comparable to that of reverting to the simple and strong faith which inspired and sustained those apostolic men, who deemed the glory of God in the salvation of souls to be the primary and paramount object of the existence and the organisation of the Church.

The thought of “home reunion,” too, has been frequently in our mind. In the religious movements of the period under review, we see at work the causes of those separations which have since crystallised into hard divisions. There are, we believe, preliminary conditions which are essential to the restoration of a healthy and permanent reunion. But as far as we can judge, there are few signs as yet of the appearance of those conditions. among the religious communities of Wales. A: great law of Church life and progress has been violated. We are not here concerned with the adjustment of responsibility. But neither side has, as yet, shown much disposition to acknowledge its own share of guilt in the matter. The spirit of disunion and disintegration is today as strong and active as ever in the Nonconformist bodies, as is evidenced by the condition of every village and hamlet in the land; and before the Church can consistently urge upon others the great duty of reunion, peace and “unity of spirit” must be restored within her own borders. There are, doubtless, many thoughtful people among us who are dissatisfied with the present state of things; but they have, as yet, scarcely formed for themselves. a public opinion. A due sense of the value of unity, and a longing for reunion have still to be created. The “spirit of unity” must be prayerfully and sedulously cultivated, in the light of the appalling waste of resources, both spiritual and material, which our divisions entail upon us, and above all, in the hallowed atmosphere of the Intercessory Prayer of our great High Priest.[12]

There are problems before the Church in Wales today which press no less urgently for solution, and which no less seriously demand wise treatment, than those which confronted her in the eighteenth century. The educational and social conditions of the people differ widely, but the old tendencies of human nature are still active. There are some signs that the evangelical revival, which has dominated Wales for a century and a half, is becoming a spent force, and there are few indications that any other type of Christianity is taking its place.

Religion was once almost the only subject of interest to Welshmen beyond their daily avocations. But matters are widely different. today. Welsh life, in a literary, scientific, and commercial sense, is rapidly expanding. Welshmen are coming more and more into contact with the surging mass of thought around and beyond them. The spell of monoglot isolation has been broken. Their attitude towards religion is changing, and, we fear, not always for the better. Griffith Jones’ remedy for his time; whose essential needs were not dissimilar to ours, was religious education, and catechising, as the groundwork of

successful preaching. The religious education of the masses; the reform of the antiquated machinery of the Church, so as to extend the privileges of the people, and quicken their sense of responsibility; an attitude of wise and warm sympathy towards those national and social movements which are calculated to improve the working classes; the due supply of a learned, spiritually-minded ministry, which will set forth the Gospel in its power to solve the social, mental, and moral problems which haunt and harass the age.
These are some of the questions that must be faced, if the Church is to meet the demands of the times. Her opportunity is before her. So it was in the eighteenth century. Some of her members viewed with stolid indifference the movement that was then busily shaping her destiny, and testing the competency of her rulers; some treated it with ridicule and contempt; and some calumniated and pursued it with relentless hostility. Others there were who welcomed it, strove to guide it, to restrain its eccentricities, and preserve its current within the Church where it had originated. They struggled nobly and long for this end. But they were at last overpowered by the forces of disintegration. The movement, nevertheless, went on, and formed for itself new channels. And once more, Wisdom was justified of her own children.

Footnotes

[1]Dean Edwards, in *Wales and the Welsh Church*, p.319.
[2]*Welsh Piety, 1739-40*, p.7.
[3]*Welsh Plety, 1740-41*, p.12. See also the letter of "A learned Dissenting minister" in the same number, p.53.
[4]*Enwogion y Ffydd*, Div. i., p.118.
[5]Rees' *Welsh Nonconformity*, p.353.
[6]*ibid*, p.347.
[7]*ibid*. p.351.
[8]Compare Bishop Morgan's "*Letter of dedication to Queen Elizabeth*," prefixed to his translation of the Bible, and Griffith Jones' Letter in *Welsh Piety, 1740-41*.
[9]"It is much more eligible to bear the undeserved reflection of some perverse people, for being, as they call it, over-busy, than the just reproach of one's own heart, for sloth and negligence." — *Welsh Piety, 1746-47*, p.5.
[10]An idea of the loss which the Church sustained through the secession of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists in 1811, may be formed from the fact that their ministers numbered only 76 in October, 1829 (see *Goleuad Cymru* for December, 1829, p.373), while their number in 1901, amounted to 833.
[11]Curteis' *Bampton Lectures*, 1890; p.343.
[12]John 17.

Chapter 2. The State of the Country at the Beginning of the Eighteenth Century.

At the beginning of the Eighteenth Century, thee British people were suffering from the effects of a series of changes and revolutions which they had passed through during the previous century. Their struggles for constitutional government had cost them dearly. They had groaned under the extortions of the reign of Charles the First; they had experienced the horrors of a civil war, and had ineffectually attempted, for the first time in their history, to establish a republican form of government; they had faced the manifold dangers of a violent reaction, which accompanied the re-establishment of the monarchy, and the restoration of the Church to the rights and privileges from which it had been suspended during the Commonwealth; they had struggled through the reign of the idle,

cynical, and voluptuous Charles the Second, and had emerged from a revolution, forced upon them by the extravagant pretensions of a false and fanatical despot.

The power of the Church had, meanwhile, been much weakened by two regrettable events, which were doubtless occasioned by the distrust, the suspicions, the heated partizanship, and the violent passions excited by the quarrels and the controversies to which we have referred. In the year 1662, the Act of Uniformity was passed, the result of which was the secession from the Church of a number of Clergy, variously estimated at between eight hundred and two thousand. Twenty-seven years later, the secession of the Non-jurors took place, when six Bishops and some four hundred Clergy vacated their livings, on the ground that they could not take the oath of allegiance to William and Mary. In each case, the secession was occasioned by conscientious scruples, and among the seceders were many divines eminent for their learning and piety, whose loss at such a time the Church could ill afford.

“This two-fold drain upon the strength [of the Church] could scarcely have failed to impair the robust vitality. which was soon to be so greatly needed to combat the early beginnings of the dead resistance of spiritual lethargy.”[1]

It was inevitable that the conflicts and the controversies of the seventeenth century should. result in the moral degeneracy of the people; and it was, perhaps, but natural that those who were directly responsible for their religious condition, should themselves have become affected by the worldliness and the spiritual deadness which prevailed. At any rate, such was the case. The Church was slumbering; the influence of religion was feeble; the salt had lost its savour; scepticism, impiety, and profligacy, were rampant. The forces of unbelief and immorality were powerful and aggressive; those of the Church were hesitating and ineffectual.

That this is no exaggeration of the state of things in the country at large, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, may be confirmed by ample testimonies, of which only a few must be adduced here. Bishop Butler, in the oft-quoted passage from the Advertisement to his *Analogy*, which was written in 1736, says:

“It has come, I know not how, to be taken for granted, by many persons, that Christianity is not so much as a subject of inquiry; but that it is now, at length, discovered to be fictitious. And accordingly, they treat it as if in the present age this were an agreed point among all people of discernment; and nothing remained but to set it up as a principal subject of mirth and ridicule, as it were, by way of reprisals, for its having so long interrupted the pleasures of the world.”[2]

In 1713, Bishop Burnet wrote the following description of the candidates for Holy Orders, and of the younger Clergy:

“The outward state of things is black enough, God knows; but that which heightens my fears rises chiefly from the inward state into which we are unhappily fallen. Our Ember weeks are the burden and grief of my life. The much greater part of those who come to be ordained are ignorant to a degree not to be apprehended by those who are not obliged to know it. The easiest part of knowledge is that to which they are the greatest strangers; I mean the plainest part of Scripture, which, they say in excuse for their ignorance, that their tutors at the Universities never mention the reading of to them; so that they can give no account, or at least but a very imperfect one, of the contents of the Gospels. Many cannot give a tolerable account of the Catechism itself, how short and plain soever. The

ignorance of some is such that, in a well regulated state of things, they would appear not knowing enough to be admitted to the Holy Sacrament. The case is not much better in many, who, having got into orders, cannot make it appear that they have read the Scriptures, or any one good book since they were ordained. These things pierce one's soul, and make him often cry out, '*O that I had wings like a dove, for then would I fly away, and be at rest.*'"

Archbishop Secker, in a charge delivered in 1738, says:

"In this we cannot be mistaken that an open and professed disregard of religion is become, through a variety of unhappy causes, the distinguishing character of the age. Such are the dissoluteness and contempt of principle in the higher part of the world, and the profligacy, intemperance, and fearlessness of committing crimes in the lower part, as must, if the torrent of impiety stop not, become absolutely fatal. Christianity is ridiculed and railed at with very little reserve, and the teachers of it without any at all."

"Throughout the whole of the eighteenth century, almost all writers, who had occasion to speak of the general condition of society, joined in one wail of lament over the irreligion and immorality that they saw around them. This complaint was far too universal to mean little more than a general, and somewhat conventional tirade upon the widespread corruption of human nature. The only doubt is whether it might not in some measure have arisen out of a keener perception on the part of the more cultivated and thoughtful portion of society, of brutal habits which in coarser ages had been passed over with far less comment. Perhaps also greater liberty of thought and speech caused irreligion to take a more avowed and visible form. Yet even if the severe judgment passed by contemporary writers upon the spiritual and moral condition of their age may be fairly qualified by some such considerations, it must certainly be allowed that religion and morality were, generally speaking, at a lower ebb than they have been at many other periods; For this the National Church must take a full share, but not more that a full share of responsibility. The causes which elevate or depress the general tone of society have a corresponding influence, in kind, if not in degree, upon the whole body of the Clergy."[3]

Similar complaints are made by leading Dissenters of that time:

"How many Sermons," wrote Dr. Guyse, "one may hear that leave out Christ, both name and thing, and that pay no more regard to Him than if we had nothing to do with Him." Dr. Watts says that in his day there was "a general decay of vital religion in the hearts and lives of men, and that it was a general matter of mournful observation among all who lay the cause of God at heart."[4]

"The Puritans were buried and the Methodists were not born. The Bishop of Lichfield, in 1724, in a Sermon, said, 'The Lord's Day is now the Devil's Market-day.' And the three dissenting bodies were lamenting that numbers of their ministers were immoral, negligent, and insufficient."[5]

Such was the state of things in England at the beginning of the eighteenth century, and in Wales it was no better. Besides the general causes which have been already enumerated as contributing to the decay of religion and morals in. England, there were other special causes which tended to produce the same results in the Principality. The chief of these special causes was the alien and often non-resident episcopate, ignorant of the language and out of sympathy with the national temperament of the people, which ruled the Church in Wales at that period. A picture of the state of things in the Diocese of St. David's at the

beginning of the 18th century has been left us by the Rev. Dr. Saunders[6], in a volume which was published in 1721, and entitled, "*A View of the State of Religion in the Diocese of St. David's, about the beginning of the 18th century, with some account of the causes of its decay. Together with considerations of the reasonableness of augmenting the revenues of Impropriate Churches*."

What is said in this volume of the state of the Church and religion in the Diocese of St. David's at that time, was doubtless more or less true of the other three Welsh Dioceses. In his dedication of the volume to the Prince of Wales, the writer expresses the hope that His Royal Highness would feel it a "moving spectacle to see, as it were, the whole frame of our religion sinking, to see many parishes without churches, many churches without pastors, and many pastors without a maintenance; for such are the profane, the impious changes that the iniquity of the times have brought upon us, [that] they are grievous to mention." He tells us elsewhere that the "Christian service is totally disused in some places, there are other some that are said to be half served; there being several Churches, where we are but rarely, if at all, to meet with preaching, catechising, or administering of the Holy Communion. In others, the service of the prayers is but partly read, and that, perhaps, but once a month, or once in a quarter of a year; nor is it, indeed, reasonable to expect that they should be better served, while the stipend allowed for the service of them is so small, that a poor Curate must submit to serve three or four Churches for £10 or £12 a year, and that, perhaps, when they are almost as many miles distant from each other."[7]

The three principal causes to which Dr. Saunders attributes the depression of the Church in the Diocese of St. David's are, first the poverty of the livings, owing largely to lay impropriations, secondly, the promotion of Bishops and Clergy who were unable to minister to their people in the Welsh language, and thirdly, the non-residence of the Bishops and Clergy. Replying to the argument that Bishops need not know the language, since they delegate the practical part of the work to the parochial Clergy, Dr. Saunders says:

"I think it is allowed that this privilege should not be extended to the inferior orders, because it is alleged at least that it is a sufficient cause of refusal (when a clerk is presented to a cure of souls in Wales) if he does not understand that language; though if the reason of this sanction be just, it is difficult to conceive why it should not hold with regard to superiors as well as inferiors that hold themselves engaged to ministerial offices; and yet even with regard to the latter, it has not been unusual with my Lords the Bishops often to relax their power, and for the sake of serving friends, often to be prevailed with to consider more the incumbent's than the people's needs, by providing for the maintenance of the one, not without manifest hazard of the salvation of the other; and what hard notions of a holy Father's pastoral concern and love of souls are people apt to entertain on such occasions? How naturally are they tempted to conclude that their pastors are not sent to learn their language, nor to mind their souls, and to believe uncharitably, contrary to St. Paul's rule, that they seek "*not them but theirs — their own and not the things of Christ Jesus?"*[8]

The earnest purpose of this excellent man, and his desire to see the Church reformed, are manifest on every page.

“When I reflect thus upon the present sad and uncomfortable view of the Church here, …. I cannot but have a melancholy fear that the time which God intends us for our trial is drawing to a period, and that the deplorable state of the once renowned Churches of Asia is hanging over our head, and that our present confusion looks too much like the dark presages of the total removing of our candlestick, the benefit whereof we have, alas! too long neglected, and made too little use of.”[9]

Other witnesses may be produced in confirmation of the same opinions. Sir John Phillips, of Picton Castle, Pembrokeshire, in a letter to Griffith Jones, the date of which is not given, wrote as follows: “I believe there has scarcely been any age, since the first publication of the Gospel, wherein men talked and wrote more irrationally (that is, on the subject of religion), and lived and acted more immorally, than at the present time.” Numerous passages to the same effect might be quoted from the writings of Griffith Jones himself, of which one only will be given here. In a letter, dated Feb. 15, 1733, he writes: “If we consider how numerous and shameless, I may say, how common and impudent the despisers and opposers of serious piety are in our days, what shall we think but that the enemy is coming in like a water-flood, and threatens to overflow our land with a worse deluge than that which drowned the world in the days of Noah.”

In an interesting volume published in 1888 by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, edited by the Rev. E. McClure, M.A., Editorial Secretary, and containing the Minutes of that Society for the first six years of its existence (1698-1704), together with abstracts of letters of Correspondents, we have considerable light thrown on the state of religion and morality in Wales. In a letter to the Society, dated May 23, 1700, Dr. John Jones,[10] Dean of Bangor, writes of the prevalence of “ignorance and ill-practice” in the Diocese of Bangor. Under date November 8, 1700, a lay correspondent from Wrexham complains of “the corruption of the age,” and writes of the urgent need of remedies. Another correspondent complains of “the great ignorance and atheism of Wales, and of the contempt of the Clergy, occasioned by the small provision for them.” Mr. Harries, of Llantrisant, Glamorganshire, says that “the poor are numerous, lazy, and mutinous, and so much addicted to sports, even in Divine Service, that he has been forced to become Church-warden in order the better to restrain them.”

That a spirit of indifference and formality had crept over the few Dissenting congregations which were scattered up and down the Principality at the time of which we are writing, can hardly be disputed. So much is clearly implied in the writings of Griffith Jones and Thomas Charles; and William Williams, of Pantycelyn, in one of his prose works, puts the following words into the mouth of Philo Evangelius:

“The people of the meeting-house, as well as the people of the Church tolerated the play-mound; ignorance had covered the face of Wales; scarcely anyone stood up against the corruption of the age, till at last light broke out like the dawn in sundry parts of the world…. The six Southern Counties (of Wales) embraced the Word early. Old sentinels were roused from their slumbers. Sermons were preached in the Churches every Sunday. The Dissenters woke up. They wailed unto them, and sone of them wept; they piped unto them, and some of them danced.”[11]

The same conclusion is indicated by the following extract from a letter to Howell Harris, dated August 7, 1741, and written by Edmund Jones, an eminent Dissenting minister at Pontypool:

“Many are they that hate me, and my friends are but few; yea, the labourers in my Lord's vineyard would not allow me even to glean after them…. Thus dissenters, and those who were not for discipline dealt with me…. I wish some of the sound dissenting ministers separated from the erroneous and loose dissenters; but perhaps it will come to that. Both the ministers of Penmaen deny that there is any need of discipline among them, and call my attempts at discipline by the opprobrious names of rigid, punctilious, and novel customs.”[12]

He further complains, however, that “bigoted Churchmen, the Baptists, and even the Methodists”, oppose him.

It has been somewhat vigorously contended that the Dissenting congregations in Wales at the beginning of the eighteenth century were by no means so few as has been generally believed. If it is true that they numbered about one-eighth[13] of the population, then indeed this larger number emphasises the fact that their spiritual condition was low, and increases their share of the responsibility for the unsatisfactory moral and religious state of the Welsh people at the period we are dealing with. Dr. Thomas Rees, quoting from statistics “collected with remarkable care and industry”; about the year 1715 by Dr. John Evans, makes out that there were seventy-one or more Nonconformist congregations in Wales and Monmouthshire. This, however, is quite inconsistent with returns made at the same time by another Nonconformist authority. In vol. ii. of *The History of Dissenters in England and Wales*, by David Bogue and James Bennett, published in 1809, we are informed on page 99, that there were only forty-three Dissenting congregations in Wales, excluding Monmouthshire, or fifty-one, if we include those of that County. The discrepancy between these two returns, compiled be it observed, by Nonconformist statisticians, is no less than twenty-eight per cent. Messrs. Bogue and Bennett inform us that their list “was drawn up in the years 1715 and 1716, by Daniel Neal, the author of the *History of the Puritans*. The character of the man,” they assure us, “is a voucher for its accuracy, and it may be looked upon as the most faithful statement which can now be given of the number of the Dissenters at the close of the first period of their history.”[14]

Such, on its darker side, was the moral and religious condition of Wales at the beginning of the eighteenth century. There was much indifference, worldliness, incapacity, and gross neglect of duty, on the part of the majority of the clergy, whilst, as might be expected, the laity were generally sunk in ignorance, superstition, immorality, and utter unconcern about spiritual things. The plague had spread among Churchmen and Dissenters alike.

But out of this darkness, light began to grow. Good men, as we have seen, saw the state of corruption which had overtaken society, and the profound slumbers into which the Church had fallen. And they felt and recognised their own responsibility in the matter.

This sense of responsibility bore fruit in the establishment in 1698 of the venerable Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, “the direct antecedent of which,” we are told, “were, no doubt, the Religious Societies founded in London and Westminster about the year 1678, and the Societies for Reformation of Manners which originated about 1691”[15] . The original objects of that Society were the association of Churchmen from all parts of the country for the purpose of ascertaining, realising, and reporting upon the ignorance and irreligion that prevailed, and of adopting means and methods for remedying them. It was passed at the Society’s meeting, held in April, 1699, that “every member of the Society do subscribe” the following pre-amble: “Whereas the growth of vice and immorality is greatly owing to gross ignorance of the principles of the Christian religion,

we whose names are under-written do agree to meet together, as often as we can conveniently, to consult (under the conduct of Divine Providence and assistance) how we may be able by due and lawful methods to promote Christian Knowledge." The operations of the Society were directed towards the erection of "Catechetical Schools," the establishment of lending Libraries in the several market towns of the kingdom, and the distribution of good books and healthy religious publications.[16] They originally included within their purview, not only the United Kingdom, but also the "plantations, especially the Continent of North America, where the provision for the clergy, we understand, is but mean;" but upon the undertaking of this latter obligation by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, which was founded in 1701, that part of the Society's design was dropped. The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge paid due attention to the needs of Wales, and generously helped those who laboured to save its people from their benighted condition, as we shall see more in detail when we come to deal with the relation of Griffith Jones to the Society. What part he bore, what means he used, and what support he received, in the noble enterprise of rescuing his countrymen from their moral and intellectual degradation, it will be our endeavour to illustrate in the following pages.

Footnotes

[1]Abbey & Overton, *The English Church in the 18th Century*, 1887, p.3.
[2]Butler's *Works*, Vol. ii. Oxford, 1807.
[3]*The English Church in the 18th Century,* by C. J. Abbey and J. H. Overton, Longmans, &c., 1887, p.25. The moral and spiritual condition of the country and the state of the Church in the 18th Century, are exhaustively discussed in this valuable book. See also
A History of England in the 18th Century, by W. E. H. Lecky, Longmans,&c., Chapter viii.; and Curteis' *Rampton Lectures*, Macmillan & Co., 1890; Lecture vii.
[4]See Ryle's *Christian Leaders*, Chapter 1.
[5]Tyerman, Life of Wesley, i. 61, quoted in Curteis' *Bampton Lectures*, p. 343.
[6]Dr. Saunders was incumbent of Blockley, Worcester, and was admitted a corresponding member of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge in the Spring of 1709. That Dr. Saunders was conversant in the Welsh language, and took an interest in Welsh affairs. we find from the minutes of the S PCK under January 1, 1718-19, in which we have the following entry: "Upon reading a letter from Dr. Saunders, Blockley, Worcester; December 8, Ordered that Dr. Saunders be desired to signify, as soon as he can, some of the instances he mentions, of alterations made in the text of the new Welsh Bible."
[7]p.42.
[8]p.42.
[9]p.18.
[10]John Jones was in 1689 appointed to the Deanery of Bangor, where he continued till his death in 1727. We find from the minutes of the SPCK that he took a keen interest in the spread of religious education among the poor in the Diocese of Bangor. He contributed handsomely towards the funds of the above Society, and used his influence to procure books of devotion for the benefit of his monoglot countrymen. We also find from his will, dated March 10, 1719, that he left the sum of £50 each to seven parishes in the County of Anglesey, to be held in trust by their respective rectors, the interest of which was to be used to teach ten poor children in each parish, to read the Bible and the Prayer Book in the Welsh language, and to instruct them in the principles of the Christian religion according to the Catechism of the Church of England. He left a similar sum for similar purposes to two parishes in Merionethshire; and four sums of £100 each to be given among four parishes in the County of Carnarvon, the interest of which was to be used to teach twelve poor children in each parish to read Welsh perfectly, and to train them in the Church Catechism in Welsh, so that they might not only repeat it correctly, but also understand it by means of an intelligible and godly explanation; and that they may also be able to read the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer plainly; and, if possible, to instruct them to some extent in writing and arithmetic.
[11]*Gweithiau William Williams, Pantycelyn*. Cyf. ii., p.470. Newport, 1891.
[12]*Life of Howell Harris*, by H. T. Hughes, 1892. pp.178-181.
[13]History of Nonconformity in Wales, Dr. Thomas Rees, p.292, London, 1861.
[14]*History of Dissenters* in 4 vols. by. David Bogue and James Bennett, vol. II., pp.97-99.

[15]A Chapter in *English Church History,* S.P.C.K. London, 1888. p.iii.
[16]One of the earliest resolutions of the Society runs thus:— "Whereas the growth of vice and immorality is greatly owing to the gross ignorance of the principles of the Christian religion, we, whose names are underwritten, do agree to meet together once a week, or as often as we can conveniently, to consult how we may (with God's blessing) be able to propagate Christian knowledge by encouraging Charity Schools, distributing good books, and by such other lawful methods as shalt be thought fit. And in order thereto do subscribe to pay annually by quarterly payments the respective sums of money set down against our names in the first column underneath."

Chapter 3. Early Life and Labours.

Griffith Jones[1] was a native of the parish of Cilrhedyn, situated in the two counties of Pembroke and Carmarthen, and was born sometime in 1683, probably about the middle, or in the latter half of that year. Neither the names of his parents nor his birth-place are preserved. The late Vicar of Cilrhedyn, the Rev. J. B. Herbert, in a letter dated December 1, 1894, wrote that "it is certain that he was born in the Pembrokeshire portion of the parish; and local tradition has fixed upon two places as his birth-place, namely PlasIlwyni and Gilfachgam." His parents were of a respectable station in life, and were noted for their Christian piety. He was not, apparently, their only child, as he refers in his letters to a nephew of his, the Rev. David Jones, incumbent of LanIlwch, with whom he used to exchange duties, and whose Church Miss Bridget Vaughan, afterwards Madam Bevan, used to attend. It has been said that his parents were Nonconformists; but this is not mentioned in any of the earlier memoirs we have seen of him, unless, indeed, it is implied in the scurrilous pamphlet written against him by the Rev. John Evans, incumbent of Eglwys Gymmun, and published in 1752. This pamphlet is so full of falsehoods that no credit can be given to any of its statements or insinuations, which are unsupported by more trustworthy evidence. But whatever the religious persuasion of his parents may have been, to them belongs the honour of having given to the world a son whose influence for good is second to that of no one in the annals of his native Principality.

Our knowledge of his earlier years is scanty. We should have been glad to know more of the circumstances under which his early training was carried on, what means of grace he attended, what religious privileges he enjoyed. But we know that he was brought up under the wholesome influence of a religious home; that his spiritual welfare was the object of the care and solicitude of God-fearing parents. Family prayers, Bible reading and instruction, formed the atmosphere in which his youthful character grew and developed. His own experience of an early religious training, doubtless, made him so earnest in after-life, in pressing upon parents the duty of family devotions, and of bringing up those committed to their charge in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. There is no greater earthly privilege than to begin life under the influence of godly parents. It is a blessing, the reality of which grows in intensity with the growth of our years; and even after they are taken from us, their prayers, their godly conversation, the fragrance of their devotions, and the calm strength of their faith, seem to fill our life with a perpetual sense of their presence, restraining us when we are wayward, and stimulating us when we are slothful. How beautiful and how touching are the words of Tholuck to his departed mother: "Thy business on earth was to watch over and pray for us; and so faithfully and so fervently was it done, that the blessing of thine intercession is not yet exhausted, but like a dew from God, will drop upon us as long as we live."

The father of Griffith Jones died when he was young, and the care of bringing him up devolved upon a widowed mother. Thomas Charles, of Bala, in a sketch of his life, published in 1809,[2] concludes from letters which he had in his possession, that, in the earliest part of his ministry, Griffith Jones' conceptions of Gospel truths and of the plan of salvation were somewhat hazy. But this is not borne out by what is told us of him by his earlier biographers. As we have seen, his parents were noted for their piety; and it is stated of him that, during his school days, he was "of a very serious turn of mind," and that, while his school-fellows were engaged in "pleasures and pastimes," he would withdraw into solitude for meditation and prayer.

He proved early in life that he was possessed of a strong intellect, quickness of apprehension, a retentive memory, and an eager thirst for knowledge, the rudiments of which he acquired in a country school. His physical constitution was never robust, though he is said to have shaken off in his manhood some of the ailments from which he had suffered in his youth. Very early in his educational career, he evinced a strong desire to enter the Christian ministry, and with the view of preparing for that vocation, he was sent to the Grammar School at Carmarthen. This school was founded in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and was one of several educational institutions which were established at that period for the benefit of Welsh youths. At Carmarthen, he had the advantage of receiving instruction from an eminent classical scholar, under whom he attained "great proficiency in the Latin and Greek languages, and in other branches of learning." By means of these advantages, he qualified himself for the study of divinity, which became henceforth his favourite subject, and to the service of which he devoted the remainder of his life. He became acquainted with the works of the most eminent divines, both English and foreign. There are no records to tell us at what date he entered, or what time he spent at this school, but if he was ordained directly from it, as is not unlikely, he must have remained in it for a considerable number of years, for he did not receive. his deacon's orders till the 25th year of his age.

Griffith Jones received his deacon's orders on September 19, 1708, from the hands of Dr. George Bull, the learned Bishop of St. David's; and his priest's orders from the same prelate on the 25th of the same month in the following year, in the chapel of Abermarlais. Bishop Bull not only committed to him the sacred deposit of ministerial authority, but also gave him valuable "advices and cautions which were always recent in his mind," and which caused him ever after to retain the most vivid recollections of his ordination day, and the most profound respect for the bishop, whose writings were among his favourite studies.[3] It was a favourable moment for those "advices and cautions" to produce their due impression on a mind so tender, so receptive, and so well-prepared. He had been nurtured in a religious home, his thoughts from his youth up had been strongly inclined to the Christian ministry, and his education had been directed with the view of qualifying him for it.

And now, when he is about to undertake its responsibilities, at a time when his countrymen were steeped in ignorance and vice; while the majority of their pastors were asleep, his Father in God uses the great influence of his position, his learning, and his piety, to deepen his sense of the solemnity of the office to which he was called. And who knows but that the noble perseverance in well-doing which characterised him in after life, and his unwavering attachment to the Church under the cold treatment which he received from those in authority, and under the cruel calumnies of some of his brethren, were due to the fatherly counsel and caution, received at the most impressive moment of his life, from the great and good Bishop Bull? Be that as it may, it is certain that the influence of

those set over us, especially on the solemn day of ordination, is an important factor in making or marring the ministry of the Church.

It has been supposed that he was ordained to the Curacy of Cilrhedyn, and that he spent some of the first months of his ministerial life in that his native parish; but we have been unable to find any early authority for this. It is, however, certain that not long after his ordination, he became Curate of Laugharne, in the County of Carmarthen, where he remained till his appointment, in 1711, to the incumbency of Llandilo-Abercowyn, in the same County. To the scene of his labours, he brought no academical distinctions, not even a college degree; neither does it appear that he enjoyed the patronage of influential people. He had to rely for success upon his native talents, his devotion to duty, his trust in God, his lofty conception of the ministry, and the consecration of his gifts to its work, During his stay at Laugharne, he applied himself diligently to study, as well as to the practical work of the Church. His sermons were full of evangelical truth; his delivery was earnest and persuasive.

His ministry created a profound spiritual awakening in the parish, and his fame quickly spread throughout the surrounding district. In the inscription on the mural tablet erected to his memory in Llanddowror Church, it is recorded that “from his first admission into Holy Orders, he devoted himself wholly to the duties of his sacred calling, which he continued faithfully and conscientiously to discharge throughout the course of a long life.” This monument was erected, and the inscription was probably drawn up by the clever and accomplished Madam Bevan, who “received her first serious impressions”[4] under his sermons, attended his ministry more or less regularly till his death, carried on a constant correspondence with him on the greatest and weightiest subjects, supported and sustained him in the arduous labours of his life with her prayers, her influence, her counsel, and her means, shared his reproach, his anxieties, and his triumphs, and, in his last and lonesome days, afforded him shelter and comfort in her own home, where he died in 1761. Nobody, therefore,knew him better; nobody sympathised more profoundly with the aims and objects of his life; nobody appreciated more cordially his personal worth, or rejoiced more unfeignedly at the success which attended his efforts on behalf of the religious welfare of his countrymen.

In the year 1711, on the 31st of July, Griffith Jones was promoted to Llandilo-Abercowyn, in Carmarthenshire, a benefice which was, and is still, we believe, in private patronage. This may appear at first sight an early promotion, as he had been barely three years in Orders. But it was by no means a preferment to be coveted, as the population of the parish could not have been large, while the value of the living must have been very small, as the tithes, commuted at £60 in 1833, were not restored by Mr. Geers till the year 1720.[5] It may be observed that private patronage in this, as in other instances in those days, conferred lasting benefits on the Church in Wales. Both Llandilo and Llanddowror, to which Griffith Jones was preferred five years later, were in private patronage; and there is nothing to indicate that he was offered any other preferment during his eminently laborious and successful ministerial career of fifty-three years. Private patronage offered him advantages which were denied to the evangelical leaders that came after him, and carried on his work in the Principality. He was not only a beneficed clergyman, but his fame and success soon secured for him the patronage of powerful laymen, while they were only curates, wholly dependent for their position upon the goodwill of their ecclesiastical superiors. Daniel Rowland was curate to his brother, and afterwards to his own son; Howell Harris, who was only a layman, was refused ordination after repeated applications to the Bishop[6]; Peter Williams and Thomas Charles were ultimately unable to obtain curacies in Wales. Few things can be more pathetic than the insight which Charles

gives in his letters and diary into the mental and spiritual struggles he went through, when, on the one hand, he saw the most pressing necessity of awakening his countrymen from their spiritual apathy, and on the other, failed to obtain a curacy where he could be at liberty to preach the word in its fulness and power.[7] How he waited upon God! How he held back and hesitated before entering on irregular paths! How his heart burned within him for an opportunity to exercise his ministry in conformity with Church order and discipline! But he was branded as a Methodist; he was turned out of one curacy after another, and at last, was compelled, either to remain silent, or to fulfil his mission outside the Church. He chose the latter course to the incalculable loss of the Church, and it can hardly be denied that the principal share of the blame rests upon the authorities of the Church in those days.[8] It is interesting to note in this connection that David Griffith of Nevern, and David Jones of Llangan, both eminent leaders of the Evangelical movement in Wales in the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th, owed their Church preferments to lay patronage, the former to the Lord Chancellor, through the influence, it is said, of Mr. Bowen of Llwyngwair, and the latter to Lady Charlotte Eden, a friend of Lady Huntington.

Griffith Jones was offered work among the Indians in the Colonies, under the auspices of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, and it is said that he accepted the offer and began to qualify himself for the task. But we are not told when, or under what circumstances, the offer was made, nor have we any means of knowing the reason which led to the abandonment of his decision. It may be that his health was too precarious, or that the urgent needs of his countrymen constrained him to remain at home. In 1713, he was elected corresponding member of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, a high testimony to the esteem in which he was held, considering that he had only been five years in Orders. That Society, as we have already seen, began early to direct its attention to the spiritual and educational needs of the Principality, and numbered several Welshmen among its most active supporters. It will, we think, be interesting to our readers if we give here a few extracts from the Society's minutes, in order to show what it was doing at the time we are writing of to further the revival of religion and the reformation of manners among the Welsh people.

One of the most regular attendants at its meetings from its first foundation to his death in the early part of the year 1736, was Sir John Phillips, of Picton Castle, who was also an intimate and constant friend of Griffith Jones. Sir John was a member of the House of Commons, and is said to have introduced a Bill into Parliament “to naturalise foreign Protestants.”[9] He was formally elected member of the Society on the 5th April, 1699; he put his signature to the preamble, along with others, and paid his subscription of £5. His name is also mentioned as a subscriber of £10 under date of December 7 of the same year. Among the correspondence of the Society, November 29, 1699, we find a communication from Mr. Alfred Bowen to Sir John Phillips, informing him that “the clergy are zealous to promote reformation, and intend to unite very speedily,” and that “the gentry have begun to subscribe towards the design of the Schools.” Under date of December 21, we find the following resolution entered on the minutes of the Society: “Resolved that the thanks of this Society be given to Sir John Phillips for the noble and Christian example he has shown in refusing a challenge after the highest provocation imaginable, and that the Lord Guilford be pleased to acquaint him therewith.”

The challenge was offered, it appears, by Mr. Harcourt, clerk of the peace for Middlesex. Another influential member of the Society was Dr. John Evans, “auditor S.P.G. 1701,” as he is described in the notes to the Journal of the S.P.C.K.[10] He was interested in the Principality and knew Welsh, as we find that a resolution was passed on the 3rd of

December, “that Dr. Evans be desired to write to Mr. Richard Gunnis, in Wales, to acquaint him that the Society will entertain him as their clerk.” and another on the 24th of February, 1701, in which he was requested “to bring to the next meeting a list of such Welsh books as are proper to be sent to the correspondents in Wales,” and “to find out a fit person to translate into Welsh the following books and papers, *viz*.: ‘A persuasive towards the observation of the Lord's Day;’ ‘The Caution against Swearing;’ ‘The Caution against Drunkenness;’ ‘A Rebuke to Uncleanness.’”[11]

The names of other Correspondents and members of the Society interested in Wales, will come before us as we proceed to indicate briefly what means had been taken, up to 1713, to revive religion and disseminate religious knowledge in the Principality. In the transactions of the Society, we have a great deal that bears upon this question, illustrating both the spiritual needs of the people at the time, and the fact that there were clergy and laity in all parts of the country anxious to supply those needs. The contrary of this fact, namely that the clergy and laity of the Church in Wales in those times were almost universally indifferent and corrupt, has been maintained by most of those who have hitherto professed to give an account of the religious condition of the Principality in the eighteenth century. That there were glaring administrative abuses, and gross neglect of duty prevailing in the Church of those days we are prepared to admit; but that things were as bad as they are generally depicted is not borne out by facts. The following extracts, which could be considerably multiplied, speak for themselves, and show that many Churchmen were ready both to acknowledge that there was great need for reformation, and to use such means as they could to promote it. The Society made every effort to secure Correspondents in different parts of the country, to whom they communicated their readiness to assist in founding Charity Schools, disseminating religious publications, establishing lending libraries for the use of the Clergy, and in encouraging the formation of societies for mutual help and counsel.

In December, 1699, we find that Dr. Robert Wynne of Gresford, and Mr. John Price[12] of Wrexham, had communicated the letter of Dr. Evans to their respective local Societies, with the result that those assembled in Wrexham ‘rejoiced at the contents of it,’ and that the Clergy to whom Dr. Wynne communicated it, ‘were well pleased with the contents of it,’ their union being to the same excellent purpose, and that they had agreed upon two particulars: (1.) To bring an account of what practice each member observed in his parish contrary to the rubrics and canons; and (2.) that each person make a *notitia* of his parish. In the same month, communications are received by the Society (1.) from Mr. Robert Wynne, Rector of Llanddeiniolen, near Bangor, to the effect that ‘the Bishop of Bangor had given a strict charge to his Clergy to meet frequently,’ and had given them direction to that purpose. That the Clergy of each Deanery should unite; and (2.) from Dr. John Jones, Dean of Bangor, from Beaumaris, ‘that he has set up schools for the poorer sort at his own charge, but of late their poverty is so great that they cannot allow themselves time to learn; that he has made it his business to recommend Dr. Bray’s design, but taxes, want, and poverty is the constant answer; that there are very few deluded people in those parts, and that ignorance and unconcernedness are the reigning diseases.’ In the following January, Mr. John Davies of Bodelwyddan, writes ‘that the Clergy had met and agreed to the same articles with those at Wrexham; only deemed it proper to remove their monthly lectures from place to place to receive the Sacrament, and make a collection for the poor, and distribute the alms every meeting. The Circular[13] letter was communicated to all the Clergy there present.’ In February, Mr. James Harries of Llantrisant, Glamorganshire, informs the Society ‘that he hath put up two schools, and set up Catechetical lectures in his parish, and hopes his example will obtain through the whole country.’ Mr. Harries was a very zealous and active member of the Society, and his name

comes before us frequently in the Correspondence. Writing on March 1, 1699, he ‘signifies his earnest desires that the design may be successful, and promises to do what in him lies to forward it; says he will communicate the papers which shall be sent him by this Society to his brethren of Monmouthshire, &c., so soon as he shall receive them, that he has begun Catechetical lectures in the several chapels of his great parish, and hopes to carry them on, together with the schooling of poor children.’ In a communication dated June 21st, 1700, he writes ‘that the design of this Society was misrepresented by some officers of the Consistory Court of Llandaf, as a contrivance to render a Convocation useless, and to weaken the jurisdictions of the Episcopal Office, and particularly that of their Courts. That he hopes to set up a meeting of the Clergy every fortnight, that he will send to the Bishop for his leave,’ &c. Under date of June 12, 1701, he sends the following letter to the Society: ‘Recommends Mr. George Howells, a justice of peace, a and very zealous person, as a lay Correspondent with the Society. Says that Catechetical lectures are promoted in divers places. That the Psalms of David have been set to good tunes by some private hands, and able ministers have taught them to the people with great advantage That several of his parishioners who are above five miles distant from the Church, do neither frequent his nor any other assembly. That upon discourse with the most sensible of them, he finds a spice of of atheism or indifferency runs through the family, and has done so for some generations.’ Writing again on the 10th of August of the same year, he saysthat ‘John Arnold, Esq., a justice of peace in Monmouthshire, would be very zealous in promoting the business of reformation, if he had any of the Society’s papers relating to the suppression of vice and immorality; and if he was writ to, has promised to correspond with the Society. Complains that the great age and distance of their Diocesan is an hindrance to them in the carrying on their good designs, and that he has not exercised his episcopal function, especially in Ordination and Confirmation of children, for several years, which omission he wishes the Archbishop would please to supply.’

