

**A Sketch of the
LIFE
and
CHARACTER
Of the Reverend and Pious
Mr GRIFFITH JONES,
of Llandowror**

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A SKETCH of the

LIFE

and

CHARACTER

Of the Reverend and Pious

Mr *GRIFFITH JONES*,

Late Rector of *Llandowror* in

Carmarthenshire;

The First Projector and Conductor of the

Welch Circulating SCHOOLS throughout

the Principality of *Wales*.

PSAL cxii. 6.

The Righteous shall be in everlasting Remembrance.

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A SKETCH of the

Life and Character

OF THE

Rev. Mr GRIFFITH JONES.

THE Reverend Mr GRIFFITH JONES,
the late Rector of *Llandowror* in
Carmarthenshire, was born in the
Parish of *Kilredin* in the same

County.—He was descended from a religious and reputable Family. His Father died when he was young. A Thirst for Learning, joined with good natural Parts, discovered itself in him very early, by his frequent Application to Study when he was very young. After he had spent some Time at a Country School, his Mother put him under the Care of an eminent Classic Scholar, who taught a Grammar School at *Carmarthen*. Mr JONES made great Proficiency in the *Latin* and *Greek* Languages, and other Branches of Learning,

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Learning, though he laboured at that Time under the great Disadvantage of a very weak Constitution of Body.—He had a very serious Turn of Mind from his Youth up; and was often observed to retire from those Pleasures and Amusements which engage Mankind, especially in their younger Years. The Pleasures of Religion, and the Satisfaction arising from the unbounded ravishing Prospects of a blissful Immortality, sweetly engaged his Thoughts, which are lost to the Mind that is ever in a Croud.

His Inclination was strong to the Work of the Ministry, yet he always deemed the Office as very weighty, and of the last Importance. He received Deacon's Orders from the Right Reverend and very Learned Bishop BULL, on *September* 19, 1708; and was ordained Priest at *Abermarlais* Chapel *September* 25, 1709. by the same worthy Prelate; of whom Mr JONES always spoke with an Air of the highest Esteem; and from whom he received some Advices and Counsels that were always recent in his Mind.

He was preferred to the Rectory of *Llanddowror* by the honoured Sir JOHN PHILLIPS, late of *Picton-Castle*, Baronet, whose Piety, Charity and other Virtues are well known to

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to many yet living; who honoured Mr JONES with an intimate Friendship to the Day of his Death.—This Living was given him by Sir JOHN intirely upon the account of his Learning and Piety, without Solicitations from Mr JONES or any of his Friends.

He was fixed upon by the honourable SOCIETY *for propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts*, as a Person every way qualified to be sent as a Missionary amongst the *Indians*, and was earnestly solicited by the Society to undertake it, as appears by several Letters yet extant. He gave his Consent, and addressed himself to those Studies necessary to fit him for that Work. But divine Providence ordered it otherwise; *Wales* was, not to be deprived of so eminent a Minister, who proved so great a Blessing to it.

Mr JONES made the Study of Divinity the main Point of his Pursuit; and as he had very strong natural Parts, and a very tenacious Memory, by a close and diligent Application her became well versed in the Writings of the most eminent Divines, whether at home or abroad. His Sermons were, well composed and digested.—He entered into the very Heart of his Subject.—His Divisions were obvious and full of Per-

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spicuity

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spicuity—his Deductions natural—his Mat-
ter solid.—These, joined with an agreeable

Delivery, a musical Voice, and a proper Action, soon made him famous as a Preacher; and great Multitudes flocked to hear him wherever he preached.

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, the Precipitancy and Carelessness; but has 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.

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

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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, something 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 spi-

rited 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 this Fellow-Creatures, anon
 he flamed with a just Indignation at the
 Enemies of their Souls. Again he swelled
 with a holy Distain 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 in-
 tensely animated.—One while his Eyes were
 effusing the soft Radiance of Compassion to-
 wards his Hearers, presently after piercing
 A 4 severely

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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 Ad-
 miration, 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 sur-
 prizing Force and Abruptness in his Interro-
 gations—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 decent 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; every thing that was said had the very 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
 Applica-

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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, did bear 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 I 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 diving 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

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Relations of the incarnate GOD.—He preached up 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*.

