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English Letters in the Cwrtmawr Collection (J. H. Davies)

IN THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF WALES, ABERYSTWYTH.
(No. 818. NLW. MS.—A COLLECTION MOSTLY OF
WELSH LETTERS).

Letters are original unless otherwise stated.
For purposes of reference they have been placed in chronological order.

1. 1796. Sep. 1. *J. JONES (Ramoeth) to - - -*. "Copied by Ellis Evans, *Cefnmawr*."

Addressing a stranger, because two years ago Jones read "some books published by you entitled,

1. The Commission given by Christ to His apostles.
2. The Bluff of the Gospel a saving faith.
3. A Letter on the Sonship of Christ.
4. The Nature and Import of Baptism."

J. is greatly pleased with them "as leading the minds of men to the original glory and simplicity of the gospel of our salvation"; and he has translated parts of them to his church ("as they cannot understand the English tongue"), and has had some circulated.

"There is a considerable alteration and reformation of late among the Particular Baptists in N. Wales, especially concerning church order and manner of worship. Our church is the first in this point."

"Our church every Lord's Day to observe the following Institution of Divine Service

1. Public prayers according to the direction given in 1 Tim. 2, vs. 1, 2, 8.
2. The public reading of the Scriptures. 1 Thess. 5: 27; 1 Tim. 4: 13.
3. The singing of praise. Matt. 26: 30; 1 Cor. 14:15; Eph. 5: 19.
4. Preaching and expounding the Word. 1 Tim. 5:17; 1 Tim. 4: 2-4.
5. Mutual Exhortation of the Brethren. Heb. 10: 24-25; 1 Thess. 5:11.
6. Collection for the poor, and other uses. 1 Cor. 16: 1-2.
7. Breaking of the Bread or Lord's Supper. Acts 2: 42; Acts 20:7.

This now we observe every Lord's Day instead of every month."

Asks for letter concerning following things:

- "1. Washing of feet is not as yet solved among us. Some think it was an ordinance to be observed once by every member in the church according to John 13: 14-15. Others thinks it is a duty to be observed only in case of necessity, 1 Tim. 5: 10.
2. What do you think of anointing the sick with oil according to James? Jas. 5: 14-17.

3. If the First Churches had a plurality of elders, what you (think) of the Seven Churches of Asia. Rev. 2: 1, 8, 12, 18; Rev. 3: 1, 7, 14."
2. 1797. Apr. 27. *Copy of English appendix to a letter in Welsh by J. JONES (Ramoth). Receiver not stated.*
Hopes receiver has by this seen a copy of J.J.'s letter to Thos. Parry, of Chester, "which informs briefly the reason of our separation from some of the churches with whom we formerly walked in fellowship," due not to prejudice but to love of truth. "Some of the above churches neglect the Institution of Christ. I know also of several persons in those churches object against the Collection every first of the week, and the feast of Charity and pleading for blood-eating. May the Lord interpose."
3. Copy of letters by J. JONES (Ramoth) to ARCHIBALD MACLEAN (Edinburgh).
1797—
Churches in N. Wales going very happily indeed. J. proposes visiting S. Wales in May, where "there is a little reformation among some of them of late." Yet J. cannot hold occasional communion with any of them because they "disregard so many of the sayings of Christ."
1799. Aug. 24.
Note.—The original of the following letter is also in the collection.
"Sara Jones, the wife of my colleague," died on June 30, aged 28, leaving husband and one child.
"Now to queries in your letter which was translated as usual."
1. J. used all endeavours to "instruct the other churches" before he broke connection, but to no purpose. Some of the Societies in Anglesea have drawn back from reformation, mutual exhortation, weekly poor collection, &c., but J. keeps in personal correspondence with many of them.
2. Glyn Church (John Edwards) and 'Crickieth' stand "connected with us." The latter are 15 members, "composed of such as have separated from Garn Church," have no public teachers, and have no public worship, "excepting the Lord's Supper and preaching the Word." Members at Ramoth 30, Harlech 50, Dolgelly 27.
3. Regrets "State of our Church meeting in different places is not agreeable to the primitive model." J. does not now conduct Lord's Supper more than *once* on Sabbath because unscriptural. The geographical extent of the churches makes it impossible to meet, as M. has suggested, for the Lord's Supper in a central place. General opinion is that the breaking of bread should cease till there is a plurality of elders in every society.
1800. March.
"The Church at *Bryndeynyd* together with the society at *Ruthin* (both in Denbighshire) have become "connected with us." "These brethren have separated from the connection as we formerly did." John Edwards of *Glyn* and his Church are in peace, also the Church at *Crickieth*. At *Ramoth* a hopeful young man named *Rab Morgan* has started preaching. J. is sorry to report that his colleague *Joseph Richard* "having imbibed something of the *Sabelian error*," has with the most part of the members at *Dolgelly* withdrawn from the church, and "formed a separate Society about the end of January."
4. 1799. Apr. 26. *Copy J. JONES (Ramoth) to WM. JONES, Bookseller, Castle, Liverpool.*
Hopes W.J. has received copy of his letter to Parry, of Chester giving

reasons for J.J.'s church's separation. J. adds that several folk in the other churches neglect or oppose "some of the Institutions of Christ," e.g. "Fellowship or collection every first day of the week, the solemn ordinance against eating of blood, the love feast." Ramoth going well, 7 baptized recently.