On February 16, 1699, Mr. John Edwards, from Llwydiarth, Montgomeryshire, writes ‘that Dr. Wynne, the Chancellor, approves of the design, that the Rural Dean of Pola had summoned his Clergy by a Circular letter, that they had met and resolved on particulars conformable to their brethren at Wrexham, too tedious here to insert; that they intend to hold their meetings at two market towns alternately, that in the whole Deanery there is but one Free School endowed for poor children to learn to read, &c.; complains of the great number of the poor, and how difficult it will be to raise a fund for their education; gives a great character of Mr. Vaughan of Llwydiarth, a gentleman with whom he dwells; obliges his Curate to teach the youth of the parish where he resides not; and in his other parish he has made some advances towards settling a Free School, which will be opened after Easter; desires every clergyman in his neighbourhood may have the printed account of the Society and the Bedfordshire letter; saith that it is not difficult to put in practice the design of reformation in those parts, the Bishop of the Diocese being the general patron; desires Dr. Evans to write to the Rural Deans to forward the work.’

Mr. Arnold Bowen of Llangan, Pembrokeshire, writing March 4, 1699, ‘Saith he had communicated the second Circular letter of this Society to the Clergy at their monthly lecture, February 29th past, in the town and county of Haverfordwest; when the clergy then present, eight or nine in number, formed themselves into a society, seven of whom subscribed an obligation in this letter recited, that some scruple the design for want of the mandate of their diocesan, who, he saith, hath rather discouraged piety, &c., by ridiculing their monthly lectures, &c.; that they have drawn up a scheme for taking subscriptions for Schools, whereunto most of the justices subscribed at their Quarter Sessions, and that the roll were sent into the several parishes; and hopes that Schools may be erected in the

most convenient places of the county, and that Sir John Phillips' presence is much wanting to promote it; doubts not of success, if the next Diocesan patronises these designs.'

Mr. Thomas Thomas of Carmarthen, writing July 20th, 1700, says 'That the Magistrates of the County had, pursuant to an instrument signed in Quarter Sessions, put the laws in execution against profaneness, &c. and wrought a visible reformation in the country. They obliged likewise the officers and some of the chief inhabitants in every parish to give informations, and got them to sign an instrument to that purpose. That the Clergy in that County are associated, have distributed many good books, and revived catechising. Suggests that a method of setting up a small school in every parish should be proposed to the gentry.' Writing again on May 19, 1701, he says that 'there is but one Society of the Clergy consisting of 11 persons; no libraries; few monthly Sacraments; no Papists; and but few Quakers. There are some Societies for reformation of manners which have been so successful that drunkenness, swearing, profanation of the Lord's Day, &c., are generally suppressed, and the state of religion very much mended; no discouragements but the want of a good Bishop which he heartily prays for,' &c.

Mr. Lloyd of Allt y Cadno, a lay Correspondent of the Society from Carmarthenshire, writes on August 1, 1700, That the Clergy and members of his Society are much encouraged by their correspondence with this Society…. That some of the prime Clergy are cautious about associating; he supposes they delay it till the Bishop is appointed. That some cavil at the word association, and that has retarded several gentlemen. That they are so dispersed that they have few meetings unless accidentally, and some promise to do their duty without entering into any Society, and those that have entered themselves do meet once a month or six weeks. That the proceedings of the Quarter Sessions hath had a visible effect on the gentry. That the design of Schools is most likely to take effect, when the manners of the people are reformed, which they are now endeavouring.'

Mr. William Younge, another lay Correspondent from Wrexham, writing November 8, 1700, and 'speaking of the corruptions of the age and their remedies, saith discipline must be restored, catechising seriously applied to, and the magistrate be vigorous and resolved in punishing vice. That in Wales there is great want of Schools, and that in Wrexham some gentlemen have promised to assist with their purses and hopes others will follow the example.'

Mr. John Price of Wrexham, in a communication dated October 4, 1701, 'says that he has made strict inquiry after Boreman (a fellow that imposed on the Lord Bishop of London and Dr. Bray, being a concealed Papist, in the business of the Protestant Missions into North America), but cannot yet hear of him. That as to their Society, they find the gentry hearty and zealous enough in the matter of Schools; that he has one School set up already in his parish, and a promise of subscriptions for more when they can have fit persons to undertake the work, for that at present they are in great want of persons thoroughly qualified for so good and necessary an employment.'

The entries in the Society's minutes referring to Wales become fewer and shorter as we go on, but none the less instructive. We can only afford to give a few more examples in this chapter. They relate for the most part to the establishment of Parochial Schools, the publication and distribution of books, and the establishment of clerical libraries in each of the four Welsh Dioceses, a project which enjoyed the approval of the Welsh Bishops. Liberal contributions towards these libraries were received from England, as was the case in later years, when funds were collected towards several editions of the Welsh Bible.

Under date of May 27, 1708, the following minute is recorded: ‘Another [letter] from Mr. Pember of Prendergast, who writes that Sir John Phillips has ordered Schools to be set up at Maenclochog and Penally, in Pembrokeshire, besides those mentioned in his former letters; and that Mr. Laugharne pays for the teaching of ten poor children of the parish of St. Bride, and of six children in the parish of Marloes, and buys books for them; also that twenty-four children are now taught at Llanychaer, the master's salary amounting to £8 15 0 per annum.’

Under December 12th, 1708, Mr. J. Harries ‘thanks the Society for the packet he has received; that he is sorry the Welsh Prayer Book is so incorrect; that the Bishop of Hereford was moved by it, and is now printing a very correct edition which will be on better paper, with a better letter, in octavo at about eighteen pence (?) value; that a School of about thirty boys was set up in that town, and taught in the method recommended by the Society.’

December 19, 1409, William Lewis at Towynn , Merionethshire, ‘thanks the Society for the packet he had received; that he had dispersed the packet of last year to such good effect that a Charity School of 15 children taught to read and write is set up at Towyn upon a subscription of £5 12 0 per annum.’

November, 1710, ‘John Vaughan, Esqre., of Dellys, earnestly recommends it to the Society to make application to the present Bishop of St. David’s to publish the late Bishop’s (i.e. Dr. Bull’s) intended circular letter, with such alterations as he should think fit. He desires to know whether the Society had ordered an advertisement relating to the Young Christian’s Library. That two eminent divines in that County desire to be corresponding members of the Society, *viz*., Mr. David Havard, Vicar of Abergwili, and Mr Floyer, Vicar of Llandilo; that one Mr. Evans, a Dissenting minister, did teach twelve poor children in Carmarthen, and since there is exception taken at the mention of it, in the account of the Schools, Mr. Meyrick’s School of 20 boys “clothed” may be inserted in the room thereof. That he should be glad to see a tract composed to excite the Clergy to read prayers with greater devotion and deliberation.’

In the same year Mr. Thomas Owen, Oswestry, informs the Society that there were in the Bluecoat School at that town thirty poor children, taught by a mistress, the boys to read and say their catechism, and Lewis’ explanation upon it, by heart for 7/6, and another teaches [them] to write and cast accounts for 2/6, The girls are taught to read, say their catechism, knit, sew, and spin for 10/- each. That the subscriptions and offertory amount to about £18 per annum.

Lending Libraries, chiefly for the use of the Clergy, as already mentioned, were established in the four Welsh Dioceses at this time, through the generosity of the Society and its supporters. Among its minutes for the year 1709, the following entries occur: ‘Bangor Lending Library sent to Chester to be forwarded to Bangor. Valued at £60 5s. 2d.’ ‘Lending Libraries prepared by order of the Society. One sent to Cowbridge, diocese of Llandaf, valued at £66 12s 0d. One ready to be sent to the city of St. Asaph, valued at £66 3s 8d.’ The above extracts give us an idea of what was done during the first twelve years of its history by the Society and the local organisations it called forth, for the revival of religion and the dissemination of religious knowledge in the Principality. It illustrates the fact that, even at that time, there were earnest men in the country, who felt and recognised the need of a reformation, and were ready to employ all the means in their power to promote it. The work was taken up by representatives of all classes. The Clergy

met together for mutual counsel and encouragement; the magistrates used their influence, and rich people gave their money; Charity Schools were put up for the education of the poor, and wholesome literature was supplied by the Society for distribution. The organisation had already spread over a great part of Wales, when Griffith Jones was admitted by the Society as one of its corresponding members in 1713. He was singularly fortunate in being surrounded by influential neighbours, who were in thorough sympathy with the movement. Sir John Phillips, and his son, Mr. Thomas Phillips, vicar of Laugharne, Mr. John Vaughan, of Derllys,[14] Mr. Arnold Bowen, Mr.Lloyd, Allt y Cadno, and Mr. Thomas, vicar of Carmarthen, were all corresponding members of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. Griffith Jones was promoted to the Rectory of Llanddowror in 1716, by Sir John Phillips of Picton Castle, "entirely," we are informed by his earliest biographer, "on account of his learning and piety, without solicitations from Mr. Jones himself, or any of his friends."[15] Sir John Phillips had already proved himself an earnest Churchman, anxious for the spiritual welfare of his countrymen, and had ample opportunities of knowing the merits of Griffith Jones, who apparently had been curate to his son, the Rev. Thomas Phillips, for two or three years at Laugharne. He was married to Sir John's half sister; but we have been unable to ascertain the date of his marriage, or, indeed, but very little that is definite concerning his married life. His wife died on the 5th of January, 1755, at the advanced age of 80, while his own death occurred on the 8th of April, 1761, at the age of 78. She was, therefore, about eight years his senior. We have no means of knowing anything of her character or disposition; but it is natural to conclude that she shared the views of her brother and her husband, It appears from a few passages of the latter's letters to Madam Bevan, that Mrs. Jones was always in delicate health. In a letter dated October 2, 1736, he says that his "poor wife complains much of her usual pain;" and in another dated December 5, 1737, he writes that she "has been extremely bad with a cough, which, with a fit of scolding, reconciled her to take some medicine, and she is much the better for it."

Few details appear to have been preserved to us respecting his life and work at Llanddowror between 1716 and 1732. His name occurs a few times only during those years in the minutes of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. His Correspondence with Madam Bevan, or what has been preserved of it, begins in the year 1732, and the first published annual account of his Circulating Schools appeared in 1738. We are therefore left mostly to conjecture as to what occupied his attention during those years. But we may be sure that he was diligent and faithful in the discharge of his parochial duties, and a useful member of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge in its generous efforts to benefit his countrymen. And we may further reasonably surmise that he utilised this period in studying theology, and in accumulating that great store of knowledge which his subsequent writings so abundantly proved that he possessed. Both his letters and his publications give evidence of his wide acquaintance with the writings of eminent divines, and of his skill and power in the exposition of Gospel truth, both in its doctrinal and practical aspects. For every reformer that must succeed, there must be a period of preparation; and we doubt not but that it was the diligent use which Griffith Jones made of the first twenty years of his ministerial life, which enabled him to bring through the press so many valuable books and pamphlets in later years, when his hands were so full of the work of organising and controlling the vast and complicated machinery of the Circulating Schools. We only know of one literary work that he brought through the press at this time, namely, an abbreviated and compressed translation of *The Whole Duty of Man*, "for the benefit of the poor," &c., which was published at Shrewsbury in 1722.[16] Of his labours as a Correspondent of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge during these years, the minutes of the Society bear some witness. Under date of July 23, 1712, it is stated that "he undertake to print it [for] was five shillings each copy in quires

(subsequently reduced to four shillings and sixpence), or six shillings bound in calf." The Society renewed their order to Mr. Treasurer, "to subscribe for 100 copies in quires on the terms of the proposal, the advance money to be paid when the first sheet is printed off." This was the first edition of the Welsh Bible printed under the auspices of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. It was brought out under the care of the Rev. Moses Williams, at that time Vicar of Llanwenog, in Cardiganshire, "a gentleman of good literature, who well understood the British and the learned languages."[17] We do not know the number of copies printed on this occasion; but the edition was soon exhausted, as another was printed in 1727. Besides the Bible and the Prayer Book, other religious publications were issued at this time by the Society for the benefit of Wales. We find the Committee ordering the purchase of two thousand copies of a translation of Dr. Gibson's *Family Devotions* at £10 15s 0d. They also distributed the *Husbandman's Manual*, the *Book of Homilies*, and *Companion to the Altar*, which had been translated into Welsh; and it is interesting to note that they entertained at this time the proposal of translating into English Vicar Prichard's Welsh Poems. Under date of January 24, 1724, it was recorded that Mr. Moses Williams had promised to recommend the translating of Mr. Prichard's Welsh Poems to the Rev. Mr. Morgan, Curate of Matchin, in Essex.[18] A suggestion was made at the same meeting by the Bishop of St. David's, "whether it would not be proper for the Society to take measures for encouraging a new impression of those Hymns in Welsh for the use of the people in Wales, they being now out of print, or very scarce." This was referred to a Committee. At a subsequent meeting, specimens of Mr. Morgan's translation were submitted, and highly approved of; while the Bishop of St. David's reported that the Bishops of St. Asaph and Bangor were willing to promote a new (Welsh) edition of Vicar Prichard's Poems. The minutes of the Society supply us also with evidence which shows that schools for the poor were established wherever it was found possible, and we find that their promoters had occasionally to clothe some of the children who attended them.

It was principally the colossal work which he accomplished in connection with this branch of the Society's operations that rendered the name of Griffith Jones famous for all time. For it must not be forgotten that he looked upon his Welsh Circulating Schools as part of the Society's work in Wales. In his third Letter to a Friend, dated October 11, 1739, he says that the design of his Schools "is formed to serve no other end but the honour of God, the advancement of our holy religion, and the spiritual welfare of our poor fellow-creatures through their and our common Lord and Saviour, and [they are] carried on as part of the laudable, but more extensive, labours of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge." To his work in connection with these Schools we shall now direct our attention.

Footnotes

[1]"The Reverend Mr. Griffith Jones (the worthy, pious, charitable, and faithful rector of this parish for 45 years, minister of Llandilo-Abercowin for 50 years) was buried April 11th. N.B. He was christened at Cilrhedyn Church, May-Day, 1684; ordained deacon September 19th; 1708. Ordained priest September 25th, 1709. Preferred to Llandilo, July 3rd, 1711. Preferred to Llanddowror July 27th, 1716. Died April 8th, 1761. Aged 77." Such is the entry made in the Burial Register of Llanddowror Church, and kindly copied by the Rev. Thomas Jones, B.A., the present rector of the parish.

[2]*Trysorfa Ysprydol*, vol. ii.

[3]The only direct reference to Bishop Bull in the writings of Griffith Jones we have found is a passage in a letter dated January 6, 1733.

[4]*Christian Guardian*, Sept. 1809, p.334.

[5]*Diocesan History of St. David's* by Archdeacon Bevan, p.236.

[6]"Howell Harries is also stated to have been refused ordination altogether, after two applications; it is singular that he should omit all reference to such an important fact in his 'Autobiography,' and that we should learn it second-hand from Whitfield's Journal. — "*Diocesan History of St. David's*," by the Venerable Archdeacon Bevan 1888, p.218. It is scarcely possible that Archdeacon Bevan could have read Howell Harris' 'Autobiography,' when he penned the above sentence. There is more than a "reference to such an important fact" in the 'Autobiography,' of which we have two editions before us as we write, published respectively in 1793 and in 1838. On page 41 of the former, and on page 32 of the latter, we find these words: "After my release [at Monmouth], I was more confirmed in my mind that my mission was of God; especially since I had so many times asked to be ordained, and had been refused; and without their having any other reason against me, than that I was going about preaching without Holy Orders." See also *A Library of Christian Biography*, 1840, vol. xii., p.135; Sir Thomas Phillips' *Wales*, 1849, p.121; *Harris' Life and Times* by Morgan, 1852, p.40.

[7]See Morgan's *Life of Charles*, 1831, pp.212, 229, 230.

[8]Mr. Charles, whilst curate of Llanymawddwy, about the year 1783, set himself to "put down some bad practices that prevailed in that parish, and began to renew the old custom of Catechising; but being looked upon as an innovator, he was complained of by his parishioners to their non-resident Rector, and by him dismissed the curacy. Being suspected of Methodism, at that time very unpopular in those parts, he was unable to obtain any other curacy; and finding himself at length precluded from all hopes of preferment, and almost all opportunity of usefulness in the Church, he yielded to the solicitations of the Methodists, and joined that body, though in heart, he still clung to the Church, as he shewed by his practice in regard to Baptism and the Lord's Supper. On a similar suspicion of favouring Methodism, Mr. Simon Lloyd, after serving many curacies, was refused institution by Bishop Horseley to the Cure of Llanuwchllyn, to which he had been presented by the patron in 1803; and he too joined the Methodists. The exclusion of these two men in this Diocese, like that of Peter Williams, the eminent Bible commentator, in St. David's, was a serious blow and injury to the Church." – *History of the Diocese of St. Asaph*, by the Venerable Archdeacon Thomas, 1874, p.144.

[9]*A Chapter in English Church History*, p.2.

[10]Chapter in English Church History, p.2.

[11]Thee following is the list submitted: 1. Bishop Jewel's Apology. 2. Dent's Plain Way to Heaven. 3. Practice of Piety. 5. Archbishop Usher's Method of Self-examination. 6. A Discourse to the same purpose, originally in Welsh, by Mr. Owen, then sequestered Vicar of Wrexham. 7. Brough's Devotion. 8. Quadriga Salutis, by Dr. Powel, originally in Welsh, and translated by him into English. 9. Whole Duty of Man. 10. Baxter's Call to the Unconverted. 11. Mr. Gouge's Book. 12. Shepherd's Sincere Convert. 13. Several Small Tracts by Morgan Lloyd, originally in Welsh. 14. Hanes y Ffydd, originally in Welsh. 15. Bishop Griffyth on the Lord's Prayer and on the Creed, originally in Welsh. 16. Bishop Kenn on the Catechism. 17. Oxford Catechism. 18. Bishop Williams' Catechism. 19. Plain Man's Way to Practise and Worship. 20. A Dialogue between a Protestant and a Papist. 21. Christian Monitor. 22. Dr. Sherlock on Death. 23. Bishop Prideaux's Euchologion. 24. Vicar Prichard's Poems. 25. Answer to the Excuses for not coming to the Sacrament. 26. Foulk Owen's Collection of Religious Poems. 27. Thos. Jones' Collection of Religious Poems. 28. Familiar Guide. 29. Help to Beginners. 30. Ashton's Method of Daily Devotion. 31. Pastoral Letter. 32. Dr. Beveridge's Sermon. 33. The Best Companion. 34. A Discourse of Prayer, originally in Welsh. 35. Bishop Taylor's Holy Living. 36. Christian Guide. 37. The Best Guide. *A Chapter in English Church History*, p.117.

[12]Writing on February 18th, 1700, Mr. Price informs the Society "That the Clergy in Denbighshire and Flintshire have associated according to the Bedfordshire model; that they resolved to rectify what was amiss in themselves with respect to the rubrics and canons. To send for a considerable number of small books."

[13]Two Circular letters had, up to this time, been issued by theSociety, in both of which its aims are fully set forth. They are printed on pp.36 and 53 of *A Chapter in English Church History*, being Minutes and Correspondence of the S.P.C.K. for the years 1698-1704, from which our quotations for those years are derived.

[14]Prefixed to an edition of Vicar Prichard's *Canwyll y Cymry*, published in 1714, by Thomas Durston, Shrewsbury, and signed John Rhydderch, is "an address to the Rev. and Hon. John Vaughan, Derllys, Carmarthenshire, thanking him for having helped forward the production of the book, and also of the *Dwyfolder Gymmunol*, appended to it." See "Vicar Pritchard," by Mr. John Ballinger, *Y Cymmrodor,* xiii, 1899, p.21. The "*Rev*." Is probably a mistake, or there may have been two of the same name, father and son, one a clergyman, and Tahoe other a layman.

[15]*Sketch of his Life and Character*, 1762, p.5.

[16]See *Llyfryddiaeth y Cymry*, p.331.

[17]See Dr. Llewelyn's *Versions and Editions of the Welsh Bible*, 1768, p.57.

[18]The following note in manuscript is attached to a copy of the 1745 edition of Mr. Morgan's translation of Bishop Green's Meditation, &c.: "John Morgan, M. A., was a native of Llanfyllin, Diocese of St. Asaph, Co. Montgomery. Having been curate of this parish, he published in Welsh a translation of Bishop Green's *Meditations on Death, Judgment, Heaven, and Hell*, for the use and benefit of his former parishioners in 1714, being at that time vicar of Matchin, Co. Essex. He died there 27th February, 1732. He made the gravel walk and planted the yew tree, now, in 1835, flourishing in Matchin Churchyard. H.W.E." It appears from *Llyfryddiaeth y Cymry*, p.281, that the first Welsh edition of Bishop Green's little work was issued in 1707. We do not know what became of Mr. Morgan's translation of Vicar Prichard's Poems, of which the only English version we know of is the one made by the Rev. W. Evans, Vicar of Llawhaden, and published in 1771.

Chapter 4. The Welsh Circulating Schools.

"Ignorance is the mother and nurse of impiety," wrote Griffith Jones in one of his powerful letters "to a Friend," in which he explains the needs, the methods and the objects of his Schools. Wales had lapsed into the most profound ignorance during the latter half of the seventeenth century, and ignorance had brought in its train the usual deplorable consequences to morals and religion. That a better state of things, at least with regard to the education of the people, existed in Wales in the latter part of the sixteenth century, and the earlier part of the seventeenth, we know from trustworthy witnesses. To cite only one, Humphrey Llwyd, an eminent Welsh antiquarian, wrote in 1568, that:

"Of late, however, the [Welsh people] are applying themselves to settle in towns, learn mechanics, engage in commerce, cultivate the soil very successfully, and undertake all other public duties equally with Englishmen, and even surpassing them in this matter, that no Welshman is so poor but that he sends his children to school to be educated for some length of time, while he sends those who make good progress in their studies to the Universities, compelling them to apply themselves principally to the study of law. Hence it is that the majority of those who follow the legal and the ministerial professions in this realm are Welshmen. And few you will find among the common people who cannot read and write their own language, and play on the harp after their manner."[1]

All historians agree in testifying that among the special characteristics of the Welsh people are their thirst for knowledge, and their aptitude for learning. And this testimony is amply confirmed by the history of Griffith Jones' Circulating Schools, as will be seen when we come to deal with their progress and results.

The causes that moved him to establish and to extend these Schools were the ignorance and the irreligion of his countrymen, and the sense of his own responsibility. In the first of his *Letters to a Friend*, dated March 30, 1738, while referring to the great importance of Catechising, he proceeds:

"In this way, Sir, it came to be discovered here, how deplorably ignorant the poor people are who cannot read, even where constant preaching is not wanting, while catechising is omitted. This melancholy discovery of the brutish, gross, and general ignorance in things pertaining to salvation, gave great thoughts of heart, and painful concern; the case being the same, if not worse, in most other places as here, and difficulties being found in teaching knowledge to those who cannot read, after many years' practice of the above

method, it occurred at length to wish for rather [than] any hopeful prospect to set up, Welsh Charity Schools."

In the second of these letters he writes thus:

"The work is great, and requires the joint endeavours of many, according to their several capacities. It cannot be innocently omitted by any. The necessity of doing all that can be [done] is very urgent and pressing; for it must be done, or multitudes of precious souls will be undone for want of it; which I wish may not only stir up many to join you in all the branches of your laudable employments this way, but excite all serious men to engage their most importunate prayers for the success of it; and may divine grace awaken the gratitude of those who receive the benefit thereof to praise the Lord.

"I have next a disagreeable, and perhaps an insuperable task, to let you know, Sir, how void of that necessary Christian knowledge the generality of all people are in this country. A melancholy consideration! I cannot dwell long upon it. It is incredible to all (who do not frequently and thoroughly examine the people, to know by experience) how little it is that prodigious numbers know of the essential doctrines and necessary duties of religion; and therefore wretchedly depraved and vicious; having hardly any better account to give of God and His perfections, of Christ and His Gospel, of the terms of Salvation, or of their own spiritual state, and of the duties they owe to God and man, than if they had not been born in a Christian country. And indeed, how can they know these things, except one teach them? It is but few, very few in comparison, that could escape this deplorable ignorance, when the parents cannot teach the children, and have not wherewith to give them any schooling; and therefore in many parts here (as I informed you, Sir, some time before, few can say the Creed and the Lord's Prayer, and others say them so corruptly as scarce to be understood, not knowing a letter in a book of their own, or any other language. A worthy correspondent wrote me word lately, that a large parish in his neighbourhood, where he desired a Welsh School, had not twelve people in it who could read the Word of God in any language; which shows that some method to redress this grievance is no less necessary here (but I hope from the favourable disposition of the poor towards the present attempt of the Welsh Charity Schools is likely to be more successful) than in either of the Indies. But we are to pray 'that God may encourage and prosper all means of grace and knowledge everywhere.'"

The means of Education in Wales at this time were, of course, very inadequate. There were about twenty-five or thirty Grammar Schools which had been established at various dates from the thirteenth century downwards. To most of these schools, a number of boys were admitted practically free of charge, and by means of the education received at them, many Welsh lads had risen from time to time to positions of eminence and trust. It is, however, very probable that the general decay and depression of the times had affected them injuriously, and had caused them to fall into a state of comparative inefficiency. But besides these old Grammar Schools, other schools more elementary and accessible to the people had, in 1675, been established in fifty-one of the principal towns of Wales, by Mr. Thomas Gouge, assisted by Dr. Tillotson,[2] afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, and other friends of Wales. An aggregate of about a thousand children attended these schools, in which instruction was given in the English language.

These endeavours stimulated other Welsh towns to make similar provisions for elementary education. It is to this movement that Sir Thomas Phillips refers in his excellent work on Wales, when he says that "it was in Wales that a systematic attempt was first made to provide schools for the poor by the voluntary subscriptions of

individuals."[3] It should also be mentioned that the Society formed by Mr. Gouge and his associates, had for its object, besides the education of children, the circulation "of the Holy Scriptures, the Book of Common Prayer, and other good books in the Welsh language."[4]

"The following engagement was entered into by the Associated Members: Whereas there are 2000 copies of a treatise called the *Practice of Piety*, formerly translated into Welsh, as also some thousands of other licensed Welsh Works, and of our *Church Catechism*, and a *Practical Exposition*, now printing, the buying of which to be freely given to poor families in Wales, would be a singular work of charity, leading to the good of many hundreds who otherwise might be destitute of the means of knowledge; and in regard that few poor children are there brought up to reading, it would be another good work of charity to raise and maintain several Schools for teaching the poorest of Welsh children to read English, and the boys to write and cast accounts, whereby they will be enabled to read our English Bibles and treatises, to be more serviceable to the country, and to live more comfortable in the world; we, therefore, whose names are under-written, do promise to contribute, during our pleasure, towards the printing and buying the fore-mentioned treatises, as also towards the teaching of poor Welsh children to read English, to write, and cast accounts, in such towns where Schools are not already created by the charity of others; provided that this charitable and pious work be ordered and managed by Dr. Tillotson, Dean of Canterbury, and the rest whose names are under-written: John Tillotson, Benjamin Whichcote, Simon Ford, Wm. Bates, Wm. Outram, Simon Patrick, Wm. Durham, Ed. Stillingfleet, John Meriton, Hezeciah Burton, Richard Baxter, Thos. Gouge, Matthew Poole, Ed. Fowler, Wm. Turner, Rich. Newman, James Reading, Thos. Griffith, John Short, Wm. Gape, Thos. Firmin."[5]

These efforts, though very inadequate, were not quite so insignificant as they appear at first sight, when we bear in mind that the population of Wales at that time could not have much exceeded four hundred thousand. We have no means of knowing what number of the schools established by Mr. Gouge and his friends were in existence when Griffith Jones commenced his Circulating Schools; but it is not improbable that some – perhaps many – of them had fallen into disuse. Serious efforts had also been made to bring education within reach of the children of the poor by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, which, as we have seen, commenced its labours in 1698, and embraced among its purposes the erection of Catechetical Schools wherever it was found possible. This work of the Society was prosecuted with vigour. In the first circular letter issued to their Correspondents by the Committee, in less than a year after its establishment, they state that "the success of this undertaking (whereby the education of above two thousand poor children is already taken care for) encourages them to hope that, if the like industry and application were observed in the other parts of this Kingdom, the children and youth might be universally well principled, and the growing generation make a conscience of fearing God."[6] During the early years of the Society, we find in its minutes frequent mention of these schools; but after the year 1720 or so, reference to them is very seldom found, not, we believe, because the work of establishing and maintaining these schools became in any way arrested, but because the Society had to turn its attention to other needs, such as the publication of Bibles, Prayer Books, and religious books, the demand for which was created by the Charity Schools. Two schools were set up in Llantrisant, Glamorganshire, in 1699; another was set up in the Rural Deanery of Welshpool in the same year; and another in Wrexham in 1701, as we have seen.

Under date of October 9, 1708, we find that Mr. Edmund Meyrick had "given two houses in that town (Carmarthen?) for the use of a Schoolmaster, and the public library for ever,

and endowed the school with £22 per annum during his life." Under February 17, 1709, it is recorded that Mr. Thomas Lloyd of Rhosycrowther, in Pembrokeshire, reports that the school at Pembroke had decreased from seventeen to eight children, and that a school was set up in another place by a worthy gentleman, and was maintained by him. A school was set up in Towyn, Merionethshire, in 1709, and another in Oswestry in 1710.

We conclude from these extracts that a considerable number of Charity Schools, in connection with the movement initiated by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, must have been established in Wales at the time when Griffith Jones commenced his great work. But his Welsh Circulating Schools were different in several respects from these. These were conducted in English,[7] his in Welsh; these were designed for children, his for men and women of all ages, as well as for children; these were parochial and permanent, his were circulating. He derived much help and encouragement from the Society and its great labours, but he worked on a somewhat different plan. He had the advantage of living, as we have seen, within easy reach of several of the most influential members of the Society, and in a neighbourhood where it carried on some of its earliest and most successful operations in Wales.

Under the date of June 15, 1710, it is recorded that Sir John Phillips informs the Committee that a friend of his in Carmarthenshire intended to put forty guineas out at interest, the profit of which he designs to apply to support a Charity School in the Parish of Llanddowror, in the same county. This was six years before Griffith Jones was appointed rector of that parish, and three years before he became a Correspondent of the Society. It was probably this School which, under the fostering care of Griffith Jones, grew subsequently into an institution for training masters for the Welsh Circulating Schools, and even for preparing Candidates for the Ministry.

The origin of these Schools, and the causes which led to their establishment, as well as their aim, and the method of conducting them, are abundantly and repeatedly explained by Griffith Jones himself. In a letter dated March 10, 1738, from which we have already quoted, he writes:

"The occasion which (through the grace of God) led gradually to the thought of them, was a catechising exercise after the second lesson in Divine Service upon Saturdays before Sacrament Sundays, when several adult people, as well as the children (particularly such as desired to partake of that blessed ordinance) were examined, not only in the Catechism, but also in a system of divinity, and discoursed with in an easy, familiar, and very serious way, about every answer they made, explaining it clearly to their understanding, and strongly applying [it] to their con- sciences. But the greatest part of those who most wanted such kind of instruction, and the application of it, stood off; being old in ignorance, they were ashamed to be thus taught and catechised publicly; while many others, after a proper and friendly way of dealing with them about it, submitted to the method willingly, and at length would not be content without it. In compassion to the poor (yet precious) souls of others, public notice was given in Church on Sunday to summon them, I mean all the poor people, to come thither, at the same time with the rest, to receive a dole of bread provided for them with part of the money the communicants gave at the Sacrament. Being come together and placed orderly in a row to receive the bread, a few plain and easy questions were asked them, with great tenderness and caution not to puzzle or give them cause to blush, having instructed and made private interest with the best disposed of them beforehand to lead on and encourage the others. This being repeated once a month, the number of the elderly Catechumens increased, and all came willingly, giving opportunity to proceed from easier to harder questions, and

by degrees to teach them in all knowledge needful to Salvation, and cheerfully learning by heart two or three verses out of the Holy Scriptures, such as would be given them to be repeated at next catechising. This was designed to fix better in their memories the doctrines and duties such texts of Scripture contained in them; and it pleased God to give such a blessing, that they all improved much, and many of them became visibly conscientious in a good conversation and all religious duties…. The first attempt [to set up Welsh Charity Schools] was tried about seven or eight years ago, with no other fund to defray the expense of it than what could be spared from other occasions out of a small offertory by a poor country congregation at the blessed Sacrament, which being laid out first to erect one, and then a little time afterwards two Welsh Schools, answered so well that this gave encouragement to attempt setting up a few more; and Divine Providence was not wanting to bring in benefactions to support them. It pleased God to increase their success and number all along to this time, insomuch that, this last winter and the present spring, the number of these Schools has amounted to seven and thirty, several of them having two, and some three masters, who are obliged to keep a methodical list of the names, places of abode, ages, quality, calling and condition in the world, dispositions and manners, progress in learning, &c., of all the men, women and children that are taught by them…. By the best calculation on a transient view, the number taught in these Schools, within the counties of Carmarthen, Pembroke, Brecon, and Cardigan, since last September (inclusive of such as are now learning), makes at at least two thousand four hundred. Very few of these could say so much as the Lord's Prayer when they came first to School, and many of them could, in six or eight weeks' time, not only read tolerably, but repeat by heart all the Church Catechism in their native Welsh language, and make pretty good answers to plain and familiar questions concerning all the necessary points of faith and practice in a system of divinity, which the masters are to instruct them in for some hours every day, about the time of morning and evening prayer."

It should be remembered that the ultimate aim of these Schools was the revival of true religion in the land. Griffith Jones always selected his instruments and adapted his means with this purpose in view. As ignorance is the "mother and nurse" of vice and corruption, so true knowledge is the mother of virtue and godliness. These are the principles upon which he worked throughout his life. He was persuaded, with the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, from which he largely derived his ideas and his resources, "that the growth of vice and debauchery is greatly owing to the gross ignorance of the principles of the Christian religion," and that the careful instruction of the people in those principles was the primary and principal remedy for the diseases and disorders that afflicted society.

In the early part of the year 1736, Griffith Jones sustained a heavy loss in the death of his friend and patron, Sir John Phillips, who had been his principal supporter in his great undertaking. Referring to that event in a letter to Madam Bevan, he writes:

"Although I much desire to express my utmost gratitude for the very obliging letter of Monday, yet the first account in it of Sir John Phillips' departure from us, and leaving the work he was engaged in, whose zeal and management was so necessary towards the success of it, gives me so great a concern, if not an insuperable grief, that I can write but little. A sore breach this! We may justly say a great man is fallen in our Israel, a great and general loss to all the world! Both the Indies will feel it. Thee persecuted servants of Christ, when they fly to England for refuge, will be distressed to hear he is dead…. I hope, dearest Madam, and my remaining friend, you will allow me to intimate how much I grieve for the loss of one who, in the possession of great affluence and plentiful fortune, sufficient to command all the pleasures that sensuality could possibly propose, would yet renounce all this to follow the strict rules of piety…. Ah! that head is now to be laid low

that was so accurate a judge of the principles, practices, and writings of men. Ah! that mouth is now closed that was wont to be always full and ready to speak of his God, and of heaven, which is now his home. Ah! a guardian angel is lost that I know was always upon the watch to discover everything that was offered to the public in prejudice to the Church or State. I grieve to think how much his society, his friends, and his associates in the several Societies he was concerned in, will miss him; the best part of whom will think it no disparagement to own that he was both the spring and guide of their laudable actions…. I cannot help being in grief for him; not because I have suffered the greatest loss that ever befell me with regard to any worldly advantage (for he did not design that, nor did I expect it), but with regard to the encouragement and countenance he gave the cause that I am resolved, by the grace of God, to continue embarked in as long as I live. I say, dear Madam, I cannot help being in the greatest grief at his death, not so much for my own as for the general loss it is likely to be to the interest of religion in all parts of the world, where anything in England could be done to promote it…. But he is gone,…. and is attended with the largest train of good works of any I had the happiness to know, which are gone unto the otherworld…. I shall be afraid to see him, if I be not found in the blessed Jesus, of Whom he talked so often to me." Writing three days later to the same correspondent, he says: "You are bravely resolved to stand in the breach that is made, which gives new life to my fainting hopes ;" and again, on the 31st of January, he says: "My long and intimate acquaintance with him gave me opportunities to know he was but man, though an uncommon one in his rank. It has also been often observed to me that he was kind enough in not making a better provision for me. But alas! they little considered that he did me an infinitely greater kindness than the greatest preferment could amount to, and understood I had no inclination to it. And if I had, I am sure his instructive conversation must have been very much lost upon me. I only mention this to let you know that it is not for any personal loss, so much as for the public, that I do and am likely long to lament his death."

This was a truly noble friendship, based upon the highest Christian principles, and free from the slightest suspicion of selfishness. These extracts show what is, indeed, abundantly evident elsewhere, that, in all his great labours, Griffith Jones was animated by the highest motives. The thought of working for promotion, or of adapting his principles or conduct with the view of seeking favours in high places, was abhorrent to his mind. His ambition was to succeed in his great undertaking. "If I was qualified for it, as I am not," he wrote in 1744, "I would certainly desire no greater preferment in this world than to be a successful advocate for the poor in the great concern of their salvation; for the poor in general, and not for my own poor countrymen only."[8]

But men of different principles and of a different stamp were promoted to positions of responsibility and influence in the Church, who won their way, not by successful work, but too often by disparaging those whose labours were a standing reproach to them. He envied them not, but sorrowed over the fact that they stood in the way of all improvement, both spiritual and administrative. He was doubtless well aware that it would have been useless for him to complain, as it was as true then as at any time in the history of the Welsh Church, that "a Welsh Clergyman, writing upon the subject, exposes himself to the poisoned arrows of those who seek to defend an iniquity by imputing to its assailants selfish motives."[9]

The following extracts on the subject under consideration are interesting. Writing to Madam Bevan on the end of January, 1735, he says:

“My friend thankfully embraces the kind offer of your interest for him, but with entire resignation, I hope, to Divine disposal whether it will succeed or not. It is fit we should do so in everything; but more especially should ministers stay for Providence to open their way, that the Master of the vineyard may place them at work where He pleases. We see that those who run before they are sent, do commonly make more haste than good speed. If men did not consult their ease and worldly interest in choosing their own places, but with an upright heart and view refer themselves to Him that knows best how to dispose of them, then it might be hoped that God would be with them in a more signal manner. To be found willing and qualified, to be able and faithful, is what we should busy ourselves most about, and wait on God to direct our labour, and to assist and prosper us in it.

“But, dear Madam, it is with great grief and lamentation that we have to consider how much this godly simplicity and singleness of heart, how much this zeal and regard for God, is now lost among us! The success is wont to be accordingly. The ministry produces little or no fruit. Most men seek their own, and not the things of Jesus Christ. It is in their own things they desire and obtain success; which yet is surely a very poor success, since it cannot but be attended with a Divine curse. This is too melancholy a consideration to entertain you with any longer. I am apprehensive, in some degree, how much my heart should be afflicted with it. The Lord assist and teach me in the use I ought to make of it.”

Again, in a letter dated January 8, 1737, he refers to the same subject:

“I have still the same wishes alive within me, which formerly I often spoke of to you, that the Clergy, though they should be those of the lowest rank and meanest circumstances, and though not above half-a-dozen in number, would join to carry on weekly lectures in one another's parishes. As faith, which carries all with it, cometh by hearing, I would promise myself the comfort of seeing more success from this than from all other methods, while other methods at the same time are not to be neglected. I am sure this would be to the improvement of the Clergy so engaged, as well as of those that would hear them. But alas! a new lesson is to be learned first, namely, to live by faith as well as to preach the doctrines of it; and three great things are first to be conquered, namely, the desire of preferments, the fear of man, and the ambition of living in favour with the gentry and superior clergymen. And yet, for all the obstructions which stand in the way, my wishes refuse to desist desiring it. If you will double the strength of this my wish by joining yours, who can tell what the issue will be, though perhaps it may not be seen in the lifetime of, Madam, your obedient servant, &c.”