—But Mr JONES'S Excellency did not shine only *in* the Pulpit, but also *out* of it—He carried the Saviour of his Religion along with him wherever he went.

—As he had a full Conviction of human Weakness and Insufficiency, and a thorough Persuasion of the divine All-sufficiency, this induced Him to be frequent in Closet-Prayer:—He looked upon an Access to GOD through a complete Mediator as his Glory, and to implore the Continuance of divine favour as his greatest Gain.—In his secret Retirements no doubt he offered up many an ardent Prayer, not only for himself, but for all his Fellow-Creatures.

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

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were welcome to come and join with him.—He began the Family-Worship by offering up a short Prayer,—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.—He likewise made it his practice to catechise his Family and Neighbours every *Sunday-Night* at least.

Amongst the People committed to his Care his Deportment was courteous and condescending: He would stoop with the utmost Cheerfulness to the lowest amongst them.—He was affable and kind and sought to please, not himself but his Neighbours, for their Good to Edification.—He did not think that when he had done Preaching on a *Sunday* his Work was then over, and he might be careless and thoughtless the rest of the Week. No, he carried

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carried the Spirit of his Sermons into his ordinary Conversation.—He maintained an uniform Gravity of Behaviour, without suffering it to stiffen into Moroseness and Sourness, or to run into trifling-Levity.—He was cheerful, but not light; serious, but not sad—It was his constant Business and daily Endeavours, (I had almost said, *his Meat and Drink*) to set forward the Salvation of his Flock; that by their *being made meet, through Sanctification of the Spirit, for the Inheritance of the Saints in Light*, his crucified LORD might see of the Travail of his Soul, and be satisfied.

He often considered the Shortness of Time, and the Length of Eternity, as an Incitement

to Diligence. He weighed the Greatness and Richness of Heaven, with the insignificant and despicable Meanness of Earth; and discovered such a mighty, such an infinite Difference, as helped him to live above the World, though in it.

When his Ministry was blessed for the Conversion of Sinners, (as indeed few Ministers were more successful) or for the Edification of any, he would, rejoice with all Humility, *as one that had found great Spoil.*—When he saw any of his People persisting in

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in Impenitency, Profaneness and Sensuality, he was grieved with heart-felt Sorrow; but to see his People *walking in the Truth, mortifying their evil affections,* and growing up in Piety and Uprightness, this was to him *better than thousands of Gold and Silver.*

As he had in his Time frequent Invitations to preach in other Churches besides his own, he would willingly comply, and he often went to several Parts that abounded with much Ignorance, where he would address himself to the Ignorant in a very plain Style, and adapt his Language to the lowest Capacity; yet it was the *Simplex munditiis*, such elegant Plainness, as very well consisted with the Character of a Gospel-Minister. He earnestly inculcated the Whole of the Truth in the Course of his Ministrations.—Be the Truth never so disagreeable to some, or ever so contrary to the worldly Interest or Pleasures of others, they were sure to hear of it.—He endeavoured indeed to shew it in as lovely a Light, and make it as amiable as he could, but nothing could prevail upon him to conceal or disguise it.—He was diligent to in-

quire into the State of his Peoples Souls, like a wise and tender Physician, whether they were furnished with a competent Knowledge

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ledge in the Way of Salvation.—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 catechize their Children and Servants.—He intreated them not to neglect Closet-Devotion; warning them carefully against squandering away the LORD'S Day in impertinent Visits, idle Chat, or foolish Jesting. And when he found any guilty, he would not speak against them behind their Backs, but, whether they were rich or poor, whether they were pleased or displeased, he would *bear in his Mind the Commandment of the LORD, and shew his People their Transgression, and the House of Israel their Sins:* He would tell them with Tenderness, and yet with Plainness, that such Courses were a sad, and too sure a Proof that Grace had not had its proper Work on their Souls, that they were carnal, and had not the Spirit of CHRIST.—He was a constant Inspector of their Actions; a faithful Monitor of their Duty, and an impartial Reprover of their Offences.—To such in his Parishes as saw and heard him, and yet continued obstinate and perverse, and died impenitent,

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penitent, he must doubtless be a standing Terror to their Consciences, as well as a swift Witness against them in the last Day.