5. 1802. *TIMOTHY THOMAS* to *REV. EDMUND FRANCIS* (c/o *Richard Roberts, Carnarvon*).
Encloses letter (copy) from Rhos-Llanerchrygog, as follows—"To the church at Pennel, R—&c." followed by creed. Had to excommunicate their minister Nicholas Lewis who "fell reproachfully." John Edwards (Glyn) and others have helped them. One Robert Humphreys (who has a wife and four small children) has been speaking well, and they intend to ordain him. Collections low. Membership 13, decreased last year. Have to pay £4 10. 0. interest, and folk poor.
6. 1802. June. *TIMOTHY THOMAS* to *EDMUND FRANCIS* (as above).
Enclose receipts for various moneys. As to church at Llanerchrygog, the assistance will be sent to E.F., but he must withhold it until reasons are provided as to why Llan. refuse fellowship with the neighbouring churches which also receive grants, and will not have men from the *South* to preach there. T. stresses that such monies are for the *minister*, not for other purposes—therefore it should be withdrawn if a church does not seem desirous to get a minister; also "young unsettled preachers should not have equal with settled pastors"; also if ministers are in doubt of receiving the money it should be paid direct to them, not to the deacons. . . . Recommends Register of Births and Deaths for Llan., and explains the manner of entries. After E.F. has distributed the money T.T. would like to hear how much gives to Rhos and "others of an unpleasant nature."
7. 1802. Nov. 19. *TIMOTHY THOMAS* (*Istington*) to *EDMUND FRANCIS* (as above).
Acknowledges account of distribution of Fund Money, also account of money used for itinerating. Is the latter more worth while than sending money to S. Wales? Has written to ask Mr. Z. Thomas's opinion. T.T. is sorry to hear that E.F. wishes to be relieved of distributing Fund Money, because "you find it a task too difficult to follow our directions and to keep your brethren at home upon good terms." Asks E.F. to reconsider it, and to suggest any amendment in rules if too strict. Gives E.F. determination of £2 9. 6. still in his hands. Fundees meet Tues. 30th inst.
8. 1804. May 18. *Copy J. JONES* (*Ramoth*) to *ARCH. MACLEAN* (*Edinboro*).
J. has recently visited churches at Crickieth, Llanllyfni and Carnarvon and all are in peace. Edmund Francis has not heard from M. for twelve months! Robert Roberts (Bryndeynith) preached at Ramoth last Sabbath. States that none of those excluded last year have imbibed the "Arminian heresy." "All those that are born again of the incorruptible seed, and have tasted that the Lord is gracious, do, as *new born babes*, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that they may *grow* thereby, after the image of Xt." J. agrees with M. that it is the preacher's duty to *declare* the whole counsel of God to hearers, but does not agree to *press it home*. Disagrees with M.'s contention "that God's people be known as such, while they are in unscriptural connections." Criticises at length Dr. Gill's criticism of text 2 Peter 2: 1, especially "δευποτης."