From such passages as these, which could be easily multiplied, it is evident that he well understood the nature of the opposition he had to battle with, and the motives which arrayed some of his brethren against him, and deterred more from co-operating with him. In passages like the following, which occur not infrequently in his letters, he explains and defends his own attitude with noble frankness, and sometimes with caustic irony:

“The fear of man restrains too many from exerting themselves in behalf of the Saviour's cause, whereas the fear of God should have the strongest influence. But religious singularity in a censorious and corrupt age, so forward to apply ludicrous names and wrong imputations to everything that is serious, cannot be ventured upon without more than common fortitude. Consider, should we be discouraged by what the world will say of us, if we do our duty? Or, rather, should we not consider what our Lord and Master will say, and how He will deal with us if we do it not? Should we not think sedately how much more eligible it is to be censured and condemned by men for doing what we most

certainly ought to do, than to fall under the just condemnation and curse of God in the face of the whole world at the latter day, for the shameful neglect of it? Or, if we are afraid that even such of our mother's children as may be slow in their motions, will be angry with us, and prejudice our superiors against us, if we offer to move a step before them; I say, if we fear their displeasure with a view of securing their interest for our promotion in the Church, I am afraid that, in this case, it is not thoroughly considered that we ought resignedly and patiently to wait His time and Providence to employ us when and where He pleases, and to leave it to the Master of the vineyard to assign our place and wages. Flattery and servile compliances, or obsequious conformities, as well as bribery in money and other presents, to procure spiritual and ecclesiastical promotions and dignities, are in the opinion of the ancients no less than simony; and then follows perjury when we lay our hands on the Bible to swear ourselves clear of it, as every minister at his institution to a Church Benefice is obliged to do."10

Footnotes

[1]*Commentarioli*, ed.1573, pp.49,50. See the whole pasage translated in the Author's *Welsh Church and Welsh Nationality*, Bangor, Jarvis & Foster, p.33.
[2]Not Archbishop Tenison, as asserted by Archdeacon Bevan, *Diocesan History of St. Davids*, S.P.C.K., p.194.
[3]*Wales*, by Sir Thomas Phillips, 1849, p.255.
[4]*ibid*., p.256.
[5]*ibid*., p.256.
[6]*A Chapter in English Church History*, S.P.C.K., p.37.
[7]See, however, *Chapter in English Church History,* p.289. Mr. Price of Wrexham, writing on the 29th of April, 1700, says, among other things, that the Clergy in Denbighshire, Flintshire, and Montgomeryshire, "agreed to endeavour to set up free Schools for the poor children, and accordingly were making *notitias* of their parishes, and that they find it most convenient to set up Welsh Schools, that being the language which the parents best understand."
[8]*Welsh Piety*, 1743-44, p.13.
[9]Dean Edwards, *Wales and the Welsh Church.*
[10]*Letter to a Clergyman*, pp.70,71, 1745.

Chapter 5. The Welsh Circulating Schools (continued).

The method of establishing and conducting these Schools is, as already intimated, fully and repeatedly explained by Griffith Jones, in his Annual Reports, called *Welsh Piety*, which were published from 1738 to 1760.[1] We are fortunate enough to possess a complete copy of these reports in three well-bound octavo volumes, each of which bears the autograph "B. Bevan," which we believe to be that of Madam Bevan. They contain ample materials for a biography of Griffith Jones during the most laborious and interesting half of his ministerial life, while they afford us the fullest and most accurate information that we can probably possess, of the religious condition of Wales in the first half of the eighteenth century. These three volumes contain an aggregate of 1340 pages, and a brief description of their contents will not be un-interesting to our readers, as it will give them an idea of the nature of our chief source of information. The first sixty-eight pages of the first volume are occupied by *Three Letters to a Friend*, "by a Clergyman of Wales, being an account of the rise, method, and progress of the Circulating Welsh Charity Schools,

with the nature and antiquity of the British language, and objections against continuing the use of it considered." There are also, in the same volume, "An address to the charitable and well-disposed in behalf of the poor in the Principality of Wales," published in 1741, and "A Letter to a Clergyman," in defence of the Welsh Schools, published in 1745. This latter fills eighty-eight pages. The remainder of the three volumes is made up of the Annual Reports of the Schools. Each of these Reports consists, in the first place, of a short preface, written most probably by Sir John Thorold,[2] whose name appears under that for the year 1745-1746. Sir John was a steadfast friend of Griffith Jones, and supported him most generously with his purse and his influence. In the second place, we have a long Letter of Griffith Jones to a Friend, who was none other than Sir John Thorold, in which the writer enlarges upon the need of teaching and catechising the people, and sets forth the aims, the methods, and the progress of the Schools. In these letters he combats objections that were preferred against the Schools, from which he vindicates them with conspicuous ability. In the third place, we have a table, giving the places where the Schools were established, together with the number of scholars that attended each School. And in the fourth place, in thirteen of the 24 numbers of *Welsh Piety*, he gives extracts from letters received in the course of the year from correspondents who took an interest in his Schools, and superintended them in their respective parishes. Of these extracts, which are most instructive, there are over six hundred in these volumes, and he tells us in some of the reports, that he had received during the year several hundreds more of such letters.[3] The greater part of those published are from Clergymen; others are signed by Clergymen and Laymen, and a few bear as many as twenty or more signatures. It is almost impossible to exaggerate the importance of these letters. They form a great volume of evidence on the moral and educational condition of the Principality in the middle oft h e eighteenth century, given by a large number of eye-witnesses, who lived in all parts of the country, and 'were in the best possible position to judge. The significance of such evidence will appear when we proceed to point out the progress and the results of the Circulating Schools.

The greater portion of these Annual Reports, which vary in length from thirty to over a hundred pages, is occupied by Griffith Jones' Letter to a Friend, in which he assumes, almost always, an apologetic tone. He had to struggle hard against apathy, suspicion, and prejudice. He had to defend himself against ignorance, misunderstanding, and misrepresentation. He had to bear the odium which fell upon him through the occasional indiscretion of his schoolmasters, and through the irregular actions of the early Methodists, with whom his detractors unjustly sought to identify him. But the worst opposition he had to contend against came from those who ought to have been foremost in supporting him; the men who had forgotten, or misconceived, or wilfully neglected, the sacred obligations which the Church laid upon them, of employing her ministry and her resources in educating the people, and awakening them from their spiritual deadness. With the exception of one scurrilous pamphlet, to which we have already alluded, his enemies have not, as far as we know, left behind them any literature from which we may learn their objections to his means and methods. Perhaps they were conscious of the futility of those objections, and wisely preferred that they should perish with their own names. Be that as it may, his own letters do not leave us in the dark as to the nature of those objections. Attempts were evidently made to create prejudice against his Schools in the minds of the English people, so as to dry up channels from which he derived much of his support, In his third letter, dated October 11, 1739, and again in his letter prefixed to *Welsh Piety* for 1740-41, he alludes to these attempts, enumerates the objections seriatim, and replies to them at length and with crushing effect. The student of Welsh Church history is only too familiar with these objections.

“The objection raised against this method in England, where our best friends are (as you, Sir, in a most friendly manner give me to understand) amounts to this, That these Welsh Charity Schools are means to continue the use of the Welsh tongue, and to keep the natives in ignorance of the English. It is urged that the Irish is abolishing, by means of the English Charity Schools in the Highlands of Scotland, and beginning to be so by the same institutions in Ireland; and that the Bishop of Man has found means to bring the Manks into disuse; and why should the King's subjects in Wales be the only persons with whom little or no pains are taken to make them learn the English tongue?….”

“This being the objection in its full strength, before I speak about it, I shall beg leave to premise that I am not at present concerned what becomes of the language abstractedly considered; nor design to say anything merely to aggrandise or advance its repute. The thing to be cleared up is, whether the chief and greatest end of all, *viz*., the glory of God, the interest of religion, and the salvation of the poor Welsh people, is most likely to be promoted by continuing or abolishing it.”

Griffith Jones’ words, in reply to this question, are too lengthy to be quoted here. In the first place, he argues, as Bishop William Morgan, Morus Kyffin, and others had argued a century and a half before him: “How can the design of destroying the British tongue be accomplished, except the present stated worship of God, and all manner of preaching, teaching, catechising, or other instructions from conversation and books in Welsh, as well as the Welsh Schools, be discontinued? What length of time, I may well ask, how many hundred years, must be allowed for the general attainment of the English, and the dying away of the Welsh language? which (as I am to show hereafter) has hitherto survived some thousands. And, in the meantime, while this is adoing (whether now or hereafter), what myriads of poor ignorant souls must launch forth into the dreadful abyss of eternity, and perish for want of knowledge? And who will answer for this?”

In the second place, he refers to “some advantages peculiar to the Welsh tongue favourable to religion, as being perhaps the chastest in all Europe. Its books and writings are free from the infection and deadly venom of Atheism, Deism, Infidelity, Arianism, Popery, lewd plays, immodest romances, and love intrigues; which poison the mind, captivate all the senses, and prejudice so many (conversant with them) against their duty to God, and due care of their own souls; and which, by too many books in English and some other languages, are this day grievously propagated.” And referring to those “poor Welshmen” who had migrated for employment to English towns, he says, “How poorly qualified are these to benefit by an English sermon!…. And this, and worse than this, is the case of those who live in or near our few English towns here, who cannot, properly speaking, be said to know any language at all, when they have lost their Welsh; none to understand the Word of God in; insomuch that, if the Welsh tongue be taken from our common people, the Sacrament of Baptism had as good be taken away also, by which alone then they could be entitled to the name of Christians.”

In the third place, he deals with scathing severity with the appointment of clergymen whose knowledge of Welsh was imperfect, to the cure of Welsh parishes.

“It is a great hardship upon some clergymen to be made pastors of Welsh congregations, when they are not qualified to officiate in that tongue. It is not my present business to inquire who this is owing to; but be they who they will, and how little soever they lay it to heart for the present, they will hereafter find themselves answerable to a grievous charge. This has, in too many places, reduced the country into heathenish darkness and irreligion (and, what some are apt to declaim against as more damnable) into different communities

and separations from the Established Church. By means of these clergymen officiating in English to Welsh congregations, we may say, a trial has been made, in some sort, whether the people would learn their language, and forget their own, till they have almost forgotten the name of Christ. The sheep could not know their shepherd's voice from first to last; and must therefore perish, or go astray for want of pasture…. It cannot justify English preaching that there may be one or two, or a small number, who understand the language, when all the rest of the parish know nothing of it; nor excuse an incumbent to devolve the whole of the work on his curate, because he knows not the tongue himself, which he is bound, by the laws of God and man, to study and minister in, or to disengage himself from the obligation thereof. Nor yet can it be a sufficient pretext of discharging the duty in Welsh, that an almost unintelligible translation should be made of an English sermon, heaping together a collection of words from a dictionary, which could make but an unsavoury discourse in any language, while it egregiously wanted both grammar and common sense; and all, because they would not be at the pains to study the language; which they should either not scruple to do, or not pretend to fill a place of such important trust, which they are altogether unqualified for. I wish these clergy were more suitably preferred; and those whose province it is to dispose of the cure of souls would do well to think of this as a business of the last consequence."

Another objection preferred against his Schools was that they tended to promote Dissent: – "I should really," he says, "be ashamed to mention the next objection, if some people did not scruple to make it. I little expected that any would have front enough to say that teaching the poor to read would make them Dissenters. A high compliment (though not intended) to those who separate from us!….

"To trace the footsteps which lead to dissension a little higher. Since it is vain to conceal what none are ignorant of, except those who have it in their power to reform it, I cannot but lament an imposition of the worst consequence in the world, which our learned and worthy diocesans in this country are sometimes liable to, by the misrepresentation that is often laid before them of several things, *especially in matters of ordination*. Their dioceses being large, and lying remote from the scene of important affairs, which require their attendance for a considerable part of the year, and the common people being of a different language, and unable to make known their grievances, their Lordships are therefore obliged to credit the testimonies, and to see with the eyes of others. But, alas! treacherous eyes that wretchedly betray their head! As many report of others, and likewise recommend candidates for the ministry, by no other rule but according as they are affected, or agree together in politics, and other opinions or morals, several well-disposed and laborious men in the ministry, very loyal and well-affected to the present government in Church and State, have suffered not a little in this way. The minds of their superiors being thus rendered unfavourably disposed towards them, some very hopeful persons have met with great difficulties, if not rejected, when they offered themselves for Holy Orders, and others observing these discouragements, have been driven to seek imposition of hands in another community, whereby Dissenters have gained some popular and useful ministers, and the people have followed them; whilst too many others, unworthy the sacred function, get admittance into it, by the interest and recommendations of those who care not what indignity they reflect thereby upon venerable characters.

"Among other necessary qualifications in a steward of the mysteries of God and holy things, no doubt but the grace of God and a holy disposition are the chief, and should therefore most carefully be inquired into; for if an unfit pilot be appointed to conduct a ship, who will be charged with the damage it sustains by his disqualification? It is well

known that ministers thus unqualified, whatever other accomplishments they may have, will neither labour heartily themselves in a cause they do not love, nor forbear looking with an evil eye on their fellow servants, whose diligence is their reproach. If they have art and interest enough to engross and abuse the ear of a superior Order, such as endeavour to be more industrious, in order to save both themselves and those that hear them, must expect no better treatment than they would certainly deserve, if they lived the idle and corrupt lives of their accusers. As the work of the ministry, almost all of it, in this country devolves generally on the lowest class of the clergy, curates and meanly-beneficed ministers, many of them (I bear them witness) would bestir themselves to labour more abundantly in the ministry if they durst; but a real (however right and regular) which yet exposes them to ill-natured reflections and resentments is too frightful a thing to venture upon. For nothing would be more heinously provoking than this to some patrons, and others who love to live undisturbed and at their ease, which tends not a little to the decay of religion in general, and the interest of the Church of England in particular. It is no secret that several profane profligates have confessed their infidelity and sensual liberties to be owing to the very bad opinion they took up of some clergymen, whom they concluded had no more of the Christian faith in reality than they; otherwise they would have preached and practised in a much better manner. The inferior and better-disposed people make no such ill-use of a corrupt ministry. They only turn to those who will condescend to explain sacred things to their capacities, and with becoming zeal and earnestness, apply them to their consciences.

"….If ministers, not qualified with the grace of God, would not do very great hurt, surely they could do but little good. How unfit are they to reprove the faults of others, who will not reform their own?…. Or will they be painful and diligent to instruct the ignorant in the Church Catechism, and its principles, whose hearts are set only upon its revenues and perquisites? Instead of providing proper. food for their flocks, they.will be looking out for greater preferments for themselves; too justly compared by a very devout divine to crows, which, when boys pick out their eyes, fly up higher and higher, till at last they drop down dead. When they happen to come to their Churches and see them empty, they will not fail to rail and declaim most terribly against those whom they force to dissent from them, till they *fix* their aversion and increase their number. For when they pour out dreadful anathemas, moderate people are frightened away, and are sometimes heard to whisper, *We will not hear this man again*; whilst many profane and immoral persons are suffered to soothe themselves with *false hopes* under the specious pretence of being *good Churchmen*. This is not *surmising* what *may be*, but is matter of fact, which is always allowed to be the most substantial evidence. And would to God there were not too many living instances to prove that from hence come the desolation of Zion, and the letting in a deluge of irreligion, vice, and confusion, that is like to carry all before it, if not remedied in time." "It is too visible whether it be innocent or criminal to mention it that the present state of the Church affords but a melancholy prospect. Who can behold it without tears, or contain the grief without crying out ?…. I mean not to offend anyone, nor ought I to be thought an enemy for speaking the truth, which my real love and desire of seeing religion revived in the Established Church do wrest from me. I am too much a mourner for these things, to be able to hold my peace when a proper occasion presents to vent my grief. Everyone knows and condemns the corruption privately, and are apt to censure all that are accessory to it, and some, perhaps, unjustly; but they wisely consider the danger of speaking out. There is proud flesh in the sore that will not endure to be touched. Complaints will always exasperate the guilty. Criminals are too weak to hide their resentments, though they discover themselves by it. Great discouragements! But as matters mend not by concealing, I have ventured the indignation of such as find themselves to be the men I complain of. Those that endeavour to discharge their duty (for

several such we have, God be praised), have nothing to do with it, and ought not to be angry that I expose myself to seek their defence, success, and encouragement. And I must solemnly declare, that I am far from designing to give any people a handle to disparage the sacred characters of anyone of our good prelates, whom I revere inferior to no man living, and whom we cannot duly regard and love without being displeased with those (whether laity or clergy), who abuse their good-natured credulity, in recommending wrong persons to the ministry, and excluding their betters; and by wrong informations misguiding their favours, to the great grief of good and laborious ministers, and encouragement to the idle and vicious. I cannot, indeed, help fearing that our Right Reverend and Ghostly Fathers may possibly sin through excess of tenderness, towards those who deserve their severe rebukes; as good old Eli, who, though an eminent saint and ruler in Israel, yet offended herein, and by too much lenity, brought ruin and infamy upon himself and family, for the iniquity of the priests, his sons, which he reproved not, as he ought to have done."[4]

These extracts give us the views of Griffith Jones on the administration of the Church in his day, and the causes of Dissent in Wales, and no witness could be more competent or trustworthy. He had been accused by his enemies of promoting Dissent, and he turns the tables with crushing effect on his accusers. It is a sad picture that he draws, and it will be recognised in some of its details in the conduct of the incumbent of Eglwys Gymmun towards Peter Williams and towards Griffith Jones himself.

Bishops being obliged to see with the eyes of others, who were flatterers and self-seekers, and this leading to the admission of bad and the rejection of good candidates for the ministry; hirelings creeping into high positions in the Church through sycophancy, calumny, and cunning intrigue; these things bearing their natural fruits in the infidelity and profligacy of one class, and in the alienation from the Church of another; the curacies and poor benefices, which offered no temptation to the ambition and rapacity of the hirelings, being left in the hands of men who had a higher sense of their vocation, and who were thus instrumental in saving the Church in Wales almost from extinction; the worldly wisdom of those who felt and privately acknowledged the prevailing abuses, but would not complain, owing to their dread of official displeasure; the impotent rage of men, who, when they happened to go to their Churches, found that their unfitness and unfaithfulness had succeeded in emptying them; the bitter persecution endured by honest men who ventured to point out abuses in the Church, and endeavoured to remedy them; all this is very interesting, but very sad. It makes us cease to wonder that the Church has suffered grievously.

The other objections made to his Schools with which Griffith Jones deals in the same letter are – that they promoted Methodism; that there was no such great necessity for religious instruction which the Schools were designed to provide; and that the people were not so deplorably ignorant and destitute of Christian knowledge, as was implied in what he said. In almost everyone of his annual Letters, he alludes more or less pointedly to the opposition he had to contend with. In a letter dated August 16, 1739, he complains that the enemies of the 'design' seem to be under a difficulty to find a plausible pretext to oppose it, without exposing themselves; insomuch that I cannot hear of any here, except persons of abandoned characters who speak against the Welsh Charity Schools. And it is only one instance of this that has appeared openly, which happened last Spring, when two of the Welsh masters met with very strange treatment. But as this sufficiently exposed the persons concerned as actors therein, it had no other influence upon the Schools (as everybody knew the characters of their opposers) but to recommend them, and moved some with compassion to relieve the masters (when the little money they had

for their subsistence had been illegally taken from them) who went on in their business, and prospered in it."[5]. He writes elsewhere of "violent enmity," and of "malicious slanders and calumnies," which were directed against him. He does not tell us from whom the opposition came. The most explicit information on this matter which we have seen from his pen is contained in a letter, written to Madam Bevan, and dated July 29, 1936.

"I could not help amusing myself this morning (my cough obliging me to be up early), how much my late friends have endeavoured to possess the Bishop and Chancellor with prejudice against me; yet, through the over-ruling power of Divine Providence, which was the only refuge I had to fly to, I have the same unscrupulous freedom to go on in the Lord's work, without disobeying any absolute command of the Bishop; and although my poor endeavours are left to stand alone, without any encouragement, or rather under great discouragement from my brethren the clergy; yet this, methinks, is an advantage to make me proceed with so much more sincerity with respect to God. And I must gratefully acknowledge, too, that the comfort derived from those dear Christian friends, whom Divine goodness has raised up for me, does more than counter-balance the discouragements of the strange looks, the unchristian censures, and the plottings of my adversaries. It will not be in their power to make me feel any sufferings, unless they could put a stop to my poor endeavours; which will never be, as long as the great God has any work for me to do."

This letter was written in the early history of the movement, and we have reason to believe that the opposition to them grew weaker and less general, as they became more numerous and better known. Writing in *Welsh Piety* for 1945-1746, he says: "I am glad to inform you that I am spared the trouble of answering such objections as are wont to be started by unthinking or misinformed people, against all religious undertakings at the first appearance of them. I think these Schools have now got above, and quite vanquished all this. The mouths of gainsayers seem to be shut, having no evil thing to say of them; at least, I do not hear of anything about them, that is, or can be justly censured."

This seems evidence that opposition to his Schools had, in a great measure, subsided after ten or fifteen years of steady work. And yet, six years after these words were written, a neighbouring clergyman wrote the pamphlet already referred to, in which he brought the vilest accusations against Griffith Jones, and his conduct of the Schools. His motives, his character, his actions, and the results of the Schools are so violently assailed that the writer could have had no other aim than to crush him. In this he ignominiously failed, and only succeeded in winning for himself the reprobation of posterity. The Rev. Evan Evans (*Ieuan Brydydd Hir*), a Welsh clergyman, in a letter of dedication to Sir Watkin Williams Wynn, prefixed to the author's Volumes of Sermons published in 1976, asserts that the writer of the pamphlet alluded to was "hired by the bishops" to blacken the character of Griffith Jones. There is no positive evidence, as far as we know, to confirm this testimony; nor is there anything to prove another allegation that has been frequently repeated, that Griffith Jones was involved in a law-suit in the Bishop's Court for twenty years.[6]

In his allusions to the Bishops, Griffith Jones is always decorous and respectful, as became a loyal Churchman. Whenever he can, he quotes their authority on behalf of his methods, and he gives copious extracts from their charges and their writings in justification of his Catechetical Schools. But from all that can be gathered from his writings, their attitude towards these Schools was an attitude of indifference and unconcern, rather than of active hostility, although he seems to have won their confidence, if not their support, after some twenty years of successful labours. He

believes apparently that they were the misguided victims of untrustworthy and unscrupulous advisers. The following extract is instructive:

"You may possibly imagine, Sir, that I reflect on magistrates and bishops; far be it from me to mean anyone but those whom these reflections belong to. You know, Sir, I was born a Welshman, and have not unlearned the simple honesty and unpoliteness of my mother tongue; nor acquired the oiliness of the English language, which is now refined to such a degree, that a great part of it is near akin to flattery and dissimulation. But in my way of expressing myself, I declare I mean not to reflect upon anyone of our worthy magistrates, or truly reverend ministers, or any other that make conscience of discharging their duty; much less any of our bishops, whom I revere as much as it is possible for anyone to do; many of whom, I am persuaded, suffer the plentiful reflections bestowed upon them, for no other cause but for not rectifying disorders which never came to their knowledge, nor punishing faults they were never informed of. And everybody thinks a detection of false recommendations, information, and visitation presentments to be of too dangerous a nature; and so the imposition will always go on. It is much too easy to give you an hundred instances of this; but one may serve to explain my meaning. Some years ago, I happened to meet, in my travels through another diocese, with a Churchwarden going to the Bishop's Triennial Visitation Court, with his presentment in his pocket, wherein he gave his clergyman a good character; but said privately he was not a gentleman of wonderful virtue, or famous for Christian morality. The several particulars which he mentioned of him, unbecoming the sacred profession, were such as I choose not to repeat; which, he said, were very well known to everybody but the bishop (as afterwards I found to be true). Upon asking the warden why he did not present him for all this, as he was obliged to do by his oath, he said he did not know whether there was an oath in the case or no; for if there was, it was in English, which he did not understand; but that he would as soon hang, or banish himself from the country, as he would present him for these crimes, because his minister, he said, had drawn up the presentment himself, and was a bottle companion to the top gentry of all the diocese, and did not want interest enough with the clergy, all of whom he could easily influence to revenge his quarrel upon the poor warden; and by whose friendship his minister would be sure to gain more credit than he with the bishop." So far from this being an isolated instance, he assures his correspondent that "our Church groans under the burden of this corruption."[7]

"To labour in vain is, indeed, discouraging; and success begets envy." This is how he was compelled to account for the opposition he met with. There was no other way. He worked on strictly Church lines. His aims were the renewal of Church life, the salvation of souls, and the glory of God. He earnestly desired that his efforts might result in checking the evils and disorders that threatened to involve Church and State in ruin. He was conscious of the integrity of his motives, the efficacy of the means he employed, and the reasonableness of his position. He, therefore, goes on, regardless of suspicion and misrepresentation. "Good undertakings should not be deserted for the ill-will of bad men; in the end, they seldom speed the worse for it." He believed that God would stand by him, as long as he was working for right ends on right principles.[8] As one of his biographers says, he was always "the strict Churchman." It is no wonder that he was keenly disappointed at finding his efforts frowned upon by Churchmen. "Indeed, Sir," he writes in 1744, "I must own freely it is beyond my imagination how it is possible to find any colourable pretence to object against them (*i.e.*, the Schools), without either alleging false facts or magnifying the accidental faults or indiscretion of some or other employed about them; which does not imply an excess of charity, or the kindliest disposition towards them." He had every reason to expect the cordial co-operation of his fellow-Churchmen. "The means and methods of carrying on the design neither are nor can be liable to

objection, since we proceed therein in everything agreeable to the rules and doctrines professed and taught in our Established Church."[9] The Schools entered no parish except at the invitation or by the permission of the parochial clergyman. "These Schools never intrude, or force themselves, but are given where desired."[10] The masters employed, who "were the best-disposed members and communicants of the Church of England that we can find willing and qualified for this service," were to be the clergyman's choice, if possible, and were to work under his direction and supervision. "The Schoolmasters are commonly of their (*i.e*., the clergy's) own choice and appointment; the care and conduct of the Schools and Schoolmasters being always submitted to them."[11] He was fully alive to the necessity of caution in the selection of masters, for "it cannot be with the grain of a good conscience to employ immoral persons to teach poor people religion. I cannot and dare not prostitute any part of the charity of good people in this matter." If masters were found in, any way unworthy, they were to be summarily dismissed, and others appointed in their place. They were to conduct the Schools according to a definitely prescribed method.

"Where a Charity School is wanted and desired, or likely to be kindly received, no pompous preparations or costly buildings are thought of, but a church or chapel, or untenanted house of convenient situation, is fixed on; and public notice is given immediately, that a Welsh School is to begin there at an appointed time, where all sorts that desire it are to be kindly and freely taught for three months (though the Schools are continued for three months longer, or more, when needful; and then removed to another place where desired). The people, having no prospect of such an opportunity but for a short limited time, commonly resort to them at once, and keep to them as closely and diligently as they can, though some can afford to come but every other day, or in the night only, because the support of themselves and families requires their labour. The masters are instructed, hired, and charged to devote all their time, and with all possible diligence, not only to teach the poor to read, but to instruct them daily (at least twice every day) in the principles and duties of religion from the Church Catechism, by the assistance of such explanations of it as they and the scholars are provided with, which they are not only to repeat out of book, but also to give the sense thereof in their own words, with a Psalm and prayer night and morning after catechising. Every master is also obliged to keep a strict account of the names, ages, condition in the world, and progress in learning, of all the scholars; and of the books they learn, and the time or number of months, weeks, and days that everyone of them continued in the School; that the masters maybe paid accordingly. This account every master is to bring in writing at the end of three months, with proper certificates of the truth thereof, and of their own behaviour, signed by such clergymen as condescended to inspect them, as well as by several other creditable persons living near the Schools."[12]

He tells us elsewhere that the clergy were desired to see, so far as they were able, that the masters and scholars give diligent attendance to their business, and behave well and regularly in everything; that they resort devoutly to the public worship on Sundays; that the scholars be taught to say their prayers and graces before and after meat; that they resort to say their Catechism to their parish minister as soon as they have learned it, which they should do in two months at farthest (many have learnt it sooner), and that their masters by no means omit, nor yet slightly perform their duty of pressing them to turn unto God, through faith in Christ, that they may obtain His grace to renew their hearts and pardon their sins; dissuading them in a particular manner from the reigning vices of the neighbourhood, and earnestly exhorting them to a devout life and conscientious discharge of their relative duties, and the worship of God at home.[13]

Such was the plan on which he carried on his Schools. It is reasonable to conclude that, among the conditions upon which they were granted, was a strict compliance on the part of the local managers and masters with the above directions, which, it is not unlikely, were printed as rules for the guidance of those concerned, as he repeats them in several of his Annual Reports in almost identical words. He informs his friend regularly that the Schools worked well, and though the organisation became cumbrous, complicated, and extensive, he seldom complains that their management gives him trouble. The work he carried on was colossal, and, when all things are considered, its success was marvellous. In the Report for 1747-48, he states that "these Charity Schools have now spread themselves so far over the Principality, that some of them are set up in every County of South and North Wales, the County of Flint only excepted." With trifling exceptions, their operations were confined to South Wales up to the year 1742, and it was not until the year 1946 that they reached much beyond Montgomeryshire in North Wales. From the latter year, when they were first established in Anglesey, to 1759-60, they visited as many as fifty-three places in that county, in some of which they worked for eight, though not consecutive, terms of three or six months each. This gives us an idea of the extent which they covered. They were carried on at a time when both education and religion had fallen very low, which rendered it difficult to obtain a sufficient supply of suitable masters for them, and a due appreciation of their benefits on the part of the people. They had to win their way against much prejudice and opposition. But in spite of these formidable difficulties and obstacles, their success was unquestionable, and was due, in a large measure, to the tact, the wisdom, the ability, and the energetic zeal of Griffith Jones, who had his hand on every pulse of the movement, though it should always be remembered that he was nobly supported throughout by generous and powerful friends, as well as by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, without whose assistance, almost one-half, and that not the least important half, of his work could not have been accomplished.

Besides the day Schools, the masters were employed in keeping night Schools wherever it was practicable. In 1738, he says that the most convenient time of the year for the Schools was generally between September and May, and that the shortness of the day at that season was no disadvantage, for they commonly came together "for four or five hours in the night; and several labourers whom the pressing necessities of their poor families will not admit to attend the Schools by day, do, in some places, constantly resort to them by night; as a considerable number of very poor (and lately very profane) people did in our Welsh City of St. David's; and instances of this we have also in other Schools." This was early in the history of the movement. At the end of the first printed Report issued in the same year, we have the following note: "Most of the masters instructed, for three or four hours in the night or evening after School time, about twice or thrice as many as they had in their Schools by day, who could not attend at other times; which are not included in the number above." The "number" referred to here was that of the scholars for the year, *viz*., 3912. This note is significant, as it bears upon the usual calculation of the aggregate number of scholars that profited by the Circulating Schools during the lifetime of their founder. That aggregate is taken from the annual returns made to him by the local managers of the Schools. But those returns were made with regard to the Day Schools only, and did not include attendants at the Night Schools. When, therefore, it is said that over 150,000 souls received instruction at these Schools during his lifetime, it must be borne in mind that no account is taken of those who were taught at night, the number of whom would doubtless swell the above total very considerably. There is abundant evidence in his Annual Reports, especially in the communications from the local correspondents, that these night Schools were very general, and doing excellent work. In the Report for 1750-51, for instance, he states that "many adult persons, not less than thirty in one School, have lately learned to read by applying themselves to the

schoolmasters in the evenings, after their labours for the day were over." Referring to the same subject in the Report for 1742-43, he writes: "Some thousands more [*i.e*., than the number given in the Report] have been stirred up to learn of one another at home, whose strait circumstances would not permit them to be long, or at all, in School." Judging from the allusions made to them in letters from Correspondents, these night Schools appear to have been a sort of combination of singing and catechetical classes, Sunday Schools, and prayer meetings.

The Schools were highly appreciated, eagerly sought after, and attended at great sacrifice, when once their aims were understood. Writing in 1738, he says that winter is the most favourable time to carry on. the Schools, because, among other reasons, "servants can more easily find labourers to serve cheaper in their room while they are at School in the winter than they could do at any other season." And again, in 1741-42, he says that:

"More Schools would have been desired, and greater numbers would have come to most of them, but that the poor wanted bodily necessaries. Such as were able to work, and could find employ, used in some places to labour two or three days in the week, to earn a little bread; and others begged it, that they might maintain themselves in School, so long as their slender provision lasted; and some applied themselves to learn at nights, after the labour of the day was over. So very great are the necessities, and the desire of the poor to receive instruction, that to impartial judges it must appear uncommon cruelty to debar them of it." Again, in 1744: "The poor people desire and thirst for the knowledge of God, and flock in great numbers to these Schools in several places,…. when they can hardly get bread enough to satisfy their hunger, and were never oppressed with so much poverty before in this country in the memory of man. They resort to these Schools notwithstanding this, to be taught and instructed how to serve God, without any other visible inducement than having their teaching *gratis*. Many of them, in several parts of South Wales, have joined together to petition that they might have a Welsh School to instruct them. In some places they have moved the compassion of their ministers to bespeak a School for them, which has always been complied with, and some of those good ministers improved the Schools to very good purpose.

These extracts are only specimens of many similar ones which might be made, both from his own Letters to a Friend, and from those of his correspondents, and which testify that these Schools were everywhere in great demand, and were. eagerly resorted to by the people.

He relates many pathetic incidents which he received from his correspondents, and others are given in their printed letters. Parents saw their children learning to read and to repeat the Catechism, and wept with sorrow at the reflection of not having themselves in their youth received similar advantages. Other parents learned to read, and received instruction at home from their children, who had been taught at School. "It has been taken notice of more than once that many above fifty, and some above sixty, and even seventy years of age, have in some places attended these Schools, and learned to read with their spectacles on. Some have learned at home of their children, what their children themselves learned at School."[14]

"In most of the Schools, the adult persons make about two-thirds of the number taught in them. In some places, several, who for old age are obliged to wear their spectacles, come into them. I am informed of two or three women, aged about sixty, who knew not one letter before, but attended constantly every day, except sometimes when they were

obliged to seek abroad for a little bread…. Nor have there been wanting some blind persons to attend the Welsh Schools near them; particularly one poor blind young woman, who made great proficiency in Christian Knowledge."[15] In a letter of a later date, he mentions three old persons about seventy years of age, and one "full seventy- three," who attended one of his Schools. "And I cannot but say," he writes again in 1744, "that I thought it remarkable that several ancient people, who came to these Charity Schools, and could not distinctly see the letters without the assistance of their spectacles, have wept bitterly that they had not the same offer of being freely taught when they were younger, and of a better capacity to learn; but I think all of them have gone through the difficulty, and have attained to read. One woman, sixty-seven years old, who is now learning, and several others, less ancient people in the same School, discover excellent dispositions, and make very speedy progress. I hope all of them will be furnished shortly with the Holy Scriptures."[16] The Curate of Gelligaer, writing on the 30th of December, 1758, says: "It may give you some pleasure to be informed of a poor old blind woman, above eighty years of age, pretty near the School, that is now instructed in the principles of the Christian religion. This poor creature, out of curiosity at first, desired to be led into the School to hear the children. After she had heard them catechised and their answers, it had such an effect upon her that she also desired to be instructed (that is, to be catechised) with them. Accordingly, the schoolmaster took so much pains with her that he taught her to repeat the Lord's Prayer, the Apostles' Creed, and the Ten Commandments, and several other necessary questions in the principles of religion." Writing of the children attending School, the Curate of Llangian, Carnarvonshire, says: "I can assure you, Sir, I am credibly informed that these little adepts, on Sundays at home, teach their aged parents the way to heaven."

It is obvious, from what has already appeared in these pages, that Griffith Jones could not have carried on these Schools, on anything like the extensive scale he did, or on the principles which he laid down, without the cordial co-operation of the clergy. That co-operation must have been practically co-extensive with the Schools. It is necessary to call special attention to this, as it has been too often and too confidently asserted that he received little but opposition from his clerical brethren. Such a sweeping charge is emphatically and abundantly refuted by the contents of his annual Reports. The success of the Welsh Charity Schools was largely due to, and joyfully welcomed by hundreds of parochial clergy, without whose co-operation the vast majority of them could neither have been established nor maintained. If the correspondence which he published in his reports were analysed, it would be probably discovered that over ninety per cent of the communications which he gives are signed by parochial clergymen. It is true, indeed, that he almost invariably implies that, to his great sorrow, and to the serious loss of their parishioners, many of the incumbents held aloof from the movement, and he expresses his desire that the number of those who supported him should be multiplied; but he seldom omits to show his gratitude to his more earnest brethren for their countenance. Referring to this subject in *Welsh Piety* for 1754-55, he writes:

"Nor should I omit acknowledging my obligations to the clergy, who deserve well of this design, by their endeavours to promote it, not only by subscribing towards it, as some have kindly done, but likewise in exerting themselves to explain to the poor the dreadful danger of their heathenish and wilful ignorance, and urging most earnestly the indispensable necessity of acquiring Christian knowledge; pressing them to accept Christian instruction *gratis*, when opportunity offers; and often visiting the Schools, stirring up the teachers to care and diligence, and catechising their scholars both at School and publicly at Church, to the edification of the hearers."

Footnotes

[1]Their publication was continued till the death of Madam Bevan, in 1777.
[2]Sir John Thorold was probably a member of the S.P.C.K. The name of a Mr. Thorold appears in the minutes of that Society as early as 1701-2. We find communications from him referred to in the minutes in 1746-49. In the *Life and TImes of Lady Huntingdon*, vol. i. p.77, he is referred to as her friend and the friend of her deceased husband. "He was one of the first members of the Methodist Society in Fetter Lane, and, with Sir John Phillips, of Picton Castle, also a member of the same Society, very useful in aiding and encouraging the labours of Mr. Whitfield and the Wesleys. He was a correspondent of the celebrated Griffith Jones, whom he assisted in the establishment of his Welsh Schools, and of Dr. Doddridge, and a letter from him to Wesley appears in an early volume of the *Methodist Magazine*. His death, which occurred in 1748, was a great loss to the early Methodists." On p.73 of the same volume, we find Lady Huntingdon, in a letter to Mr. Wesley, dated January 15, 1746, writing of a "Mr. Jones.l who has been with me for some weeks, and has been very acceptable and useful to many," which refers possibly to Griffith Jones.
[3]See *Welsh Piety,* 1741-43, p.61.
[4]Letter to a Friend, *Welsh Piety*,1740-41, pp.4-10.
[5]See also *Welsh Piety*, 1741-3, p.6.
[6]Lecky's *History of England in the 18th Century*, vol. iii., p.105.
[7]*Letter to a Clergyman*, pp.50-52, 1745.
[8]"The affair of the Welsh Schools, it is hoped, will have some good effect, if an unworthy man is not too much seen in it. Providence setting them up and favouring them with friendly reception, is some hopeful symptom, under many threatening aspects. I wish there was a hundred for every one, and a hundred-fold success attending each of them. They are the likeliest means to prepare men's minds to receive saving knowledge now, when the standing order for instruction seems to have fallen under a general and heavy curse and judicial lethargy." Letter to Madam Bevan, January 6, 1738.
[9]*Welsh Piety*, 1739-40, p.22.
[10]Letter ii, August 16, 1739.
[11]*Welsh Piety*; 1747-48; p.18.
[12]*Welsh Piety*, 1749-43, pp.5,6.
[13]*Welsh Piety*, 1739-40. p.13.
[14]*Welsh Piety*, 1752-53, p.12.
[15]*Letter to a Friend*, August 16, 1739, p.26.
[16]*Welsh Piety*, 1943-44, p.9.