He had a most reverential Esteem for the divine Word and was well versed in the holy Scriptures.—And whereas according to that well known Maxim: *Bonus texturarius “est bonus theologius;”* a good Textuary is a good Divine, it was known to All that *the Word of GOD dwelt richly in all Wisdom.*—The Oracles of Heaven were his principle Delight, from thence he frequently fetched Matter for Conversation; from the Scriptures he took his Maxims of Wisdom, and formed his Judgment of Things.—He was clear in the Doctrines of Redemption; with equal Care, he avoided the pernicious horrid Errors of the *Antinomian* Tenets on one hand, and the Popish and Pharisaical Notions of Merit on the other. He knew that every Part of our holy Religion, (though absolutely undiscoverable by mere carnal Reason) is, when, spiritually discerned perfectly rational; as it comports with the Attributes of the Godhead, suits the State of fallen Man, and is most admirably adapted to display the divine Glory, and redress human Misery. He clearly saw that in the active and

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and passive Obedience of JESUS CHRIST all the Attributes shone most illustriously. In short the sacred Precepts were the Model of his Temper, while the precious Promises were *the Joy of his Heart, and his Portion for ever.*

To improve the Minds of those He fell into Company 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 an heavenly Use of earthly Things. His divine Matter sent his Disciples (Men ordained to teach the Universe) to learn Maxims of Wisdom from the Birds of the Air; so he made common Occurrences often to be Monitors to instruct his Friends and glad he was, very glad, to have an Opportunity of glorifying his Maker; and to awaken in himself and others a more lively! Spirit of Devotion.—He had always a particular Pleasure and Delight in speaking well of, and hearing others recommend the Love of CHRIST.—He seemed as if he had made that Passage of St *Augustin* his Motto, who said, “*Si scriba*

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“*bas, non placet mihi nisi legam JESUM, si con-*
“*feras, non sapit mihi, nisi sonueris ibi JESUS,*
“*quia JESUS est in ore meo mel, in aure melos,*
“*in corde Jubilum.*”

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.—He was very diligent in procuring Subscriptions for the Support of circulating Welch Free-Schools, to teach poor Welch Men, Women and Children to read their native Language; under whose Care and Management they have been carried on for Twenty four Years past. In these Schools no less than *One hundred fifty eight Thousand two Hundred and Thirty seven* poor ignorant Persons have been taught to read; who in all Probability would have died in Ignorance, had it not been for this useful Institution.* Great Care was likewise taken to

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catechize

* If the Reader has a Desire to see the Rise and Progress of these useful Seminaries of Christian Knowledge, he will find a full and copious Account of them in the Rev. Mr JONES's yearly Accounts, intitled *Welch Piety*, which were published four and twenty Years successively. Although the Subject-Matter of these Papers carried in them a Coincidence of Ideas, yet there is a beautiful Variety, and a pleasing Diversification running through the whole; which at the same Time as it affords Entertainment to the religious Reader, it also shews the rich Talents of the pious Author.

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catechize and instruct the young People that were taught in these Schools in the Principles of the Christian Religion. He having applied to the SOCIETY for promoting *Christian Knowledge*, of which he was a Corresponding Member, that venerable Body caused to be printed Two large Editions of the Welch Bible of Fifteen Thousand Copies each, which were sold very cheap for the Benefit of the Poor in *Wales*.—He likewise composed and published several excellent and instructive Books in; the *British* Language, and several
in

* The following are the Titles of some of Mr JONES's printed Books in *English*, viz.

1. *A Platform of Christianity, being an Explanation of the XXXIX 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. *WELCH PIETY: or, An Account of the circulating Welch 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 *Welch Apostle*, as he was sometimes stiled.

Some of those in the *Welch 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*

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in *English*, and left some Things in Manuscript, which perhaps one time or another may be published.

He was very charitable to the Poor, and his unwearied Endeavours to alleviate the Distresses of the necessitous *Welch* People will render his Memory justly dear to them. He not only fed and clothed them in considerable Numbers, but was likewise 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 cured 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 reasonable Advice, ever exhorting; them to an earnest Care for their immortal Souls, as being of much greater Value in God's Sight,

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than

10. *An Abridgement of this last, for the Use of his Welch Schools.*

11. *A LETTER upon the Subject of Catechizing the Ignorant.*

12. *The Duty of Praising GOD.*

13. *An Extract of Mr REES PRITCHARD'S Welch Poems.*

By the kind assistance of many charitable Persons Mr JONES was enabled to print very great Numbers (sometimes 12000, at others 8000, &c. at an Impression) of many of the above Books, which were distributed throughout all *Wales*.

