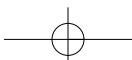
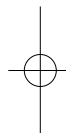
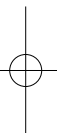


**A MEMOIR OF
THE REV. DANIEL ROWLAND**



A Memoir of the Rev. Daniel Rowland

BY

The Rev. John Owen

Curate of Thrussington, Leicestershire

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A MEMOIR
OF
THE REV. DANIEL ROWLANDS,

LATE OF LLANGEITHO, CARDIGANSHIRE.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION,

CONTAINING A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE CHIEF
SUPPORTERS OF RELIGION IN WALES; FROM THE
REFORMATION, TO THE BEGINNING OF THIS CENTURY.

BY THE REV. JOHN OWEN,

CURATE OF THRUSSINGTON, LEICESTERSHIRE.

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—'A man whom God has taught,
With all Elijah's dignity of tone,
And all the love of the beloved John.'—Cowper.

ADVERTISEMENT

The Author has lately published in Welsh the substance of what is contained in this volume. There are here some omissions, but more additions, both in the Introduction and the Memoir.

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INTRODUCTION

IT may not be uninteresting to the English reader to learn something respecting those in Wales, who have been the most eminent in promoting true religion in that country, since the glorious times of the reformation from Popery.

Even their very names are not much known in England. Some short account of them may be suitably introduced before the memoir of a man, who in many respects was the most illustrious of them. To this brief account is added a biographical table, exhibiting the time in which they lived, and their different ages. The *most* eminent of these men may justly be deemed to be the following;—

I. WILLIAM SALESBURY, ESQ.

This illustrious individual was born at Plasisav, near Llanrhwt, Denbighshire, about the beginning

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of the sixteenth century. He was brought up at Oxford: and having finished his studies there, he went up to London and entered at one of the Inns of court. He did not continue long in London, but returned to his native country. His residence is said to have been *Cae-du*, Llansannan, Denbighshire. He possessed a particular talent for learning languages, and this he cultivated to a considerable extent; so that he became pretty familiar with no less than *nine* languages, besides English and Welsh. He published several books in his own native tongue. The following have been ascribed to him

- 1 English and Welsh Dictionary, in the year 1547.
- 2 Calendar of Months and Days ———
- 3 The Overthrow of the Pope's high altar 1550.
- 4 Easy and Plain Guide to the Welsh language. 1550.
- 5 Translation of the Epistles and Gospels 1551.
- 6 Rhetoric, or Exemplifier of Eloquence ———

7 Translation of the New Testament 1567.

This was to commence a new era in his native country. There were before him hardly any books printed in the Welsh language; and indeed none that we know of now. The first, and probably the two first, mentioned above, came from the press in the reign of Henry VIII, and the three next, in Edward VI's reign. The 'Rhetoric' was

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not published by him, but after his death by the Rev. H. Perri, who, it is said, enlarged and improved it considerably.

But the most important work that he published is the last—*The New Testament*, which will signalise his name as long as the language will exist. Though a layman, he was the first to give his countrymen the most important portion of the Bible. He was indeed assisted in this work by some of the clergy, but the greatest part was his own translation. His assistants were Richard Davies, D.D. Bishop of St David's, and the Rev. Thomas Huet, the precentor of St David's. The books translated by the bishop, were the *first* Epistle to *Timothy*, the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, the Epistle of *James*, and the two Epistles of *Peter*; and the precentor translated the book of *Revelation*.

When this learned and benevolent man ended his earthly career, is not known. The probability is, that he did not long outlive his publication of the New Testament, which was in 1567, as Doctor *Morgan*, who published the whole Bible in Welsh in 1588, which he must have been several years in preparing, does not mention him among those who assisted him. For had he been living, no one else could have afforded him so much help in his great undertaking.

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2. RICHARD DAVIES, D.D. BISHOP OF ST DAVID'S

He was the son of a country gentleman in the, county of Denbigh. He was born about the year 1501, and was brought up at Oxford. His first preferment was Burnham in the county of Buckingham, and he was made a canon in the Cathedral of St Asaph. During the reign of bloody *Mary*, he went abroad, and continued on the continent till her death. On the accession of *Elizabeth*, in 1558, he returned to his own country, and in the following year was made bishop of St Asaph. But two years after, that is, in 1561, he was translated to St David's; which shows, that at *that* time, though not now, the latter was the most lucrative see. He presided

over that diocese, and no doubt to its great benefit as to the spread of true religion, for twenty years, until his death in 1581.

He was deemed a good and learned man. His learning is attested by the fact, that he was chosen one of those who were appointed to revise the English translation of the Bible in 1568. The Bible was divided into fifteen parts; and the portion allotted to him contained the books of *Joshua*, *Judges*, and *Ruth*. It has been already mentioned what books of the New Testament he translated into Welsh. But he also wrote a long letter, or an address to his countrymen, in their native language,

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which was prefixed to Salesbury's edition. This letter is highly creditable to him as a man of extensive learning, deep piety, and ardent zeal for the glory of God, and the salvation of men. He was a most strenuous opponent to popery, and a most decided friend of the reformation. Another instance of the zeal and religious activity of laymen, in those days, is mentioned in this address. The Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments, as we are told, had been previously translated and published by a baronet—Sir John Prys. It is remarkable, that the Welsh are more indebted to laymen than to the clergy, in the first instance, for the most important portions of the scriptures in their own language.

3. THE REV. THOMAS HUET

The time of his birth, the writer cannot find. He died in 1591. Besides being precentor of St David's, he was the incumbent of Cevnlllys and Diserth, in the county of Radnor. What will deservedly perpetuate his memory is the share he had in translating the New Testament first into Welsh, which has been already mentioned. The importance of giving a people the scriptures in their own language, is far more than can be calculated. Had not the Welsh this favour conferred on them, we have no reason to think, that they would have been in

any better state now than that in which the Irish papists are found to be in the present day. There is no illuminator like the Bible; and there is no such destroyer of popery. The two cannot live together. Where popery is dominant, the Bible is not to be found in circulation. And where the Bible is known and commonly read, popery dwindles, decays, and dies. There is no part of this country where the Bible is so generally known and read, as in Wales; and probably there is no part where there are so few papists; and those few that are there are mostly Irish, and not natives.

4. WILLIAM MORGAN, D.D. BISHOP OF ST ASAPH.

To this eminent man belongs the honour and the high renown of having published the whole Bible *first* in the Welsh language, and to him the whole principality is under the greatest debt of gratitude. He was born at Ewybrnant, in the parish of Penmachno, Carnarvonshire. It was at Cambridge that he was educated. He translated the Bible when he was vicar of Llanrhaiadar-yn-Mochnant, in the county of Denbigh. So strong was the Popish temper of his parishioners, that, owing to his efforts in the cause of true religion, some of them lodged an accusation against him in the ecclesiastical court; and he was obliged to appear before the Archbishop to answer for himself. What was the exact nature

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of the complaint, the writer has not been enabled to learn. This step, however, taken by his parishioners, was so far from doing him any harm, that it tended greatly to facilitate the great object he had in view. It was the means of making him acquainted with *Whitgift*, who was then the archbishop; who, when he understood the work in which he was engaged, encouraged him to proceed with it. And it was through the assistance of *Whitgift* and some others, that he was enabled to publish the whole bible in 1588—a year that should never be forgotten by the inhabitants of Wales. The Old Testament and the Apocrypha were his own translations; and he revised the New, which had been previously published by Salesbury, in 1567.

It appears that Doctor Morgan took in hand this important work spontaneously, from a pure desire to do good, and not through the advice or instigation of the rulers of the Church or of men in power.

It is indeed true, that parliament had done something previously for this purpose, but wholly unconnected with him. It had passed an act in the year 1563 for the translation of the Bible into Welsh. The four bishops of Wales, together with the bishop of Hereford, were required by this Act to prepare a translation by March, 1566; and in case of failure, each of the bishops was to pay a fine of forty pounds. Whether they paid this fine or not, is not known:

but the work was not done, and nothing seems to have been done towards its accomplishment. This neglect was probably owing to the popish temper of the country; and perhaps the bishops, at least some of them, were not very friendly to the object. The heart for the work was

evidently wanting. Dr *Llywelyn* in his 'Account of the translations and editions of the Bible in Welsh', which is an excellent work, kindly endeavours to exculpate these bishops: but the excuses he makes for them are by no means consistent with what Dr Morgan says in the dedication of his translation to queen Elizabeth, prefixed to his work. It is written in Latin; and the following is his view of the subject. Referring to the previous Act of Parliament, he proceeds thus:

The same thing (the Act) betrays at the same time our *idleness* and sloth, because we could neither be moved by so urgent a necessity, nor constrained by so advantageous a law; but so great a work, than which nothing can be of greater moment, has remained so long almost untouched.¹

According to Doctor Morgan, 'idleness and sloth were the chief reasons. There was great indifference as to the Scriptures too general in the country;

¹ Quod idem nostram ignaviam et segnitiam simul prodit; quod nec tam gravi necessitate moveri, nee tam commodà lege cogi potuerimus, quin tam diu res tanta, quâ majoris esse momenti nihil unquam potuerit, intacta penè remanserit.