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6. The Welsh Circulating Schools (continued)

Into the management and extension of the Circulating Schools, Griffith Jones threw his whole energy from the beginning. He was convinced that they were the best means for compassing the revival of religion. He cherished them with fond affection, and expected great things from them. But he was obliged to be watchful and cautious in establishing them, and in guarding himself against imposition. In a letter to Madam Bevan, written in the year 1736, he says:

"Having by yesterday's post received a letter from the Curate of Devynock, about having a Welsh School there, and suspecting his design to be no more than getting a little money by being master of it, I have written him a long letter this night, directing him to make earnest proposals about it from the pulpit and otherwise, to raise contributions from the wealthy men there to defray the expense of teaching; and, to encourage him and them, I will endeavour to stretch beyond present ability to supply the poor with little books to learn; and that if it should be in my power to supply the poorest or the best qualified with

some Bibles, they should not want them. I believe he and they cannot with credit refuse the proposal." A school was established in Devynock in 1738, with 110 scholars. In the same letter he writes: "I think to be on horseback tomorrow by daybreak, for Llanfyrnach, to meet two clergymen concerned in the Schools – Brock of Nevern, and Thomas of Puncheston. And I hope to be favoured this week by you with a good account of your Schools in Llandilo and Llandebie. The Lord will surely bless your soul for the encouragement of them everywhere. I hope the great commotion that is now made about them will stir up the minds of those who cannot go to school, to learn at home."

From these extracts we see that he was a thorough business man; that he maintained, as far as possible, a personal supervision over his Schools, that he did what he could to test the sincerity of those who asked for them, and to secure that his efforts should be locally seconded and supplemented. His task was a difficult one. He had to be careful on the one hand not to disappoint, or to offend the *amour propre* of those who applied for the Schools; and on the other, not to abuse the confidence of his generous supporters. As implied in one of the last extracts, some of the poorer clergy received small gratuities for teaching in these Schools, and others for inspecting them. In a letter dated January, 1737, he writes:

"Mr. Thomas of Puncheston was here this day in relation to the Welsh School. Paid him as much, or rather more, than he desired, *viz*., two guineas, as part of his due, as his quarter is not out. He has not brought his account; when he does, I will pay him to the full. I have paved the way for to go to examine his School without offence, for which I am glad; for I cannot be satisfied without knowing what is everywhere done with the Charity I am trusted with."

He took part wherever he could in establishing and superintending his Schools. In a letter written January 9th, 1737, he tells his correspondent that he was engaged to be at Kilgeran on St. Paul's Day, "where probably I may open a new Welsh School, having this day received a letter from thence about both, I mean a sermon and a School." Writing again on the 13th of December, in the same year, he says:

"Opportunities of service increase every day. Such favourable dispositions appearing to encourage a Welsh School at Blaenglyn Fawr. I have done all that was possible to patch up books to have it opened tomorrow. A person from that neighbourhood having been here about it last Sunday night; as was also Jenkin, master at LlanIlwch, who, I suppose, sets out this morning to bring me tidings of ten Schools in Pembrokeshire. I gave him yesterday the best instruction I could towards setting them in a good way…. Books are much wanted."

He attended to such matters of detail as the best mode of publishing a school in the neighbour- hood where it was to be introduced:

"Experience has not yet taught me a better method for getting up a Welsh School than to have it published in several Churches around the place it is intended to be in, that teaching and books will be given *gratis* for three months to as many as will accept of the offer, letting them know that they are not to expect such an offer again. And this has been very successful to procure a greater number of scholars."[1]

He had reason to be satisfied with the progress of the Schools as early as this, for he further observes in the same letter: "Can we possibly do otherwise than observe how remarkably our gracious God has answered our poor prayers, by bringing us into a way of

being abundantly serviceable in the best employment; and, as far as I am hitherto convinced, into the likeliest methods of compassing our ends, and I hope, in some large measure." Writing again in January, 1738, he says: "There is reason to hope that the methods now used will prepare several for conversion when visiting times will come. I cannot think the Holy Spirit would set the work on foot if He did not design to make it successful to promote the salvation of some." It will have been seen from the foregoing extracts that he was largely assisted in his great undertaking by Madam Bevan, whose counsel and encouragement he constantly sought, and never sought in vain, in the difficulties that beset his path.

Though he was a sturdy defender of his native language, and a strong advocate of having the ministrations of the Church performed in that language, wherever the higher interests of the people required it, he welcomed with equal joy the opportunity of establishing English schools wherever the people preferred the English language. In *Welsh Piety* for 1942-43, he writes:

"We have instances now of encouraging success among the poor ignorant people in the English part of Pembrokeshire, where two English Charity Schools were set up for some months last summer, in the method of the Welsh Charity Schools; where they prospered far beyond what could be hoped for at first. They were soon crowded with scholars, both young and adult, who made a great and speedy progress, not only in reading English, but likewise in knowledge of the Christian belief and doctrines." Again, in *Welsh Piety* for 1745-46: "In compliance with very earnest and repeated importunities of many, I have set up of late some English Charity Schools, in such small districts of this country where the people speak the English tongue, though very corruptly; and likewise some schools of mixed English and Welsh Scholars, on the borders of these districts. Many more such schools are desired; but at present, I am not sufficiently provided with means to encourage them. It is the single business of these, as well as the Welsh Schools, to teach the scholars the Word of God, to pray in the name of Christ, to learn the Church Catechism, and the principles of religion, with some Psalm tunes. We do not meddle with teaching any of them writing and cyphering, which would require more time than their circumstances, and more expense than my little cash can afford."

The aim of Griffith Jones' Schools, as we have often observed, was the religious instruction of the people. For the successful attainment of this, he lays repeated emphasis on the duty of catechising. He deeply lamented the general disuse into which it had fallen in his day, and maintained that the low condition of religious knowledge and practice in the country was largely due to its neglect. It was its revival in his own parish that first revealed to him the gross ignorance that prevailed, even among those who regularly attended divine service; and the discovery then made roused him to do all in his power to impress upon the clergy and others the due importance of catechising. In order to help those who were engaged in the work, he published in five parts a volume of 620 pages, being an elaborate exposition, in the form of questions and answers, of the Church Catechism, which forms a "Complete Body of Divinity," as has been justly remarked. It may be added that he published an abridged edition of this for the use of the more ignorant class of scholars that attended his Schools. In 1749, he published an able and spirited Welsh pamphlet of forty-five pages, in which he traces the history of catechising, and urges its importance on the clergy, parents, and heads of families. In a note prefixed to his work on the Catechism, he advises that heads of families should ask two or three questions at a time out of it to the members of their households; when assembled together on Sunday nights, and at other times when convenient; and he lays special stress on such subjects as "the Baptismal Vow," "Salvation through Jesus Christ," "faith,"

“repentance,” “Prayer,” “the Lord’s Supper,” and “the duties of children and servants.” “And,” he adds, “if the clergy will be good enough to do the same, or adopt any other method they think best of catechising, on Sundays at the evening service, I hope they will see the benefit of it to their unspeakable comfort.”

In *Welsh Piety* and elsewhere, he appeals with urgency and earnestness for the restoration of catechising to its rightful place in the parochial system, and enforces his appeals with us answerable arguments drawn from Holy Scripture, the Prayer Book, and the writings of eminent Church divines. “We [the clergy] are obliged by our most solemn ordination vows to catechise, at least the younger part of the congregation; we are frequently exhorted to do so by our diocesans, and some times censured and condemned for neglecting it, even by those whose fault and neglect it is that we cannot do it.”[2] He insists that preaching is of very little good while catechising is neglected.

“England, and Wales, too, for the greatest part, are full of preaching; but for all this, the tide of corruption does not abate, but seems in most places to flow in upon us more and more. And what method then had we best try to redress these grievances, but to erect Catechetical Schools everywhere, in as many places as may be; not to teach the Catechism by rote only, but likewise to explain, enforce, and apply daily and fervently, the truths and duties contained therein, in a familiar and easy way, till it be well understood, affectionately engaging and teaching the catechumens to be constant and earnest in their prayers for the grace of God and His blessing.”[3]

“Serious men in the ministry,” he says elsewhere, “have experienced and complained much of it, that without catechising (which is not very practicable, while the people cannot read) preaching is in a manner lost and thrown away upon them; which I could exemplify (if you can excuse it, Sir), from what was related to me some time ago by a clergyman of considerable note, and more than common diligence in his function. He told me he had studied to frame his sermons for several years in the plainest language he was able; and being called to a sick man, of good sense in his business, who desired to receive the Sacrament, and expressed great hopes of his own salvation, and blessed God that he had been to hear the best sermons twice every Sunday for many years together, the Clergyman asked him, upon this occasion, some easy questions; as particularly, what the Bread and Wine in the Lord's Supper signified, which he was now about to receive, as he had done often before; but he could make no answer. Asking him farther, through whose merits he hoped to be saved, and some other plain questions, he could answer none of them, but endeavoured to excuse himself because he was not book-learned; upon which the clergyman asked him who was the minister whose good sermons he had been so constant a hearer of for so many years; You, says the sick man, and I am sure, says he, no man could preach better. Which, said the clergyman (in relating of this to me) astonished me very much, that any of my bearers should remain so ignorant, after all my pains in studying and preaching the plainest sermons possible for a great many years together. But, Sir, it is matter of much greater astonishment that this lamentable case is much too general to be true of one or two only in a parish. What if many parishes cannot afford an instance or two to the contrary? This is very sad, yet too certainly true, especially in this country, where non-residences, plurality of curacies, English preaching to Welsh congregations, abound so much; and, alas! the want of proper dispositions to wish for success, and some places left almost without any preaching at all. I can, therefore, see no probability to lay the foundation of that knowledge and reformation we so much want, without such a method as you, Sir,” and other kind benefactors do now encourage among us. It is my humble opinion that all gentlemen, as well as the clergy, who have the interest of religion at heart, would do well, or can hardly do better than, by

exerting themselves to promote catechetical exercises in churches, schools, and families, and also in all religious Societies. As to the first of these (I mean catechising in the Parish Churches), I am glad to tell you, Sir, that our Right Reverend Bishop of this Diocese, in his late Visitation Charge to his Clergy (among many other good instructions), very heartily recommended catechetical evening lectures on Sundays and Holidays; which I pray God to bless with success, and reward his Lordship for it; and I am sure I can answer for myself, and some others, that we shall be always forward, in the most sincere, grateful, and public manner, to acknowledge all such marks of his Lordship's zeal to revive the now much-impaired Christian religion among us. And as to schools, families, and societies, even in this last, whereof we hear you have considerable numbers at this day in England (may God direct and prosper them to His own glory, and the good of many souls) for the sake of the young, the ignorant, the inexperienced, and unstable, explanatory catechising, together with prayer, Psalmody, conference, and brotherly exhortations, would be the safest and most edifying method to improve them in such sound, useful, practical, experimental and thorough knowledge as might serve for a clue to guide them through all conditions, temptations, and duties of the Christian life, &c"[4]

We insert the above somewhat lengthy quotation for more than one reason. It brings vividly before us the unsatisfactory condition of Christian knowledge in Wales at the time when Griffith Jones commenced his Circulating Schools; it enumerates some of the causes which paralysed the efficiency of the Church in the discharge of her mission; it points out the means which, in the writer's opinion, were necessary to redeem the country from practical heathenism, and to save the Church from fully deserving the charge of negligence and failure, and among those means, it lays special emphasis upon regular catechetical instruction and close intercourse with the people, as an essential part of parochial ministrations. Some of the methods recommended in the above passage, such as "societies," "conferences," and "brotherly exhortations," were viewed in those days with suspicion, if not actually proscribed, by those in authority. But Griffith Jones looked upon them as opportunities for the personal instruction of the people in the vital truths of religion; and had they been generally sanctioned and adopted, there can be little doubt that they would have greatly strengthened the Church's position. And, besides being of historical interest, his opinions and experience of the importance of catechising have lost none of their force and applicability in our own time.

In addition to the establishment and superintendence of the Schools, Griffith Jones had to procure Bibles, Prayer Books, and other literature, necessary to carry on the campaign against ignorance and irreligion, in which he was engaged. His Schools soon created a great demand for these, and a deep and widespread desire to have the Holy Scriptures in Welsh made itself felt. As we have. already seen, the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge had begun to work in this direction, before he was able to look much beyond the limits of his own parish. In the year 1718, the Society brought out an octavo edition of the Welsh Bible, and the Book of Common Prayer bound up with it. It was edited by the Rev. Moses Williams, Vicar of Devynock, a man of acknowledged literary abilities. In 1727, another octavo edition was brought out, again under the editorship of Mr. Williams. Proposals for bringing out the edition of 1718 were embodied in a circular printed in 1714, and signed by the Bishops of Bangor, Llandaff, St. Asaph, Hereford, St. David's, and Worcester. The circular ran as follows:[5]

"Whereas there has been, for some years past, a great scarcity of Bibles in octavo in the British or Welsh tongue, the former editions in that volume being long since out of print, and the folio edition being for the use of Churches, and not for the convenience of private persons;

“And whereas there are in the four Welsh Dioceses upwards of five hundred parishes, in which the generality of the people understand no other language, and are in greater need than ordinary of having the Bible and other religious books in their own tongue, because they are, in many places, too often destitute of the benefit of public worship, and of instruction from the pulpit, there being so many *sinecures* and impropriations in that country, and the provision for the incumbent or curate so very small in some places, that the allowance for several Churches will scarce afford a maintenance for one man;; and whereas there are also above 6000 Welsh in Pennsylvania, and other parts of his Majesty’s dominions in America, where these Bibles are very much wanted;

“It is therefore proposed to publish a new edition of the Welsh Bible in octavo from the folio edition printed at Oxford 1690, with a translation of the English Index printed in quarto 1702; as also a new edition of the Common Prayer Book, with the singing Psalms and 39 Articles annexed, from the late edition in folio at London; and to print them both in the same volume and character with the edition of 1677, that such as have been used to those Bibles, may the more readily find out the Scripture in these.

“But whereas such an edition (by reason of the great expense) cannot well be undertaken by any printer or bookseller, without some assistance to defray the charge thereof; it is therefore proposed to raise money for the advancing this work, by subscriptions, and the charitable contributions of well-disposed persons.

“It would be superfluous to use any arguments to engage such to promote so pious an undertaking; their zeal for God’s glory and the good of souls; their sense of the inestimable benefit of God’s Word, which they enjoy; and their compassion for those who are deprived of it, and live in great ignorance, will be sufficient motives to persuade them.

“For these reasons, we who are more particularly concerned for the promotion of God’s glory, and the edification of the British people of the Principality of Wales, have thought fit, not only to encourage this good undertaking with our own subscriptions, but earnestly to recommend it to the clergy, gentlemen, and other well-disposed persons in our respective dioceses.”

About two hundred and fifty copies are subscribed for in this Circular, of which one hundred are ordered by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. We have been unable to ascertain the number of copies printed in the editions of 1718 and 1727.

From the minutes of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge during the years 1726 to 1740, we learn that a large number of religious books in Welsh, such as the *Book of Homilies*, the *Whole Duty of Man*, *Family Prayers*, the *Husbandman’s Manual*, and other smaller pamphlets, as well as Bibles and Prayer Books, were distributed by the Society in the four Welsh Dioceses. In July, 1736, a letter is read from Griffith Jones to the Committee, requesting that the cost of binding three hundred and fifty Welsh Bibles be granted him by the Society, and this request is agreed to, the cost of binding being £11 13s. 4d. On September I4th of the same year, the Committee, at his request, agreed to send him “on the Society’s terms,” five hundred Psalters in Welsh, with the Welsh Alphabet bound with it, and also a dozen copies of Bishop Burnet’s Pastoral Care. Other similar requests follow, and are granted to him. In the following year, the Society sets apart “£50 towards buying Bibles, New Testaments, and Common Prayer Books for the use of the poor.” Griffith Jones, writing from Bath, which he used to frequent, probably for the sake of his health, sends the Society a communication dated May 10, 1737,

“Signifying that, as he finds the impression of the New Testament in Welsh impracticable by reason of the greatness of the expense, he therefore proposes that the £50 of Sir John Phillips’ legacy be laid out in five hundred Welsh Bibles, including the Old and New Testaments, and Singing Psalms, which he will bespeak of Mr. Mount as soon as he has the Society’s approbation, and will be answerable for the rest of the charges.” This request is granted, subject to the approval of Sir Erasmus Phillips and his brother. We find the Society again recording their desire “to help him as far as their funds allow.” On January 3rd, they further promise to bind two hundred and seventy Welsh Bibles for him, “if Mr. Jones will purchase them at two shillings and sixpence each.” Other minutes in the Society’s records testify both to his importunity and to their liberality. In 1738, he was requested to signify to the Committee “what care is taken to instruct the children of the Welsh Schools in the English language.” His reply to this question, if he made any, is, apparently, not recorded among the Society’s transactions. In August, he sends Mr. Thorold a table containing the number of Schools, and of scholars in each of the Welsh Counties, the aggregate for that year being 3,912, together with a brief account of the scholars, their ages, conditions, &c.. This communication is entered on the minutes of the Society on August 28, 1739. In March, 1740, it “is agreed that the Welsh Bibles remaining in store be given to Mr. Jones of Llanddowror to be distributed as he shall see occasion.”

In the year 1746, a new octavo edition of the Welsh Bible was brought out by the Society. The “curator” of this edition, as well as the next one which was issued in 1752, was Richard Morris, a native of Penrhoslligwy, in Anglesey, and, at that time, chief clerk in the Navy Office. It was printed at the Cambridge University Press, and consisted of fifteen thousand copies. The cost of bringing it out amounted to £6,000, of which £600 was subscribed in Wales, and the rest in England. The book was sold for three shillings and sixpence, while the Society gave the binding.[6] Reports of donations towards this impression appear constantly at this time in the minutes of the Society. Griffith Jones bore his share in the work of collecting funds towards these editions. Under April 22, 1746, we find the following record: “Mr. Thorold to Mr. A. D. Deane, £558 15s. 6d., in East India Bond and interest, on account of the Welsh Bible, from the Rev. Griffith Jones, pursuant to an order of the Committee of the Welsh Bible of the 15th instant.” Whether this sum was collected by him or was given through him by a friend or friends, or came from his own private means, we are not able to determine. The records of the Society bear ample testimony that both the Committee and Griffith Jones worked together nobly in the distribution of these editions of the Bible, as well as other religious publications. We find him receiving five thousand Welsh Church Catechisms several times, fifteen thousand copies of the Collect for the Second Sunday in Advent, four hundred of the Welsh Bibles “allotted to him,” &c. In the minutes of the Society for March 7, 1748, it is recorded that a copy of the Welsh Bible was presented to the Prince and Princess of Wales, through the hand of Sir William Irby. On March 23, 1749, it was agreed upon to forward the following letter to the members of the Society in Wales, “as occasion called:”

“Sir, – In answer to yours of – I am ordered by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge to acquaint you that it gave them a great deal of pleasure to find the people so desirous of having the Bible in their own language. But the demands already made upon them are so great that they cannot possibly get a sufficient number bound, to supply those demands in less than four months, in which time you may expect such a proportion to be disposed among you as the Society can supply.

“However, for your further satisfaction, I can inform you that the Society has a design to go on as soon as they can, not only with another edition of the Bible in Welsh more suitable to common use, but also with an edition of Prayer Books and [New] Testaments

in the same language." On the 23rd of December, 1760, the Society drew up an address to the King on his accession to the throne. Among other things, they inform his Majesty of their efforts to provide the people with religious publications, and have reason to hope that their distribution of Bibles, Prayer Books, and religious tracts "hath greatly contributed to confirm the faith and improve the morals of our fellow-subjects, and particularly, from a compassionate and Christian regard to the wants of our poor brethren in Wales, we have printed and dispersed thirty thousand Bibles in Welsh, that the poor inhabitants of that country might have the Holy Scriptures in their own tongue."

The assistance which the Society gave to Griffith Jones was as ungrudging as it was indispensable. Writing as early as 1738, he says:

"By the great favour of the honourable Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge to this branch of your laudable designs, we have been enabled to procure at great expense (notwithstanding your kind assistance therein) nine hundred and forty Welsh Bibles since last summer, besides Psalters and Church Catechisms, and about thirteen thousand other books, many more thousands being still wanting, not for the Schools only, but for the use of other people who learn to read of one another at home, which, with the salaries of all the masters for teaching, and being also obliged to supply the urgent temporal necessities of some of the scholars, to prevent the famishing of their bodies (while endeavours are used to save their souls), have increased the expense of this year to a very extraordinary pitch."

In illustration of the great demand for religious literature created by the Schools, we make the following quotation from *Welsh Piety* for 1742-43, page 2:

"Besides about four thousand Welsh Bibles, and near as many thousand Welsh Psalters, bought at different times, and many more thousands of the Church Catechisms in Welsh, which were purchased for the poor (being much favoured therein by the worthy Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge), I say, over and above all this, it has been found necessary to be at the pains and expense of writing and printing several other Welsh tracts for their use, as four thousand two-penny books of Prayers; four thousand four-penny books concerning 'the nature and necessity of sound Christian knowledge;' four thousand eight-penny books 'of the Duty of Householders, and of Family Worship'; four thousand twelve-penny books of 'Directions about the decent and spiritual performance of Divine Worship, with various form of prayer in Scripture expressions, suitable to all occasions;' twelve thousand six-penny books of 'A plain, full, and Scriptural Explication of the Baptismal Vow and the New Covenant, as contained in the first part of the Church Catechism;' eight thousand twelve-penny books of the like 'Explication of the Apostles' Creed;' four thousand nine-penny books of 'Singing Psalms, &c.' And it is to be noted that such a number of all these Welsh books have been sold at the prices mentioned, to people that were able to buy, as defrayed the expense of printing them, with a considerable overplus to the School cash; insomuch that many thousands of these books have been given to the poorest, to encourage them to read, without any diminution of, or deduction at all from, any one of the benefactions given to the Schools, except such sums as by the donors were expressly given for books. It is likewise not unfit to be known that the several benefactions (which chiefly came from England) for these last six years, towards the support of the Charity Schools only, do not amount. in the whole to two thousand pounds; which amply justifies what was said in a former account, that at least eight or ten poor persons are taught for every twenty shillings given to that purpose."

It should be noted that all the Welsh books and tracts enumerated in the above extract were written or compiled by Griffith Jones himself. In *Welsh Piety* for 1747-48, he writes again: “Many thousand books of several sorts, to the value of five hundred pounds and upwards, have been provided this year, whereof some are sold at half price, and the rest dispersed *gratis*.” He adds his “public acknowledgment” of “two very generous presents, given for my own use.”

The following “Notice to the Welsh Circulating Schools,” printed in an edition of Griffith Jones’ work on the Church Catechism, will show the conditions on which Bibles were granted to the poor, as well as the care with which he distributed the gifts entrusted to him:

“That the poor people, who are well-conducted, and wish to have Welsh Bibles *gratis*, and are of proper age and of earnest disposition to make the best use of them, should produce a certificate from their parish minister, testifying that they can read Welsh perfectly, and that they resort to their minister to say the Catechism and learn the Exposition of it; and that they conduct themselves becomingly, and severally make the responses, and say the ‘Amen’ at the end of the prayers in Church, according to the devout custom of all the primitive Christians in the ancient Church. Also, the age and condition of such poor people, together with their addresses, should be noted down in the certificate. On these terms, as many Bibles as possible will be distributed *gratis*.”[7]

The financial burdens occasioned by such an organisation as this must have pressed very heavily upon him. In the year 1740-41, the number of Schools amounted to 150, and he tells us that sometimes two, or even three, masters were employed in one School. This would bring the number of masters to considerably over two hundred for that year. But besides the salaries of teachers, he had in some places to hire rooms for holding the Schools, while he had also to make occasional contributions towards “giving bread” to some of his poor scholars, to hire messengers and inspectors, and to make donations to some of the poorer clergy who assisted him in various ways. In *Welsh Piety* for 1747-48, page 2, he writes thus on this subject:

“Some money must be paid for the carriage of books to those distant places where the Schools are; some gratuities are given to poor clergymen for catechising, and for inspecting the conduct of them; and I am to acknowledge with great thankfulness that some benefactions have been sent for that particular purpose, which have been laid out accordingly. However, it has been found urgently needful to employ also some other persons of integrity, to inspect the progress of the Schools, the behaviour and accounts of the masters, and to see that they duly catechised their scholars every day.”
When we add to these expenses the cost of books, we have some idea of the heavy financial burden that constantly pressed upon him.

As regards the sources whence he derived support, he tells us that he had little to expect from his own country, as most of the people were unable to contribute, while the remainder were unwilling. “Yet,” he writes elsewhere, “there have not been wanting here some friends, hearty friends to this cause, as many as they are; but I could mention this with regard to persons of rank or ability, almost in the singular number; and some few others of inferior circumstances, as servants and poor tradesmen, have contributed according to their ability.” The very first financial support came to him from what “could be spared from other occasions out of a small offertory by a poor country congregation at the Blessed Sacrament.” We learn also from some of his correspondents that offertories were made towards the movement in some of the parishes which profited by it. In

referring to “such English benefactors as are kindly disposed towards it,” he says that many of them were unknown to him. A list of his contributors and supporters is given in *Welsh Piety*,[8] and includes about a score of names, most of whom were clergymen, and over one-half from Wales. But the principal part of the burden was doubtless borne by his intimate friends. such as Madam Bevan, Sir John Phillips, and Sir John Thorold.

While his labours were steadily multiplying and extending, and his manifold responsibilities rapidly increasing, the country was going through a period of depression and much poverty. He constantly alludes to this in his Annual Reports. In *Welsh Piety* for 1746-47, page 8, he writes:

“Considering the growing poverty and the many distresses of the poor in this country at present, by scarcity of money and the breaking of farmers, who must thereby be unable to employ the poor tradesmen and labourers, it will be necessary to give many more books than formerly.” In his previous Report, he had said that “all the lower ranks of people here being reduced in circumstances, the commodities which some have for market lie upon their hands; many of them have been obliged to quit their farms, and several so very poor that they cannot attend the Schools without being assisted in their maintenance.” Again in 1747-48, he writes that “a most formidable poverty is increasing among the low rank of people in this country.” and that such of the poor people as are “able to work, usually receive the value of their labour in bread-corn, being seldom paid in money.” A correspondent, writing from Carnarvonshire in 1754, complains that “the market is here very high, and drives the poor to beg their bread about the country, and leave the School to be filled with such only as are not able to go far from home.”

But in spite of difficulties that pressed him on every side, and were such as would have daunted a man of less faith and courage, he trusted in God and persevered. Nor did he trust in vain. “Though there is still no settled fund,” he writes in 1746, “and some times not stock enough in hand to defray half the expense of the current year; yet the spontaneous subscriptions, or free-will offerings of some benevolent persons or other, have never hitherto failed to come in time, to pay off fully and punctually all debts contracted for this good undertaking.”

We insert another striking extract from the same letter, as furnishing proofs of Griffith Jones’ immovable confidence in the righteousness of the cause he had espoused, of the principles which guided him, and of the methods he employed; his trustful dependence upon God both for the means of sustaining the work, and for its success; his insight into the feelings and apprehensions of his friends; the strength of his convictions, his force of character, and his invincible determination to go on with the movement, in the face of all obstacles and discouragements.

“These Schools were at first begun, and have hitherto all along been carried on, by remarkable instances of Divine Providence in favour and support of them. There was no fund or foundation to encourage the beginning of this undertaking, besides an absolute assurance that it was the good Word of God, and the indisputable essentials of His holy religion, that were sincerely intended to be taught by it to poor, ignorant souls. It was this which gave an humble degree of confidence to hope for the blessing of God on the weak and friendless attempt, uprightly intended for the glory of His holy name. And though it was a work of expense, it was very evident, notwithstanding, several friends could not be very safely consulted about it, because in all likelihood they would embarrass it with discouragements, from the seeming improbability of being able to support it. However, upon repeated trials, it pleased kind Providence that this discouragement, and fear of

insufficiency to defray the expense of the attempt, began by degrees to wear off. For by the friendly influence of Divine goodness, benefactions several of which were from persons unknown) have always been very seasonable and very liberal; or else the great charge of so many Schools, and of so many thousand poor souls annually taught in them for so many years, as you may find in the close of the following account, could not possibly have been supported."[9]

Footnotes

[1]Letter to Madam Bevan, December 16, 1736.
[2]*Welsh Piety*, 1752-53.
[3]*Welsh Piety*, 1745-46, p.21,
[4]Letter, August 16, 1739, pp.16-18.
[5]MS. 14,952, Brit. Mus. p.8. This copy was lent to Richard Morris, apparently for transcription, "by the Rev. Mr. Broughton, Secretary to the Society," *i.e*., to the S.P.C.K.
[6]A Chronological Account of the several Editions of the Holy Scriptures in Welsh. MS. 14,952. Brit. Mus.
[7]Brit. Mus. 872. l. 114. The Volume referred to bears no date.
[8]The following names are recorded in *Welsh Piety*, as contributors to the Welsh Circulating Schools, and, especially in the case of those who were residents in Wales, as fellow-labourers with Griffith Jones in soliciting subscriptions, distributing literature, and superintending the Schools generally: Sir John Thorold, Bart., Cranwell, Lincolnshire; Sir John Phillips, Bart., Picton Castle, Pembrokeshire; Mrs. Bevan of Laugharne, Carmarthenshire; Sir Francis Gosling, Knight, and Alderman of London; Rev. Dr. Hales, Teddington, Middlesex; Slingsby Bethel, Esq., M.P. for the City of London; Dr. Hartley, Bath; Rev. Dr. Stonehouse, Northampton; Rev. James Hervey, Weston Pavel, Northampton; Wiliam Butler, Esq., Buerton, Cheshire; Rev. James Sparrow, Bath; Thomas Jones, Esq., Westminster; Rev. William Wynne, Lasynys, Merionethshire; Rev. Thomas Ellis, Holyhead, Anglesey; Rev. Robert Williams, Treasurer of Bangor Cathedral; Rev. David Morris, Rector of Festiniog, Merionethshire; Rev. Andrew Edwards, Rector of Dolgelley; Rev. Humphrey Jones, Llanfwrog, Anglesey; Rev. David Lloyd, Langerniew, Denbighshire; Rev. John Edwards, Vicar of Cwm, Flintshire; Rev. John Kenrick, Vicar of Llangerniew, Denbighshire.
[9]*Welsh Piety,* 1745-46. pp.1,2.

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7. Results of the Schools

We shall now turn our attention to the results which followed these Welsh Charity Schools, as seen in the altered conditions of Church life, and of Society at large. *By their fruits ye shall know them* is the Divine test of movements and institutions, as well as of individual lives. Of the success which attended these Schools, there is abundant evidence of various kinds, and from numerous witnesses. They answered the purpose for which they were instituted. And this was both an ample reward for the time and expense, care and anxiety, which their founder bestowed upon them, and more than sufficient compensation for the ill-natured criticism and bitter hostility which they kindled against him and his friends. For it must be remembered that those who were associated with him in his labours, came in also for a share of the odium which fell upon him. Even his faithful friend and coadjutor, the accomplished Madam Bevan, did not escape. In allusion to this, he penned the following passage in a letter written to her, dated October 11, 1735: "I am sorry for the trouble you meet with from, I must say, a person of uncommon ill-nature, and shameless inveteracy; for I dare affirm that none but one deeply leavened with something worse than what I can find a name for, would set himself to oppose a person so obliging and so zealously engaged in the best interest. But though I am concerned at this, I cannot

wonder at it; your designs are too good to expect any other than the rage of the prince of darkness; and his subjects he will stir up to form against them all the opposition that may be."

But in the face of opposition and difficulty, he persevered with unabated zeal and effort, and his friends retained their confidence in him. The movement grew in influence and popularity, as well as in volume. Misunderstandings were cleared, calumnies were exposed and refuted, and prejudices abated, as the methods and principles of the Schools became better known. Some of the clergy freely acknowledged that at first they entertained strong suspicions against his Schools, but that, on becoming better acquainted with them, became their firmest friends. "Whole congregations in some parishes, where the poor scholars have been publicly examined, have expressed great satisfaction at the unexpected proficiency they had made in a short time; and some clergymen have frankly owned that they were greatly prejudiced in their opinion against the Welsh Charity Schools, till they had happened to be present when some of the scholars were examined; and then they themselves earnestly desired Schools for a quarter or half a year in their own parishes."[1]

In the words of one of Griffith Jones' biographers, the results of these Schools showed themselves

"All over the Principality in an increased thirst for knowledge, and what is of more importance, in raising the tone of religion. The Sabbaths were spent in reading, and a devout attendance at the house of the Lord, instead of the dancing and merry-making they used to spend those sacred hours in. The harpers and fiddlers became useless. Some of them were so far convinced of their wickedness as to refuse their attendance on Sundays, and some became even teachers in the Schools. Such characters had been hired by the year to play by the joint contributions of young people;[2] and some of them, seeing that their ways of iniquity were lost, became outrageous enemies to the Schools. But the general voice of Society soon silenced objections."[3]

It was doubtless "The general voice of Society," added to the support of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and of the few powerful friends who stood by him, that thwarted the designs of his enemies, who endeavoured to bring into disrepute and ruin both him and his work. The facts mentioned in the extract we have just made, as well as others of similar import, are abundantly attested by the published letters of the local correspondents of the Schools, whose testimonies prove beyond dispute that a great reformation of morals, and a revival of Church life and spiritual religion, followed in the track of these Schools. The Holy Scriptures are read; the Church Catechism is learnt, repeated, and understood; the custom of catechising after the Second Lesson at the evening Service is revived; the congregations increase and join in the responses; Psalm tunes are learnt and sung; and the Lord's Table is better and more devoutly attended. Nor are the results less observable outside the Churches. Family worship is extensively set up; profane language becomes less common; habits of drunkenness and profligacy are diminished; the haunts of vice are deserted; the Schools and the Churches are frequented. These signs of reformation are reiterated again and again by the correspondents of Griffith Jones. He sometimes publishes their letters, and at other times summarises the information contained in them, in his own annual Letter.

In *Welsh Piety* for 1740-41, he writes: "It is well attested by proper and credible witnesses, that by means of 'the Welsh Charity Schools' many parish Churches, almost empty before, have been filled with large congregations, the number of Communicants

much increased, very many householders have set up the worship of God in their families, a remarkable reformation is seen in many neighbourhoods, and many thousands of young and old people have been taught to read, and to say the Church Catechism, and willingly repeat it before the congregation to their parish minister; several of whom could not truly say the Lord's Prayer before; and all this in a short time, and (comparatively) with a small expense."

In *Welsh Piety* for 1741-42, he writes: "I have received a very remarkable account from one part of the country (too long to be inserted) that the Welsh Schools have been eminently successful, through the blessing of God, to effect a very great reformation and visible appearance of serious godliness in many, where all other means and methods had been tried before, without being able so much as to civilise the disorderly rabble of the place, as I may justly call them in their unreformed state." Again, in *Welsh Piety* for 1142-43: "A Clergyman wrote me word that the poor people and children who had been in the Welsh Charity Schools out of his two parishes, had been called together in order to be examined before the congregation, who were in all one hundred and eight persons, thirty-seven of them old people; and that they were examined for two hours and upwards, and gave account of what they had learned, to the great satisfaction of all the gentlemen and others that were present. These poor people, less than twelve months before, he says, could neither read nor answer any question at all in religion; and the Welsh Schools, as he adds, had done more good in a few months than his constant preaching had been able to do for all the time he had been there. I could produce many attestations from Clergymen, gentlemen, and others, concerning the improvement in knowledge, reformation of manners, visible appearance of serious piety, and greater regard than before for public worship, which have been promoted, through the blessing of God upon the Welsh Charity Schools, more or less in all places where they have been." Again, in the following year, he writes that "some worthy ministers have lately certified that their Churches and Communions were fuller, and that their preaching is now better understood by the poor and low ranks of people," &c. In the same letter, he mentions incidents reported in letters "received since I began to write," wherein it is certified that "some very young children are sometimes overheard talking together very seriously about their salvation through Jesus Christ; and that the parents of a child about six years old, declared to their neighbours that they were never under such shame and confusion about their ignorance and neglect of God's worship, as when they heard their little child telling them very gravely one night, after he was come from school, 'You must not go to meal without Grace, nor to bed without prayer.'…. I am told just now that a reformation is coming on by means of a Charity School, lately set up in a place very notorious for profane swearing and drunkenness; and that several persons have received reproofs in a kind manner from the young scholars. A person who went lately to another school writes me word that he was greatly and very agreeably surprised to find the scholars, in so short a time, give so good account of the principles of religion out of the Church Catechism, and the Explanation of it, giving also the meaning and sense of everything in their own words." "Such has been the happy effect of these endeavours, through the blessing of God, as I have been credibly certified by persons of undoubted veracity, living near these schools, that many have been reclaimed from their vicious practices of horrid and customary swearing, drunkenness, and other debaucheries. A visible reformation and serious regard for piety has been observed in very many families and neighbourhoods, where there was no appearance of it before. Several reverend clergymen, who inspected these schools, have given it under their hands, that the scholars performed beyond their expectation, and that they and their parishioners received no small satisfaction when the Welsh scholars were publicly examined at the parish Church before the congregation…. Some other clergymen have written to me, signifying that, before the coming of these

schools into their parishes, there was hardly one in their congregations that could answer the responses in divine service; but that now there are, to their great joy (to use their own words), very many that carry their books with them to Church, who read the Psalms, and answer all the responses perfectly well."[4] In another of his Annual Reports, he writes in a similar strain: "I will instance briefly in one school only, which was a very full one; set up in a place so notoriously infamous for profane swearing, that all the children, even the youngest of them, were generally guilty of it. This gave the master great concern. He tried all means to break them of so odious a habit. He spoke to them in a friendly manner about it, and sometimes had recourse to a little correction. He gave them Scripture verses to learn by heart every night, concerning the vices they were guilty of, and the duties they owed to God and man. This conduct succeeded so well, by the blessing of God, that after some weeks, not a single oath of any sort was to be heard among them. When the small-pox was in the neighbourhood, about forty of them sickened of this distemper, and nine of that number, from five to nine years old, died, and I am informed in a manner that gave great comfort and admiration to those about them; showing an awakened concern for their souls, and expressing great hopes of mercy for the sake of Christ their Saviour. When they were alone, they were overheard repeating the Catechism, and the verses they had learned by heart, and at other times, praying earnestly."[5]

The letters from correspondents, which are published in *Welsh Piety*, abundantly confirm the above extracts. They were written, for the most part, by clergymen, who cannot be suspected of exaggerating the good results of the Schools, for any selfish purpose or worldly advantage. For, in the first place, the Schools did not enjoy the patronage of those in authority, and some times met with opposition from. the people for whose benefit they were held; and, in the second place, they considerably increased the labours of the parochial clergy wherever they were established. It must, therefore, be owned that it was from a desire to benefit their people and to perform more efficiently and faithfully the duties of their sacred office, that those many clergy who welcomed them to their parishes, supported them so heartily, and spoke so well of them. And this is a matter of considerable importance. We can only give here a few, out of a very large number, which prove incontestably that it is far from true to say, as has been too often said, that nearly all the clergy of those days were worldly minded, idle, and utterly indifferent to the spiritual welfare of their people. It is probably true that the majority of the Welsh clergy were willing, at that time, to follow the lead of any one who would help and encourage them in providing better means for the instruction of their people, and the revival of spiritual life in the Church; and it is certain that they received but little encouragement and guidance from those who were officially placed over them. In our opinion, it reflects no little credit on the Welsh clergy of those days that, under the circumstances, so many of them followed so faithfully the lead in this great work, of one of their brethren who occupied merely an ordinary position in the Church.