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than their perishing Bodies. He was a diligent Observer of Providence; He would neglect no Duty, or any lawful Methods to bring about any well-laid Plan for the Good of Mankind;

yet he had his Eye upon HIM whole superintending Providence overules all Events. There were several young Gentlemen brought up under his, Care for the Work of the Ministry, some of whom are now eminent and useful in the Church.

But 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. He steadily relied for final Acceptance and endless Felicity on a *better Righteousness* than his own, even the glorious and transcendently rich perfect Righteousness of JESUS CHRIST, imputed unto him for his Justification.—This was the Rock of his Hope and the Crown of his Rejoicing.—
Under-

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Under Affliction and bodily Pain (of which he had a great Share in his Life) he was very submissive and resigned; he would endure torturing Pains without murmuring or repining: he bowed and kissed the Rod; yea, there appeared a Serenity in him under the Pressures of the deepest Affliction.—As his Joy was not of this World, so no Calamity could take it from him.

He was likewise of a very forgiving Temper.—He would often earnestly pray for his Enemies; (for some such even Mr JONES had

notwithstanding his Piety and Uprightness) who through Envy vainly endeavoured to asperse his Character and depreciate his Labours and Works.—The ignorant *Critic* and dull *Remarker* will frequently attempt to find a Blemish without any Ground, whose Sentiments are not sufficiently elevated to observe a Beauty—such are neither Judges of Men, or Books, or Things; but these can diminish no solid Reputation by their Censures, nor bestow a lasting Character by their Applause.—Such only can confer Fame, who have Merit themselves to deserve it.

He was possessed of the Spirit of Candour and love in a high Degree. Though as a Minister of the Church of *England*, He had a steady Attachment, to her Communion,
yet

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yet to Persons of a scrupulous and tender Conscience, dissenting from the Church, He left the Rights of private Judgment. Therefore, he hesitated not to give the right Hand of Fellowship: to all upright, and pious Men of every Denomination, being fully sensible, that *all* the Godly are *one* in CHRIST.

He was remarkable for his Gratitude for Mercies received; his Soul did overflow with Thankfulness. The following Passage which I received in a Letter from a worthy Clergyman.* who, was intimately acquainted with Mr JONES, and made him a Visit, a few Weeks before he died, is a Specimen of his grateful Sentiments.—“Soon after I entered the Room, (saith my valuable Correspondent) “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 subject to in my younger Days, that
 “I could not walk the Length of this Room
 “but with the greatest difficulty. How won-
 “derful is the Love of GOD to me; that I
 “am

* The Rev. Mr MORGANS of *Trelech*.

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“am I 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 allsufficient SAVIOUR;—but (added he)
 “the grand Enemy of Souls will attempt to
 “disturb my Peace and Tranquillity; but,
 “blessed be GOD for his allsufficient 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
 “little 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 delight-
 “ful Frame and longing Expectation of his
 “everlasting Rest, till Nature fainted, and
 “the Tabernacle of Clay dropped off.”

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He departed this Life in Comfort and Peace on the 8th Day of *April*, 1761. in the 77th Year of his Age, at the House of a worthy Lady*, whose eminent and distinguished Piety, Hospitality, and charitable Deeds are well known; at whose House Mr JONES had been for some Time before he died. 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 Forty five Years.—Thus the Reverend Mr GRIFFITH JONES came to his Grave, like a ripe Shock of Corn, full of Piety, and full of Days. It may be truly said of him, “that few Lives were more “heavenly and useful, few Deaths more triumphant.” He went to his Grave in Peace, and is now at rest: His Name is recorded in the Annals of Eternity, and the Honours conferred upon him will be ever-blooming and incorruptible.—*He died in the LORD, and his Works follow him, and praise him in the Gates.*

*The honoured Mrs BEVAN of *Laughame*.

The END.