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and in many a strong repugnance to them, owing to the popish leaven which pervaded a great portion of the community. The children of darkness cannot endure the light. Nothing shows more clearly and distinctly the true character of popery, than its attempt to prevent the circulation of the Bible.

We may justly conclude from some parts of this dedication, that there was also something else, by which we may in a measure account for this neglect of the bishops. Some of the higher orders in Wales, as well as some of the bishops, much wished to introduce the English language into the country, and on that account did not wish the Welsh to possess a vernacular translation of the Scriptures. However desirable in some respects this may be thought to be, the way proposed to effect the object was not the right one. The denial of the Scriptures to a people can on no grounds be justified. Some other means ought to have been used for the purpose, if indeed the object be one worthy of being attained. We have the following allusion to the subject:

'If any wish, for the sake of retaining unanimity, that our nation should be driven to learn the English tongue, rather than that the Scriptures should be translated into our own language, I would they were cautious,

lest they obstruct the truth, while they are anxious for unity; and I desire them to be more careful, lest they drive away religion, while they promote

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*concord.*¹ How suitable, and how wise too, are the following sentences;

There is no doubt, but that similarity and agreement as to religion, will avail much more towards unity, than similarity and agreement as to language. Besides, it is by no means a godly thing, to *prefer unity to piety, utility to religion*, and some sort of *external agreement* betwixt men, to that *exquisite peace*, which the word of God imprints on human souls.²

The sentiments and thoughts of this good man are remarkable for their correctness, depth, wisdom, and dignity. He far excelled in these respects his successor, bishop *Parry*, who also prefixed a dedication to the edition of the Bible which he published. He possessed a mind of a much higher order, more comprehensive, and much more elegant and dignified. No one can compare the two dedications, without being convinced of Dr Morgan's great superiority.

1 Si qui, consensûs retinendi gratiâ, nostrates, ut Anglicum sermonem ediscant, adiendos esse potiûa, quàm scripturas in nostrum sermonem vertendas esse volunt; dum unitati student, ne veritati obsint, cautiore esse velim; et dum concordiam promovent, ne religionem amoveant, magis esse sollicitos opto.

2 Non dubium est, quin religionis quàm sermonis ad unitatem plûs valeat similitudo et consensus. Unitatem præterea pietati, utilitatem religioni, et externam quandam inter homines concordiam eximie illi paci, quam Dei verbum humanis animis imprimit, præferere, non satis plûm est.

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Several are mentioned by him as having been his encouragers and assistants in his work. He makes a most grateful acknowledgment of *Whitgift's* assistance; who helped him, he says, 'by his liberality, authority, and counsel'. He speaks of the bishops of St Asaph and Bangor, *Hughes* and *Ballot*, as 'having granted him the books which he requested'; and as having 'examined, well weighed, and approved' his work. He mentions most gratefully, the liberality and kindness of Gabriel Goodman, a native of Ruthin, but then the dean of Westminster, at whose house he lived during the twelve months that he was engaged in overlooking the press. He names besides them the following, who 'afforded him help that was not to be despised', that is, David Powel, D.D.—Edmund Prys, Archdeacon of Merioneth—and Richard Vaughan, Rector of Lutterworth, and afterwards successively the Bishop of Bangor, Chester, and London.

After the act of parliament in 1563, which was not complied with, there has been no effort made by government, nor by any in authority, in behalf of the Welsh version; no, not even to the present day. The present translation was not made by a royal or parliamentary authority, but it is a work which Dr Morgan took in hand of his own good will; and it was afterwards revised, but by no authority, by Bishop Parry, and after him, by Bishop Lloyd. All

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these were the spontaneous acts of benevolent individuals, acting under no instructions.

Doctor Morgan was made Bishop of Llandaff in 1595, seven years after he published the Bible. He well merited this elevation. In 1601 he was translated to St Asaph, and died in 1604.

5. DAVID POWEL, D.D.

He is said to have been born in Denbighshire, about the year 1552, but the place of his birth is not known to the writer. He died in 1598. Rhwabon was his residence, of which he was vicar. He was one of those, as we have seen, who assisted Dr Morgan in the translation of the Bible. His attainments, especially in Welsh antiquities, are said to have been very considerable.

6. JOHN DAVIES, D.D.

The birth place of this distinguished scholar and antiquarian was Llanveras, in the county of Denbigh. He was born in 1570, and died in 1644. His education was first in the grammar school at Ruthin, and then at Oxford. His residence afterwards was Mallwyd, Merionethshire, of which he was the incumbent. Though young at the time, it appears that he gave some assistance to Doctor Morgan in his work; for he mentions in his Preface to his Welsh Grammar, that he had been 'an unworthy assistant'

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to the two translators of the Welsh Bible. But the most material assistance was that which he gave to bishop Parry, who published a revised edition of the Bible in 1620.

He composed and published several books, but the most valuable were his Welsh Grammar in Latin, and a Latin and Welsh Dictionary, which, as it appears, was somewhat previously prepared by one Dr Thomas Williams, a physician, who lived at Trevriw, near Llanrhwst. It is said that it was Doctor John Davies that translated into Welsh *the Thirty-nine Articles*, which were first published in 1664. By whom and when the Prayer-book

was first translated, is what the writer does not know. An act was passed in the reign of Charles II by which the Welsh bishops and the bishop of Hereford were required to provide, that a translation of it should be made and published: but it is very strange, if there was no prior translation made; for how otherwise could the public service have been performed in the Principality. More than a *hundred* years had elapsed between the Reformation and the passing of that act, and the Bible had been translated into the vernacular language for more than *seventy* years previously. Whether there was a prior translation, or whether the service was performed in English during all this time, the writer has no means of ascertaining. In the act already alluded to, which passed in 1563,

¹⁴

the Prayer-book as well as the whole Bible was required to be translated: but neither Salesbury printed it with his Testament, nor Doctor Morgan with his Bible.

7. THE REVEREND EDMUND PRYS

He was born in 1541, and died at eighty years of age, in 1621. His birthplace was Gerddibluog, in the parish of Llandecwyn, Merionethshire. He was educated at Cambridge, and obtained the living of Maentwrog in his native county, and also the Archdeaconry of Merioneth. Besides his having been one of Doctor Morgan's assistants in his arduous work, he did great service to his country by versifying the Book of Psalms. There had been a previous attempt of this kind by one Captain William Middleton, who while on sea, 'doing business in great waters'; spent much of his time in this laudable work, and who finished it at Scutum, an island in the West Indies, on 24 January 1595, as recorded in the manuscript, afterwards published after his death by one Thomas Salesbury, in 1603. What an occupation for a naval captain but how suited to a mind imbued with religion and possessing a taste for poetry. Unhappily the metres chosen were not suitable to express the original, nor adapted for singing.

The Archdeacon showed in this respect a better

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judgment, though his metres are not so varied as they might have been. The character of his performance is not very dissimilar to that of Sternhold and Hopkins in English, though as a whole perhaps superior. It has been in general use since his time, and has not yet been superseded by any other. There are some Psalms, and some parts of Psalms, exceedingly well done; but in many instances it is very defective, in sense, rhythm, and

propriety of language. But considering the age in which it was none, great credit is due to the author; and he has by it conferred a great and lasting benefit on his countrymen. Some of his Psalms are still sung, not only in the churches, but in most of the dissenting chapels in the Principality.

8. RICHARD PARRY, D.D.

Ruthin was his native place. He was brought up at Westminster, under the celebrated historian Camden, and afterwards at Oxford. He was made the Chancellor of Bangor in 1592, and the Dean in 1599. He became the head master of the Great School at Ruthin, which was established in 1595 by Gabriel Goodman, then dean of Westminster. The Rev. Richard Griffith was the *first* head-master, and Doctor Parry the *second*. He was consecrated bishop of St Asaph on the death of Doctor Morgan in 1604.

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He published the *second* Edition of the whole Bible in 1620, and the translation was altered in many places, and improved in some instances. Inferior, no doubt, he was to his predecessor in learning and judgment, but he received much help from his friend, Doctor John Davies of Mallwyd. What may be justly said of this edition, is, that it was *anglicised*; for that of Doctor Morgan was evidently more Hebraistic, and therefore more Celtic, the two languages being so similar in their peculiar idioms. Some hold that Doctor Morgan made his translation from the English, and others from the original language. He no doubt, like all others, made use of every help within his reach. But that he followed the construction of the Hebrew in some instances, is quite evident; and that in other instances, he followed that of the English, cannot be denied: but the latter plan has been followed more by his successor than by him. Had the Hebrew been more literally rendered, the translation would have been much better, and more consonant with the peculiar idiom of the Welsh language.