Of the *Welsh Piety* for 1740-41, extracts of letters from correspondents number about eighty, and fill some fifty-six pages. We shall select only two. The first is from the Rev. P. Thomas, curate of Gelligaer, in Glamorganshire, dated July 16, 1741. He enumerates the reforms effected by the Schools under four headings:

"1. Our Churches in general in this neighbourhood are now near as full again of auditors as they used to be before those Welsh Charity Schools circulated about the country. Their ministers endeavoured before, both by fair and rough means, to bring the people under the droppings of the sanctuary, but all in vain; yet now (blessed be God) our solemn assemblies are thronged; and what is more to be taken notice of, there is a visible change for the better in the lives and behaviour of the people; which induces me to hope that

God pours down His blessing in great abundance upon this new way (if I may so call it) of reviving religion among us. As by learning to read they are taught to read their Master's Will with their own eyes, as well as to hear it with the ear, it is hoped that the advantage they receive by both senses, will doubly increase their love and affections to God and His holy ways.

"2. We have now a Monthly Communion about us here in several Parish Churches, where, within very few years past, it could hardly be administered so often as thrice a year, for want of persons to receive it. But (thanks be to God) I hear there are near six score monthly communicants in one of these parishes at present, *viz*., Eglwys Helen, where, not long since, they wanted a convenient number to minister the blessed Sacrament on one of the three solemn Feasts of the year. Am also informed that the communicants increase monthly at Bedwas, Mynyddislwyn, and Bedwellty in Monmouthshire, and in several other parishes distant from me, where the Schools have been for one or two quarters, &c.

"3. It was difficult for the poor to find fit persons, according to the excellent institution of our Church, to stand godfathers and godmothers to their children when they brought them to be baptised; as few made conscience of receiving the Lord's Supper, indeed very few could give a tolerable account of it, nor of the Creed and Ten Commandments, nor of the very plainest principles of the Christian religion. They could neither answer the easiest questions about them, nor yet submit to instruction. But now, blessed be God, since these Schools came about, they seem to be quite altered and of another disposition: are desirous to be taught, and bewail their ignorance, insomuch that we have several families now where the parents and their children, or the masters and their servants, examine one another in practical points of divinity, and question each other in the Church Catechism, and often spend their spare hours in reading and praying. And the poor people who stood Sureties at the font when they knew not what they did, now understand something of their duty, are stirred up to put their god-children to the Welsh Schools, and to give them what poor assistance they can in meat or clothes towards their support therein.

"4. The Welsh Schools have been the means, under God, to reform the profanation of the Sabbath Day, which the generality of the common people formerly spent in tippling, gaming, &c., notwithstanding all the good laws in force against it. Many of them at present are as fervent for the sanctification of it, as before they were in profaning it; for, as then they assembled together for their plays and diversions, without much interruption, neighbours associate now on the Lord's Day evening to read their Bibles or other good books, and to repeat what they remember of the instructions given them from the pulpit in the morning; singing Psalms and praying with their families, which, before they were taught to read, they neither did nor could do. They gratefully own the light and reformation they are now blessed with, to be owing (next under God) to the charitable supporters of these Schools, which they acknowledge to be the most beneficial charity that ever could be offered towards promoting religion among the poor and ignorant, &c."[6]

The next quotation shall be one from the pen of Mr. Marmaduke Gwynne, of the Garth, Breconshire, who was a county magistrate of an honourable family, and "an ornament to his county and profession," as Griffith Jones styles him. It was this influential correspondent that, "being alarmed at the reports he had heard of Howell Harris,…. and regarding him as an incendiary in Church and State," went to one of Harris' meetings with the Riot Act in his pocket, with the view of dispersing the congregation; but having heard the sermon, he was greatly impressed, and entreated the evangelist to accompany him to Garth to supper.[7] The following extract from a letter from Mr. Gwynne to Griffith Jones, dated October 10, 1740, bears evidence of his religious earnestness:

“When we were talking about a world which is invisible to the natural eye, we entertained ourselves with giving thanks and praises to the great God, for the extraordinary success the method of setting up Charity Schools has had, which is visible by seeing the effects thereof. For our Churches hereabout, which formerly used to be very thin, have, of late years, full congregations, and the communicants at the blessed Sacrament of our dearest Lord’s Supper are increased accordingly. I shall take care to see that the excellent rules you sent me be strictly observed. And I hope some others, after they have had from me the perusal of your printed letter, will be pleased with your blessed undertaking.”[8]

Of the *Welsh Piety* for 1746-47, letters from correspondents occupy sixty pages. The first is from the Rev. Robert Lloyd, minister of Devynock, who writes on the 16th of December, 1746:

“The Welsh Charity School at Illtud, in this parish, under the care of T. D., has been blessed to the very great improvement of the children there, who, though most of them were but young, and never had learned a letter before, will now read with great perfection, and give very satisfactory answers to most questions in the principles of our holy religion; say their Catechism very perfectly, and have got by heart a good deal of your Explanation thereof. This exceeding sweet and comfortable beginning has so wrought upon the parents, that they are very desirous of having the School for another quarter, to be taught by the same master. For his humble and Christian behaviour, and his great diligence in instructing the children, have so won the affections of many that were at first very indifferent about the School, and stopped the mouths of the gainsayers, that none can be more proper to be employed in the farther teaching of it, if it may be granted for one quarter more. I can only assure you that this account is given you with as strict an eye to truth as possible, having myself watched with great closeness over every part of the master’s conduct; I mean his conduct both as a Christian and schoolmaster; and make it therefore my humble and hearty request he may be employed here for some time more.”

The Rev. David Havard, curate of Llandyssul, writes on the 25th of May, 1747: “Since the time you were pleased to bestow the fifty Welsh Expositions *i.e*., of the Catechism] to the poor of our parish, Mr. Thomas, the vicar of the parish, and myself did distribute them to the poorer sort that would learn them, especially to the Scholars of the Welsh Charity School. I may boldly say that the Welsh Charity School did more good in our parish than all our preaching for many years, for now the people bring their children to Church to be catechised every Sunday evening, twenty or thirty at a time.” The vicar of two large parishes in Glamorganshire, the Rev. D. Price, Llangyfelach, writes on the 9th of September, 1747: “I have observed that the parents of such children as were taught to read, and have learnt some portions of the Exposition on the Church Catechism, seem more civilised in outward behaviour, and more frequently attend the public service; which I impute more to their being shamed by their own children of their former neglect, than to any impression that might be made upon them by all I could say; that some of the adult scholars, seldom seen before in Church, are now at least in appearance attentive hearers; and that others of them, who frequently joined in all other offices of Divine worship, and yet continued in the total omission of the Sacrament, are become monthly communicants. These present good effects, and many more, which, by the Divine blessing on this pious and charitable undertaking, may be hoped in time to come, encourage my importunity for a Welsh School in each of my parishes, for my farther assistance in the ministry.” The Rev. J. Thomas, rector of Puncheston, Pembrokeshire, who had inspected several Schools in his district, bears, among other things, the following testimony to the masters of the Schools: “They have not only behaved as sober

and pious Christians, but have been indefatigably industrious in the management of their Schools, brought up al their scholars beyond expectation to read in a short time, taught them all the Church Catechism by heart, and most of them, to understand the sense and meaning thereof, as the Baptismal Vow, the Creed, the Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, and the Sacraments. They not only attended the Church of England themselves, but brought their pupils there to be openly catechised along with them, as I have been well informed; and had some of them constantly, who were in my parish, attending the Divine service and Sacraments, with a decent and devout behaviour, and brought their scholars to be duly catechised by me. They were not only free from Methodism, but showed a great dislike to those that followed that way." The Rector of Llangerniew, in Denbighshire, writing on the 14th of September, 1751, reports that there were forty boys and girls in his School during the summer quarter, and adds: "Some of them I have heard read the Bible perfectly well, and, to my very great satisfaction, have five or six young lads that seldom fail attending morning and evening service on Sundays, and make all the responses audibly and distinctly; and so diligent, yea, so indefatigable, is the old man, the teacher, amongst them, that I never once surprised him as doing nothing, or absent from his charge and employment…. One time of many, I came upon them at prayers in the Litany, which all, from the biggest to the least, answered devoutly, and was, methought, a lovely scene or sight; they seemed even beautiful in their rags, while they thus *learned to put on Christ Jesus*. Good Sir, for my own part, I am entirely of opinion that no better method could be thought of, as for promoting mutual instruction, so likewise for inflaming mutual zeal. Of this I could give some instances, particularly of a lad about eight or nine years old, that has learnt to read perfectly well; and now the School being gone too far for him, and some others to follow, his wonted play-fellows come to him, as for play, so also to learn their book and Catechism. This same lad, when a little brother of his lay a-dying, got up at midnight undesired, and with his book in hand, fell upon his knees and read a prayer or two for him, and when he had done, fell a-weeping. Is this lad, Sir, entitled to one of the Welsh Bibles of the next impression? And pray, when are they to come out? for I am constantly solicited by some one or other of my parishioners on the account." The Rev. Thomas Ellis, Vicar of Holyhead, wrote, in a letter dated February 27, 1752: "It gives me pleasure to find by the printed certificates for the two last years that not one of the said Schools fails of doing good service to religion, better and more lasting service perhaps than is done by any other means. The exceeding great usefulness of the said Schools, for promoting the knowledge and practice of the true religion among those that would otherwise be in great danger of continuing strangers to both, is now become un. deniable throughout Wales from sufficient testimony and experience." This correspondent complains that North Wales was backward in contributing towards the support of the Schools, which showed, in his opinion, "such a want of zeal and spirit in a good cause as casts a reproach upon our country." The Rector of Llanllechid, Carnarvonshire, in a communication dated April 22, 1952, stated "that the master behaved regularly, soberly, and carefully," and that he instructed the children in the Catechism, and singing of Psalms, as well as in reading the Welsh language. "The benefit," he adds, which "great numbers have received from this Charity is already very plainly to be seen, as many of them make the regular responses at Divine service, a thing not known before in this parish. They also sing Psalms very well while the master assists them, and will in a little time be able to do it without any instructor." The Incumbent of Llanengan, in the same county, writes on the 10th of June, 1755: "That these Schools, guided by Divine Providence, have greatly revived the decayed spirit of Christianity in the hearts of people, is visible from their eagerness, poor as they are, to procure Welsh Bibles and other good books; a passion so dead a few years ago, that one might fancy himself now transported to another climate."

These extracts, which could be indefinitely multiplied, speak for themselves.[9] They prove that the Schools of Griffith Jones were creating a widespread thirst for knowledge, and a spirit of religious earnestness in the country. He could write of them in 1752 as follows:

"I have now before me about two hundred certificates or letters, received this year about them, from clergymen and others, all but few personally unknown to me, several of which I beg leave to annex to this account. Were I to trouble you with all such testimonies as have been sent me about them from all parts where the schools have been from the beginning, the number would amount to near two thousand; some hundreds of extracts out of them have, at several times, been made public already. All good men, I trust, will justly admit the joint evidence of such a cloud of witnesses to be sufficient to vindicate, and I hope to recommend, these little nurseries to the charitable consideration of well-disposed Christians."

The uniform testimony of his numerous correspondents for over twenty years amply justified him in using the following words in 1759:

"The utility of such schools becomes more and more conspicuous, in so much that they have lately been received into some very dark parts of the country where they had never been before, and where they have been blessed with surprising success. The ignorant poor creatures at first, having been long habituated to their shameful ignorance, treated religion and the offer of Christian instruction with ridicule and scoffings; but soon after some schools had been opened, it pleased God to work such a wonderful awakening among them, that they bestirred themselves with great concern about the salvation of their souls. Men, women, and children flocked to the schools; old as well as young submitted to be catechetically instructed. It was very delightful to hear of so great a change among them, as that the daily worship of God, in the morning and evening, was set up in many families. Several such refreshing instances of divine blessing attending this work of charity, have greatly encouraged your ancient, humble servant, though under many infirmities, to proceed in it again, as we hope it may incite others to contribute toward it."

That the schools were instrumental in teaching a very large number of Welsh people to read their own language, is abundantly proved by what has been already shown. The number of those who attended the day schools in his life-time amounted to over 150,000, while those who attended the night schools were twice as numerous, in many of those places where the schools were established. We are further told that many learnt at home. "It should also be kept in mind," writes Judge Johnes in his admirable essay on the *Causes of Dissent in Wales*, "that the number of scholars just given applies merely to those who frequented the schools in the day time; Griffith Jones informs us that those who received tuition by the night visits of the schoolmasters were twice as numerous a class as the regular day-scholars. Nor are these details in any respect a matter of vague conjecture, as one of the duties of the schoolmasters was to keep a minute account of the names, dispositions, and progress of their pupils." "This was certainly a *degree* of success which the most sanguine friends of the institution could hardly have anticipated; we can only justly appreciate its real extent when we recollect that the population of Wales during this period continued, on an average, between 400,000 and 500,000."[10] In *Welsh Piety* for 1777, the year in which Madam Bevan died, a statement is given "of the number of Schools established by Griffith Jones and Mrs. Bevan, and the number of scholars instructed in them from the commencement in 1737, till the death of that lady in 1777, a period of forty years." The total number of schools was 6,465 and of scholars 314,051. It was a magnificent work. It is no exaggeration to say that in a little more than a

generation, the great majority of the population of Wales was directly affected by these schools. And their beneficial results were unquestionable. The Rev. Dr. Thomas Llewelyn, a learned Nonconformist minister, in his *Tracts, &c*., printed first in 1769, says:

"Reading among the lower class of people, is become much more common and general in that country (*i.e*. Wales) now than formerly. Since the year 1737, 220,000 persons and upwards, we are informed, have been taught to read in one particular sort of schools, called Circulating Welsh Charity Schools, first set up by the late Rev. and truly pious Griffith Jones, and since his death, supported by the voluntary contributions of well-disposed persons."

Another indirect testimony to the good effects of these schools may be cited here:

"Another reason why the people are more respectable and better informed than might be expected in a district apparently little calculated for the progress of improvement, is that the advantages of decent education have been longer established in Wales than in most parts of England. I do not mean to affirm that at the present moment the Welsh peasantry are better taught than the English, because the instruction of the poor has of late been taken up in England by persons of condition; and the benevolent institutions of this country, when once their necessity is felt and acknowledged, are seldom allowed to relax in their progress towards universal utility. But I apprehend our middle-aged and elderly poor to be much more ignorant than the middle-aged and elderly poor of Wales, at least in that part with which I am acquainted; and a certain portion of knowledge having descended hereditarily from father to son for several succeeding generations, it is more firmly rooted and more generally spread than where it is of very recent acquirement, though the immediate opportunities are superior. It has been urged as an objection to Sunday and other day schools with as, that the children unlearn at home with their ignorant parents, faster than the efforts of their instructors can induce them to learn; but this objection would rarely be found to apply in the Principality. There are few persons in the towns who are unable to read; and even in the villages, and the more mountainous parts, schools are very common, and in many instances, of ancient establishment. Where there is no ball, as before described, and especially in the mountains, the school is kept either in the Church porch, or in the body of the Church."[11]

It is to the Schools of GriffithJones that Wales owes, if not the conception, at any rate the means of establishing Sunday Schools, and the fact that our Welsh Sunday Schools have, unlike those of England, been always largely attended by adult pupils, goes far to prove that they are the successors of the Welsh Circulating Charity Schools; and Thomas Charles of Bala, who took a leading part in founding Welsh Sunday Schools, acknowledges, in a communication to the Hibernian Society, dated January 4, 1811, that "the Circulating Day-Schools have been the principal means of erecting Sunday Schools; for without the former, the state of the country was such that we could not obtain teachers to carry on the latter. Besides, Sunday Schools were set up in every place where the day-schools had been."[12] The Schools of Griffith Jones became also the model of the Gaelic Schools, established early in the nineteenth century in the Highlands of Scotland, for the purpose of teaching the inhabitants of those parts to read their own language. "The Scotch Society, when speaking of the past experience of such schools in Wales, pronounced the plan peculiarly suited to the mountainous nature of both countries, and to have widely diffused the ability to read, and conveyed, with much celerity, from one valley to another the elements of instruction."[13]

Footnotes

[1]*Welsh Piety*, 1741-42, p.7.
[2]"I had consented with one or two jovial young men to pay a musician for the season, as they used to say, that is, at Easter, Whitsuntide, &c., and during the time of vacation from School, when we intended to divert ourselves with dancing," &c. – *Autobiography of Peter Williams*.
[3]Sketch, &c., by Rev. E. Harries.
[4]*Welsh Piety*, 1744-45.
[5]*Welsh Piety*, 1747-48.
[6]*Welsh Piety*, 1740-41. pp. 76-79.
[7]*Memoirs of Howell Harris*, by John Bulmer. p.27.
[8]*Welsh Piety*, 1740-41, p.86. Several other letters by Mr. Gwynne are inserted in *Welsh Piety.*
[9]It should be borne in mind that a considerable number of the letters from Correspondents are subscribed by laymen.
[10]*Causes of Dissent in Wales*, by Judge Johnes, p.27.
[11]*The Scenery, Antiquities, and Biography of South Wales, &c*., by Benjamin Heath Malkin, Esq., M.A., F.S.A., 2nd Ed. 1807, Vol. i, p.104.
[12]*Memoir of Charles*, by Rev. E. Morgan, 2nd Ed., 1831, p.363.
[13]*Wales, &c.*, Sir Thomas Phillips, 1849, p.274.

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8. Other Agencies and Movements.

Such were the principles and the methods by which the Circulating Schools were conducted, and such were the results which followed them. They met with undoubted success. But it is not to be supposed that they were the only agency within or without the Church in Wales in the eighteenth century, which was working for the enlightenment of the people, and the revival of religion. We do not here propose to indicate the efforts which were made by Nonconformists in this direction, as it would take us beyond our limits. But it will be expedient in this chapter to take a brief general survey of what, apart from the Circulating Schools, Churchmen were doing for the promotion of religion and literature in the country.

We have already referred to the attitude of the Bishops in Wales towards the Circulating Schools. It is true that they were members of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, which never relaxed in its support of Griffith Jones, while they gave their countenance and their contributions towards publishing Welsh Bibles and Prayer Books, and other devotional works, such as the *Book of Homilies*, *Vicar Pritchard's Poems*, and *The Whole Duty of Man,* which is evidence that they took an interest in the welfare of the Welsh-speaking population, which included the vast majority of those committed to their charge. And this only makes it the more puzzling to find no evidence that they gave their sanction or support to the Welsh Circulating Schools. At one time, indeed, Griffith Jones seemed to think that he was on the point of realising his most fervent hope,[1] namely, that the Bishops would give their countenance to the movement. In *Welsh Piety* for 1748-49, he wrote: "We are very highly obliged, as I am given to understand, to our most worthy and right reverend Diocesans, who are pleased to speak kind things, and approve of the Welsh Schools, and recommend them, because they are now, as the expression goes, under the appointments and directions of the parochial clergy; and, indeed, they were never designed to be otherwise, where they please to take the care of them. It will be our duty to be more express in our most grateful acknowledgements for this favour to our

superiors; when we obtain their leave to do so." It does not appear, however, that their Lordships gave him leave to make use of their names, otherwise we may be sure that he would have promptly done so, both in gratitude for their support, and in the interest of the schools. It is to be feared that their knowledge of both the condition of their dioceses, and of the benefits that were derived from the schools, was insufficient to enable them to estimate at their true value, the reports made to them by the opponents of these schools, which fell on unfortunate times, as regards Episcopal rule; for it was at least equally true of the Welsh Bishops as of the English, that "towards the middle of the century, and on to its very close, there was an undoubted lowering in the general tone of the Episcopal order."[2] The great and good Dr. Bull, between whom and Griffith Jones strong feelings of mutual respect had existed, and whose opinions of Vicar Prichard's character and services to religion, were so high as to have induced him to express his desire to be buried at Llandovery by his side, had died in 1710; and it does not appear that any of his successors in St. David's in the eighteenth century, did much to help the Church in the diocese.

Dr. Humphreys of Bangor, at the beginning of the century, as we have already seen, stimulated his clergy to associate themselves together for the purpose of improving the educational and religious condition of the diocese, on the principles adopted and recommended by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. He was a patron of learning; and we are told that Ellis Wynne and Edward Samuel, both eminent Welsh authors in after-life, were induced by his counsel, and perhaps by his assistance, to prepare for Holy Orders. Dr. Beveridge, soon after his appointment to St. Asaph in 1704, applied himself to restore discipline among his clergy, which, since the days of Dr. William Lloyd, had become lax. He revived "the custom of public catechising, which had of late fallen into neglect; and with a view to promoting its efficiency, he drew up and published for the use of his clergy his Plain and Easy Exposition of the Church Catechism."[3] A Welsh translation of this little work was published in 1707. T h e administration of Bishop Fleetwood, who entered on his work in the same diocese in 1708, was characterised by much energy and earnestness.

"His charge for 1710, which was very explicit on the duties of the clergy, wardens, and people, and has been described as 'an admirable epitome of the discipline of the Church,' was, contrary to the usual custom, printed and sent round to the clergy sometime before his visitation. From it we further learn that there were two abuses which he set himself resolutely to correct, *viz*., the non-residence of 'some rectors who thought themselves at liberty to absent themselves because not tied by oath to canonical residence as vicars were.' but which he declared to be contrary to the Act of 21 Henry VIII.; 'and the disuse, in some places, of a weekly sermon for one every fortnight or three weeks.' insisting that there must be a sermon every Lord's Day throughout, he left it to the discretion of the minister whether it should be in English or Welsh; but added his disapproval of the conduct of those who gave an English one to favour one or two families in the parish, when the rest were Welsh."[4]

These were bright instances; but unfortunately for the Church in Wales, her chief pastors during the remainder of a century so pregnant with issues, seem to have taken little active interest in her welfare.

"Passing on from the parochial clergy to the bishops, we find that they were, for the most part, men of mark, both for learning and piety; but they were the victims of the baneful system of translation, under which their tenure of the See was too short and precarious to enable them to acquire much personal influence, or to carry out large measures of reform;

and they were frequently absentees in consequence of their holding English preferments in order to eke out their incomes. There were as many as seventeen bishops appointed to the See [St. David's] in the course of this century, twelve of whom vacated it by translation. Even in Saunders' time, "invidious remarks were made that the bishops only accepted the post by way of earnest or insurance of some other bishopric; and yet the system had not then reached its full development."[5]

These words were written of the Diocese of St. David's, but matters were not much better in the other three Welsh Dioceses; and we beg leave to state that a heavier indictment of Church administration in Wales at that time, than that which is made in the last quotation, it would be hardly possible to formulate. In order to realise its full weight, it must be borne in mind that the Bishops were willing "victims of the baneful system of translation," and that it was by no constraint or compulsion that they added English preferments to their Welsh bishoprics. And the fruits, which ripened as the century grew, became bitter in the early part of the nineteenth. The contrast between the attitude of the Welsh people towards the Church at the beginning of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth, can hardly be exaggerated. The following figures, which are taken from the *History of Dissenters*, by David Bogue and James Bennett, are highly significant. In the year 1716, there were about 1,150 Dissenting congregations in England and Wales, of which 53 only, or 4.2 per cent., were in Wales. But in 1810, or thereabouts, out of the 2,002 Dissenting congregations in England and Wales, 419 belonged to Wales, or nearly 21 per cent. Monmouthshire is included in Wales in both cases. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the Church in Wales enjoyed exceptional opportunities. She had retained the strong and steadfast attachment of the people towards her, which had so distinguished them through. out the Cromwellian period. The relation which subsisted between the great landowners and their tenants and dependents, even at that time, was largely characterised by the spirit of the Feudal System. It appears to be true that more than a "few Welsh Squires"[6] were prepared in 1746 to risk their all for the Pretender, had he succeeded in carrying out his intention of marching his army into Wales; and "the traditions that linger still among the Welsh hills show that Jacobite principles were not confined to the landowners, but also prevailed among the peasants and farmers."[7] "When the parsons and the squires opposed the revivalists, under the conviction that the latter were bringing troubles upon the Church, they had no difficulty at first in persuading the people to join them in persecuting the itinerant preachers.

"What, then, were some of the chief causes that have led to such a contrast as we see now existing? Many of the causes were, no doubt, common to England and Wales, and have left bitter fruits there as well as here; but one, at least, with results of its own, was peculiar to the Principality; I mean, of course, the language, which presented, it must be admitted, a grave barrier to the free intercourse of the component parts of the Kingdom, and was a drawback to the worldly advancement of the monoglot Welshman. Bat how was it faced? Was it by carefully selecting for their spiritual guidance and oversight the best material their council afforded – men of the stamp of the earlier Tudor Bishops, such as Davies, Morgan, Parry, Griffith, and Lloyd; and providing for their further instruction in the language of business by means of week-day Schools? Alas! no; and incredible as it may seem, from 1724 to 1890 – for a period of 150 years – no Welsh-speaking Bishop presided over this diocese;[8] not one who could administer confirmation in the language alone understood by the monoglot catechumen, or could take part efficiently in any other office of the Church in the Welsh tongue. And it was no better in the other three dioceses…. One of its first fruits was to check and almost extinguish a feature which had honourably distinguished the Welsh clergy of the past, namely, their real for the publication of books in the vernacular for the enlightenment of their countrymen, and to

hand over the powerful instrument of the press to those who have not been slow to use it to the Church's detriment."[9]

But notwithstanding the want of encouragement on the part of the official leaders of the Church, much was done by Churchmen in the eighteenth century, even apart from Griffith Jones' Schools, to promote Welsh literature and education. We have already referred at some length to the movements that were under the auspices of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, both in the establishment of Charity Schools, and in the dissemination of Welsh religious publications. There is no reason to believe that the movement, in which Griffith Jones took the leading part, absorbed any of the Schools which had been started early in the century. With regard to religious literature in the vernacular, there were doubtless thousands of copies of excellent publications scattered up and down the country at the beginning of the eighteenth century, which had been issued in the previous one. Thee metrical version of the Psalms by Archdeacon Prys, who had rendered valuable assistance to Bishop Morgan in the translation of the Welsh Bible published in 1588, had been issued either separately, or bound up with Bibles and Prayer Books, for a hundred years before the Circulating Schools were set up, and some ten or twelve editions of this popular work were thus circulated. The effects of the celebrated Vicar Prichard's sermons were deep and widespread in the neighbourhoods where he laboured. He drew immense congregations when he preached in the Parish Churches of Llandovery and Llanedi, of which he was incumbent; and when he officiated at St. David's Cathedral, of which he was Chancellor, it is said that he was obliged to erect a movable pulpit in the churchyard, as even the venerable Cathedral Church itself could not hold the vast multitudes that thronged to hear him. But it was through his homely but powerful poems that he exercised the most lasting influence over his countrymen.[10] They were learnt and repeated all over the Principality, until comparatively recent times. Between 1646 and 1750, about twenty editions of these poems, in part or in whole, were circulated.[11] The good which they did in those times is incalculable. It has been suggested that the 1630 edition of the Welsh Bible was brought out through the exertions of the Vicar, and that he was also the author of *Carer y Cymry* (*The Lever of Welshmen*), an excellent little book of 135 pages, which was first published in 1631.[12]

Other devotional works, mostly translations, such as *Practice of Piety*, translated by Rowland Vaughan, of Caergai, *Pilgrim's Progress*, translated by Stephen Hughes, with many more works of a like nature, had been printed and circulated in the seventeenth century. In the third year of the eighteenth appeared the first edition of the *Visions of the Sleeping Bard* by Ellis Wynne, based, it is said, on the work of Quevedo, and written in nervous, classical Welsh. This book has exercised a deep and lasting influence on religious thought in Wales. Its author was also the translator of Jeremy Taylor's *Holy Living*, first published in 1701; and, at the request of the Welsh Bishops, he superintended a new edition of the Welsh Prayer Book in 1710. He died in 1732, and was followed in the benefice of Llanfair, in Merionethshire, by his son William Wynne, who appears on the list of those who were authorised to receive subscriptions in aid of the Schools of Griffith Jones, and was one of the Correspondents of these Schools, two letters from him appearing in *Welsh Piety* for the year 1752-53. William Wynne held, in addition to Llanfair, the rectory of Llanaber in the same county, and it would seem that his younger brother, Edward, acted as his curate in this latter parish, and was also a Correspondent of Griffith Jones, a letter of his being published in *Welsh Piety* for 1751-52. One of Griffith Jones' Schools was held in Llanaber Church in 1751-2, with 29 scholars, and another in Llanfair in the following year, with 24 scholars. In this latter year, a School was also held in Llanaber Church with 30 scholars, and another in the village of Barmouth in the same

parish, with 35 scholars, which is evidence that the sons of the celebrated Ellis Wynne, of Lasynys, were warm supporters of the Circulating Schools.

Another eminent man of letters in the ministry of the Welsh Church at this time was Edward Samuel, Incumbent of Llangar, in Merionethshire. He was a writer of elegant Welsh, and a bard of no mean order. Most of his prose works were translations, and among them was that of Grotius' *De Veritate* &c.

Theophilus Evans, Vicar of Llangammarch, and afterwards of St. David's, Brecon, was a learned man, and an able Welsh scholar. He became vicar of the former parish in 1738, and in *Welsh Piety* for 1739-40, Llangammarch appears in the list with a School of 71 scholars. He was made vicar of St. David's in 1739, and a School was set up in Brecon town in 1742. In 1745-46, there were two Schools in the parish of Llangammarch, with a total of 87 scholars. Theophilus Evans was the author of *The Mirror of the First Ages*, in which he "told his countrymen their early history, how great they had been, how many lands they had governed, and how much they had lost. The imagination of children by many a mountain hearth was fired by the visions they saw in the Mirror. The supine inaction of the first half of the eighteenth century was the seed time of many ideas."[13] Theophilus Evans also wrote the *History of Modern Enthusiasm*, in which he makes a vigorous onslaught on the eccentricities of sectaries in all ages; and though he includes among them Wesley and Whitfield, and their followers, whom he describes in no measured terms, he does not appear to have made a single direct reference to the Welsh Methodists, who had been in existence for twenty years when he issued the second edition of this work in 1756. This omission is remarkable, and difficult to account for. He also brought out, in 1722, a translation of the *Beauty of Holiness*, by Thomas Bisse, D. D., brother of Phillip Bisse, Bishop of Hereford, and formerly of St. David's. This little work consists of four sermons, in explanation and defence of the Book of Common Prayer as a manual of Public Worship. At the beginning of the volume, a list is printed of nearly 150 subscribers, and it is noteworthy that the name of Griffith Jones, Rector of Llanddowror, appears among them, as do also the names of his friends and neighbours, John Vaughan, Esq., of Derilys, and the Rev. Thomas Phillips, Vicar of Laugharne.

Moses Williams, sometime Vicar of Devynock, Breconshire, was another eminent scholar and antiquarian of this period. Though he removed to London in 1724, he continued to enrich Welsh literature, and to benefit his countrymen in various ways till his death in 1742. He brought through the press, as already mentioned, the two editions of the Welsh Bible, which were published under the auspices of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, in 1718 and 1727 respectively, in the orthography and arrangement of which he effected important emendations.

The celebrated priest and poet, Goronwy Owen, lived in the same period. He was a brilliant but unfortunate genius. Born of poor parents, and a native of Anglesey, he was befriended by powerful patrons, and was enabled to enter the University of Oxford, where he showed such talents as a linguist that Dr, Porteus, Bishop of London, pronounced him to have been "the most finished writer of Latin since the days of the Roman Emperors."[14] To his great joy, he was ordained to a curacy in his native parish, which, it appears, was directly under the bishop's charge. But his joy was short-lived, as, in three weeks, the Bishop told his chaplain who had given the curacy to Goronwy Owen, presumably in the absence of the bishop, that he was obliged to accommodate a young clergyman "of a very great fortune,"[15] who had for a long time been importuning the bishop to secure a curacy for him. There was nothing for the young bard to do but to seek for a curacy in England, which he did. But he was not happy, and he continued to move from place to

place, writing beautiful poetry, and longing to return to his native country, which he never did. The subsequent history of this marvellous man is truly pathetic. The three brothers, Lewis, Richard, and William Morris, of whom more presently, did their best to befriend him. Natives of a parish close to his own, and, like him, born of humble parents, they knew him from their boyhood, and when, through their remarkable talent and industry, they rose to positions of influence in the world, they did their best to help him. But it was in vain. One of them, William Morris, was a Collector of Customs at Holyhead, and succeeded in interesting the Rev. Thomas Ellis, incumbent of that parish, in the welfare of Goronwy Owen. It is interesting to note that Mr. Ellis was a constant correspondent and a valued supporter of Griffith Jones. He offered to assist the bard in publishing his great poem on the Judgment Day, which ranks among the finest epics in the Welsh language; but he could not persuade him to do anything for himself, and after a good deal of correspondence, the matter fell through. Goronwy Owen finally left this country for America, and little was subsequently heard of him. But his literary remains are among the most precious treasures in the Welsh language. The eldest of the three brothers just mentioned, Lewis Morris, set up a printing press in Anglesey, by means of which he brought out several Welsh books.[16] But he subsequently sold it to Dafydd Jones, of Trefriw, who was himself a promoter of Welsh literature. Lewis Morris was a Welsh poet, an able critic and antiquarian, and left behind him a mass of Welsh manuscripts, which eventually found their way to the British Museum. Richard Morris, his brother, was appointed chief secretary in the Navy Office, and continued his powerful patronage of Welsh literature throughout his life. As we have seen, he superintended the two editions of the Welsh Bible, towards which Griffith Jones did so much to obtain subscriptions, namely, the editions of 1746 and of 1752; and he is said to have generously offered to help Peter Williams to bring out his annotated edition of the Welsh Bible. He also supported the parishioners of Trefdraeth, in his native county, in their opposition to the institution of the Rev. Dr. Bowles, an English clergyman who knew no Welsh, but had been appointed in 1766 by the Bishop of Bangor, to take charge of a parish in which the services of the Church had to be conducted in the Welsh language. The parishioners were successful in their appeal at law.

The Rev. Evan Evans (*Ieuan Brydydd Hir*) was another gifted Welsh churchman of this period. He was a pupil of Edward Richard, of Ystradmeurig, who was himself a writer of exquisite Welsh lyrics, and the founder of a Grammar School in his native parish, which has done noble work in the interest of education. Evan Evans matriculated at Merton College, Oxford, in 1751, but owing to *res angusta domi*, was unable to proceed to his degree. He was sometime afterwards ordained to a curacy in Cardiganshire, his native county. He was a poet of considerable merit, and a keen antiquarian, but was apparently too much bent on his studies and researches into the antiquities of his country, to be of much practical use as a parochial clergyman. He was a correspondent of Richard Morris, and of his two brothers, and also of Thomas Percy, then Bishop of Dromore and a student of Celtic antiquities, whose letters to Evans may be seen in a volume by the latter, entitled "Some specimens of the Poetry of the ancient Welsh Bards," first published in 1764. The edition now before us is a reprint of this, without date, and consists of three parts, the first in English, the second in Latin, and the third in Welsh, together with an appendix of seventy-eight pages, containing matter of a cognate nature. Evans wrote a good deal of poetry, much of which is admirable, and he left to Mr. Paul Panton, of Plas-gwyn, Anglesey, who greatly befriended him in his later years, about one hundred volumes of manuscript, consisting partly of original, but mostly of transcribed matter, relating principally to the history and the antiquities of Wales. He was also a correspondent of William Wynne, Rector of Llangynhafal, Denbighshire, who was himself a painstaking

student of British antiquities, a cultured poet, and left behind him Welsh poetry of superior merit.

These names are among the most prominent Welsh Churchmen of the eighteenth century, whose literary productions form both some of the signs of an intellectual awakening, and some of the forces which contributed to its development. There were others of scarcely less eminence, who wrote both prose and poetry, and contributed their share to the work. It has been observed that there is no part of the United Kingdom in which so large a proportion of the lower classes are devoted to intellectual pursuits as in Wales.[17] This is true, and we shall not go far wrong if we say that this fact, if it did not altogether originate, received at least a great impetus in the intellectual awakening of the people in the eighteenth century with which we are dealing, and in the creation of which the Schools of Griffith Jones had a considerable share. Several volumes containing selections of Welsh poetry were published in this century, the contents of which, though of varying merit, are of an edifying, and generally of a religious character. As early as the year 1721, a volume of religious poetry, containing One hundred and seventy-four pages, and entitled *Difyrwch Crefyddol*, was published by a Church layman; John Prichard Prys, of Llangadwaladr, Anglesey. These poems are a kind of sermons in rhyme, each of which is headed by a text from Holy Scripture.

Another collection of three hundred pages from old Welsh poets was made in 1770 by another layman, Rhys Jones of Llanfachreth, Merionethshire; another of three hundred and eighty-six pages was made by Jonathan Hughes of Llangollen, also a layman, in 1778; and in the following year, another volume of five hundred and fifty pages of a similar character was published by Dafydd Jones of Trefriw, already mentioned as having purchased the printing press of Lewis Morris. These collections, which by no means exhaust the list, consist of carols, poems, and songs, for the most part of a distinctly religious character, and eminently suited to a people that have always been noted for their attachment to poetry and music. The demand for them was largely created by the charity schools, at which thousands of Welsh people of all ages were taught to read their own language, and to understand the fundamental principles of religion. The demand became more general as the century grew, and as the movement increased in force and volume. The schools, the catechetical meetings, the pulpit, and the press had their share in its development; and under the combined influence of these forces, which acted and re-acted on each other, a great change took place in the country. The village square and the village green were forsaken for the Churches and the Schoolrooms; “rustic carnivals” gave way to religious assemblies; and the profane songs and interludes, accompanied by the fiddle and the harp in the drunken revelries of those times, were exchanged for the Psalm, the hymn, and the carol. It was an intellectual as well as a spiritual revival, and it grew in power and extent, till it either conquered or converted most of its opponents, and became the dominant influence in the land.

The clergy whose names we have mentioned helped the movement, not only by their literary productions, but doubtless by their parochial ministrations also, for their writings prove them to have been, for the most part, men of high principles and earnest purpose. And in such sources of information as we possess, we find the names of many others, who, as parish priests, were earnestly grappling with their duties under the heavy burdens of poverty and pluralism. No account of their labours has been handed down to us, and we only come across them accidentally; and we doubt not but that there were faithful men in the ministry of the Church in those days, of whose good works no record has been preserved by man. We see some of them in the correspondence and diaries of Howell Harris; some in quotations from contemporary sources given in such works as

Rees' *History of Welsh Nonconformity*;[18] and many may be found among the correspondents of Griffith Jones. But some there doubtless were whose names are only "written in the Lamb's book of life."

Another movement, belonging to the latter half of the eighteenth century, was the Establishment of learned Welsh Societies, which had their headquarters in London, and the first of which, the *Cymmrodorion Society*, was founded in 1751. "Its originators were principally members of the Society of the Ancient Britons; among others, was the celebrated Richard Morris, brother of the other Morrises of literary celebrity; he sat as president in 1752, and we find some letters to him addressed in that capacity by the no less celebrated Goronwy Owen. Before their dissolution in 1787, they had numbered among their members nearly four hundred individuals, distinguished in some branch of Welsh learning."[19] The Cymmrodorion Society was re-established in 1820. In 1770, the Society of the *Gwyneddigion* was formed. Membership in this latter was restricted at first to natives of North Wales, as its name implies, but that arrangement was soon abandoned, as a South Wales member was elected Chairman in 1975. The objects which these Societies were designed to promote were the cultivation of the Welsh language, the study of Welsh history and antiquities, the encouragement of Welsh education, the revival and perpetuation of Welsh customs, the preservation of Welsh manuscripts, and the publication of Welsh literature. Among their first fruits was the publication in 1789 of the works of Dafydd ap Gwilym,[20] an eminent Welsh poet who flourished in the middle of the fourteenth century; of the *Cambrian Register,* a journal which came out at irregular intervals, three volumes only of which were issued, in 1796, 1799 and 1818 respectively; and of the *Myfyrian Archaeology of Wales,* which was published in 1801-7, in three large volumes, and consists of three divisions, the first containing selections from the Welsh Bards, from the earliest period to the fourteenth century, which had remained till then only in manuscripts. The second division consists of "historical documents," and the third of "a collection of aphorisms, proverbs, ethical triads, &c." These three publications were probably the joint production of Dr. Owen Pughe and Mr. Owen Jones {Myfyr), both of whom were members of the *Gwyneddigion*, the latter having been elected its first chairman in 1771. It was also about this time that Dr. O. Pughe published his Welsh-English Dictionary. Mr. Owen Jones was a great collector of Welsh manuscripts, of which he left behind him one hundred volumes, containing 35,500 pages, which the Cymmrodorion purchased from his widow about the year 1824, intending to publish them, it is said, as a continuation of the *Myfyrian Archaeology of Wales*. This latter work was brought out at the sole expense of Mr. Owen Jones, who was a native of Denbighshire, but in later life carried on an extensive business as a furrier in Thames Street, London. It was in reference to this that a writer in the *Quarterly Review* about that time, said to be Robert Southey, penned the following remarks. "The praiseworthy and patriotic exertions o f individuals may cause the Welsh nation to blush. When a foreigner asks us the names of the nobility and gentry of the Principality, who published the *Myfyrian Archaeology* at their own expense, he must answer, none of them, but Owen Jones, the Thames-Street furrier."[21]

In 1795, the establishment of the *Cymreigyddion* took place, its object being the cultivation of the Welsh language, and an offshoot of which was another, called *Caradogion*, formed shortly after, for the purpose of encouraging the cultivation of the English tongue among Welshmen who resided in London. "This Society," writes the historian of the *Gwyneddigion*, "existed for many years, and much talent was elicited in its progress; it was here that many made their first essay in public speaking, who have since figured in assemblies of a more important cast."