9. 1805. Jun. 27. *Petition of JOHN BLAYNEY (Llanberis) to Managers, Particular Baptist Fund.*
Petition for books giving statement of faith "according to the confession of faith that was published in London in the year 1689." Recommended by Titus Lewis (Carmarthen), Evan Evans (Horeb), Samuel Breeze (Aberystwyth), Thos. Jones (Glyncyriog). (N.B.—The whole of the letter, including signatures of recommenders, is in the same hand).
10. 1806. May 30. *Copy J. JONES (Ramoth) to MACLEAN.*
J. very perturbed because M. had written to Edmund Francis of J.'s "spirit and indiscreet manner of writing." J.J. has given E.F. a transcript of his (J.'s) letter and sought his judgment. E.F. thinks the letter excellent, but also thinks that M. can never be pleased on the disputed question of doctrine. J.J. therefore says he will discuss the millenium no longer with M., though he hopes friendly correspondence may continue.
11. 1806. June. *Copy J. JONES (Ramoth) to - - -*
J. has recently lost his "host of upwards of 16 years." Regrets to hear of H. D. Inglis's death of whose works he thinks highly. Says Fuller's pamphlet caused some stir among the Calvinistic Baptists, but is dying down now. J. has published a small collection of hymns as an appendix to his former collection of Psalms and Hymns, the more recent collection being mostly a translation of hymns from Maclean's collection, and from John Glas's collection of Xn. Songs. J. has also published a "Summary of Scripture Principles and Xn. Practices put forth by Elders and Brethren of Several Xn. Churches in N. Wales." Churches are going happily, although because of the strictly scriptural nature of them J. does not expect popularity. Differs from Maclean's view of Millenium as set forth in his "Commission," p. 335-351. Gives following list:
- | | <i>Pastors</i> | <i>Members</i> |
|------------------------|---|----------------|
| Ramoth (Merioneth) | J. R. Jones, Robert Morgan | 89 |
| Llanllyfni (Carnarvon) | Edmund Francis, Wm. Williams (his helper) | 61 |
| Bryndeunyth (Denbigh) | John Roberts, Robt. Roberts, Wm. Roberts (helper) | 37 |
12. 1808. Jun. 29. *DAVID SAUNDERS (Undergrove, Nr. Lampeter) to J. R. JONES (Garregfawr, Nr. Tanybwlic Inn, Merioneth).*
Regrets to hear than J.R. has left "South-Deheubarth as you call it." Greatly admires J.—"The only thing I put against you is your *depart-ure*," although he knows very little about the circumstances. Although J. sent the pamphlets by Evan Jones, Eglwswms, he has not received them, for E.J. is "rather more unsteady than some people, although a very good preacher." Fever has raged in Cards, especially Cardigan and Newcastle, but now abating. John Richard, old minister at Newcastle, and James Thomas, deacon there, died of fever. Zech. Thomas still well; also saw Henry David, John Reynolds and Ben Davies of Molerton, at Cardigan at Annual Meetings. Heard Henry David came along to "your territories" with Christmas Evans. Speaks of success of Wesleyans, but says their preaching is very confused. D.S. has been to London serving a new Welsh church there; is still single, and living on farm with parents. (Note—"Dated 29 June. Answered Sept. 7, 1808.")
13. 1817. *MICAH THOMAS (Abergavenny) to ELLIS EVANS (Baptist Minister, Llanefydd, Denbigh).*

Commends John Davies' moral character. He erected a new meeting house, seating six or seven hundred, opened March 20, 1806. About 30 baptized since. Good congregations.

14. 1821. Sep. 14. *WM. DAVIES (Utica, U.S.A.—Deerfield) to ELLIS EVANS (Cefnmaur, near Ruabon).*
Long letter. Writes to tell E.E. (a stranger) all about Baptist life in America. Mentions Welsh preachers out there—John Stephen (Pembrokeshire), Joseph Richards, Thomas Morgan (Merthyr Tyd.), David Griffiths (Mer. Tyd.), Griffith Thomas (Carnarvon), Ab. Williams (Monmouth), Richard Jones (Cardigan), Thos. George (Radnor). Wishes remembrance to John Evans (Llanwddan), W.D. came from Salem, Glan Conway.
15. 1822. *W. M. DAVIES (Utica) to E. EVANS.*
Would like to hear from E.E. No more information as from previous letter.
16. 1823. Oct. 2. *TIMOTHY THOMAS. Testimonial to character of EVAN EVANS, his friend.*
Testimonial states that E.E. was instrumental in founding Welsh Baptist Church at Deptford, honorarily. Now a more central situation would be desirable. T.T. signs himself "The hereditary friend of the Cambrian Baptists."
17. 1823. May 12. *Sent by TIMOTHY THOMAS to ELLIS EVANS.*
Copy of the filling up of a widow's receipt.
18. 1824. Feb. *J. HARRIS (Editor and Publisher, Seren Gomer) to JOHN EVANS, Minerva, near Wrexham.*
Bill against J.E. for £7. 6. 9. through Ellis Evans.

F. G. HASTINGS.

The Pastoral Ministry of the Church, by Charles E Surman. (Independent Press Ltd., 1s.)

Mr. Surman's complaint has frequently been expressed, but never more forcefully than here. It is that ministers are not properly trained for their real calling and that when they leave college they scarcely have time to exercise it anyway. One sympathises with Mr. Surman. Not all colleges can be quite so remiss in the matter of giving practical instruction to students as Mr. Surman alleges his was. But, even so, this booklet has its point. We must evolve a scheme whereby men preparing for the ministry can have a period of "walking the wards," so to speak. The writer pleads for simpler machinery in the churches, enabling the minister to spend less time in long committee meetings, and more among his people. The minister himself should be ruthless in husbanding his time, and there must be dedicated lay pastoral service. The pamphlet closes with fifty "Pastoral Suggestions" which every ordinand would do well to read and digest.

J. ITHEL JONES.