The reasons for this edition are given by the Bishop in his dedication to James I prefixed to it. He says that there *were no* Bibles in some churches, and that in others they were nearly worn out. And he further says, that he knew of none that were intending to take the work in hand. His

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edition was a *folio*, and in black letter, like that of Doctor Morgan. The Welsh at this time had no Bibles in their families, nor even in *all* the churches. It was now, that is, in 1620, nearly one hundred years since the reformation from Popery, and yet the people of all ranks were left in a

destitute state as to the word of God. And they continued so for some time after this; for the design of Bishop Parry was only to supply the churches with Bibles. The object was doubtless good, but it would have been better still, had it been more extensive. But the honour and credit of providing a larger supply, belong to the two benevolent individuals next to be mentioned.

9. ROWLAND HEYLIN, ALDERMAN OF LONDON, AND SIR THOMAS MIDDLETON, ALDERMAN OF LONDON.

The first, it is said, descended from a Cambrian family, but the second was a native of the principality. He was born at Castell-y-Waen, in the county of Denbigh. The date of their births is not known to the writer. It was through their benevolence and charity that the Welsh were *first* enabled to purchase Bibles for themselves; and this was in the reign of Charles I, and in the year 1630. This edition, brought out by these patriotic and charitable individuals, was an *octavo*, and sold at a low price, *five* shillings a copy. The good work thus begun, went on, and before the end of the century,

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three editions of the same size were brought out of the press, containing altogether no less than *thirty thousand* copies. We can scarcely conceive now the state of the country, the dark ignorance that prevailed in it, *two hundred* years ago, when there were no Bibles but in the churches. It is only two hundred and ten years, since the Welsh people could get the Bible in their own language. How much greater are their privileges now, since not only every family, but every member of every family, and every cottager, can now, if they choose, procure Bibles for themselves,

There are two things worthy of notice on this subject: the first is the debt of gratitude the Welsh owe to laymen. The Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments were first translated into their language by a layman—a baronet. The New Testament was first translated and published by a layman—a barrister: and the first edition of the Bible for general circulation, was published by two laymen—aldermen of London. The second is, that the spread of the Bible in Wales, creating a desire for a larger supply, was eventually the cause which led to the establishment of that glorious institution, the BIBLE SOCIETY. The origin of that unrivalled institution, is intimately connected with the Welsh translation, and with the circulation of that translation in the principality. The Welsh Bible, more

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than any other, has occasioned the formation of the Bible Society. What great things often derive their origin from what appears to us very small!

IO. THE REVEREND REES PRICHARD

Llandovery, Carmarthenshire, is supposed to have been the birth-place of this excellent man, as well as the principal scene of his ministerial labours. He was born about the year 1579, nine years before the Bible was published in Welsh, and died in 1644. His education was at Oxford. Soon after he was ordained, he had the living of Llandovery given him by the Bishop of St David's, and in 1612, the church of Llanedi by King James I. Very thoughtless, and even ungodly and immoral he was at first, and was converted, as it is said, by the means of a mute animal. He had a tame goat, which sometimes followed him to the public-house, which he often frequented. And on one occasion he and his jovial companions forced the animal to drink, and to such a degree, that it became intoxicated. This however had such an effect on the poor creature, that it would no more follow him to the public-house, nor could be prevailed upon in any way to do so. This example of the goat had such an effect on Prichard's mind, that it proved the means of his conversion. This is the tradition, and it is

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mentioned in the short account given of him, prefixed to his works.

This is the first popular preacher in Wales of whom there is any account. His success at Llandovery was but small. It was otherwise at Llanedi. So large was his congregation at the latter place that he was often under the necessity of preaching in the church-yard in the open air. His want of success at Llandovery was a subject of great grief and lamentation to him.

What will perpetuate his memory in Wales, are his poems, entitled, 'The Candle of the Welsh'. They are on a great variety of religious subjects, in an easy and familiar language, in smooth and rhyming metres, and level with the capacity of the humblest. He combines dignity with simplicity in a remarkable degree, and also what is homely and even humorous with gravity and seriousness. He is the religious Burns of the principality. His views were altogether evangelical; and there is a warmth, a fervour, an earnestness in his poems, that is very engaging and attractive. But what particularly distinguishes them is the mass of religious truth that they contain. They form a body of doctrinal and practical divinity.

What has been justly said of them by a good and excellent minister, was, that 'they contain the cream of Scripture'. They have been, and are still popular, much read by all ranks

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and all denominations. Many in former times were induced to learn to read, that they might be able to peruse these Poems. This is the testimony of Stephen Hughes, who published an edition of them in 1671. His words are 'It is supposed that the works of Mr Prichard has led *thousands* to learn to read'. They have been translated into English, but not according to their original simplicity and expressiveness, and as it may be said, not according to their native and yet chaste and dignified homeliness. They are quite unique in their character; there is nothing like them in the Welsh language. They form a considerable volume, between five and six hundred pages.

II. THE REVEREND MR WROTH

There is no account of his birth-place. He was brought up at Oxford, where he continued fourteen years. He obtained the living of Llanvaches, Monmouthshire, about the year 1620. He was fifty years of age when he was brought to right views of religion. His great delight was music; and he was for some years in the habit of amusing his parishioners after the morning service, by playing on some musical instrument in the church-yard. It was the sudden death of one of his friends that was the means of awakening him into a sense of his ungodly and sinful state. When he found the value of religion

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himself, he was anxious to bring others to the knowledge of it. He began the work, then uncommon, of preaching often. The Bible was not then to be found, except in the churches, and the country was sunk in deep ignorance. Great numbers flocked to hear him, and great success attended his ministry. Some from the counties of Brecknock, Gloucester, and Glamorgan, and from greater distances still, came to hear him, and doubtless not in vain.

But he was not suffered to go on in his heavenly work without opposition, and without hindrances. 'The Book of Sports' became a stumbling-block to him; and, because he would not do so ungodly a work as to read it on Sunday, he was summoned before that nefarious court that was established by Archbishop Laud and his party, to take cognisance of such matters. He was first admonished; and having still disobeyed the wicked

command, as he ought have done, he was then suspended. He however continued his labours, and was the *first* in *Wales* who collected a congregation of dissenters. Wolves had entered the church, and would not allow the sheep to continue in it. They could not well have devoured them for lack of power, otherwise they would have no doubt done so, and have thus followed the example of the Papists. They were most evidently of the same identical spirit. This was the beginning of dissent in Wales, caused by the cruel

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and ungodly oppression of such as intruded into places of power which did not belong to them; who, being radically Papists, crept into places of influence and authority in our Protestant and Reformed Church. Whenever the Devil gets into the church, he will surely create divisions, especially when he gets into situations of power and authority. The church will be soon filled with his own subjects, and the faithful servants of God will be obliged to flee away; and then to harass them still more, they will be called rebels and schismatics. Mr Wroth died in 1640.

12. THE REVEREND ROBERT POWEL

He lived at the same time with the former, and died the same year. He was brought up at Oxford, and had given him the living of Cadegstone, in the county of Glamorgan, in 1620. His labours in the ministry were diligent and extensive, and were attended with great success. He was a laborious and a gifted preacher. There was an intimacy between him and Rees Prichard, of Llandovery, and they were mutually helpful to one another.

13. THE REVEREND WILLIAM ERBURY

He was a native of Glamorganshire, and was brought up at Oxford. He obtained the vicarage of St Mary, Cardiff. He was a contemporary

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for the most part with the two just mentioned, having outlived them only four years. Like Wroth he was summoned before the ecclesiastical court, for not reading 'the Book of Sports'. To put on the thing the face of fairness, he was first admonished. Even the wicked one will assume the form of justice. However, no monition could induce a conscientious man to do a wicked work; and owing to his disobedience, he was the next time suspended. Notwithstanding this, he continued his ministerial labours, and was extensively blessed in his work. The people he collected formed the *first* dissenting congregation at Cardiff. The papist Laud was

the cause, and the 'Book of Sports' the occasion. At the door of Laud lies the fault of Dissent in the first instance in Wales.

14. The Reverend Walter Cradoc

He was born at Trevela, Llangwm, near Llanvaches, Monmouthshire, in 1600. His family was respectable; and he inherited a goodly patrimony. He was educated at Oxford. It was the awakening ministry of Wroth, of Llanvaches, that proved useful to him. He was made acquainted with the truth, when young. His first curacy was that of Mr Erbury at Cardiff. But when Erbury was admonished for not reading the Book of Sports, Cradoc was, for the same neglect, deprived of his curacy.