A resuscitation of the *Eisteddfod*, after a long period of suspense, took place in 1798, when it was held at Caerwys, in Flintshire, under the auspices of the *Gwyneddigion* Society. “It commenced on the 29th of May, in the ancient Town Hall, under the same roof that sheltered their ancestors 231 years before, when assembled on a like occasion, by virtue of a Commission from Queen Elizabeth, *viz*., 26th of May, 1567.”[22] In looking over the lists of the names of those who supported these movements, we find only a few members of the Welsh aristocracy, a class which, by their writings and their influence, had so powerfully patronised Welsh literature in the sixteenth century, and the early part of the next. A great change had taken place in this respect. It was the beginning of a new era in Welsh literature, when it found its contributors and promoters, almost exclusively, among the middle and lower classes.

The Societies to which we have briefly drawn attention were instrumental in associating together a large number of Welshmen, and in encouraging them to promote the laudable objects enumerated above. They contributed substantially to the revival of interest in the history, the literature, and the antiquities of their native country, and gave to study and research in those fields, as well as to education in a more general sense, an impetus which has not yet spent its force. This intellectual and literary movement coincided, as we have seen, with a powerful religious revival. The condition of things thus existing, though on a much smaller scale, might be said to bear some analogy to what had taken place in the sixteenth century, when the revival of literature and religion went hand in hand, and resulted in the intellectual and spiritual emancipation of many peoples. These two forces, the intellectual and the spiritual, act and react on each other. It is often impossible to determine which is the cause and which the effect. The quickening of the spiritual faculties acts as a stimulant on the mind, while the due cultivation of the intellect brings light to the conscience. They should never be divorced in education, for man is a moral as well as a rational being. Religion without knowledge is apt to degenerate into superstition or fanaticism, and bare mental culture may result in mere egotism, cold, cynical, and selfish.

But it must not be understood that, during. the second half of the eighteenth century, the promoters of Welsh literature on the one hand, and those who rejoiced in a religious revival on the other, always sympathised with each other, or acted in concert. They rather co-existed than coalesced. Nay, more; there was some degree of mutual dislike and distrust. There was a class among the Methodists who viewed higher education, and the promotion of secular literature, with something like aversion, and we believe that that aversion continued to be a stumbling-block to the progress of ministerial education among them till late in the first half of the nineteenth century;[23] and it is certain that some of the promoters of Welsh literature and learning, to whom we have already referred, treated the Methodists with undisguised contempt.[24] It was the common misfortune of these movements that there was no greater sympathy between their respective promoters, the result of which, had it existed, would have been beneficial to both. in spite of mutual suspicion and distrust, they were unwitting, we had almost said unwilling, allies, in bringing about the spiritual and intellectual enfranchisement of the people. And almost to the close of the eighteenth century, both derived most of their support from Churchmen.

Footnotes

[1]“That this design may be advanced and improved to the greatest advantage it is capable of, it is very much wished that my Lords, the Bishops in Wales, would deign to patronise the Schools, by enjoining the clergy

to encourage, regulate, and catechise them, and such as have been taught in them, a soften as may be; which would not only remove groundless prejudices, but likewise mightily assist the catechumens to keep in remembrance and improve what they had already learned. This would raise an emulation in others to learn, and could not fail to edify the whole congregation. How greatly it would contribute to revive religion in the Church of England, and remove the indefensible reproach and scandal which arise from their gross immorality and ignorance in the things of God, if those who have been baptised members of her, were thus taught and pressed to live worthy of her Communion!" *Welsh Piety*, 1740-41, p.29.

[2]Abbey and Overton, *The English Church is the Eighteenth Century*, p.24.

[3]*A History of the Diocese of St. Asaph*, by the Venerable Archdeacon Thomas, 1874; p.129.

[4]*Ibid*. p. 131.

[5]*Diocesan History of St. David's*, by Archdeacon Bevan, 1888, p.208. Published by the S.P.C.K.

[6]"Wales," in the *Story of the Nations* Series, by Prof.O. M. Edwards, p.384.

[7]See an able Paper in the *Cambrian Journal*, and Series, Vol. iv., 1864, on "David Morgan, the Welsh Jacobite," who suffered death for his principles.

[8]St. Asaph.

[9]*Diocesan History of St. Asaph*, by Archdeacon Thomas; 1888; p.99. Published by the S.P.C.K.

[10]Vicar Pritchard himself said that "set preaching did little good, while a snatch of song was always listened to."

[11]See an exhaustive article on "Vicar Pritchard," by Mr. John Ballinger, in the *Cymmrodor*, Vol. xiii., 1893.

[12]*Y Ficer Pritchard, Beibl* 1630, a *Charer y Cymry*, gan Mr, Ivor James, *Treathodydd*, Mawrth, 1893.

[13]Prof. O. M. Edwards, in *Wales*, "Story of the Nations" Series; p.384.

[14]*Works of Goronwy Owen*, by Rev. Robert Jones, 1876; Vol. ii. p.7. Goronwy Owen was also proficient in the Hebrew and Chaldee languages, and we find from his letters that he was anxious to obtain books for the purpose of learning Arabic and Syriac. As an illustration of the popular opinion respecting the great facility of acquiring languages which he possessed, it may be mentioned that he is said to have learned Arabic in three weeks, and to have gained a fluent knowledge of the Irish language in a very short time. (See *Gronoviana*, Llanrwst, 1860, p.xx.) In spite of the fact that the study of Oriental languages was neither a paying nor a fashionable pursuit at that time, we have come across the following instances of natives of the Principality who had gained practical knowledge of some of those languages, which goes to confirm the reputation of Welshmen for linguistic capacities. Goronwy Owen himself, in a letter to Richard Morris, dated August 15, 1752, while referring to books in Arabic and Hebrew which he possessed or wanted, says that he "would be glad to know who the Jenkin Thomas is, who understands so well the Oriental languages." In the minutes of the S.P.C.K., under date of March 5, 1723-4, an entry is made to the effect that a "Mr. Jezreel Jones was asked what he would take for assisting in correcting the translation of the Bible into Arabic. Mr. Jones gets two shillings a sheet according to his offer far correcting such proofs. He says he is sorry he cannot do it for nothing." In a review in the *Guardian* for May 16, 1894, page 745, of 'Travels in India a hundred years ago,' containing Notes and Reminiscenses of Thomas Twining, formerly a civil servant of the East India Company, the following information may be found: "Young Twining left London to take up his appointment at the age of sixteen. His only preparation for the work before him appears to have been comprised in a few lessons in Persian, from a poor Welshman named Llewellyn, whom his parents had discovered in an obscure Court in Fleet Street, the study of Oriental languages being evidently at that time by no means a lucrative or dignified pursuit." The names of Jenkin Thomas, Jezreel Jones, and Llewelyn are, like that of Goronwy Owen, unmistakably Welsh, and it is not improbable that their possessors were men of humble origin, while it is not a little remarkable that they found means to become proficient at that time in some of the Oriental languages. It is worth noticing in this connection that Sir William Jones, "one of the most distinguished linguists and Oriental scholars that England has produced," was also a Welshman on his father's side, and belonged to the same period, but unlike those above mentioned, he was a man of good birth, and enjoyed the highest educational advantages.

[15]These are the words of Goronwy Owen himself.

[16]It is said in *Diddanwch Teuluaidd* that the printing press was set up in Bodedern, and that "a little book called *Ymarfer o Lonyddewch* (*Practice of Quietness*), and a few small other things, were printed there. Mr. Lewis Morris proposed to print a book called *Tlysau'y hen Oesoedd* (*Gems of Ancient Times*); but the project did not succeed; it does not appear that more than one part was printed." p.xxiii. This latter may be seen in the British Museum (872. l. 18); but it is said on that copy that it was "printed in Holyhead, in Anglesey, 1735," and not in Bodedern. It is a quarto volume of 15 pages. It is said of Lewis Morris that, for a short time in his younger days, he followed the trade of a cooper, his father's occupation, and that he could construct a harp and play on it, build a ship and steer it, compose a poem (*cywydd*) and sing or recite it with the harp. *Diddanwch Teuluaidd*, 2nd Edition, 1813, p.xxii. The first edition of this work was brought out in 1763, under the editorship of Hugh Jones, Llangwm.

[17]Dean Edwards; *Wales and the Welsh Church*. p.211, 1888.

[18]See, for instance, pp.315,386, of that work. Ed. 1861.
[19]The Origin and Progress of the *Gwyneddigion* Society, by Wiliam Davies Leathart, Hon. Sec., and Librarian; 1831, p.10.
[20]For an able critique of Dafydd ap Gwilym and his Poetry, see the *Quarterly Review* for October, I901, which is understood to be from the pen of a well-known Welsh scholar.
[21]*The Origin and Progress of the Gwyneddigion*, &c, p.13.
[22]*Ibid*., p.28.
[23]For instances of this aversion, see *Life and Letters of the late Dr, Lewis Edwards*, lately published.
[24]See, for instance, a writer in the *Cambrian Register,* Vol. ii, p.431.

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9. Ministerial and Literary Labours

We now return to Griffith Jones and his labours. A considerable amount of space has been devoted in previous chapters to the Welsh Circulating Schools, principally because it was by means of these that the subject of these pages was enabled to render his greatest service to religion and to his country. It was not his fault that the Church of which he was so devoted and worthy a minister, did not reap the full benefit of them. His labours in connection with that movement were almost unexampled in the history of education, when all things are considered. He guided it for thirty years. It grew under his hands from a small beginning into a vast organisation, till it covered almost the whole of twelve counties. His schools found their way into the remotest parts of North Wales. They reached the farthest limits of Anglesey, as well as the mountainous districts of Merioneth and Carnarvon. The labours that devolved upon him in connection with such a vast and complex movement were indeed great. He had to hold regular communications with the subscribers, managers, and masters of the Schools, as well as with the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and his correspondence alone would have been sufficient to occupy the time and tax the energies of an ordinary man. But in addition to this, and besides his parochial duties, his literary works, and his itinerant journeys for the purpose of establishing and examining the Schools, to which we shall presently direct attention, he had also to superintend the training of many of the masters, for we are told that “his teachers were generally persons taught and prepared by himself, and commonly selected from the serious part of his disciples at home and abroad. They were men of acknowledged piety, and such as had the interest of religion in general, and the success of the Schools in particular at heart.”

But his labours in connection with the Schools formed only a part, though an important part, of the burden which lay on his shoulders. He was a prolific writer of theological, catechetical, devotional, and epistolary literature. A list of his works, though not a complete one, is given in the Memoir which was published in 1762.[1] It consists of thirteen books and tracts, four of which, including *Welsh Piety*, already described, were written in English, and the remainder in Welsh. We have succeeded in procuring nine of the above number, and also two small volumes of his printed sermons, as well as a volume of his letters, the three last being posthumous publications. These printed works which have come to our hands, consisting in all of twelve volumes, contain an aggregate of about 3,300 pages of moderately close print. He left also a large amount of manuscript, consisting principally of sermons and letters.[2] All his works published in his lifetime were designed to meet the needs created by his Circulating Schools. In the memoir already referred to, we are informed that “by the kind assistance of many charitable persons, Mr.

Jones was enabled to print very great numbers (sometimes 12,000, at others 8,000, &c., at an impression) of many of the above books, which were distributed throughout all Wales." We cannot attempt here to give a full description of his writings. The substance is always solid, and his arguments are profusely illustrated and enforced by quotations from Holy Scripture, and sometimes from ancient writers and eminent Church divines. His theological standpoint is unmistakably that of the Reformers of the the sixteenth century. His reverence for the Bible, with every page of which he was familiar, was profound, and his loyalty to the Church was unimpeachable. He gives the most prominent place in his teaching to the cardinal truths of religion, which he holds with unflinching firmness, and expounds with force and fulness. His style is somewhat ponderous, and sometimes involved; and Welsh idioms may occasionally be detected in his English writings.

His extant letters which we have seen, dating from 1732 to 1743, were all written to Madam Bevan, his constant friend and fellow. labourer. They are about one hundred and sixty in number, of which ninety-four are printed in a volume edited by the Rev. Edward Morgan, sometime Vicar of Syston, Leicestershire, and published in 1833. The manuscript volume which we have seen was most kindly and courteously lent in 1894 by Dr. Basil Jones, the late Bishop of St. David's. The letters deal with a variety of subjects, but mostly with those connected with religion, either on its doctrinal, devotional, or practical side. It is but a comparatively small portion of them that is taken up with personal affairs, though allusions to these have been partly eliminated from the printed volume. It would exceed our limits to enter largely into the contents of these letters, full as they are of interesting matter which throws light on the intimacy between him and his correspondent, on his own personal character as a Christian minister, his profound anxiety for the revival of true religion in the Church, and the spiritual welfare of his countrymen, on his masterly grasp of theological subjects, and his versatile powers in handling them. It is probably true that his intellectual endowments, his store of knowledge, and his spiritual attainments, are seen to a better advantage in these letters than in any of his other published writings. They deal copiously and incisively with such topics as the Infidelity and irreligion of the times, Religion as the business of life, God the best portion, Obedience to God as the test of religion, The pleasure and the honour of being employed for God, Spiritual conversation, God's love, Religious zeal, Spiritual hunger, Praying for the ministry, The study of the Scriptures, &c. There are also nine letters on Prayer, comprising nearly eighty pages of the printed volume. The intellectual powers of his correspondent, as well as her religious sympathy with one who was her spiritual father, were evidently calculated to encourage him in these epistolary communications. The following facts respecting this gifted lady will doubtless be of interest to our readers. They may be seen in a note on page 454 of volume 1. of the "Life and Times of the Countess of Huntingdon."

"Mrs. Bevan was a daughter and co-heiress of Mr. Vaughan, of Derllys, in the parish of Merthyr, Carmarthenshire, and received her first serious impressions under the apostolic ministry of Griffith Jones, Rector of Llanddowror. She was very handsome, sensible, and accomplished. Her husband, Arthur Bevan, Esq., was Rector of the County Borough of Carmarthen, and for fourteen years its representative in Parliament; his public conduct was at once dignified and endearing, and he died (March 6th, 1745, aged 56), beloved and lamented. To Mr. Jones, Mrs. Bevan was ever grateful and affectionate, attended his ministry at Llanddowror and Llandilo, powerfully assisted his efforts in establishing that blessing to the poor of the Principality – the Welsh Circulating Charity Schools – and at last, in 1761, it was in her house at Laugharne that he died, and at her own expense she erected a monument to his memory in the parish Church he had so faithfully served.?.. At every visit of Mr. Whitefield to Bath, he preached in Mrs. Bevan's house, and at the period

of which we speak, the Earls of Chesterfield and Huntingdon, and Mrs.Stanhope, were among the distinguished auditory. Mrs. Bevan's elegant and accomplished manners attracted Lord Chesterfield's attention, and having studied the Deistical writers of the age, she was enabled to give all her eminent ability and clearness to the discussion of the topics he was fond of introducing. She easily and solidly refuted his plausible objections to revealed religion. "Lord Chesterfield's inclination to subvert Christianity," she writes to Lady Huntingdon, "has involved me in many inconsistencies. A greater proof of his prejudices and his being reduced to the last distress in point of argument is his general clamours and invectives against all historical evidence, as absolutely uncertain; and it is not so much the corruptions of Christianity that his Lordship finds fault with, as with the Christian revelation itself, which he does not scruple to represent as the product of enthusiasm or imposture. Yet, at other times, he will agree with me, that never were there any facts that bad clearer and more convincing evidence attending them, than the extraordinary and miraculous facts whereby the divine original and authority of the Christian revelation was attested and confirmed. This strange fluctuation of opinion I can account for only on this ground – that the incontrovertible and undeniable evidence of these facts has overcome the notions and prejudices with which his mind has been so strongly prepossessed; and it is this shaking of the Babel of unbelief that fills me with hope that the great Dispenser of spiritual benefits will, of His free grace and mercy, reveal to his Lordship's mind the grand and harmonious system of revealed truth, the several parts of which are like so many links of a beautiful chain, one part answering to another, and all concurring to exhibit an admirable plan, in which the wisdom, the grace, and goodness, and the righteousness of God, most eminently shine forth. Your Ladyship's great intimacy with, and friendship for, Lord Chesterfield, has induced me to be thus minute in what related to him. Of Lord Huntingdon, I have not had much opportunity of forming an opinion; but I bear from good Lady Gertrude, that Sir Charles and his Lordship are inseparable, and have long and interesting discussions on the most interesting topics. He has called frequently on Mrs. Grenfield, with whom he seems much pleased. Your Ladyship is well assured she will not lose a favourable opportunity of speaking a word in season."

This letter is valuable as being the only extant production of Madam Bevan's pen, as far as we know, and it bears out all that is said of her. It brings before us a person of a high intellectual order, well read in the great controversies of the eighteenth century, profoundly loyal to the fundamental truths of Revelation, and deeply anxious to rescue others from the mazes of unbelief. It was a rare privilege, and a proof of exceptional merits, to have won, as Griffith Jones had won, the friendship and the confidence of such a person.

The history of the fellowship and joint labours, of these two great benefactors of the Welsh people is, indeed, a remarkable one. One or two interesting facts, which we have not seen elsewhere, are reported in the following extract. Having given an account of Griffith Jones' many gifts as a parochial minister, the writer goes on to say:

"In these meritorious labours of love, his hands were strengthened by his chief parishioner, John Dalton, Esq., who, at that time, occupied the mansion house of Cloch y Fran, an ancient seat of Sir John Phillips and his progenitors; this patriarchal, numerous household, was then a pattern of the primitive devotion, order, and regularity, where the fear of God was displayed in goodness, charity, neighbourly love, family affection, and consequent happiness. In 1724, this kind friend died in humble, yet assured hope of a blissful immortality, and was interred in the chancel of Llanddowror Church, where he had so constantly knelt in prayer, and so frequently heard and profited by Mr. Jones' exhortations. His exemplary widow survived until 1757, and was then joined to her

kindred in the same time-hallowed receptacle of God's saints, followed in due time by her beloved pastor. They were loving and lovely in their lives, and their perishable dust is now mingled together until the dawning of that imperishable day. Mr. Jones assisted in preparing their only son for the ministry; and when the youth left home for the University of Oxford, he gave him such very excellent counsel, and prayed so cordially with him, both in the family and in private, that this child of many prayers…. remembered the parting hour to the last. (This was the learned and Rev. James Dalton, M.A., afterwards Rector of Great Stanmore, Middlesex.) Through this family, Mr. Griffith Jones became intimate with their benevolent kinswoman, Mrs. Bridget Bevan, the pious and richly endowed widow of Arthur Bevan, Esq., K.C., who honoured him with her friendship, and made him the almoner of her bounty, which was very large, &c."[3]

Both Griffith Jones and Madam Bevan continued to labour for the success of the Schools to their dying day, and made provision for their continuance after their death. Griffith Jones lost his wife, as we have seen, in 1755, and in the following year, was taken into the house of his friend, where he remained till his death. On the 11th of February, 1756, he executed his Will, in which he made over to Madam Bevan all the funds that were in hand belonging to the Schools, as well as his own private property, after the payment of some legacies, the residuary legacy to the Schools amounting in all to over £7,000.

"The words of the gift are as follows: As I know none more trusty, nor any so properly qualified, to faithfully discharge all my debts on account of the Welsh Charity Schools or otherwise, as well as to pay the legacies herein-before by me given, than the truly honoured Mrs. Bridget Bevan, of Laugharne, in the County of Carmarthen, widow, to whom I am greatly obliged for her most generous and compassionate assistance to me always and on all occasions, who will most faithfully pay all my just debts, and readily encourage and promote, so far as will lie in her, all the acts of charities of every kind she now assists me in. I have, therefore, earnestly requested her to take on herself the the trouble of being sole executrix of this my last Will and Testament, and do hereby accordingly nominate and appoint the said Bridget Bevan sole executrix thereof, and towards the discharge of that trust and trouble, I give and bequeath to her, and to her disposal, all and every part of such charity money I may be trusted with at the time of my decease. I also give and bequeath to her all the rest and residue of my personal and chattel estate rights and credits whatsoever by me hereby undisposed of, and whether the same shall consist in ready money, securities for money, household goods and furniture, and my study of books which shall be by me undisposed of at the time of my decease, effects and substance or otherwise whatsoever which I shall be possessed of, interested in, and entitled unto at the time of my decease, without being liable or subject to be accountable for the same to any person or persons whatsoever having, or pretending to have, any right or claim to any part thereof upon any account whatsoever."[4]

Madam Bevan carried in the Schools till het death in 1777, and made provision in her Will for continuing them after her decease. The funds at her disposal had been increased to about £10,000; but one of the Trustees, Lady Stepney, appointed under the "Will, having questioned the validity of the gift in order to put in her claim to it as next of kin, the whole fund was invested in the Court of Chancery, and it remained there for a period of thirty years, pending the final decision of the Court."[5] It was at last released in 1804, and was assigned to its original purpose by a new scheme of administration devised by the Court, having in the meantime accumulated at interest to £30,500 7s. 6d.[6] While the money was in Chancery, "the old Circulating Schools died of inanition," and the great work that had been carried on for nearly half a century was suspended at a time when the Church needed all, and more than all, her resources to retain her hold on the people. During

Madam Bevan's management of the trust, the Schools had lost none of their popularity or efficiency, if we may judge by their number, and the number of those who attended them. In 1763, the number of the Schools was 279, and of the scholars 11,770, being in both cases the largest recorded since their commencement; in 1973, the Schools numbered 242, and the scholars 13,205; and in 1777, the Schools were 144, and the scholars 9,576. The movement had become a part of the machinery of the Church, and was doing incalculable good. But suddenly and abruptly, it is arrested, and the education of ten thousand souls is almost instantaneously dropped. Who can estimate the loss of power and prestige sustained by the Church through the collapse of such a beneficent organisation? Among all her children, clerical and lay, no one stepped forth to repair the damage, and take up the work of education. And when the funds were recovered from the Court of Chancery, and began to be applied once more to their original purpose, Thomas Charles had been working for twenty years at the task of educating the people, on the plan of Griffith Jones' Circulating Schools. But Thomas Charles had been virtually forced out of the Church. The year 1777 was a critical juncture for the Church in Wales. The loss of two such lives as those of Griffith Jones and Madam Bevan was great indeed. It appeared as though the striking words used by the former on the death of Dr. Knight had become true. "It looks as if the King of Heaven meant war, when He calls home His ambassadors."[7] Meanwhile, the Methodist movement was rapidly gaining in influence and popularity, and the forces which tended towards its separation from the Church were becoming more pronounced and aggressive. From 1777 to 1810 is truly one of the saddest periods in the history of the Church in Wales.

We shall next turn our attention to the ministerial life and character of Griffith Jones. The promotion of true religion and the welfare of souls were the main objects of all his efforts and movements. "To catch all opportunities of doing good to others, to watch carefully against the stragglings of our hearts from God, and to make a very solemn use of consecrated ordinances, are methods that will hardly fail to bring us on towards the attainment of joyful hope and full assurance of faith, which is the life of a religious profession." "There cannot be greater happiness or greater honour than to be chosen by the ever-glorious King of Heaven to carry on the advancement and promotion of His Kingdom on earth, and to do all that is practicable to bring forth the miserable captives of dismal darkness into marvellous healing light, that they may enjoy the inconceivable benefits of His death and passion." Such passages as these may be multiplied almost indefinitely from his letters and other writings. Even when he was compelled to take rest on account of his health, he bore on his heart the people committed to his care. Writing from Bristol in 1737, he said that he found "solitude and retirement to be no such frightful things as some may imagine, provided one sets himself in the happy way of conversing with his God and his Bible.... I should soon fall into an excess of love with this way, if it was not for an almost overcoming grief and concern about my absence from the charge.committed to me by Divine Providence, which, however weakly I might fulfil if present, or however well it might be performed by others in my absence, it can give but little ease to my mind, while I do nothing. For since I must give an account, I must not neglect to do what weakness can attempt towards discharging the duty that I have vowed to the Lord to engage in, and must answer for before Him at His coming." He shunned all society where vain and unprofitable conversation prevailed. "I avoid all company here," he says in the same letter, "as much as I can, and have proposed more time to myself for inward recollection and retirement from conversing with others than I find I am likely to enjoy.... And there are the vain pursuits, the enchanting gaieties, and the seemingly innocent but dreadfully bewitching and corrupt conversation of this world, which is now so general and fashionable, and prevails more than ever amongst the men of this world, and ends in such enormities as were hardly heard of in former days."

He was a devoted and diligent pastor, courteous and kindly in his demeanour towards his parishioners, among whom he moved as their friend and counsellor, never missing an opportunity of promoting their spiritual welfare.

“He was very charitable to the poor, and his unwearied endeavours to alleviate their distresses will render his memory justly dear to them. He not only fed and clothed them in considerable numbers, but was likewise a physician to their bodies as well as their souls. He had by long study arrived at a great proficiency in medicine, and had large quantities of drugs sent him from London, which he made up and dispensed to the poor *gratis*, and, through God’s blessing, with remarkable success. And when he had cared any of his country people of their bodily distempers, and thereby gained their love and esteem, he never failed to take that opportunity to second it with pathetic, judicious, and seasonable advice, ever exhorting them to an earnest care for their immortal souls, as being of much greater value in God’s sight than their perishing bodies.”[8] “Amongst the people committed to his care, his deportment was courteous and condescending. He would stoop with the utmost cheerfulness to the lowest among them, and carried the spirit of his sermons into his ordinary conversation. He maintained a uniform, affable gravity of behaviour, without suffering his temper either to stiffen into moroseness, or to evaporate into levity. He was cheerful, but not light, serious, but not sad. It was his constant business and daily endeavour, (I had almost said, his meat and drink) to set forward the salvation of his flock.”[9]

As a conversationalist, we are told that he was persuasive and winsome; and he employed his talents and opportunities in this as in other ways to commend the religion he professed. “To improve the minds of those whom he conversed with was another of his remarkable qualities. Few were better furnished either with richness of fancy, depth of thought, or copiousness of expression, to bear a shining part in conversation. With these talents, he always endeavoured to give some useful and religious turn to the discourse. He had the amiable art of making a heavenly use of earthly things…. To lay plans and schemes for the good of others was his frequent study; and to carry those beneficial contrivances into execution was his favourite employ.”[10] His anxiety to use his opportunities for the improvement of others is frequently illustrated in his letters. Writing on the 2nd of October, 1736, he observes: “I took a couple of the clergy I met there (at Llanlluan] for three or four miles with me in my return, for the sake of talking together; and we are to meet again next Wednesday night at Carmarthen, to converse a little more together. One of them, I think, is better than common; I mean Griffiths of Bettws. The other was the curate of Llanarthney.” Again, on the 2nd of November in the same year, he writes: “My nephew and I went yesterday with four other clergymen, and had a comfortable conversation, and held to the one thing needful all the time we were together, and promised one another at parting to assist with our prayers and best endeavours to promote the great design.” On the 7th of December of the same year, he writes again: “Justice – was here this morning, and confined me for several hours; but his prisoner took the liberty of talking freely and seriously with him upon such subjects as he could bear – particularly the magistrates’ duty to carry on a reformation, and in order to this, that the parochial officers should be supplied at the expense of the County stock with such little books or abridgements of their duty, to instruct them in the discharge thereof.” Other instances of his solicitude for the spiritual edification of others might be given; but we must forbear.

In his catechising exercises, which formed an important part of his ministrations, he used the same tact and tenderness as in his other parochial duties. He sought to approach his

people on their best side, and first won their confidence before trying to find his way to their intelligence. The account of his early catechetical efforts is very instructive, as well as illustrative of his wise and winsome methods.

“It was Mr. Jones’ custom to deliver a lecture on the Saturday evening previous to the Sacrament Sundays; and after the Second Lesson, adults as well as children were examined in the Church Catechism, and individually addressed in an easy, familiar, but serious manner, on the subjects of the questions put and the answers they made. At such exercises, Mr. Jones had a very [happy] talent for explaining, and b y close application, to enforce the obligations arising from the subjects on the conscience. At first, many declined being made the subjects of those instructions; shame prevented the old, but emulation produced great application among the younger part of the congregation. In order to prevail on the poor part of the adult members of the congregation, a dole of bread was given to everyone that, on such occasions, would repeat a verse of Scripture, and thus give their pastor an opportunity of applying it.”[11] We are not surprised to learn that “the plan succeeded beyond anticipation.” It was, in fact, the origin of the Circulating Schools.

Those who have studied his works will not be unprepared to learn that a prominent feature in his ministerial life was his method of conducting Family Prayers, which he deemed essential to the revival of true religion, and did much to promote throughout the country. He urged his schoolmasters to encourage family worship in the homes to which they found entrance. He published several important works in Welsh, which were designed to awaken the people to the importance of this duty, and to assist them in the performance of it. We have reason to believe that the impressions produced by these works have lasted even to our own days. It is stated that he catechised his family and neighbours every Sunday evening at the Parsonage. This must have been done after the Evening Service was over at the Church, and at a kind of family worship.

“He thought it his incumbent duty, wherever he lived (like the pious patriarchs of old) to build an altar unto the Lord in his house, to offer up morning and evening sacrifice to the God of Israel. His constant method every morning and evening was to call his family together, and his neighbours were welcome to come and join with him. He began the family worship by offering up a short prayer[12]; then a chapter from Scripture was read, upon which he would make some expository remarks; then some verses of a Psalm were sung; then he prayed, In confession of sin, he was humble and contrite; in his petitions for pardon and grace, earnest and urgent; and when he prayed for the King, the ministers in Church and State, and the nation in general, one would imagine that the whole kingdom pressed upon his heart, so earnest was he in his devotion. This method was used by him daily, and never intermitted, unless he was sick or disabled.”[13] “He was likewise a good casuist, to resolve the doubts of tempted souls, and to encourage the hopes of the desponding. He would often inculcate the necessity of family worship, and exhorted the heads of families to catechise their children and servants.”[14]

We have already seen that Griffith Jones’ ministry was not confined to his own parish. He paid visits across the borders, and preached in London, Bath, and Bristol, and doubtless in other places in England, where he went by invitation, on business, or for the sake of his health, and where the prominent men of the Evangelical movement used often to assemble. William Williams, in his elegy to Griffith Jones, mentions as facts that Scotland had the privilege of hearing him proclaim the Gospel, and that he also preached before Queen Anne. No mention is made of the time or purpose of these visits. One of his

biographers, the Rev. E. Harries, who wrote sometime in the first half of the nineteenth century, in a note to his translation of the elegy, refers to the matter thus:

“Of his visit to Scotland, nothing better than a vague traditionally account can be obtained – that it was to endeavour to prevent the division in the Scottish Church, in consequence of the excitement occasioned by the Erskines.Nor is there anything more authentic about his preaching before Queen Anne. It is said that he had been cited by her Majesty to do so, on account of some very unfavourable representations that had been made of his zealous mode of preaching; and that, having heard him herself, he was dismissed with an assurance that her Majesty heartily wished every clergyman in the kingdom preached in the same efficient manner.”

We have not been able to trace many details connected with his extra-parochial preaching in Wales. There are extant, we believe, about six volumes of his sermons in manuscript, at the end of each of which a record is given of the dates and places at which they were preached. A knowledge of these facts would probably throw interesting light on some points and episodes in his life. It is only with regard to one, the fifth of these volumes, that we have been fortunate enough to get at the information mentioned.[15] The facts of importance to us here are connected with those sermons in the volume which are recorded to have been preached by Griffith Jones outside his own parishes. Of these there are some twenty-three, most of which were preached in the thirties of the eighteenth century, in some twenty parishes, which are all within moderately easy distance of Llanddowror, and situated in the counties of Carmarthen, Pembroke, and Cardigan. Several of these sermons were preached on dates within Easter and Whitsun weeks.[16] These records are connected with two facts of some interest: first, that most of the Charity Schools established in those years were within the area where these sermons were preached; and, secondly, that the first signs of the evangelical revival in Wales appeared almost within the same area.[17] This was comparatively early in the history of the Charity Schools, and their founder travelled farther afield as the limits of the organisation became more extended.

“He made frequent tours over both North and South Wales, to advocate the cause of his Schools, to dispose of both by sale and *gratis*, his valuable publications, and to preach the everlasting Gospel. He frequently made a point of getting himself published on a spot where he expected to find the young and thoughtless of the neighbourhood met to celebrate some feast day, and enjoy themselves in mirth and folly.”[18] “He generally managed to make these excursions during the Easter and Whitsun weeks, as he had a greater chance, at these seasons, of falling in with some of those scenes of pugnacious uproar, and drunken frolic, which were at that time so much in vogue in his native country, and which it was always his object to discourage.”[19]

He used frequently to exchange duties with his nephew, the Rev. David Jones, who was incumbent of the neighbouring parish of Llanllwch; and it was under his ministry in that Church that Miss Bridget Vaughan, afterwards Madam Bevan, was converted from a worldly and thoughtless life.[20] It was also while he was preaching at Llanddewibrefi Church that Daniel Rowland, of Llangeitho, was converted. The traditional account, the correctness of which we have no reason to dispute, points out this incident as a remarkable one. The ground on which it took place is one of historic interest. For, according to a tradition, of which, however, no record is preserved of an earlier date than the eleventh century, it was on the spot where the venerable Parish Church of Llanddewibrefi stands that, some eleven centuries and a half before the time of which we are now writing; a modest and retiring monk appeared, after much entreaty and

persuasion, to confute and vanquish the advocates of the Pelagian heresy, which was then troubling the British Church. That monk was none other than St. David himself. We have, however, more definite, and probably more authentic, details respecting the much later occurrence with which we are dealing here. There are sufficient reasons to account for Daniel Rowland's presence at Llanddewibrefi on the occasion referred to. His brother was in charge of the parish, and Circulating Schools were established at that time both at Llanddewi and Llangeitho. There is an account of a School with 91 scholars at the former, in *Welsh Piety* for 1738-39, which is the first and earliest published account of the Schools, and of another School in the latter parish, in the same year, with 206 scholars. Schools might have been established in these parishes, especially in Llanddewi, before the year 1738, as we know that Griffith Jones had commenced his Circulating Schools as early as 1730. And we know, too, that he had preached frequently in that parish from the year 1733. The memorable event which we are now referring to may, therefore, have occurred in the year 1735, or 1736. The fame of Griffith Jones had brought together a crowded congregation. During the sermon, Rowland stood in front of the pulpit, erect and haughty. His almost defiant mien arrested the attention of the preacher, and filled his heart with compassion. For a moment, the discourse is interrupted, while the preacher offers up a short, fervent prayer, that God may have mercy on the soul of the proud, light-hearted young clergyman, and that the Holy Spirit may descend upon him, and use him as an instrument for turning many from darkness unto light. It was a great moment in the history of religion in Wales. That prayer was answered, and Daniel Rowland became henceforth, and remained for more than half a century, one of the most powerful preachers of the ages. We are told that, on that occasion, some of his parishioners accompanied Rowland, a fact which is not without significance, when it is considered that the distance from Llangeitho to Llanddewibrefi is over four miles.

It is said that, when Griffith Jones preached in those "rustic carnivals" referred to above, his discourse would last sometimes for three hours. When the Churches proved too small to hold the large congregations that came together, as was not infrequently the case, he would preach to them in the churchyards, as Vicar Pritchard had done before him. This fact has been accounted for by later writers, on the ground that the clergy closed the doors of the churches against him. There is no foundation for this. At the beginning of his discourses on those occasions, he was not seldom met by proud, defiant, disdainful looks from those who had come to scoff; but by degrees, the power of his persuasive and impassioned appeals would subdue his proudest hearers, and produce symptoms of strong emotions in the vast multitude. All that we have been able to glean from early accounts of him, entirely agree in describing him as one of the most powerful preachers that the country has ever produced. The foremost place among Welsh preachers has been generally accorded to Daniel Rowland, and it is a noticeable fact that the Rev. Joshua Davies, author of the History of the Baptists in Wales, published in 1778, writes thus of Daniel Rowland: "I recollect having heard him about the year 1737 in Carmarthenshire, and I heard some of the Independents, in returning home, say: 'We never heard anyone to be compared with him in the Church of England, unless it were Mr. Griffith Jones.'" Mr. Edmund Jones, a Nonconformist minister of those times at Pontypool, bears the following testimony, in a paper on the religious condition of Wales in 1742, contributed to the Glasgow Weekly History: "Among the clergy is the famous Mr. Griffith Jones, one of the most excellent preachers in Great Britain, for piety, good sense, diligence, moderation, zeal, a mighty utterance, the like whereof I never heard."[21]

Preaching has, at all times, exercised a great influence over the Welsh people. The traditions of the far past are dim and inarticulate. But the echoes that have come down to us from the times of the ancient British Church, seem to point to the fact that the power

of sacred oratory was great in the age of St. David, St. Padarn, and St. Teilo. So it was in the days of Vicar Pritchard; and so it has been during the last century and a half. It is not our business to inquire here whether that power is on the wane in our day; suffice it to say that the Church which will justly win the confidence and the loyalty of the people, and perform its mission successfully in Wales, must not undervalue the influence of the pulpit. It has been said of the three representatives of the British Church mentioned above, that David performed Divine Service in a more pleasing manner than his companions ;
that Padarn sang in a superior style; and that Teilo excelled as a preacher.[22] Griffith Jones realised the paramount importance of these three ministerial requisites, and himself excelled at least in two of them. We do not know whether he was musical or not, but we have seen somewhere that he had a “pleasing voice;” and if the description about to be quoted is true, we know that he had it under perfect control. We know, too, that he fully appreciated the power of music, as he did what he could to give it its proper place both at family worship, and in the service of the Church. His manner of rendering the Liturgy, and of preaching, is given in his Memoir published in 1762, and is doubtless authentic, as that Memoir was evidently written by one who had personal knowledge of him.
It will therefore be given here in full:

“His pulpit accomplishments were so very uncommon that it is exceeding difficult to describe them. In reading Divine service, he was devout without affectation. He did not hurry the Prayers over, as is too often the case, with precipitancy and carelessness; but had a sacred awe upon his mind, ever remembering he was addressing the eternal God; and as he observed the stops and pauses with great judgment, and pronounced his words with a grave and pleasing accent, so he generally engaged the attention of all present.[23]

We have before us as we write the two volumes of sermons by Griffith Jones, to which reference has already been made, the one consisting of a translation of seventeen sermons,[24] the texts of which are selected from the first twelve chapters of the Gospel according to St. Matthew; the other of six sermons on Repentance, from Acts ii. 37,38, and published in the original Welsh. These sermons are excellent, in substance, arrangement, lucidity, and force of diction. They are full of strong doctrinal matter, which is skilfully applied to practical aims and issues. They abound in metaphorical expressions and illustrations, mainly taken from Scripture, and occasionally rise into really powerful eloquence. They are written with the intention of being delivered and not of being read; and while they contain riot a word that could possibly offend the taste of the most fastidious critic, they are admirably adapted to the intelligence of the people, and the age they were intended for. They give one the impression throughout that the writer had in store an abundance of reserve force, which he might use in the delivery, if occasion required. There is no parade of learning, no effort at literary or oratorical effect, no rhetorical display; but the preacher is profoundly conscious of the greatness of the truths he has to proclaim, and of the issues which depend upon the faithful delivery of his message. We do not wonder that the results of his ministry were great. He directs the sinner's eye, first to himself, and then to the “Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” His reader has no reason to complain that doctrine and practice are divorced in his theology, or that there is even a seeming antagonism between faith and works in the economy of grace, as expounded by him. We give a passage on “Following Christ,” taken at random:

“Attend to this matter, for the greatest part perish through self-deception. Nothing can supply the place of following Christ. Were you able to perform wonders and miracles, it would not answer the purpose (Matthew vii. 22). Be not therefore deceived; nothing will

avail you except you follow Christ…. Give way to nothing that may be an hindrance to you. Make no excuses, for none are either proper or just; and none will be at the last admitted. If you follow the deception of sin, it will surely harden the heart, and make you careless about your true interest. If you follow the customs, habits, and practices of the world, you most clearly deny Christ, though you may profess His name. If you confer with flesh and blood, and follow your own counsels, you do not follow Christ, and will surely be cast to perdition. Resolve, therefore, through God's grace, to follow the Saviour through all obstructions, through all difficulties, knowing that you cannot be otherwise His true disciples. Remember that Christ's purpose in His suffering, in the counsels of His Word, in the ordinances of His house, and in all the provisions of His Gospel, is to lead you to follow Him. It is want of success in this respect that makes ministers to mourn, and the Spirit of God to grieve. Oh, consider whom you ought to follow, and who can do most for you at the last. To profess Christ's name, and deny Him in your works, is to be reprobate, and will lead to a fearful end: Titus i. 16. Except you follow the Saviour, we shall have no word of comfort to say to you when you come to die. Consider the reasons that have been mentioned why you should follow Christ; and may you all be resolved to follow Him. Remember what He was when on earth, and follow Him in His contentment under the greatest poverty, in His humility and self-denial when most honoured, in His patience under the severest sufferings, in His faithfulness under the greatest temptations, in His love to His most inveterate enemies, in His hatred to every sin, in His zeal for the glory of God, and in His compassion towards the souls of men. Be resolved and determined through grace thus to follow Him, whatever impediments may come in your way."[25]

We will now return to the description of his preaching mentioned above, and interrupted by the last quotation:

When he came into the pulpit, it was with reverence and holy fear. His attitude was erect, natural, and becoming. His prayer was fervent. He had an unassuming solemnity and seriousness in his face, sweetened with all the meekness of charity and love. The fire of zeal, chastened with modesty, kindled in his eyes. His mind was full fraught with the idea of his subject; yet not forgetful of the presence of his auditory, or the respect due to them. His pronunciation and manner of speaking in the beginning was tranquil and easy. In the explication of his text, or any divine truth, he had a peculiar air of familiarity, some thing resembling conversation; unless where he had occasion to relate events, or touch on those circumstances that were interesting and moving. As he advanced, his subject fired him more and more. How spirited was his utterance! His hearers could feel their blood thrill within them. One could plainly see the various passions he would inspire by turns rising in his own breast, and working from the very depth of his heart. One while, he glowed with ardent love to his fellow creatures; anon, he flamed with a just indignation at the enemies of their souls. Again, he swelled with a holy disdain at the turpitude of sin; then melted with grief and fear lest some of his hearers should neglect their day of grace, and thereby perish eternally. Every feature, nerve, and part about him were intensely animated. One while, his eyes were effusing the soft radiance of compassion towards his hearers; presently, after piercing severely into the sinner's bosom, or saddened with sorrow at human misery, or burning with indignation at human folly. His face, as Milton says, was the mirror of his mind. Add to this his significant gestures, which always suited themselves to the passions he would express, whether admiration, aversion, joy, sorrow, surprise, pity, indignation, &c. His movements were the language of nature. There was a noble pomp in his description; clearness and strength in his reasoning; his appeals to conscience were close and pointed; a surprising force and abruptness in his interrogations; a divine pathos in his address, worthy the imitation of every preacher. The

passions of the hearer were pleasingly assaulted, or sweetly attracted with a winning kindness. The ear and the eye were filled with becoming actions and harmony of sounds. Every word that proceeded from his mouth was big with feeling and concern. He spoke naturally, for he spoke feelingly. Everything that was said had the stamp of sincerity, which art may mimic but cannot reach. In refuting, remonstrating, and reproving, he assumed the tone of conviction and authority; but when he came to the application, he entered upon it with a solemn pause. He seemed to summon up all his remaining force; he gave way to a superior burst of religious vehemence, and, like a flaming meteor, bore down all before him. His voice broke silence, and proceeded with a sort of dignified pomp. Every word was like a fresh attack, and carried with it a sort of triumphant accent. No wonder that his hearers wept, when the preacher himself burst into tears. No wonder that he was so successful in the conversion of sinners, when it was the divine Spirit that made the Word effectual. By his preaching, the drunkards became sober; the Sabbath-breakers were reformed; the prayerless cried for mercy and forgiveness; and the ignorant were solicitously concerned for an interest in the divine Redeemer. He warmly invited the poor to become rich, the indigent and guilty to accept of pardon. He taught men to be rich in good works, without placing the least dependence upon them. Christ was all to him, and it was his greatest delight to publish his Redeemer's unsearchable riches. In his preaching, he copiously displayed and exalted the person, offices, characters, and relations of the incarnate God. He preached faith and repentance judiciously. He was a strenuous asserter of the absolute necessity of the new birth and Gospel holiness, both in heart and life; and thus he was a burning and shining light."[26]

We are here tempted to remark that the description of his preaching given in the foregoing extract bears, in its main outline, a striking resemblance to the description of Daniel Rowland's preaching given by Christmas Evans, or that of John Elias, given by Eben Fardd, which warrants the conclusion, we think, not only that there are some characteristics which are never absent from all true oratory, but that Griffith Jones was the prototype, both as to matter and manner of delivery, of the earliest great preachers of the evangelical revival in Wales. As his fame spread abroad, Llanddowror became, and continued to be for many years up to his death, the centre to which earnest and devout people from the surrounding country congregated, especially for the reception of the Sacrament, which was administered on the first Sunday in the month. Many travelled ten, twenty, and thirty miles, in order to be present at his Church on these solemn occasions. One of his curates was Howell Davies, who had been prepared for the ministry by him, and became afterwards a prominent leader in the evangelical movement. When he was about to be ordained to the Priesthood, Griffith Jones announced the fact to the congregation, and desired them to pray earnestly that God may bless the young minister.

Nothing surprises us more in the life of this wonderful man, than the fact that he was able, for so many years, to sustain the manifold burdens that constantly pressed upon him; and this surprise is much enhanced when we consider that he was always in a weak and precarious state of health. In 1738, he wrote that he was then in such a weak condition, that he could not "hope for the honour of being concerned in the movement but for a very little while."[27] In the preface to *Welsh Piety* for 1740-41, Sir John Thorold writes: "To all human appearances, the stay of this faithful labourer in this region of sickness, pain, and misery, will not be long." Both in his correspondence with Madam Bevan, and in his letters in *Welsh Piety*, he complains of failing health, and warns his friends that he cannot hope to carry on much longer his great work. In *Welsh Piety* for 1755-56, he writes: "As I am now advanced in years, and am in a low state of health, I am writing this as what may probably be the last account I may be able to give the benefactors of this charity, till we meet at the awful audit." But notwithstanding bad health and constant suffering, he never

relaxed in his efforts to benefit his poor countrymen. And "*man is immortal till his work is done*." His life was nerved and nourished by his great desire of accomplishing the task he had in hand. He worked by day, and by night too, for we find him in one of his letters dated January, 1738, writing thus to his friend: "The contemplation [of the work of divine grace] has set me now too high to write of business; and the morning birds have sung their first anthems – must therefore stop. Ah! cruel fate, that these bodies require so, much attention." From other letters, we gather that he was gently reproved by his kind correspondent for turning night into day, and he generally replies. with promises of amendment.

He wrote the usual letter to his Friend in the *Welsh Piety* for 1759-60, in which there are indications that he felt that the end was drawing nigh:

"Your aged servant in this employment is setting up his *Ebeneser*, praising God that hitherto *the Lord hath helped us*. He that perfecteth strength in weakness hath enabled him, under frequent sicknesses and many infirmities, as it were, *dying daily,* to proceed therein, with the utmost fidelity in his power, and with all possible frugality, in the distribution of your charities…. I do intend, through God's assistance, and with the concurrence of our charitable friends, to go on again in this service of love. And when the time of my dissolution cometh (which cannot but come very soon, I have now a comfortable prospect that it will be prosecuted by a truly religious person, of competent fortune, and unexceptionable character, acquainted with the method of carrying it on, having been already very assisting to me in this charitable undertaking."

This "truly religious person" was, as we have seen, Madam Bevan, who carried on the work with fidelity and success for sixteen years.

Griffith Jones died on the 8th of April, 1761. His last illness does not seem to have been protracted or painful. An account of an interview which one of his most intimate friends had with him, a few weeks before his death, is given in the sketch of his life, to which we have. often referred. His remarks show that his heart was overflowing with gratitude for the divine favours vouchsafed to him during a long and laborious career. "Soon after I entered the room," writes the Rev. Mr. Morgan, of Trelech, who was one of those prepared for the ministry of the Church by Griffith Jones, "and enquired after his welfare, with a pleasing countenance, though now full of age, and upon the brink of eternity, he said: 'I must bear witness to the goodness of God. Oh, how wonderful is the love of God to me, that I am now, even now, free from that troublesome distemper, the asthma, which I was so subject to in my younger days, that I could not walk the length of this room but with the greatest difficulty. How wonderful is the love of God to me, that I am not blind, as I was for three weeks in my childhood, when I had the small-pox, and that I am not a blind beggar going from door to door! How wonderful is the love of God, that I have such a good friend to take care of me, when I cannot help myself. How wonderful is the love of God, that I now feel but little pain, but that I am likely to go to my grave with ease. How wonderful is the mercy of God, that I can clearly see what Christ has done and suffered for me, and that I have not the least doubt of my interest in my all-sufficient Saviour; but (added he) the grand enemy of souls will attempt to disturb my peace and tranquillity. But blessed be God for His all-sufficient grace! How wonderful is the kindness of God, that the natural faculties of my soul are now as strong as ever, only I feel a tittle decay in my memory.' In this grateful strain he went on as long as he was able to speak. And another time he said: 'Blessed be God, His comforts fill my soul.' He enjoyed much of a delightful frame and longing expectation of his everlasting rest, till nature fainted, and the tabernacle of clay dropped off…. His body was interred at his own Parish of Llanddowror.

His funeral was very solemn. Abundance of poor, disconsolate people testified their grief by their looks, and shed abundance of tears for the loss of so good a man, in whom were united the judicious divine, the eminent preacher, the loving pastor, and the faithful friend, who had laboured amongst them for forty-five years."

Thus lived and laboured this remarkable man, and thus he died. How appropriate the following tribute paid to him by a gifted Churchman of last century. "Few men, in any age or country, in so humble a position, have exercised a nobler or a wider influence. Few teachers and philanthropists have passed away into eternity, cheered by the review of richer results of their life-work, than the absolute certainty of having exercised an enlightening and ennobling influence upon more than fifteen myriads of souls."[28] It is impossible to give a full and just estimate of the character of Griffith Jones. Humility was among his most conspicuous virtues, and marked him out as a true follower of Him, Who was "meek and lowly in heart." "That which gave a genuine lustre to all his other endowments was his remarkable and uncommon humility. Though. his friends might admire his superior abilities, or his acquaintance applaud his exemplary behaviour, great usefulness, and incessant diligence; yet he himself saw how far he fell short of his high calling; saw and lamented his defects. He renounced self in every view; was ever unconscious of his own: shining parts; desirous to improve, even by the meanest, and had very depreciating thoughts of his. own performances."[29] The following passage from one of his letters could only be the language of a truly humble heart, blinded by no self-delusions: "I am so slow in every business, of importance, which I would ascribe to my natural dulness, but. that I find I have quickness enough in things of no value; and this slowness is the cause why my own soul, and my friends, are losers by me. My imperfections vex me so much, that I am almost willing to be as mean in the esteem of my friends as I am in my own; and I should be altogether so, were I humble enough." But the dominant element in his character was love, the "*very bond of peace, and of all virtues*." Every page of his writings, and every effort of his life, testifies to this. He loved the Master he served, the flock committed to his charge, and the work he was commissioned to do. He esteemed the honour of labouring for God above all things, and he writes of the pleasures derivable from His service as incomparable. He ever lived and moved as in the immediate presence of God. It is no wonder that his labours were eminently blessed. There was no self in them. Nor yet is it a wonder that he was misunderstood and misrepresented by men whose aims were low, and whose ambitions were sordid. But as he laboured not for the approval or the applause of man, he was not embittered. Amid all disappointments and discouragements, he retained his perfect trust in God. It was the secret of his triumph. He kept constant watch over his own motives and feelings. He uttered no word of resentment against those who maligned him; his only sorrow was that the work of God was neglected and thwarted by men who were pledged by the most solemn and sacred vows to promote it. He received his reward in the success which crowned his labours, and he looked for no other.

Footnotes

[1]"The following are the titles of some of Mr. Jones' printed books in English, *viz*.:
"1. The Platform of Christianity, being an explanation of the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England.
"2. A Letter to a Clergyman, evincing the necessity of teaching the poor in Wales.
"3. The Christian Covenant, or the Baptismal Vow, as stated in our Church Catechism, Scripturally explained by question and answer. Note. This is the First Part of his intended Exposition of the Church Catechism in English. The Second Part, which goes to the end of the Creed, is now in the press.
"4. Welsh Piety, or An Account of the Circulating Welsh Charity Schools in Wales. These tracts were published annually for four and twenty years successively, and collected into two handsome volumes in

octavo. They breathe forth a spirit of piety every way worthy of this Welsh Apostle, as he was sometimes styled.
"Some of those in the Welsh language may be rendered:
"5. A Manual of Prayers for morning and evening, &c.
"6. Free Advice.
"7. A Call to the Throne of Grace.
"8. A Guide to the Throne of Grace.
"9. A large Exposition of the Church Catechism, with Scripture proofs, being a compendious Body of Divinity.
"10. An abridgement of this last, for the use of his Welsh Schools.
"11. A Letter upon the subject of Catechising the ignorant.
"12. The Duty of Praising God.
"13. An Extract of Mr. Rees Prichard's Poems."
A Sketch of the Life and Character of the Reverend and pious Mr. Griffith Jones, &c. London, 1762. p.18.
[2]"The Editor has in his possession several volumes of Mr. Jones' MS. Sermons, some written in full, but the greatest part are skeletons. They amount in all to nearly 550 in number, extending almost over the whole Bible; and they contain a rich store of plain, sound, and Scriptural divinity." Preface by Kev. J. Owen, translator of Griffith Jones' Sermons, seventeen in number. Published by Hamilton, Adams & Co. No date is given.
[3]*Christian Guardian*, April 1827, p.125.
[4]*History of Mrs. Bevan's Charity*, by Mr. C. Morgan-Richardson, 1890. p.6.
[5]*Ibid*. p.7. Mr. Sutton's bequest of the Charter House was similarly contested in 1611. See *Wales*, by Sir T. Phillips, p.251.
[6]See Bishop Burgess' Tracts, 1815, p.148. Dr. Burgess says that Griffith Jones had left only £2,000, "which were augmented by benefactions to £8,000 at the time of Mrs. Bevan's death." It may not be generally known that this was the "Welsh Charity" which benefited in consequence of an unhappy encounter between Oliver Goldsmith and Evans, a London publisher, over an anonymous letter which had appeared in the *London Packet*, containing an ungenerous attack on the unfortunate poet. The incident occurred in the year 1773, and its details were somewhat as follows : Goldsmith's well-known play, *She Stoops to Conquer*, had met with unqualified success in the winter of that year, which provoked the envy of some of his contemporary play-writers. Hence the unworthy attack just mentioned. When Goldsmith's attention was drawn to the obnoxious letter, he became furious, and his friends, instead of persuading him to treat it with the contempt it deserved, fanned the flames of resentment, and prompted him to seek for reparation. He proceeded in high temper to Paternoster Row in the company of one Captain Higgins, and entered the shop of Evans, the publisher in question, whom he assumed to be the editor, On being remonstrated with, Evans professed ignorance of the whole affair, and promised to speak to the editor. "He stooped to examine a file of the paper, in search of the offensive article; whereupon Goldsmith's friend gave him a signal, that now was a favourable moment for the exercise of his cane. The hint was taken as quick as given, and the cane was vigorously applied to the back of the stooping publisher. The latter rallied in an instant, and being a stout, high-blooded Welshman, returned the blows with interest. A lamp hanging overhead was broken, and sent down a shower of oil upon the combatants; but the battle raged with unceasing fury. The shopman ran of for a constable; but Dr. Kenrick, who happened to be in the adjacent room, sallied forth, interfered between the combatants, and put an end to the affray. He conducted Goldsmith to a coach, in exceedingly battered and tattered plight, and accompanied him home, soothing him with much mock commiseration, though he was generally suspected, and on good grounds, to be the author of the libel. Evans immediately instituted a suit against Goldsmith for an assault, but was ultimately prevailed upon to compromise the matter, the poet contributing fifty pounds to the Welsh Charity." – Washington Irving's *Life of Oliver Goldsmith*, Chapter xxxviii.
[7]Letter to Madam Bevan, May 31, 1735.
[8]*Gospel Magazine*, 1777. p.347.
[9]*Ibid*. p.293.
[10]*Ibid*. p.345.
[11]Sketch, &c., by Rev. E. Harries, p.8.
[12]"The Collect for the second Sunday in Advent," writes a later biographer.
[13]*Sketch*, &c., 1762, p.10.
[14]*Ibid*. p.14.
[15]For this we are indebted, and hereby wish to tender our unfeigned thanks, to Sir John Williams, Bart., Plas Llanstephan, who is in possession of the above-mentioned volume, and has most kindly transcribed the texts, dates, and places of delivery.

[16]The texts on these occasions were Romans iv. 7; vii. 24,25; xii. 1; 1 Corinthians ii. 2; 2 Corinthians v. 14,15; v. 20.
[17]Some of the parishes where the sermons were preached are:
Abernant, Conwyl, Defynock, Llanllwch, Llanddewi, Llangynnog, Llandyssil, Llangeler, and Kilgeran.
[18]*Life and Character of Griffith Jones*, by E. Harries, p.15.
[19]Judge Johnes' *Essay on the Causes of Dissent in Wales*, p.35.
[20]*Christian Guardian*, Sept. 1809, p.334, quoted in "Letters of Griffith Jones," by E. Morgan, 1832, p.xiii.
[21]Rees' *History of Welsh Nonconformity*, p.386, Ed. 1861.
[22]See Life of Teilo, in *Liber Landavensis*.
[23]"Some of his hearers thought that the Prayers and solemn addresses to the sponsors were the effusions of his own feelings, and upon reference, were astonished to find that he had not varied one word from the prescribed form in the Prayer Book. This impression was likewise made upon some Dissenters, who witnessed his impressive delivery of the Marriage Service, and may be considered excusable in such persons, who never entered their Parish Church but at the performance of that ceremony." — *Christian Guardian*, April 1827, p.123.
[24]The translation of this volume is by the Rev. John Owen, the biographer of Daniel Rowland, and sometime curate of Gaddedby, Leicestershire.
[25]*Sermons* by the Rev. Griffith Jones, translated from Welsh manuscripts…. by the Rev. John Owen, p .235, &c;
[26]A Sketch of the Life and Character of the Rev. G. Jones, &c, London, 1762.
[27]*Welsh Piety*, 1738-9.
[28]Dean Edwards; *Wales and the Welsh Church*, p.140.
[29]*A Sketch*, &c., 1762, p.20.
[30]*Letters*, p.134.

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10. Griffith Jones and the Evangelical Revival in Wales.

It remains for us, in this final chapter, to attempt to ascertain the relation of Griffith Jones, as an educationist and reformer, to the evangelical revival of the eighteenth century, and to the Methodist movement which, though it sprang from that revival, was by no means identical with it. We fully recognise that we have before us a delicate and difficult task. We have to reckon with prejudices that have been stereotyped and strengthened by the controversies of more than a hundred years. But it will be our endeavour to deal with the matter in strict accord with what appears to us to be the testimony of facts, as far as we have been able to ascertain them. That the evangelical revival was attended with irregularities and indiscretions cannot be denied by anyone who is fairly acquainted with its history; and that incalculable blessings have accrued through it to the Principality is equally undeniable.

What position did Griffith Jones occupy with regard to the evangelical revival in Wales? How far did his labours conduce to bring it about? What was his attitude towards the Methodist movement, and how far was he responsible for it, both in its earlier and its later developments? What were the causes which prevented the Church from reaping the full benefit of his labours, and of the revival, among the earliest instruments of which he held a foremost place? These are some of the questions which we shall attempt to answer in this chapter. It will have been seen that we make a distinction between the evangelical revival and the Calvinistic Methodist movement. That distinction will be obvious when we reflect that many of those who were powerfully influenced by the former, were opposed to the latter, in a greater or less degree; from its rise about the year 1735, to the formal secession of the main body of the Methodists in 1811.

Humanly speaking, the evangelical revival was the result of long and laborious efforts, and, we doubt not, of earnest prayers, on the part of good and holy men, who beheld with sorrow and alarm the terrible growth of immorality and licentiousness, which followed upon the political troubles of the middle and the latter half of the seventeenth century. We have already seen that some of those efforts had been made before the close of that century. Religious associations or guilds began to be formed as early as the year 1678, "under the influence of Doctors Horneck and Beveridge and Mr. Smithies. These guilds met frequently for devotional exercises, and systematically undertook certain good works. They were instrumental in bringing about more frequent celebrations of the Holy Communion in churches, daily services, the establishment of schools, the ministrations to prisoners and the sick."[1] These guilds led to the formation of Societies for the reformation of manners. It is a noteworthy fact that the 'powers that be,' to wit, the King and Queen, the Lords and Commons, and the Judges of the United Kingdom, took an active part in encouraging and supporting these movements for the suppression of vice, and the promotion of true religion in the land. On the 9th of July, 1691, Queen Mary, "in the absence of the King," addressed a letter to the Justices of the Peace in the County of Middlesex, in which she exhorted them to put in force those laws which had been made "against the profanation of the Lord's Day, drunkenness, profane swearing and cursing, and all other lewd, enormous, and disorderly practices, which, by a long continued neglect, and connivance of the Magistrates and officers concerned, have universally spread themselves, to the dishonour of God, and scandal of our Holy Religion, whereby it is now become the more necessary for all persons in authority to apply themselves with all possible care and diligence to the suppressing of the same."[2]

On the 20th of February, 1697, the King issued a proclamation "for preventing and punishing immorality and profaneness," probably in reply to a "Humble address of the House of Commons to the King for the suppressing of profaneness and vice,"[3] which was passed about the same time. Out of these movements, so powerfully patronised, arose the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, which, as we have seen, entered upon its work with earnestness and vigour. It established schools for the education of the poor; it published and distributed religious literature; it assisted in forming associations over the country for carrying out its plans and purposes; it brought together the clergy and leading laity in many parts, and sought to awaken them to a due sense of their vocation and duty. The beneficent operations of this Society were extended to Wales in the earliest years of its existence. It was from its plans and provisions that Griffith Jones derived his ideas and his methods, and much of his resources. He was, as we have already seen, one of its most faithful and trusted correspondents for a period of forty-eight years, during which he laboured with marvellous skill and energy, to carry out its primary intention of teaching the people to read their own language, and of instructing them in the leading principles of religion.

It has been shown that efforts had been made in the seventeenth century to distribute the Holy Scriptures among the Welsh people. In 1630, the first octavo edition of the Welsh Bible was printed at a great expense, through the generosity of Sir Thomas Middleton, Rowland Heylin, and other citizens of London, "who were moved with compassion towards the poor in Wales." This edition proved of great service, as Griffith Jones tells us. "Several ministers bestirred themselves on this encouragement, became better acquainted with the Welsh tongue, and preached more intelligibly, and much oftener; and many of the people learning to read, and conversing with the Bible in their own houses on week-days, received the explications of its doctrines with much greater forwardness and edification in the house of God upon Sundays. By these most gracious means, the poor

Britons had cause to praise God, and rejoice that they had heard the wonderful works and Word of God in their own tongue. And by this method, the Christian faith was now propagated among them, &c." In 1697, Thomas Gouge, who, as has been stated, had already done great service in the matter of popular education, was enabled to procure "a new and very fair impression of eight thousand Welsh Bibles and Common Prayer Books, one thousand whereof were freely given to the poor, and the rest sold at a moderate price."

"A work of that charge that it was not likely to have been done in any other way; and for which this age, and perhaps the next, will have great cause to thank God on his behalf."[4]

"Nor should we ever forget the great kindness of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, who undertook, with much pains and labours, to procure us a large impression of Welsh Bibles, with the Liturgy, in the year 1714, which was finished in 1718, when it was extremely wanted. Our Right Reverend Welsh Bishops subscribed to, and encouraged this pious and charitable work, many worthy members in England and Wales of the said Society, several other charitable persons, and some of the Right Reverend Bishops and clergy in England (who, as I ought most gratefully to acknowledge, have expressed themselves very favourably inclined to compassionate our present wants) contributed towards it. I have reason to believe (as some hundreds of them passed through my hands) that about a thousand of these Bibles were given to the poor. And of a later impression of Welsh Bibles,[5] of a similar size, without contents of chapters and marginal references, and therefore not so useful and acceptable to the Welsh people, who had been used to these advantages in all former Bibles; I was enabled by the bountiful assistance of good, persons, to buy above two thousand of them in all; some whereof were given, and some sold to pay for the teaching of others to read, with a full permission so to do from the kind benefactors who enabled me to purchase them. And I am bound gratefully to acknowledge the charity of the before-mentioned Society, in paying for the binding of very considerable numbers of them.

"I have likewise received some private benefactions in Bibles of this last impression; particularly from the Right Reverend Bishop of Bristol, above a year ago, by your hands, which came very seasonably, when I could not procure a Welsh Bible to supply the greatest need."[6]

Griffith Jones has been called the "morning star" of the evangelical revival in Wales, and he fully deserves that title. He had borne the burden and heat of the day before the earliest of the evangelical leaders, either in England or Wales, appeared on the scene. He had been labouring in the ministry for seventeen years before John Wesley, and for twenty-nine years before. George Whitfield, received deacon's orders; he had been carrying on his Circulating Schools, and, in co-operation with others, through the help of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, had circulated thousands of Bibles, Prayer Books, and useful religious publications, among his monoglot countrymen, and had preached in many parts of the neighbouring counties, before Daniel Rowland commenced his itinerant ministry, or Howell Harris his field preaching; he had established three hundred and twenty-nine schools, and, by their means, had helped to instruct 19,139 of the poor in the truths of the Gospel, when John Berridge, William Williams, and Peter Williams commenced their ministry; and he had entered into rest before Thomas Charles was six years old. The leaders of the evangelical movement in Wales were to a man South Wales men, bred and born within a radius of about thirty or forty miles from Llanddowror; and it was in those parts almost exclusively that the influence of Griffith Jones was felt previous to the year 1740.

That the Charity Schools of Griffith Jones prepared the way for the powerful religious awakening which broke out in Wales in the eighteenth century cannot be questioned. They do not, indeed, appear to have been responsible, directly or indirectly, for the change which took place in Howell Harris about the year 1735, as we do not find that they were established in Talgarth, his native parish, before the year 1740. That change, as Harris himself relates in his Autobiography, was brought about under the ministry of the incumbent of his own parish, the Rev. Pryce Davies, when, on the Sunday before Easter Day, the latter was solemnly and earnestly inviting the members of his congregation to the Holy Communion, and replying to the not uncommon excuse of those who abstain, namely, their sense of unfitness. "If you are not fit to come to the Lord's Table, you are not fit to come to Church, you are not fit to live, you are not fit to die." This was the arrow that pierced Harris' conscience. We may remark, in passing, that this instance shows that there were, even in those days of spiritual deadness, earnest pastors among the Welsh clergy, who fulfilled their duties with fidelity. Another instance is the Rev. Daniel Rowland, father of the celebrated Rowland of Llangeitho, who died in 1731, and of whom it is said that he was, especially in his later days, a man of conspicuous piety, and that he went about preaching beyond the limits of his own parishes.

Howell Harris makes mention in his Diary of a man from his neighbourhood who went about from house to house in 1736, to teach the young people to sing Psalms. This man he accompanied, and took advantage of the opportunity to exhort the people. About this time, he began to establish his Societies on the plan of those of Dr. Woodward. These activities roused the hostility of the people, and alarmed the incumbent of his parish, who wrote to him a letter, pointing out his presumption, and warning him of the penalties he might incur. In the summer of the same year, Harris seems to have paid a visit to Griffith Jones, the result of which was that he established a school at Trevecca, in his native parish, and on the 8th of October, writes to inform him of the success of the enterprise. But it was an enterprise of short duration, for, about the latter end of the following year, he was turned out of the school. "There appeared now a general reformation in several counties. Public diversions were laid aside, religion became a common subject of conversation, and places of worship were everywhere crowded. The Welsh Charity Schools, by the exertions of the Rev. Griffith Jones, of Llanddowror, began to spread; people in general expressed a willingness to receive instruction; and Societies were formed in many places."[7] This was in 1737.

Daniel Rowland was brought into a serious view of life and of the ministry, as already related, under the preaching of Griffith Jones in the parish Church of Llanddewibrefi. John Rowland, Daniel's elder brother, was curate of Llanddewibrefi at the time, as well as incumbent of Llangeitho and Nantcwnlle, to which he succeeded after his father's death. As stated above, the elder Daniel Rowland, moved by the spiritual destitution of his countrymen, used, in his later years, to make preaching excursions beyond his own parishes. It is more than probable that Griffith Jones, who also was active about the same time, became acquainted with Rowland and his family. Nothing, under such circumstances, would be more natural than that John Rowland should invite Griffith Jones to preach in his church. Another fact of importance is that, in *Welsh Piety* for 1738-39, there is a list of ten parishes in Cardiganshire where schools had been held, eight of which, including Llanddewibrefi and Llangeitho, are within easy distance of the high road which runs between Lampeter and Lledrod.[8] It appears, then, that Llanddewibrefi was a kind of a centre of the schools in Cardiganshire in the earlier years of their history. In *Welsh Piety* for the year 1746-47, a letter is inserted from "John Rowland, Vicar of Llanddewibrefi" and another from Walter Jenkins, one of the Churchwardens.

We thus see that Howell Harris and Daniel Rowland, the pioneers of the itinerant movement which ultimately issued in Welsh Methodism, became early under the personal influence of Griffith Jones. Others who took a prominent part in the same movement in its earlier days, came also more or less under his influence. Howell Davies, who was almost as great a power in Pembrokeshire, as Daniel Rowland was in Cardiganshire, was trained for the ministry by him at Llanddowror, and laboured for some time as his curate. William Williams, the hymnologist, was ordained to the curacy of Llanwrtyd in 1740, where he served for three years. In 1741, he certified to the success of the Charity Schools, and the efficiency of the masters, both in Llanfair-ar-y-bryn, his native parish, and in Llanwrtyd. In conjunction with the curate of the former parish, he testifies that the master "behaved himself civil and according to the prescribed rules, without taking upon him to be an exhorter, or anything unbecoming his calling," an intimation that some of the schoolmasters were even then accused of taking upon themselves to "exhort," which was contrary to the "prescribed rules." In the year 1749, William Williams was married to a lady of "strong common sense and piety," who had lived as a friend with Griffith Jones, and proved an eminently suitable companion to her husband. The Bishop refused to admit Williams to priest's orders, because, among other things, he went forth to preach in other places besides his own parishes. With the amiable candour that always characterised the "sweet singer of Wales," he intimates that he never afterwards entirely approved of his own irregularity. He considered it a hasty step; and thought he might have been more useful had he been more cautious. Another leader of the evangelical movement was Peter Williams, a native of Laugharne. His mother was a church-woman, and used to attend the ministry of Griffith Jones, who was on terms of intimacy with her son, after the latter had entered the ministry of the Church.[9]

There can be little doubt that Griffith Jones perceived very early the dangers that might accrue to the Church from the itinerant movement which had been commenced by these earnest men. He himself showed every anxiety to work in strict conformity with the rules of the Church. He sought the co-operation of the clergy, and entered their parishes only when invited or permitted. "I have sought very carefully," he wrote in 1942, "that this design should be carried on in everything as orderly and consistently with the Church of England as was possible." He constantly reiterates this assurance. His great desire was to secure the sanction and patronage of the bishops, so that his schools might the more easily find entrance to every parish. He was anxious that the Church should seize the great opportunity that was before her, by turning her parochial system into an instrument for enlightening and uplifting the people, and thus win their lasting attachment and gratitude. He saw others awakening and bestirring themselves. Referring to the distribution of copies of the Welsh Bibles of 1714 and of the two subsequent editions, he writes in the *Welsh Piety* for 1741-42: "I am informed the Protestant Dissenters in London sent, out of their funds and charities, some hundreds of these Bibles to be distributed by their ministers; which much ingratiated them with the people, and won many to learn their Catechism. And if our people are not prevailed on by the method I have proposed, or a better, to learn ours, the spiritual interest of our Church, and sound religion, will never thrive in Wales." He found it necessary to exercise every care and caution to save himself and his schools from the suspicion of disloyalty to the Church, which the distrust of those in authority was too ready to entertain, and the watchful jealousy of many of his brethren was only too eager to encourage. And as he went on, his difficulties increased. The revival movement which commenced under Howell Harris in Breconshire, under Rowland in Cardiganshire, and under Howell Davies in Pembrokeshire, rendered the situation more complicated. His enemies were not slow to avail themselves of a plausible opportunity to discredit his work by identifying him with the itinerant revivalists and their irregularities.

Those earnest men, though never for a moment contemplating any separation or secession from the Church, worked on different lines from him. They paid less heed than he did to teaching the people, and we think there is evidence that some of their followers depreciated catechising. It is most probable that Griffith Jones was referring to the Methodists when he wrote in 1945 "that the people justly complained of for their tumultuous and disorderly real among us, are no friends to catechising," and "are not only ignorant and unprincipled (*i.e*., untaught) in the doctrines and duties of Christianity, but likewise too opinionative to submit to catechising, and spare not to declaim openly against it." He also quotes a "grave minister, in a letter now before me," as writing that "some persons who take upon them to be religious, are busy in doing all they can to persuade the catechumens to leave it off, upon a false hypothesis, *viz*., that it dries up their spirits, and creates hypocrites in the Church."[10] Moreover, those good men felt less restrained than he did by the limitations of the parochial system; and their intrusion into the parishes of their brethren very naturally caused much irritation, which, we may suppose, was generally in proportion to the ministerial apathy of the aggrieved clergy, though it must by no means be assumed that it was always so. It was, furthermore, alleged against the revivalists that they were guilty of doctrinal errors, and of encouraging extravagant and unseemly outbursts of religious feelings among their people during divine service. Griffith Jones heard these things, and, at least at the commencement, believed they caused him considerable embarrassment.

Many of the clergy who heartily supported the Circulating Schools, looked with disfavour upon the work of the revivalists, and in their communications to Griffith Jones, expressed their strong disapproval of their methods and their "enthusiastical" spirit. The Rev. Elias Thomas, "minister of two parishes in Monmouthshire," writes to him in 1747: "I can no less than lament and freely confess with regret and concern, that I have been one of those that were prejudiced against the Welsh Charity Schools, suspecting them to have a tendency to promote Methodism, and a contempt of the parochial clergy, till about fifteen months ago, I had an opportunity of perusing your excellent and judicious *Letter to a Clergyman*, whereby I was fully convinced of their consistency with the constitution of our Church, &c." Such intimations occur in letters from other correspondents published in *Welsh Piety*. In the Preface for the same year, the writer refers to the same subject. "As to the charge of Methodism, it is but common justice to the undertaking, and to the reverend and worthy person who has been from the beginning the chief manager of it, to assure the public, that the persons who go under that denomination have not the least concern in it. It conforms itself as strictly as possible to the model of the Charity Schools in England, and teaches for doctrine nothing but what is taught by the Church of England"[11]

Griffith Jones' first trouble from the revival movement arose apparently from the conduct of Howell Davies, his own curate, who, about the year 1740, was getting beyond his rector's control. We have no information about the matters that were in dispute between them, beyond what.p is contained in the letters of Griffith Jones to Madam Bevan. In an undated letter, written probably in 1740, or the following year, he says: "I officiated myself here today. Howell went to Llysyfran. He is so unsettled in his mind that I cannot depend on any of his promises; the last he talked with has him. I am sorry I cannot fix him in his studies. I see he will continue as ignorant and disorderly as any of the crowd, when he parts with me. It is the cry of the crowd that he will be governed by, which grieves me very much for his own sake." The following extract from another letter, also undated, is interesting: "I am quite well, and never more alive than today, and all last night, though I talked a great deal, and with high spirits, with Howell Harris; but I think it shall be the last time, for he is absolutely erroneous and conceited." It is not probable that the threat

contained in the last sentence was carried out, as Howell Harris corresponded with him after this, and paid visits from time to time to Llanddowror.

There are four other letters of his, written in the month of May in 1741, and one written in April, 1743, in which he expresses his opinions of the Methodists in still stronger terms. But at that time he had not attended any of their meetings, and must have depended for his knowledge of them upon the reports of others; and there is sufficient evidence to show that, as he became better acquainted with them, a great change took place in his opinion of the movement, and in his attitude towards its promoters.

In the last extract, Griffith Jones mentions an interview he had had with Howell Harris, at which he "talked a great deal, and with high spirits." It is probable that the letter of Harris to him about to be quoted from, and dated May. 15th, 1741, was written in consequence of that interview. With excellent judgment and temper, and with the profound respect which he always showed for Griffith Jones, Harris replies in that letter to some of the accusations that had been levelled against him and Rowland.

"I have, since I parted with you, heard so many things that seem to prove strongly that the enemy is let loose upon us, in a way not expected, to divide those who love the Lord Jesus more dearly than their lives. I could not rest without writing a letter to you, and I am persuaded you will receive it in the same spirit in which I write. Should we not be very tender and cautious in hearing with both ears, before we pass judgment? I hope that, notwithstanding all the calumnies cast upon me, I am justified in this, that I would not for ten thousand worlds expose men or doctrines that have sufficent evidence that they are sent of God…. O, dear Sir, mistake not my end, nor my spirit; for at this moment I could write with tears of love to you. I am and ever was persuaded that I shall see you shining in glory. It is the concern of the Lord's cause that makes me write to you, not cunningly or artfully, but in simplicity, in the spirit of our common Lord, and from the abundance of the heart"

In reference to the errors with which Rowland was charged, the writer says that the impression was due to the malice of his enemies, the ignorance of those who listened to him, or to some casual unguarded expressions, which he would willingly correct when his attention was called to them.

"I believe that, when you look a little calmly, you find that all aspersions against Rowland come from such a spirit. As to what has been reported of some expressions used by him in preaching, I am persuaded that they are false. It is true that, when he has been informed that they were mistaken by his hearers, or not explained in the sense which he intended, he has had the humility to correct what was not clearly stated I find that there are some people who make it all their business to…. set all in the blackest light, in order to divide you. There are but few faithful ministers, especially in this dark benighted Church; and shall they be divided? As to crying out, some I have seen and spoken to; they were so penetrated by the Word that they could not help crying out, some on seeing they were lost, and others on seeing they had pierced the Son of God by their sins; whom, if you had seen, you would have had no scruple about, but have blessed God on their account. There is, it must be confessed, much of the evil spirit and hypocrisy in the crying out of some. I publicly objected to it, and Rowland thanked me. Their singing together on the way has much simplicity in it. The heart being thus kept heavenward, trifling thoughts, as well as idle talking, are prevented. When my heart is warmed by love, I cannot help singing, even if I am hoarse. Their speaking to, or embracing each other in love, I am sure was also in great simplicity. I find such love in my own soul towards you

that, if I were near you, I could not help embracing you in the love of God, which others may construe into imprudence.