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He afterwards obtained the curacy of Wrexham: but his energetic and faithful preaching excited so much displeasure, that he was soon dismissed, but not without being useful to some, who afterwards spread considerably the knowledge of the Gospel.

His ministry after this dismissal, became mostly itinerant. He was probably the *first itinerant preacher* in Wales. The writer of the *History of Religion in Wales*, the Rev. D Peter, late of Carmarthen, says, that he 'travelled through the counties of Brecknock, Radnor, and Montgomery, preaching Christ wherever he found an opportunity', Wales was at that time, as to religion, very little better than popish countries; and in some respects it was worse, being altogether as free from the restraints of religion, but less under the influence of superstition: for where there is no religion, superstition is better than lawless lust and profane ungodliness. Under the usurpation of Cromwell, Cradoc for some time preached in London: and it was there he died, in 1659.

15. The Reverend Vavasor Powel

He was a native of Radnorshire, and was brought up at Oxford. He became a curate to his uncle, the Reverend Erasmus Powel; and while in this situation, he heard Walter Cradoc; and through him obtained right views of religion, about the year

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1640. Shortly after, he joined Cradoc in his itinerant labours, and continued this course for several years. And through him, more especially, the Gospel spread through considerable portions of the principality, particularly through Montgomeryshire and the southern counties of Wales. The account given of him in the *History of Religion in Wales*, already quoted,

is this:—‘So great was the zeal and diligence of Mr V Powel, that he often preached two or three times a day. It was seldom he spent two days in the week throughout the year, without preaching. He sometimes travelled 100 miles weekly, and preached wherever he found an opportunity. There were but few churches throughout Wales, in which he did not preach. He also preached often at fairs and markets, on mountains, and in villages. And God blessed his labours very extensively, so that many returned to the Lord through his ministry.’ He lived, about the year 1650, in the parish of Ceri, near Newtown, Montgomeryshire.

He met with more persecution than any other in his day. From the year 1640, until Wales was reduced by Cromwell in 1648, he was often put in prison, and cruelly treated, and that for no other cause, than for preaching the Gospel to save the souls of men. Some peculiar blindness belongs to all persecutors of religion! He enjoyed some respite during Cromwell’s time, and even encouragement in

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his laudable and laborious work. Whatever may be thought of many of Cromwell’s acts, it cannot be justly denied, but that the measures he adopted towards Wales, conduced much to pull down the strong holds of ungodliness, and popish superstitions in the country. It was the first strenuous attempt to uproot the popery that still continued in it. After the restoration of Charles II, in 1660, persecution raged against him again; and he had to spend nearly the whole remainder of his life in prison. He died in 1670, aged 53.

It is said, that he had been, throughout his life, in no less than *thirteen* prisons: and for no fault but that of preaching the Gospel. Man, while ignorant of God and under the influence of a sectarian and superstitious spirit, is a strangely unreasonable and a most cruel being, worse than the wild beasts of the field. Though popery had the for a long time been renounced; yet the spirit of popery fully possessed the minds of the higher orders. The Gospel had considerably spread among the middle and lower classes; but the higher classes, and the clergy in general, were still destitute of its light, and destitute of its spirit.

The three foregoing individuals—Erbury, Cradoc, and Powel, together with Wroth, were the *first* of whom there is any account, who went preaching everywhere through the country; and South Wales,

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more especially, was the field of their labours. The four had been brought up at Oxford, and were ordained in the Established Church, and would have doubtless continued in it, had it not been for Laud and his party, who deprived them of their cures, because they refused to do the work of the Evil One.

16. The Reverend Thomas Gouge

This benevolent man was born at Bow, near Stratford, Middlesex, in 1605; and he died in 1681. He was brought up at Eton, and afterwards at King's College, Cambridge; of which college he became a fellow. In 1638 he obtained the living of St Sepulchre, London; where he laboured diligently and faithfully for twenty-four years, until the passing of the Uniformity Act in the time of Charles II. He afterwards devoted much of his time and his money in spreading the knowledge of true religion in the Principality. The account given of him in the *History of Religion in Wales*, already alluded to, is the following—p. 586—

‘After having buried his wife, and settled his children, he had only £150 a year remaining; and he spent £100 every year in works of charity. It is said that he confined his charity almost wholly to Wales the last nine or ten years of his life. When between sixty and seventy years of age, he usually travelled to Wales, to distribute the money he could

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spare himself, and what he could collect, among laborious, but distressed and needy ministers. He established in the chief towns in Wales between *three and four hundred schools* to teach children to read, and engaged to pay himself for the schooling of one hundred children. He procured the printing of *eight thousand* copies of the Welsh Bible, distributed *one thousand* gratis among the poor, and sent the remaining seven thousand to the chief towns, to be sold at a reasonable price. Though Mr Gouge had a licence to preach occasionally in Wales, he yet was often persecuted. And though he went constantly to church, and sometimes received the sacrament there, he was yet excommunicated, even while engaged in doing all this good to the Welsh. But from love to God and the souls of men, he endured all these things with great patience, and ceased not to do good, until he finished his course with joy and triumph.’

Tillotson, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, preached his funeral sermon, and gave him a very high character. His benevolence was very

remarkable; quiet, and yet very efficient; extensive, and yet unostentatious. The print that is still in existence of him, exhibits a countenance wholly in unison with his character. It is the very picture of benevolence. -

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17. The Reverend Stephen Hugues

The birth-place of this excellent man was Carmarthen. He was born in 1623, and died in 1688. After the accession of Charles II, he was ejected from the vicarage of Meidrim, in his native county; and afterwards suffered great persecutions. His character was very similar to that of *Gouge*, a remarkably meek and benevolent man, quietly active in doing good. His preaching was probably more efficient than that of *Gouge*, not owing to any great powers of oratory, but to a peculiarly melting manner which he possessed. It is said that the tears he often shed in preaching drew tears from those who heard him. Like *Gouge*, he never meddled with the disputes of the day, but preached the essentials of religion, as to doctrine, experience, and practice, with great plainness, melting fervour, and unshaken fidelity.

He frequented the darkest places of the country, and through his moderation and humility he gained the esteem of many respectable people, of all such as were not wholly ungodly or altogether blinded by a party spirit. But he was often annoyed and hindered in his heavenly work; and yet his efforts were extensively beneficial to the spiritual good of the country. His sole object was to promote true religion. It was his practice to exhort and persuade all heads of families to teach their children and their

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servants, and their neighbours, and to encourage all who were ignorant, to learn to read: and he prevailed on many, when turned forty, and even much older, to do this. Wherever he was, he was in a certain way preaching, availing himself of every opportunity to converse with people about the concerns of their souls. It appears that in many respects he was not unlike the late excellent Mr Charles of Bala.

He assisted Mr Gouge in bringing out an edition of the Welsh Bible, and prepared the way for bringing out another edition, but did not live to see it finished. The two editions contained *eighteen thousand* copies. He published in his native language no less than *twenty* different books,

some translations, and some composed by himself. The following are some of his translations;

Call to the Unconverted, by Baxter.

Now or Never, by the same.

Treatise on Conversion, by Alleine.

Exposition of the Lord's Prayer, by W. Perkins.

The Practice of Piety.

It was Mr Hughes that first collected the poems of Rees Prichard, and published them in one volume. He published at least two editions of them. He did more than any before him to induce people to seek religious knowledge, and also to enable them to do so. The books he translated, and published, and

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circulated through the country, were very numerous. He spent much of his own money and much of what he procured from others for this purpose. The counties which received the greatest benefit from his labours and those of Mr Gouge, were those of Glamorgan, Brecknock, and Carmarthen.

18. The Reverend Peregrine Philips

He was born at Ambra, Pembrokeshire, in 1623, and died in 1691. He was born the same year with Hughes, and outlived him three years. His education was at Oxford. His first curacy was Cydweli, Carmarthenshire; of which Doctor Collins, his uncle, was incumbent. On account of his popularity as a preacher, the living of Mounton, near Pembroke, was given him, and soon after St Mary and Cosheston; in each of which he preached once every Sunday. He was a diligent and a gifted preacher, excelling most in his day. During Cromwell's time he exercised his ministry throughout the county, and there were but few churches in which he had not officiated. He could preach with great facility both in English and Welsh. But on the accession of Charles II, he, like many others, was ejected from his charge. To cast away the gold and retain the dross was the insane work done in those days. Altogether swinish was the temper of the age, inasmuch as the husks were chosen, and the pearls were trampled

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under foot. The most diligent, pious, and faithful ministers were cast aside and persecuted, while those who were generally the most inactive and

most indifferent about vital religion, were retained and caressed. When deprived of his preferments, to support himself and his family, he took a farm; but he still continued his ministry, though often annoyed and hindered by those in power. His labours were very extensively blessed, and for the few last years of his life he enjoyed the benefit of the toleration act.

19. HUGH OWEN

His native place was Bronyclydwr, Merionethshire, He was born in 1637, and died in 1699. He was brought up at Oxford about the beginning of the rebellion, and owing to some objections he had to some things in the church, he did not take orders in it. He lived on the small estate that was left him by his father, and devoted himself through life to the work of preaching the Gospel gratuitously to the illiterate poor of his country. He had about twelve places in the counties of Merioneth and Montgomery, where he regularly went to proclaim his heavenly message; and some of them thirty miles or more from his own residence. He finished his circuit in three months, and then began again. Occasionally he extended his visits to some parts of Carnarvonshire and other counties.

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He was a very meek, peaceable, and humble man, self-denying, blameless in his conduct, and very diligent and laborious in spreading the knowledge of the Gospel. But notwithstanding his quiet and peaceable mode of proceeding, he met with great hindrances from the persecutors of the age and the enemies of true religion. Under the pretence of preventing the spread of error, they tried to stop the progress of truth. But this good man pursued the same course, and became the blessed instrument of conversion, edification, and salvation to many. What is any church or any order of church government, except these ends be answered? It is only when the ministry is owned to make men wise unto salvation, that it attains its great object. It has been solely appointed for this purpose; and when exercised in a way deemed by men irregular, and at the same time rendered efficient for this end, it is infinitely superior to that, which is deemed regular, when not owned for the end designed by it. The work that is done, should be chiefly regarded, and not the instrumentality through which it may be effected. The best machinery in the world is worth nothing, if it is not worked so as to produce what it is designed to accomplish.

20. THE REV. GRIFFITH JONES

It was a period of great ignorance and darkness in

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Wales when this excellent man appeared on the stage of life. The religious knowledge which spread during the time of Cromwell's usurpation, had disappeared through the oppressive and persecuting measures adopted by the government of Charles II. His government, though legitimate, was a scourge to the country. True religion seemed to have forsaken the land; and this was the case in England as well as in Wales. The ruling powers in the church, in imitation of the papists, used force and compulsion for the defence and promotion, as they blindly thought, of true religion; but what they actually did thereby was to banish it from the kingdom, and to promote ambition, sloth, infidelity, and ungodliness.

Mr G. Jones was born in the parish of Cilrhedyn, Carmarthenshire, in 1683. He was educated at the Grammar School in Carmarthen. When ordained, he was twenty-five years of age; and it appears that he possessed even then right views of religion. He commenced his ministry in 1708, and was doubtless the *first* of the late Reformers, not only in Wales, but also in England. The living of Llandeilo Abercowyn was given him in 1711, and of Llanddowror in 1716. His talents were very popular, and his diligence and activity were very great. Some of his sermons, translated into English, were published a few years ago by the writer of this account. And

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his Letters to Mrs Bevan have also been published in English. They show a mind vigorous and penetrating, and moulded in the form of Scriptural truth. They are extremely useful, and suited to the various trials, and difficulties, and temptations of a Christian life. His sermons are plain, scriptural, full of matter, and adapted to the capacities of the most illiterate. There are no *plainer* sermons in the English language.

In 1730 he began his 'circulating schools' a work that will signalise his name through many generations. They were daily schools kept for two or three quarters of a year in the same place, and then removed to another. They spread soon through all parts of the country. He published an annual account of them from 1737 to 1760. In this last year, the schools were 215, and the scholars 8,687. What a work carried on by one man! He supported them by money he obtained from good men in England as

well as in Wales. Those schools prepared the country, in a great measure, for the powerful preaching of Rowlands and his fellow-labourers.

But the ministry of G. Jones was greatly blessed. Through the means of his schools, he exercised it very extensively. Though he confined himself to the churches, yet his ministry partook much of an itinerant character. It was not only in the neighbouring churches that he often preached, but also in distant churches in other counties. Wherever he preached,

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vast multitudes of people flocked to hear him, and great success attended his labours.

He contributed in other respects towards the furtherance of religious knowledge in his own country. Two large editions of the Bible were brought out of the press mainly through his efforts. He translated and composed many useful books; and through the bounty of 'the Christian Knowledge Society', he printed a vast number and distributed them widely through all parts of the country. No one, in any age, in Wales, has done so much in this respect as he, except the late Mr Charles of Bala. It is remarkable, that the *three*, who have done most by writing for the religious benefit of their country, were born in the same county, and in the same part of it. The three were Stephen Hughes, Griffith Jones, and Thomas Charles. Mr Jones died in 1761.

As some account will be given in the following pages, of the most celebrated of those who were engaged in the late great revival of religion, their names shall be omitted here. It is not to be supposed, that *none* but those already named, have been useful in their day. The object was to mention those who have been *most* eminent, having been instrumental in doing extensive or general good in the country.

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THE CAUSES OF DISSENT

It appears from the foregoing brief account, that dissent in Wales was first occasioned by the 'Book of Sports'. This book was first issued by James I, through the advice of high-churchmen, or rather papists in the church. It contained a royal permission and encouragement to the people, young and old, to indulge themselves, on the afternoons of Sunday, in almost all kinds of amusements and rural sports. This was done under the pretence of driving away the gloom and melancholy that was generated,

as it was said, by Puritanism, but in other and correcter words, by true religion. Seriousness was gloom, and concern for the soul was melancholy. To a mere formalist there is no joy but in what he calls innocent mirth; his religion can give him none. Sports on Sunday are one of the peculiarities of popery. The known practice of the papists, is to go to church very devoutly in the morning, and to appear fully occupied with religious objects; and then in the afternoon and evening, to have recourse to sports and amusements. In the morning they appear as if they were most unwillingly devout, putting on a gloomy face: and in the evening, as if they were most willingly undevout, indulging in all manner of foolish mirth and irreligious entertainments.

By the advice of Laud and his party, this book was re-issued by Charles I; and all the clergy were ordered to read it in their churches on

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Sunday. Those who had any true sense of religion, of course refused. After having read, 'Remember to keep holy the Sabbath day', they could not afterwards with any consistency read an order, or any permission to profane it. But for this refusal they were suspended or deprived of their cures. This was the very beginning of dissent in Wales. Laud's object was not to re-establish the popery of Rome, but to set up an Anglican popery; it was not to acknowledge the authority of the Pope of Rome but to make himself a Pope. The religion of ceremonies was his religion and that of his party, and not the religion of true godliness.

What greatly *increased* dissent eventually, was the conduct of the rulers of the church after the accession of Charles II. By the Act of Uniformity the greatest harm possibly was done to the church; for by it the *true* church was for the most part cast out of the Church of England; which might have been avoided, had there been any disposition to concede a few things of no great importance, except when imposed as necessary. Great deadness prevailed afterwards in the church, until the revival of religion in the last century. The first that was raised up in Wales by a gracious providence for this purpose was Griffith Jones. There was an attempt to stop him in his useful career, but it did not succeed. But Rowlands and his fellow-labourers

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were not suffered to continue in the church, where they began their good work, and where they wished to continue. We ought to be thankful

that there is now a better spirit in the rulers of our church; and let us pray, that it may improve still more.

N.B.—It may not be improper to observe, respecting those mentioned in the following table, that

6		were born in	Denbighshire.
2	"	"	Merionethshire.
1	"	"	Carnarvonshire.
1	"	"	Carmarthen shire.
2	"	"	Cardiganshire.
3	"	"	Pembrokeshire.
1	"	"	Monmouthshire.
1	"	"	Glamorganshire.
1	"	"	Radnorshire.

The counties of Flint, Anglesea, and Montgomery, have been the birthplaces of none of them, except it may be of some of those of whom no account is given.

All the Reformers of the first age were from North Wales, except Huet; and all the Reformers of the two next ages, except Hugh Owen, were from South Wales. The most honoured county as to number has been Carmarthenshire.

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Time Chart

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A MEMOIR OF THE REV. DANIEL ROWLANDS

PART I

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS—THE PARENTAGE OF
ROWLANDS—HIS EDUCATION—HIS CHARACTER WHEN
YOUNG.

WE have in general a desire to know past events. To be without this desire, is to be in a degraded state indeed; it is to be destitute of that which rightly belongs to every thinking and reasonable being. While men are in this state, there can be no hope of improvement. The mind being wholly occupied with present things, present interest, and present gratifications; what is past, as well as what is future, is wholly neglected.

Though this is the case with too many, it is yet

not the case with all. There is in some a desire and an anxious longing to become acquainted with what is past, especially with the history of their forefathers. It is well to know the condition of the world in general, and past events in foreign countries; but it is still more interesting to know what has taken place in our own land. The nearer the connection, the stronger should be our attachment. While we ought to feel an interest in the welfare of other lands, we ought to feel still a stronger one for that of our own. And while we delight to trace the gracious dealings of providence towards other countries, it ought to afford us peculiar delight in tracing them towards our own country. The religious improvement of a part of this kingdom is intimately connected with the individual, of whom we are now proceeding to give some account.