“I have been informed that it has been told that Rowland does not speak well of you, which I am sure is not correct. Such is his opinion of you that, when any wish to be admitted to communion, if he finds that they have been under your examination, his usual way is to raise his hand and say, ‘If you have been there, I have nothing to say after him.’ I have always heard him speak of you with great esteem. As to your books, I never speak much to him about them; but his selling, and encouraging the sale of them, is a sufficient proof of his approbation.”

In the concluding paragraph of this letter, Harris defends Rowland from the charge of holding “sinless perfection” that had been made against him.

We find from Harris’ correspondence that he paid frequent visits to Llanddowror in 1742 and the following year, and that he continued to hold Griffith Jones in high esteem and affection. In an undated letter, written probably in 1742, he says : “Tomorrow fortnight, I trust I shall hear the laborious old soldier, Mr. Griffith Jones, who has been owned to batter Satan’s strongholds near thirty years, and still holds on, and is wonderfully owned in his ministry, especially in propagating the Circulating Welsh Schools, by which means, in a few years, many thousands have been taught to read, who before were like mere heathens, as you may see in some English tracts called *Welsh Piety*, which I believe you may have at brother Hutton’s. In the last, he gives a gentle rebuke to us; but there was need, there having been some irregularities amongst some.” Again, on December, 14, 1742, in a letter to Whitefield, he writes: “Next Sunday, I hope I shall see the faithful and laborious Mr. Griffith Jones. He grows most sweetly, I hear. Many that once thought ill of communicating in their Parish Churches, have changed their thoughts, and met the Lord there, and see (that) their motives arose from self, mistaken conscience, want of love, and conversation with such that have a party more at heart than the common cause of Christ. I have great faith given me that we shall see great things even in this poor benighted Church. I have uncommon prayers wrought by the Lord in my heart for it. I see more and more need daily of being cautious in every step we take. It is the enemy that hurries to make haste.” In a letter to another correspondent, written on Christmas Day, 1742, he refers to his visit to Llanddowror, mentioned in the last extract. “Last Sunday, I heard that old and eminent man of God, Mr. Griffith Jones, who has laboured with uncommon power and success in the ministry for upwards of thirty years, I believe. In receiving the Sacrament there then, I think I never had before such a discovery of my dear Master.” Again, on the 17th of the following March, he writes that the “Welsh Circulating Schools. are blessed, and prosper much in the hand of the valuable Mr. Griffith Jones;” and on the 21st of the same month: “Last Sunday was a day of uncommon sweetness, light, love, liberty, and power, under the ministry of dear Mr. Griffith Jones, when many hundreds of the lambs gathered to meet the great Shepherd, and I believe they met Him.”

In another long communication to Griffith Jones himself, Howell Harris gives expression to similar sentiments of respect and affection towards his correspondent, and of his own firm attachment and adherence to the Church. It was dated from Bristol on the 26th of January, 1746, and a translation of it shall be given here almost in full, as it throws important light on the inner working of the Methodist movement at the time, as well as on Harris’ state of mind with regard to it.

“With true respect and sincere love, I sit down to address to you these words, assuring you that my soul goes out in gratitude to our beloved Saviour for the many gifts and

graces He has bestowed upon you; and in particular, that He has given you the spirit to withstand ignorance and corruption, but more especially that He has blessed you with success beyond expectation in our own benighted Church, for which my soul has often wept bitterly, labouring amid tribulations on all sides, of which no-one knows except Him Who searches all secrets; and yet willing to suffer all, and to be misunderstood and misjudged for my honest intentions; and still pressing forward in faith and love, hoping that our Saviour would grant to those whom it most nearly concerns, to have a right and clear opinion of this work, in which I have been deemed worthy to have a small share, so that at last this our Zion shall become 'a praise in the earth' and to sit, as she once did, as a princess among the provinces…. I think I have this uppermost in my soul, that my name and labours may be for ever forgotten, but that my Redeemer only should be known and worshipped; and that His truth may be studied, accepted, believed, and preached, and that His poor, sickly Church may be recovered from darkness and formalism, into its first love and faith, and once more put on her beautiful garments. This is my desire, and this, I believe, is the hearty desire of all the other workers who have turned out to labour in this way. Often have we desired and prayed that those in authority may come to know of our principles, our aims, and the obstacles we have to contend with, for the sake of the real blessing that has already accrued to souls, and is still accruing; there is little doubt but that their compassion would be moved, and that their opinion of us would be changed, and that they would no longer look upon us as mere mad enthusiasts.

"What if in our zeal against those who are corrupt and ignorant, we utter some mistaken words, and in some things, through want of experience, go too far, and perhaps allow ourselves to be misled by some cunning hypocrites? Will no other side but that be ever considered? Are there no considerations which modify the complaints brought against the work? Are we not sorry to have given offence to anybody, or to have manifested in our conduct a spirit which is unbecoming, or contrary to the Gospel? Do we not publicly and before the world acknowledge and lament our failings, and profess our earnest desire for a full conformity with the example and the precepts of our Saviour? Though we are denied admission to the Communion, and doubtless for reasons that appear sufficient to our superiors, according to the light we are placed in before them; and, though we are rebuked publicly from the pulpit, and called by names which do not belong to us, and though many of us have been forbidden to partake of the Communion in our Parish Churches, for no other reason than that we hold meetings or societies, we nevertheless always strive to continue. in prayer on behalf of our degenerate Church, and are resolved to remain in her until we are finally turned out. I well know her spiritual poverty, though she is ready to say in her fallen state that she has need of nothing. The work done among us is too evident to be hidden, or to require any proof of its extent and reality to show that it is the Lord's work; though it has been clouded by inevitable weaknesses, which charity should cloak, for true and valid considerations. Yea, we have hazarded our lives during many years, under all kinds of opposition, before a hostile world; often in danger of being done to death, sometimes appearing with our blood mingled with the dust, for no cause in the world but that we invited them to the Saviour of sinners; when the Lord knew that nothing else constrained us to travel incessantly day and night, through rains, tempests, hailstorms, frost and snow, preaching in the open air in all weathers, and that only for the love of God and of His Church; promising to ourselves and requiring. no other reward in this world but what we possessed in our own consciences; bearing reproach, hard words, and insults, reckoning it a sufficient recompense to hear miserable, poor, defiled, ignorant sinners crying out, 'What must we do to be saved?' renouncing their sins in righteousness, following the Lord Whom they once reviled, and bearing the good fruit of obedience. This recompense we unquestionably receive, though tares are largely mingled with the wheat, making a fair show, but nevertheless turning out badly and disgracefully.

This we have seen with bruised hearts. Yet, blessed be God, there are many thousands, in England and Wales, who prove by their Gospel-lives that they have truly enlisted under the banner of Christ, and to whom God has made us instruments of salvation, to rescue them as brands from the burning. Oh, if our superiors knew of the hundredth part of the good that has been done, I believe they would be so far from blaming us, or thinking ill of the work which so conspicuously shows the power of its great Author, that they would be more diligent to inquire more closely into it, till they would be fully satisfied on trustworthy testimony. So that whatever admixture of heated zeal, or other failings, may have been observed when we are pressing the truth, yet I humbly believe that many of our masters in Israel, with tears or with joy, would be ready to fall before Him that sitteth upon the throne, and to say: 'Of a truth, the Lord hath visited our land and this is the Lord's work.'

"Who else could have opened the eyes of the blind, turned the wicked ones from the error of their ways, and made the blasphemer lowly and humble? There are numberless other examples of God's goodness to be seen. I am sure that you see, and feel the weight, the urgency, and the burden of the great work of dealing with souls, and that you are not ignorant of the trials and pitfalls that surround us, from the various kinds of people whom we have to deal with, from the unseen enemy, and above all, from the inscrutable depth of the evil that is born with us. You cannot refrain from weeping for us before the Lord; and [see] that it is a miracle that our heads are kept above the water. O, dear Sir, who is sufficient for these things? If I had no true and certain hope that the work is the Lord's, and that He has pledged to take upon Himself the care, the weight, and the management, my hands would have grown slack from a thousand considerations. And through this confidence in His grace, His power, His wisdom, I see that I move in Him. O, Sir, help us by your prayers; there never have been such worthless and insufficient worms employed in so great a work…. Your counsels against pride, &c., are always acceptable and profitable to me, for I can never sufficiently value the privilege of faithful admonitions, which I need at all times. O, help, Sir, help in this work, yea, this very great work of endeavouring to rescue many poor sinners like brands from the burning; I implore you to help us in every way, for the Lord's sake."

We know of only one more letter from Harris to Griffith Jones. It was written on the 3rd of January, 1760, when Harris had become captain in the militia, and was prepared to fight in defence of his country against the danger which threatened it, as he believed, from "the tyrannical spirit of Popery;" "a life," he adds, "by far the most disagreeable to me. But being persuaded of my duty by the faithful, unerring Spirit of grace, I am willing to testify, once for all, my regard to my king and country; but, above all, to the most precious Gospel.". His personal reference to Griffith Jones in this letter is as full of respect and affection as ever. "I was much refreshed," he writes, "in hearing by T. David of your being yet here below, to stand in the gap, and to entreat for a poor, unbelieving world, which, being indeed blinded by the god of this world, sees no glory or excellency in the most precious Redeemer. Sinners are really running in the broad road to eternal ruin, and that merrily and lightly. And I greatly fear that very few mourn over them. I hope you will live to awaken many by your honest labours before the end of your days. I should esteem it the highest honour if counted worthy to be of some real service to all, especially to poor Wales, as you have hitherto been in many respects."

We make no apology for the length, of these quotations. They reveal the inward feelings of the writer towards both the Church and Griffith Jones; and. he was a true representative of the spirit of Methodism at the time. He writes with perfect frankness. He was under no delusions as to the perils and imperfections of those with whom he was associated. He was an enthusiast certainly, but not a fanatic. His expressions of

attachment to the Church and to Griffith Jones were not framed merely for the eye of a strong churchman, for they are repeated, even in stronger terms, in his letters to others, as well as in his diaries. Nor can we believe that he would have written in terms so free and affectionate to one whose feelings towards him were other than cordial. Howell Harris was a remarkable man in many ways; but, in all his eventful history, nothing is more remarkable than his attachment to the Church, and the tenacity with which he clung to her communion. We could quote abundantly from his letters and diaries in confirmation of this; but we must forbear. It is true: that, he lamented her spiritual sloth and inefficiency; but is he to be branded as an unfaithful churchman for doing that? He was consumed with the desire of awakening his countrymen from their spiritual deadness. He threw his whole energies into the work from the highest motives, and would not be induced to desist from his purpose by threats or persuasion. He was convinced that he was doing God's work, and he defended lay preaching with conspicuous ability, on historical grounds, as well as on those of urgent practical necessity. He had to obey the dictates of an imperative conscience, which forbade him to depart from the communion of the Church, and bade him go forth into the highways and hedges to preach the Gospel to perishing souls. He did both, and was blamed for his "conformity by people of all denominations," and for his preaching by his fellow-churchmen. He had many temptations to leave the Church. He was refused ordination by the bishop, after repeated applications; he was offered ordination by the Dissenters, and given every encouragement to throw in his lot with them; he was misrepresented and persecuted by some of the clergy and the magistrates; but he clung to the Church with loyal devotion. He communicated in her regularly, and exhorted his followers to do so, for which he was much censured. He showed every anxiety that the Church should reap the advantages of his incessant labours.

There is further evidence that Griffith Jones became more friendly towards the Methodists as he became better acquainted with them. We have seen that, at first, he suspected them of something like duplicity. The biographer of Lady Huntingdon acknowledges that "the Methodists may, perhaps, in some instances, have been wanting in candour towards the clergy; and under the feeling of personal insult, or of zeal arising out of general apathy, may have employed epithets not sufficiently cautious; nevertheless, the general conduct of many of the clergy deserved the severest reprehension." Howell Harris himself, as we have seen, acknowledged the need of the gentle rebuke which Griffith Jones had administered to the Methodists for their irregularities. But the attitude of caution and aloofness which the latter maintained towards them in 1741, had, seven years later, become considerably changed.

"About the month of May, 1748, Lady Huntingdon and her daughters, accompanied by Lady Anne and Lady Frances Hastings, left Bath, where they had been staying some considerable time, on a tour through Wales. It is a matter of regret that so little information can now be obtained of her Ladyship's journey into a part of the kingdom where she was destined in after years to reap a harvest so abundant. From the scanty materials, however, which remain, an imperfect and irregular journal in the handwriting of Lady Frances Hastings, we are informed that Lady Huntingdon was met at Bristol by Mr. Howell Harris, Mr. Griffith Jones, Mr. Daniel Rowland, and Mr. Howell Davies, all of whom accompanied her into the Principality. They appear to have travelled slowly, taking short stages every day For fifteen days successively, two of the ministers that accom- panied her Ladyship, preached in some town or village…. 'The divine influence of the Spirit of God,' says Lady Frances, 'was very evidently afforded with His Word, and many were added unto the Lord's people.' On one occasion, when Mr. Griffith Jones preached in a large field from that passage in the fortieth chapter of the prophecies of Isaiah, *What shall*

I cry? there was an extraordinary manifestation of the grace and power of God over the assembled multitude, so that many were deeply convinced of their misery and guilt, and cried aloud in the most awful manner. When the sermon was ended, Lady Huntingdon inquired of many of those who had been so affected, the cause of their loud and bitter cries. Most of them replied that they were so powerfully and deeply convinced of their. sinfulness and awful condition in the sight of God, that they were afraid He never would have mercy on them. The people in general through the whole assembly seemed greatly bowed down and humbled before the Lord, and many said they should never forget the time when God was so gracious unto them."[12]

In a letter of Harris to Whitfield (December 14, 1742), quoted above, the writer says that some of the people "thought ill of communicating" in their own Parish Churches, probably because of the indifferent lives of their clergy, and he implies that they were induced by him to alter their minds when the matter was duly explained to them, which is another evidence of his anxiety to attach the people to the Church. This matter of communicating elsewhere than in their Parish Churches on the part of the people, was a cause of much ill-feeling in those days, as we may gather from the following passage in one of Griffith Jones' Letters in *Welsh Piety*. And if we compare the respective attitudes of Griffith Jones and Howell Harris towards the people who followed the habit alluded to, it will be seen that the latter was the stricter churchman of the two.

"Many of the poor laity," says Griffith Jones, "because they are wont to employ the trustiest people in all their temporal concerns, can no more commit their souls to the care of a manifestly weak and wicked minister than they would be clients of an unskilful and unfaithful lawyer, or than they would, in a dangerous fever, trust their lives in the hands of a foolish, faithless physician. These sincere souls, rather than part with the Established Church, desire to receive the blessed Sacrament (at least sometimes) in another parish. The Dissenters may well be angry with this; for if it was not complied with in very many places, meeting-houses would have been much fuller in Wales. Many Dissenters have been made by scrupling this indulgence. A few months would produce thousands more, if strictness of conformity in this respect should be pushed on to the length some desire."

In the earlier years of the evangelical revival, few things are more remarkable than the great veneration which was shown to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and the overpowering sense of the divine presence and blessing which was experienced during its administration. It is sometimes stated, and oftener taken for granted, that the due position of the Holy Communion in the economy of public worship was gained, or regained for it, in this country about the middle of last century. This is a mistake. Griffith Jones himself laid much stress upon frequent celebrations of the Lord's Supper, as well as upon regular attendance, and due preparation. In a letter to Madam Bevan, dated March 26th, 1734) after having enumerated the ends for which the Sacrament was ordained, and after giving his reasons against its administration in private, except in times of persecution, or in cases of necessity, such as sickness or confinement, he proceeds:

"And I must own that to use our endeavours to promote the more frequent celebration of it among professed Church members in public is very expedient, everything considered. Where we read in Scripture of the disciples breaking of bread from house to house, their houses were their churches, or stated meeting-places, and they had no other then. There was the gathering of the disciples together, and there they had the doctrine of the Apostles, that is, the preaching of the Word of God, singing of Psalms and prayer, namely, the whole of divine worship devoutly performed, of which the Sacrament was but a part, the concluding part. This they did as often as they met together as a Church, &c."

Before Sacrament Sunday, Griffith Jones himself was in the habit of holding a preliminary service in his own Church on the previous Saturday, at which he prepared the communicants for a devout and intelligent reception. His Church on such Sundays, as already stated, became the centre of a large; multitude who came from long distances.[13] His correspondents from all parts of Wales gratefully testify to the more numerous and reverent attendance at the Holy Communion, as one of the happy results of the Circulating Schools. The rector of Puncheston, for instance, in a letter dated June 6, 1741, writes thus: "For my churches have been so flocked to since the schools have been set up that there is scarce room sufficient for the audience within doors; and I can affirm that they appear very devout in the public worship, very attentive under the Word, and greater numbers do partake now constantly every month of the Holy Eucharist, I hope with a more regular zeal and due reverence than before." It was under an earnest exhortation from his parish clergyman to the people to attend the Holy Communion, as we have seen, that Howell Harris was first brought to a serious frame of mind, and he frequently mentions in his diaries and letters the great blessing he received at the Lord's Table. Sacrament Sunday at Llangeitho, in the time of Rowland, was a great day. Even to this day, we believe, it is called "the Sabbath of the Great Assembly"[14] in that village. Thousands of people came together, having travelled from long distances in order to be present at the Holy Communion, which was always administered at the morning service. Whitfield, in a letter to a friend, says that the "power of God at the Sacrament during its administration by Rowland, was enough to make one's heart burn within him." As many as twelve hundred, or even two thousand, partook of the Sacrament on those occasions, when he was assisted generally by two or three clergymen, and some times by seven or eight. In August, 1769, at the anniversary of the opening of Trevecca College, we are told that the Sacrament was celebrated on Friday, the 18th, in the afternoon; on Sunday, the 20th, at one o'clock; and again on the following Thursday early in the morning. In later times, John Williams, son of William Williams, relates that, in the year 1800, he had been on a tour through Wales of some six hundred miles, when he preached generally three times a day, and administered the Lord's Supper twice.[15] The Sacrament seems to have held the same position in the early history of the evangelical movement in England. When Whitfield "was at Haworth, the Lord's Supper was frequently administered, not only to the stated communicants, but to hundreds from other quarters, who resorted thither on those solemn occasions, esteeming them in a particular sense as *the days of the Son of man*, such, in many respects, as had never been witnessed since the first promulgation of Christianity, when the Spirit was, in so eminent a degree, poured from on high…. At Haworth, on Whit-Sunday, the church was thrice filled with communicants.[16] We are also told that, whilst Whitefield remained at Ashby-place, "the Sacrament was administered every morning by some of the clergymen who were with Lady Huntingdon;"[17] and again, that on Sunday, October 5, 1766, Mr. Wesley administered the Sacrament at Lady Huntingdon's chapel at eight o'clock in the morning.[18]

The leaders of the evangelical movement in Wales were more anxious, it would appear, than those in England, to maintain their position as an auxiliary to the Church, and to prevent the formation of an independent body. Howell Harris clung to the Church to the last. Daniel Rowland, though discountenanced and discouraged, if not formally ejected, continued to read the Church Service in his chapel, after he had left the parish church, refused to allow the clergy to be ill-spoken of in his hearing, and on his deathbed earnestly exhorted his son to remain in the Church. William Williams thought he saw great danger to the "unwary, new-born Methodists, from the anti-Trinitarian, Socinian, and Arian doctrines which gained ground daily, and, in a letter to Thomas Charles, dated May 28, 1790, or about eight months before his death, urged his correspondent most pathetically

to “exhort the young preachers to study, next to the Scriptures, the doctrines of our old, celebrated Reformers, as set forth in the Articles of the Church of England, and the three Creeds, namely, the Apostles’ Creed, the Nicene, and the Athanasian. They will see there the great truths of the Gospel, and the deep things of God, set forth in a most excellent and suitable manner. They are a most sound form of words on the high and spiritual things of God.”[19]

The case of Peter Williams is related in his autobiography. He was ordained in 1745 to the curacy of Eglwys Gymmun, near Carmarthen. His rector held some preferment or a good curacy in England, and generally visited his parish only once a year to receive his tithes. Peter Williams set himself to work in earnest. He established cottage lectures from house to house, and attended “wakes,” which he endeavoured to reform and convert into religious services. For his zeal he was thought by some to be “righteous over much,” and suspected of Methodism. A curious incident led to his dismissal. When he was delivering a carefully written discourse one Sunday morning, he was disturbed by the bad behaviour of some young people in the church, whom he proceeded to remonstrate with, and in doing so, he lost his place in the manuscript. He had to make the best he could of an awkward situation, and rather than terminate abruptly, he finished with a few extemporised words, which, he confesses, had no particular reference to the subject of the sermon. The wife of the rector, who happened to be in the congregation that morning, wrote to inform her husband that his curate was now unmistakably convicted of being a Methodist, as he had preached *extempore*. The rector gave him notice to leave on the charge of “preaching original sin, justification by faith, and the absolute necessity of regeneration.” The incriminated curate tried to defend himself, but his irate rector was inexorable. He went to the bishop, but it was of no use. His Lordship accused him of preaching in two churches outside his own parish, but told him that, if he behaved well for three years, he would grant him full ordination. “How can I subsist, my Lord,” was the reply of the astonished curate; “I cannot dig, I am ashamed to beg.” “Live as you can,” was the bishop’s rejoinder; and the curate left the palace without the offer of meat or drink. Peter Williams tried one or two other curacies, but with no better success. Here is an illustration of the spirit which drove out of the Church such men as Rowland, William Williams, and Thomas Charles. The rector of Eglwys Gymmun had been appointed to that benefice in 1730, but had lived apparently in England. He visited the parish only to receive the tithes. And yet he is supported by his bishop in dismissing, even without the usual legal notice, his curate, who was doing his best to perform the duties of the parish. And we are not surprised to find that the rector in question was none other than the notorious John Evans, who, in 1752, wrote a scurrilous pamphlet, in which he tried to ruin both the character and the work of Griffith Jones.

Thomas Charles, in later years, met with a similar treatment. He expressed his strong attachment to the Church under severe trials. “I can live independent of the church,” he wrote in 1783, “but I am a Churchman on principle, and therefore shall not on any account leave it, unless I am forced to do so. But you can well conceive how disagreeable and uncomfortable it is to be doing nothing. I have never felt before, in the same degree, the force of the expression, ‘Woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel.’”[20] He saw the fields already white to harvest, and longed to gather the fruit into the Church. But he was forced to remain idle, as the Church refused to give him work. The Methodists suffered persecutions, imprisonments, and heavy fines for years; but they would not invoke the protection of the law by declaring themselves dissenters from the Church. “Our steady attachment to the Established Church,” wrote Charles in 1802, “cost us in fines, in one year, near one hundred pounds; for we scrupled to have our places of worship recorded and our preachers licensed as Dissenters.”[21] Their scruples were expensive to these poor

people; but their attachment to the Church was strong. In their Quarterly Association at Bala, held in June, 1801, they passed the following declaration: “We do not designedly separate, nor do we deem ourselves to be dissenters from the Established Church. In our doctrinal tenets, we fully agree with the Articles of the Church of England. What appears in our religious organisations as inclining towards Dissent, has taken place of necessity rather than of choice. It is not our intention to form a schism, a sect, or a party. God forbid.”

Such was the attitude of these earnest men towards the Church, and such was the treatment they received. They loved her Liturgy, and defended her doctrines, even after they had ceased to minister in her courts. We are justified in believing, we think, that this attitude was attributable, in a large measure, to the great influence of the example and teaching of Griffith Jones, for whom those leaders, as well as thousands of their followers throughout the land, entertained the profoundest respect. When, however, he disappeared from the scene, he left behind him among the clergy no successor who commanded the same influence; and the forces which made for separation grew until they finally prevailed just half a century after his death. These forces were two-fold. On the one hand, there was the want of guidance and sympathy on the part of the bishops, and the hostility of a section of the clergy and of the wealthy laity; and on the other, there was the growing influence of the exhorters[22] among the Methodists, who clamoured for authority to administer the sacraments; and there was again the gradual estrangement from the Church of the masses of the people, who failed to receive that spiritual sympathy and help from the parochial clergy, which they so much needed and longed for.

It has been remarked that the life-work of Griffith Jones contributed to the increase of Dissent in Wales, and especially to the creation of the Welsh Methodist denomination. This is, no doubt, in a manner true; but it is also true that his personality and his labours were effectual in retarding that movement, and in modifying its results when the disruption came. It is a fact of considerable significance that the Methodist movement began in Wales some four years earlier than in England; whereas Wesleyan Methodism in the latter country was formed into a separate body by the ordination of Dr. Coke in 1784, or twenty-seven years earlier than the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist ordination, which did not take place till the year 1811, “at which period the original founders of their body were in the grave.” The following extract, which is instructive in many ways, will serve to show that the elements of separation among the Welsh Methodists were much more active in North than in South Wales, and this, we believe, is due to the fact that the personal influence of Griffith Jones had been greater in the southern division in the Principality. “It should not be concealed that a large number of Methodists in diverse parts of the country, on some principle or other, had withstood the change” *i.e*., the Methodist ordination; “and among them were some preachers and leaders. This feeling was much stronger in the South than in the North. We know that a few in the North manifested some unwillingness for a short time, but when they saw that there was hope of compassing the secession without much harm, they fell in with the plan; and I do not know of even one in North Wales, either an officer or a private member, who retired from the Connexion because of the change. But it was not so in the South. Most of the clergy, and some of the preachers left.[23] Several members left, especially among the rich. An uneasy feeling existed in the minds of others, so that they would not receive the Lord’s Supper from the hands of any of the new ministers, although they did not turn their backs altogether on the Connexion. In a few neighbourhoods, where the personal or ministerial influence of the clergyman was more than ordinary, the body of the congregation was lost, and the house of worship too; but there were not many instances of this kind.”[24]

It is impossible not to recognise the force of the following acute observations of the late Judge Johnes in his essay on the *Causes of Dissent in Wales*:[25]

"It may now be asked with what degree of propriety the rise of Dissent in Wales can be connected with the name of Griffith Jones – a man whose whole life was spent in exertions to render the Establishment impregnable against Dissent on the one hand, and the more fearful encroachment of sin, ignorance, and superstition on the other? One answer only can be given; it is a melancholy truth; a truth, nevertheless, but too well sanctioned by experience, that a few pious ministers are the weakness, and not the strength of an Establishment, when the majority of its ministers are sunk in indifference to their sacred duties! The zeal of the few only serves to cast into darker shade the apathy of the many; and by raising the moral sentiment of the people, to make them more sensitively intolerant of the abuses that surround them. It is upon this principle only that we can explain whence it was that Methodism broke out first, and most extensively, in that division of Wales where the Poems of Rees Pritchard and the Schools of Griffith Jones had exerted the most powerful influence. And hence it was that so many of those clergymen who had been connected with the latter became eventually the missionaries of Methodism; and it may also be remarked, that the irregularities of the Methodist clergy, which led in the end to systematic itinerancy, appear to have begun by the practice of preaching from church to church, which they seem to have adopted in imitation of Griffith Jone's 'Easter and Whitsun' circuits."

Our task is done. It is with mingled feelings of gratitude and regret that we look back on the history of religion in Wales during the eighteenth century; of gratitude for the men whom God raised within the Church in times of great need; of regret that the Church failed to reap the bountiful harvest which their prayers and labours were destined to produce for her. A revival of spiritual religion was the paramount need of the Church and country at the commencement of the century. And it came in God's good time. The ground had been carefully and systematically prepared for it. It was the result of long, loving, patient, and painstaking labours; it was the outcome of much prayer and effort on the part of holy and humble men, many of whom have, we fear, been ungratefully forgotten among us. It came in the usual way of divine working. It was the result of conditions prescribed by God, and faithfully fulfilled by man. The original members of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge looked abroad, and saw the frightful decay of religion and morals which prevailed. They took counsel together to devise means of arresting the deluge of vice and irreligion which threatened to submerge the country. From them, Griffith Jones and his coadjutors derived encouragement and help. It was his Schools that created the demand for Bibles, Prayer Books, and other religious publications, which the Society poured into Wales with joyful generosity. It was the knowledge gained by means of these Schools and this literature which, in its turn, created that thirst for the Gospel in our land, which grew into a great revival. There is no mystery about that revival. It is only an illustration of God's ordinary method of working.

It was a great opportunity for the Church in Wales.[26] The fire was kindled within her; the preparations had been made by her own most faithful and devoted children. The Schools of Griffith Jones had disposed the people, not only towards the reception of the Gospel, but towards its reception in the form in which it is professed and presented by the Church herself. A large number of her clergy became awakened to the importance of turning her system into an efficient means for instructing her children, and rescuing them from the prevailing heathenism. The leaders of the itinerant movement were thoroughly loyal to her doctrines and her polity, and they maintained their loyalty in the face of much persecution. Their theology[27] was far removed from the shallow sentimentalism that is

sometimes associated with religious revivals. It was a robust, Scriptural theology, professedly based upon the Liturgy, the Creeds, and the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church. Anyone who is acquainted with the writings of Griffith Jones, the sermons of Rowland, or the hymns and correspondence of Williams, will recognise this. Those men, by their self-denying labours, their earnest devotedness, and their powerful ministry, won the hearts of the people, and changed the face of the country. The great prestige of their influence, fame, and success was at first laid to the credit of the Church, to which they never ceased to avow their attachment. In consequence of this, many of the Dissenters looked with disfavour upon them.[28] And no wonder, for their people flocked after them, and sometimes compelled the Dissenters to change the hour of service in their chapels, when the revivalists officiated in their vicinity. It was the dawn of a golden age for the Church no less than for the country. There was a vast wealth of resources ready at her disposal – religious, educational, and literary. The press, an extensive educational system to meet the most pressing needs of the times, the meeting-house or mission room, the societies or communicants' classes, the itinerant missioners to make up in some degree for the serious deficiency in the number of her parochial clergy, and the spiritual and intellectual life that was bursting forth everywhere; these forces only waited for her sanction, to be employed in strengthening her defences, and in fulfilling her mission. She could authorise and encourage them; but she could not suppress them. A wise, gentle, sympathetic guidance on the part of those in authority might have strengthened the movement, purged it of its eccentricities, and turned its current into the regular channels of the Church. But the opportunity was lost. The Methodists were misjudged; their motives and their principles were misrepresented; their peculiarities were caricatured; their failings were exaggerated, and their good was evil spoken of. The official leaders of the Church stood aloof, suspicious and watchful, and too ready to believe the worst of them. They thought, presumably, of Church order and authority, when Church life was the vital need of the hour. Authority and order are, indeed, divinely ordained safeguards against self-willed and arrogant individualism; but they cannot be justly invoked as an excuse for indifferentism and apathy, or as an obstruction to the progress of spiritual forces. When God offers the Church in times of great need an increase of power and efficiency, she rejects it to her own detriment, even though it be in the sacred name of authority.

Footnotes

[1]*Student's English Church History*, by Canon Perry, p.561.
[2]*An Account of the Societies for Reformation of Manners in England and Ireland*, 3rd Edition, 1700. This work is highly commended in a short address to the Author by twenty Lords Spiritual, thirty-seven Lords Temporal, and sixteen Judges of the United Kingdom.
[3]*Ibid*. The date of the Address of the Commons is not given.
[4]For an account of the services rendered to the Welsh people by Thomas Gouge, see his Funeral Sermon; preached by Dr. Tillotson, then Dean of St, Paul's, and published in 1682. pp.83-92.
[5]The following editions of the Holy Scriptures in Welsh had been issued before the time when Griffith Jones wrote the above words.
"In the year 1546, a thin quarto volume, containing, among other things, the Lord's Prayer and the Decalogue, brought out by Sir John Price.
"In 1546, the Epistles and Gospels for the whole year were translated by William Salesbury, and printed in London in a quarto volume.
"In 1567, the New Testament was printed in London in quarto, in a very beautiful character. William Salesbury had also the chief hand in translating this." He was assisted by Bishop Richard Davies and others.
"In 1588, William Morgan had the assistance of the most eminent divines and linguists of that age, *viz*: Thomas [William] Hughes, Bishop of St. Asaph; Hugh Bellot, Bishop of Bangor; David Powell, Vicar of Ruabon; Edmund Prys, Archdeacon of Merioneth; Dr. John Davies, Rector of Mallwyd; and Richard

Vaughan, then Rector of Lutterworth, who was afterwards Bishop of Bangor, then of Chester, then of London," &c.
"In 1620, Dr. Morgan's version of the Bible was revised by Richard Parry, D. D., Bishop of St. Asaph, &c."
"In 1630, The same was reprinted in octavo, &c."
"In 1647, The New Testament only was printed in 12mo, at London, &c."
"In 1654, The Old and New Testaments and the Singing Psalms were printed at London (I suppose by the Dissenters) in the same volume with [as?] that of anno 1630, &c." It is said in *Hanes y Ffydd* that 6,000 of this edition was printed.
"In 1672 was printed without references, the New Testament and the Psalms, both in prose and in metre, in 8vo. at London.
"In 1677-78, Edition by Stephen Hughes, of Swansea, and Thomas Gouge.
"1689, The former impression of the Bible being sold off in a very few years at eight, nine, and ten shillings, and the people demanding still for more, Stephen Hughes sets another impression on foot, but before he had done hardly anything in it, he dies, and is succeeded in his undertaking by one David Jones, another Dissenting teacher, who, having gain more at heart than religion, was no less infamous for abusing the generous encouragement this good design met with, than Stephen Hughes was eminent for rather more than answering the expectations of his subscribers. For contrary to what the world saith he had promised, he left out the Service and the Apocrypha in the edition he put out this year, and printed only the two Testaments and the Singing Psalms, and these, too, so very incorrect and imperfect, that some even of his own persuasion have complained thereof, &c."
"In 1690, the Old and New Testaments with the Apocrypha were printed at Oxon. in folio, in a fine Roman character, which was since sold off to a bookseller at Salop. This edition has the late learned Dr. Lloyd, Bishop of Worcester's Chronology, and Scattergood's references in the margin, &c.
In 1718, an octavo edition by the S.P.C.K., &c.
"In 1727, The Old and New Testaments, Apocrypha, with a Service annexed, and the Singing Psalms and Hymns, were printed at London, in a small octavo, &c." The above notes are summarised from a manuscript in the British Museum. (M.S. 14,952.) It is probably from the collection of Richard and Lewis Morris. A copy of it was sent to Dr. Thomas Llewelyn on the 28th of January, 1768, the year in which the latter's first edition of '*An historical account of the Welsh Versions and Editions of the Bible*' appeared. We see from the above account that the seed, which 'is the Word,' was pretty extensively sown in Wales in the seventeenth century and the early part of the eighteenth, no less than six editions of both Testaments, and two of the New, having been issued between 1630 and 1727. It should also be remembered that, during the same period, eight editions of the Book of Common Prayer in Welsh were issued. See the manuscript mentioned above.

[6]*Welsh Piety*, 1741-42, pp.11-15.

[7]*Howell Harris's Autobiography*, p.24.

[8]Griffith Jones is recorded to have preached in Landdewi as follows: September 29, 1732, from 2 Corinthians v. 20; March 11, 1733, from 2 Corinthians v. 14,15 ; June 3, 1733, from 1 Corinthians ii. 2; August 4, 1734, from Rom. vii. 24,25; September 1, 1734, from Galatians vi. 7.

[9]It is also worthy of notice that Thomas Charles was largely indebted for his early religious impressions, to an old disciple of Griffith Jones, named Rees Hugh. "I loved him as long as he lived," says Charles in his Diary, "as my own soul, and always looked upon him as my father in Christ."

[10]A Letter to a Clergyman, evincing the necessity, and indicating the method of instructing the poor and ignorant people to read the Holy Scriptures in their native language. 1745, p.88.

[11]See also *Welsh Piety* for 1740-41, p.16.

[12]*Life and Times of the Countess of Huntingdon*, 1839. Vol. i. p.84.

[13]The present Rector of Llanddowror tells us that a tradition still lingers in the parish to the effect that "very large congregations used to assemble there on Communion Sundays, the people coming from all parts, leaving home on Friday, and not returning till the following, Tuesday. They used to live in tents."

[14]"Sabboth y Cwrdd Mawr." It may be interesting to note that the custom of holding, on the Saturday before Sacrament Sunday, a special Service of preparation for the reception of the Holy Communion, continued to be observed until recent times in many Churches and Chapels in Cardiganshire.

[15]*Life of Rev. John Williams*, p.20.

[16]*Life and Times of Lady Huntingdon*, Vol i. p.156.

[17]*Ibid*. p.163.

[18]*Ibid*. p.476.

[19]*Life of William Williams*, by Rev. E. Morgan, 1847, p.60. See this letter, and another from Williams to Charles, dated January 1, 1791, given in full in *Wales*, by Sir Thomas Phillips, pp.136ff.

[20]*A Brief Memoir of the Rev. Thomas Charles, B.A*., by Rev. E. Morgan, 1831, p.212. "The neglect by the Church of such men as Charles seems to have been the peculiar and crying sin of the last age." *Wales*, &c., by Sir Thomas Phillips, p.147, 1849.

[21]*The Welsh Methodists Vindicated*, by Charles, 1802.
[22]Referring to the Methodist ordination of 1811, Judge Johnes says: “It is well known that Charles and his clerical brethren were urged into this indefensible measure by the continual importunity of some of the lay preachers, who were ambitious to participate in the privileges of that profession of which they already shared both the popularity and the toil.” *Causes of Dissent*, &c., p.48.
[23]*i.e*., left the Methodists who had separated.
[24]*The History of Welsh Methodism*, by the Rev. John Hughes, 1851; Vol. i., p.460.
[25]p.28.
[26]It is abundantly evident from his writings that Griffith Jones was keenly conscious of the acute crisis which the Welsh Church was passing through in his time, and which would eventually test to the utmost the capacity of both her rulers and her organisations. “I beg leave to add,” he wrote in 1741, “that the Right Reverend Fathers in God, the Bishops of this country, have it now in their power, and the best opportunity for it that ever did, or perhaps ever will offer, of rendering their names ever dear and memorable to the present and future generations of the poor Welsh people, and of being serviceable to them in their most dear and momentous concern, by encouraging an impression of the Welsh Bible on *the plan of promoting the Catechetical teaching of the poor, and the support of the Welsh Charity Schools. Children yet unborn and generations to come will call them blessed*.” *Welsh Piety,* 1740-41, p.37.
[27]Nothing is more observable in the literature of the Evangelical revival in Wales than the great reverence it shows for the Holy Scriptures, and the frequent recurrence in it of Scriptural quotations, references, and allusions. And this remark is especially applicable to the Hymns of William Williams, of whom it is said that he advised other composers “never to attempt to compose a hymn till they felt their souls near heaven, under the influence of the Holy Ghost, and then the Spirit would be ready to bless the work.” The same reverence for the Word of God may be seen in the productions of other Welsh hymnologists of the same period, such as Morgan Rhys (who was one of Griffith Jones’ schoolmasters), and Ann Griffiths, who, though she had received but little education, had led a thoughtless life up to her twentieth year, and died in her twenty-ninth, wrote nevertheless about forty Welsh hymns, which are characterised by unusual force and beauty of expression, and are very largely based upon the narrative, types, emblems, and phraseology of Holy Scripture.
[28]That the spirit of intolerance against the itinerant Methodists was not confined to Churchmen is evident from Howell Harris’ letters. “The greatest bitterness,” he writes, “that is manifested at present against the work, proceeds from the learned men and carnal professors of every sect, whose legal hearts cannot rejoice to see the Lord coming in a way contrary to human experience. And some of the Dissenters, ministers and people, join the gentry and carnal clergy in speaking evil of, and opposing the work.” Writing to Whitefield in 1744, he states that “Benjamin Thomas was turned out from among the Dissenters for his zeal and attachment to us.”