It is not too much to say that there never has been any single individual in Wales, in any age, who has contributed so much towards the promotion of true religion through the country, as the late Daniel Rowlands of

Llangeitho. It is much to be regretted, that no history of his labours has hitherto been given to the public. This has been a great loss; for the Supreme Ruler of all has been pleased to work great things through him, such as still remain in their effects and are likely to continue through some ages.

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There was an intention to write his life soon after he died. Why it was not done was thus explained some years ago to the writer by his son, the late Rev. Nathaniel Rowlands:—Soon after the death of Rowlands, Lady Huntingdon, who had long been acquainted with him, requested that every information respecting him should be collected and sent to her, as she intended to write his life. This request was complied with; but before she made use of the materials, she was removed to another and a happier world. There was no inquiry made for these documents for some years; and when it was made, they could not be found. There have been repeated applications made, but with no success. Thus the undertaking was deferred, until the difficulties had increased so much as to become nearly insurmountable. There has been besides a general impression as to the difficulty of doing justice to one so eminent. It was probably owing to such an impression that the late Mr Charles did not undertake the work, though there was no one better qualified.

The present writer has been long restrained from the attempt, being sensible of his inability, to execute the work in a manner worthy of its subject. Seeing, however, no probability of anything being done, and having in his possession more materials than perhaps any other person now living, he has thought it better to do *something*, than to do nothing. He has some

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advantages which are peculiar. He was born and brought up in the neighbourhood of Llangeitho. Though too young to have known Rowlands, he has yet conversed much with many of his stated hearers, and with some of his personal friends; he has known his late son, and obtained from him much information, as well as from the late Mr Griffiths of Nevem, and other clergy who knew Rowlands intimately. Under these circumstances, the writer has deemed himself justified in making the attempt.

The birthplace of Rowlands was near the scene of his future labours. It is not often that this has been the case with men of eminent usefulness.

He was born in the parish of Llancwnlle, which borders on the parish of Llangeitho, at a place called Pantybeudy, in the year 1713. His father was a clergyman of the same name with himself, and was the incumbent both of Llancwnlle and Llangeitho. Daniel was his second son. It does not appear that his father was really acquainted with true religion. It is probable that he, like many others, especially in those days, was a stranger to genuine godliness. His son, Daniel, was however brought up for the ministry, without possessing at the time any suitable ideas on the awful importance of the sacred office. His conduct previous to his conversion was a sufficient proof of this. And it cannot be supposed, that any really pious father would ever have encouraged

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a son to become a minister of the Gospel, while he betrayed no symptoms of serious piety. There is no clearer proof of spiritual blindness than to educate for the Church such as manifestly show by their conduct and disposition that they are destitute of true religion. God indeed can straighten the crooked things that we may do: but that is no rule for our conduct. And if God makes right what we do wrong, that does in no degree lessen the evil of what we do.

He was educated at Hereford, at the grammar school in that city. He possessed very quick parts, and made rapid progress in his learning. He was deemed fit, as to literary attainments, to take orders at the age of eighteen: and according to the opinion of his son, he was ordained at an earlier age than usual, that is, when he was only twenty. He was a good classic: and that was then, and too much still, considered a sufficient qualification for the ministry. Such learning is no doubt necessary, especially in our day; but it does not form the only or the chief requisite. There are other things which are much more necessary, without which the best qualifications are wanting. There must be a linguist to teach languages, and an artist to instruct in any liberal art: so there ought to be a Christian to teach Christianity, and a godly man to guide and direct those that are godly.

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What is reported in the neighbourhood of Rowlands in youth, is, that he was remarkable for natural vivacity, and very adroit in all the sports and corrupting amusements of the age. He was of the middle size, of a firm make, quick and nimble in his action, and foremost in all the youthful feats of the day. It was then customary to go to church in the morning,

and to spend the rest of the Sunday in sports, revels, and drunkenness. There was commonly in every parish some place where the vain, the foolish, and the dissolute assembled; and there among them Rowlands, it is said, appeared the foremost, the liveliest and the most active of the party, after having been in Church reading, praying, and preaching in the morning! Drunkenness no doubt followed. Though it is not said that he was notorious for that beastly habit, yet he fell into it occasionally. It is not easy to suppose the possibility of such inconsistency: but while religion is a mere form, there is so much ignorance and hardness of heart, that the greatest inconsistencies are neither seen nor felt to be so. When the mind is wholly darkened as to spiritual things, and the conscience wholly asleep, men seem to have lost their understanding and common sense. But it was not long after he was ordained that Rowlands continued in this awful state.

He was then what the people were in general. The

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priest and the people were alike, both extremely ignorant of religion, and wholly given up to the vanity of their own minds. Though the Bible was known, or might be known, and divine service was regularly performed in the churches, yet ignorance and ungodliness prevailed through the whole country. Preaching, such as it was, was very scanty; in some places, not more frequent than four times in the year. Prayers were thought sufficient; and those were only read, and not prayed, as if they possessed a sort of charm, which, being applied by mere reading, were to effect all the good intended by them. It was the bead-praying of the papists. Religion, when it loses its power, degenerates everywhere in a similar way. When spiritual worship ceases, the mechanical one commences; and this mechanical or formal worship is always found to be unfriendly and even inimical to preaching. It is a certain proof of deadness in religion, when formal worship is exalted, and preaching depreciated. Both (i.e. public worship and preaching) are to be valued, but preaching the gospel has the priority and the pre-eminence, and without it the worship will surely become a heartless work of mere formality.

The state of the country at that time was far more irreligious than, in the present day, will be imagined probable. As an evidence from an eye-witness is always the most satisfactory, such an one shall be

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added, taken from a Magazine, called 'The Spiritual Treasury', published by the Rev. Thomas Charles, late of Bala. It is a part of a 'Conversation between *Scrutator* (enquirer) and *Senex*' (an old man). The former is supposed to have been Charles himself, and the latter a venerable old man at Bala, whose name was John Evans, who at that time (1799) was nearly eighty years of age. He describes the state of Bala and its neighbourhood about the year 1742, when he first went to reside there, and what he says is a pretty correct specimen of what the country was in general. His words, as translated, are these:—

'The common people were more inclined to go to church on Sabbath mornings, than the gentry; but in the afternoons, they greedily followed their amusements. There was hardly a Sabbath afternoon on which they had not, in some part of the country, some place for sports. Here the youths exhibited their strength, and a great number of the people of the neighbourhood came together to look at them. On Saturday nights, especially in summer, the young people, both males and females, kept what was called *singing-nights*, and amused themselves by singing with the harp, and dancing, till the dawn of the sabbath.¹ In this town (Bala) they

¹ See Appendix A.

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were usually on the Sabbath afternoons, singing and dancing in the public-houses, playing *tennis* under the *Hall*, *bobbing*, &c. There was in every corner of the town some sport going on until night. The *Interludes* in summer were played in the loft of the *hall*, on the afternoons of the Sabbath, and both the gentry and the common people thus amused themselves together, and profaned the Lord's day. There was also a great number of those called *travelling people* (*pobl gerdded*), who came occasionally to this town. These were wanderers, who traversed the country for the sake of begging, if not for worse purposes. They were people of corrupt and depraved lives, an oppression on the country, and a shame to the magistrates who suffered them. This in part was the state of the country as to morals, in the year 1742, and a good while after that. As to true religion and godliness, if by their fruits they are known, there was here but little of them, at least as things appeared to me.'

Coincident with this account is that which Howel Harris gives, contained in the memoir of him which was published in 1791, and partly written

by himself. He describes the state of the country at the commencement of his career, in these words:—

‘There being at that time (1735) a general slumber over the land, the generality of people spent the Lord’s day contrary to the laws of God and man; it

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being by none rightly observed; neither had any one whom I knew, the true knowledge of that God whom we pretended to worship. No sooner was the worship over on the Lord’s day, than the conduct of the people discovered that the heart was entirely alienated from all that was good. The remaining part of the day was spent in indulging the prevailing corruptions of nature; all family worship being utterly laid aside (except among some of the Dissenters), while an universal deluge of swearing, lying, reviling, drunkenness, fighting, and gaming, had overspread the country like a mighty torrent, and that without any notice taken of, or a stop, as far as I had seen, been attempted to be put to it.’

This nominally Protestant country had become completely popish in its manners and morals. And no wonder, for there had been some popish measures adopted. The effects of the system of Laud, with his ‘Book of Sports’, and his persecutions of the really religious, still continued. There was still a habit of going to church in the morning: that being done, the rest of the day was spent in amusements, sports, and drunkenness. Pretending to serve God in the morning, they actually served their lusts and the Devil, the remainder of the sabbath.

PART II

THE CONVERSION OF ROWLANDS, AND THE COMMENCEMENT OF HIS REFORMED MINISTRY

HE was born, as we have seen, in 1713. Howel Harris mentions him, according to the history of his life, as one that had commenced preaching the gospel in 1738.¹ This was not long after Harris himself began his useful career. It is not quite certain which of them was first converted. They were however at first unconnected with one another; but they soon became acquainted, and laboured together in the great work.

As Rowlands had begun his useful course in 1738, it appears that he had not long been in the ministry, without being qualified for the office which he, like too many others, undertook thoughtlessly and presumptuously. The grace of God sometimes abounds in a most wonderful manner. To live in the neglect of the great salvation, is doubtless a fearful sin; but

¹ See Appendix B.

it is a greater sin still to intrude into a sacred office without any suitable qualification and without any right motive. This is nothing else but to add sin to sin, to aggravate the neglect of divine grace by presumption. But he who made of an inveterate persecutor one of his chief apostles still manifests at times the abounding of his grace, by calling and qualifying for his great work, even such as presume to engage in it, while altogether inconsiderate, and wholly unqualified.

Rowlands had, by this time at least, that is, in the year 1738, when twenty-five years of age, begun his great, arduous, and glorious work, which he pursued unweariedly, unremittingly, and incessantly, throughout his long life, and that for the space of more than fifty-two years. Who can tell the results of his labours? There are no labours on earth so pregnant with good, as those of a minister, blessed and owned by heaven, for the conversion and salvation of men.

According to reports current in the neighbourhood, and according to what the writer has heard many years ago, from some who were Rowlands' stated hearers for several years before he died, his conversion took place somewhat in the following manner: The Reverend Griffith Jones, the founder of the circulating schools, was in the habit of travelling through the country, and of preaching in various

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churches. He came to Llanddewibrevi, which is between four and five miles from Llangeitho. And as his preaching was very powerful, energetic, and awakening, a great many people went to hear him. Rowlands was also induced to go. His appearance at this time was very vain, full of conceit and levity. So large was the assembly, that there was no room for them to sit down; and in the midst of them, just opposite the preacher, stood Rowlands, evidently conceited and full of himself, and his countenance showing no small measure of contempt. His appearance was such as to draw the attention of Mr Jones while he was preaching, and so much so, that he suspended his discourse, and offered up a very earnest and affecting prayer for the vain young man that stood before him, beseeching God in an especial manner to make him a suitable instrument for turning many from darkness into light. This prayer, it has been said, produced an amazing effect on the mind of Rowlands. His appearance when returning home was quite different from what it was when he went there. The proud gait had disappeared, and the vain talk was no longer heard. With the head and face towards the ground, he seemed very thoughtful. It was thus that his great change commenced.

He was not afterwards the same man: nor was his preaching the same. But it was sometime before

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his views of religion became clear and accordant with the Gospel.

There was in his neighbourhood a good and very pious minister, belonging to the Dissenters. His name was Pugh. He served a chapel called Llwynpiod, and two other chapels at some distance. It was a great joy to this good man to hear of the change that had taken place in Rowlands: and he encouraged his people to go to hear him. This pious minister had a few under his care, who were truly religious in the midst of a thoughtless and ungodly world; as was the case commonly then with every denomination of right-minded Dissenters. There were a few here and there who knew the truth, while the great mass was in thick darkness,

following all kinds of folly, delighting in vanity and ungodliness, and as unconcerned about their spiritual interest as the very beasts of the field. No one truly pious could do otherwise than rejoice, on observing clear tokens of seriousness in a person of such gifts and energy as Rowlands. He thought, as it is most probable, that he was in every way calculated to be of great service to the interests of true religion. His situation too as a clergyman, was of great advantage to him; for his office was then held in great respect generally, though not commonly discharged in a way becoming the Gospel. A godly minister in the church has almost at all times greater

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advantages, and greater facilities of doing good, than any other minister. Though the Dissenters had among them, in the last century, many good and gifted ministers; yet the greatest and the most extensive good was done by clergymen. *They* were the chief instruments in producing the great change that has generally taken place through the country.

But, to leave this, the followers of Mr Pugh could not wholly approve, at first, of the preaching of Rowlands. While he proclaimed some truths according to the scripture and very powerfully, he handled other things in a way they thought inconsistent with the gospel. Of this they complained to Mr Pugh; and they expressed a wish to go to Rowlands, to remonstrate with him and to show him what was erroneous in his views. But the answer of the good and wise old man to them was this:

Let him alone. He is an instrument which God is raising up for doing some great work in the world. He will improve in a short time. God will bring him right by degrees.

And so it was. The good old man proved to be a true prophet. God soon straightened the crookedness that was in his creed, and made him an instrument of great good in his day. One of the mistaken views he then had was respecting Christian perfection; it was a notion which he had probably borrowed from the works of William Law. Besides,

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his ideas as to the freeness of the gospel were not very clear. He was for a time entangled in that confused system of salvation which relies partly upon works, and partly upon grace, a system which those who are only beginning to see the light, or who are aroused but not converted, usually adopt. However, it was not long before he attained clearer light as to divine truths; and he continued in that light, throughout his long life,

without any cloud to darken his mind.

What he preached at first was the law, in its high and minute demands, and in its awful threatenings. He stood, as it were, on Mount Sinai, and loudly proclaimed eternal perdition to a sinful world. Awful and extremely terrific was his message; nothing but the consuming flashes and dreadful thunders of the law, with hardly anything like the joyful sound of the gospel. Endless condemnation, deserved by sinners, was what he set forth with unusual power and energy. His own spirit seemed to have been filled with great and awful terror. He appeared as if he wished to kindle the fire of hell around the transgressors of God's law, that he might terrify them. He unfolded the indignation of heaven against sin with amazing clearness, earnestness, and vigour. But there was no harshness in his voice nor sternness in his countenance; but on the contrary, the most melting tenderness. He spoke

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as one overflowing with compassion, and under the deepest conviction of his own unworthiness.

It has been said by some that he preached at this time according to his own experience, and that the terrors of the law had awfully seized on his own mind. It is not improbable that he had undergone convictions of the deepest kind, and that he communicated to others what he had learnt and felt himself. There is nothing that we can show so clearly and as effectually to others, as what we have seen and felt ourselves. It is not human learning, so much as divine learning, that can qualify us for the great work of the ministry. No one can speak feelingly and correctly of man's dangerous and miserable state by nature, but he who has obtained a clear view of himself as a sinful creature, condemned by the just law of heaven. It is he who knows himself as a sinner, that is fit to address sinners.

Very wonderful effects followed this kind of preaching. However awful the message, hundreds and even thousands assembled to hear it: and such terror seized on many of them, that they sometimes fell down on the ground as if they were dead. Tears streamed down the faces of hundreds at the same time. The most thoughtless groaned through an inward agony, as if they stood on the brink of despair; and the most hardhearted, profane, and ungodly, often wept under the deepest convictions. This

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was the case for a considerable time with respect to the numerous assemblies which attended his ministry. Deep convictions, and hardly anything else, were produced. According to what the writer has heard from the oldest of Rowlands' followers that he has consulted, those convictions lasted for some years—perhaps four or five; and he continued all that time in the same awful strain of preaching.

This account is confirmed by what is said in the elegy on his death, that was composed by the late Reverend William Williams, who had been Rowlands' cotemporary, almost from the commencement of his career, and who had been through life his fellow-labourer and most intimate friend. There was no one more acquainted with the whole of Rowlands' life than he: and he has contrived to introduce into his elegy much that is historical and interesting. The elegies of Williams (and he composed many) are all very remarkable, and far superior to any other elegies the writer has ever seen, either in English or Welsh. A literal translation of the passage referred to, is the following:—

'After preaching the stormy law
Some years in succession,
And having made many broken-hearted,
Now he changed his strain.'

Many differ in their opinion as to the mode and order of preaching the law and the gospel. Some

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think, that they ought to do as Rowlands did; that the law should be first preached, to convince men of sin, before any particular or express disclosure be made of the gospel. Others bold, that the right mode is, to set forth the gospel in its nature and fullness, even in the first instance, without making any specific explanation of the law, or proclaiming its terrors. There is also a third opinion, and that is, that the law and the gospel should be unfolded together, so that the danger and the refuge, the disease and the medicine, may be made known at the same time.

This is evidently one of those points, on which no general and fixed rule can be prescribed; as the mode greatly depends on circumstances, and often on circumstances with which no human being can be acquainted. God does not convince all, or convert all, in the same manner, or by the same means. And whatever mode he may have adopted in restoring to himself any of his ministering servants, that probably is the mode which

is most suited to each of them to employ towards others. This was probably the case with Rowlands. The clear view he had himself of the evil of sin as a transgression of God's law, and the realising perception he had of its awful consequences, he endeavoured to impart to his hearers; and he succeeded to an astonishing extent. The best way for us to know what mode to

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pursue, is to seek the guidance and teaching of his Spirit, who 'worketh all things after the counsel of his own will'. The first work seems to be, to convince of sin; and for this purpose, it appears necessary to know that which shows what sin is; and that is the Law. But as to the measure, time, and degrees, on this point, it is not the teaching of man, but the teaching and guidance of the Spirit, that can give the instruction that is needful.

The churches which Rowlands served at this time were *Llancwnlle* and *Llangeitho*: and according to his son's account, he served them both for nearly thirty years for ten pounds a year. When it was that he took the curacy of *Llanddewibrevi*, does not appear; but it is probable that he had it soon after he became really acquainted with the truth. It however appears, that he had been serving the three churches for some time before he was ejected; and he usually preached three times on the Sunday. But he did not confine himself to those places, but preached often in other churches, far and near. Williams in his elegy says, when mentioning the commencement of his ministry, that 'five of the chief counties of Wales' had heard 'the great thunders'. Inasmuch as he continued to preach 'the stormy law', according to what some have said, for four or five years; and as five of the counties of Wales had heard his awful preaching, before he 'changed his strain', and proclaimed 'the

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great salvation', it is evident, that he began his itinerant labours soon after his conversion. But at first he preached only in churches, and in ecclesiastical chapels.

The circumstance that led him first to go and preach out of his own neighbourhood, as related by his late son, was the following:—

There was a farmer's wife in Ystradffin, in the county of Carmarthen, who had a sister living in the vicinity of Llangeitho. This woman came at time's to see her sister; and on one of these occasions she heard some strange things respecting the clergyman of the parish, that is, Rowlands.

The common saying was that he was not right in his mind. She however went to hear him, and not in vain: but she said nothing then to her sister, or to anybody else, about the sermon: and she returned home to her family. The following Sunday, behold, she came again to her sister's house near Llangeitho. 'What,' said her sister with great surprise, 'what is the matter? Is your husband well, and are your children well?' She was afraid from seeing her so soon and so unexpectedly, that something unpleasant had happened. 'O yes,' was the answer, 'nothing of this kind is amiss.' She asked her again, 'What is the matter then?' She replied, 'I don't well know what is the matter. Something that your *cracked* clergyman (this was the name then given him) said

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last Sunday, has brought me here today. It continued on my mind all the week, and never left me either day or night.' She went again to hear him; and she continued to come every Sunday, though her road was hilly and mountainous, and her home more than twenty miles from Llangeitho.

After having continued to come there about half a year, she felt a wish to ask Rowlands to come and preach at Ystradffin. She made up her mind to try what she could do; and so after service one Sunday, she went to Rowlands, and saluted him somewhat in this manner—'Sir, if what you say to us is true, there are many in my neighbourhood in a most dangerous condition, going fast to eternal misery. For the sake of their souls, come over, Sir, to preach to them.' The woman's request struck him with surprise; but without a moment's hesitation, he said in his usual quick way, 'Yes, I will come, if you can get the clergyman's permission'. This satisfied and highly gratified the woman; and she returned home in great joy, as if she had found some rich treasure. She took the first opportunity to ask the clergyman's permission, and easily succeeded. Next Sunday she went very joyfully to Llangeitho, and informed Rowlands of her success. According to his promise, he went over and preached at Ystradffin; and his very first sermon there was wonderfully blessed. Not less than thirty persons were, it is said, on that

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occasion converted. Many of them afterwards came regularly to hear him at Llangeitho, and he occasionally went over to preach there.

There is another remarkable event connected with Ystradffin. The following account was given to the writer by the late Rev. Hugh Lloyd, of Cilpill, near Llangeitho. He received it from *one that went over with*

Rowlands on the occasion, and was an eyewitness of what took place. What happened is the following—

There was in the parish of Ystradffin a gentleman, who was during the season in the habit of amusing himself with hunting on the Sunday mornings. He did so on one of the Sundays that Rowlands was to preach there. He went out to hunt on the mountains with his dogs, and some of his servants and of his tenants accompanied him. He had heard that a stranger was to preach in the church that day, and had also heard the common report, that he was one not quite right in his mind. As he returned from hunting, he came by the church; and he and his companions went in, more, it seems, for the purpose of a frolic than anything else. With the evident intention of perplexing and confounding the preacher, the gentleman stood up on a seat just opposite the pulpit, and put on a face of the utmost insolence and contempt. Rowlands saw him and fully understood his object:

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but the effect produced on him, though then young, was the reverse of what the gentleman expected. Rowlands went on without seeming to notice him, and with great readiness of utterance. In a short time his words became very powerful; so penetrating and terrific, that his hearers stood fixed with amazement and trembling with fear. The appearance of the gentleman soon changed. His countenance fell, his limbs quaked, and the tears streamed down his cheeks; and he could no longer stand up on the seat. He came down, and sat with his head towards the ground, and shedding tears profusely.

What a sight! and what a change! the lion tamed—he who was evidently in some respects possessed by the evil spirit, brought into his right mind—a presumptuous sinner brought down to the dust, a haughty scorner deeply humbled in the presence of his ungodly companions! Conscience awakened, exercises amazing power: it is far stronger than anything else. It will break asunder the strongest fetters. Neither the devil, nor sin, nor the world, has any bonds which it will not break. Nothing can withstand or resist its power. Shame, reproach, losses dangers, yea, the strongest obstacles—it will face them all unshaken, and go through them all, resolutely, firmly, and unrelentingly. It will shatter to pieces bars of iron, and break through gates of brass; and there is nothing that can restrain or resist it. The

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voice of conscience, when awakened, is the voice of God himself.

In this humble posture the gentleman remained till the end of the service, and listened as silently to the sermon as his weeping would allow him. It was a singular sight to all present, and produced on them a very great impression. After the service was over, the gentleman went to meet Rowlands in a very humble and trembling manner. He confessed his presumption in attempting to confound him, and his sin in profaning the Lord's day. He asked his pardon, and invited him kindly to his house. Rowlands' conduct was of course such as became the occasion. He kindly received him, cheerfully and thankfully accepted his invitation. He went and dined at his house, and stayed there that night. This was the commencement of a friendship that continued through life. This gentleman, and several others from the same neighbourhood, were afterwards in the habit of coming regularly to Llangeitho to hear Rowlands. There are some now living who well remember this gentleman, and who had often seen him at Llangeitho. It was his practice to resort there, at least every month, while he lived: and his whole life bore a creditable testimony to the sincerity of his religion.

The occasion which first induced Rowlands to undertake field-preaching, was the following, as

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mentioned by his late son;—After he was converted himself, his great desire was to convert others, especially his former companions in his days of vanity and folly. But his lively and earnest preaching was wholly disliked, and made them to neglect coming to church altogether. Their custom was to go on the Sunday to some place, suitable to their purpose, that was on one of the hills above Llangeitho, and there to amuse themselves with some of the games and sports then practised. There was a particular spot where all the giddy and the dissolute used to assemble. Rowlands tried all means to put a stop to this profanation of the Lord's day; but he failed to succeed. He then determined to go there himself on Sunday. As they would not come to him in church, he resolved to go to them on their own ground. He must have possessed a very bold spirit, and an intense concern for their eternal welfare, before he could have ventured to go to such a place, and especially to go among those who had been his companions, and many of them probably much older than himself. But there he went; and he preached to them on their own spot, as they

did not allow him the opportunity of preaching to them in church. He proclaimed the truth to them with great faithfulness and with great power; and such was the effect, that there was no more assembling there. This stronghold of Satan was

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pulled down through God's blessing on this laudable adventure.

It is not many that possess qualifications suitable for such an undertaking. Few there are who have the boldness, quickness of thought, readiness of speech, and the judgment as well as zeal, that are necessary on such occasions. It was indeed singular that he obtained an hearing but doubtless there was One working there, who has power to control and change the wills and purposes of the most perverse and the most ungodly. Dependence on his blessing and influence was the great secret of the success obtained. It is when God sends, that the work will be done. The example of others is not always a safe rule for us. In cases of this kind, the example is not so much our guide, as the secret impulse and guidance of the divine Spirit. One man can do what another cannot, and that owing to a diversity in the gifts and endowments, both natural and spiritual, which each may possess. The great object should be, to use, employ and improve our *own* peculiar gifts and to ask and seek counsel and direction from above.

The success which at this time attended his ministry everywhere was very remarkable. Wherever he preached, multitudes assembled to hear him. And it appears that he went to preach from home, and extended his labours to some of the surrounding

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counties, soon after his conversion. The Rev. Joshua Thomas, in his *History of the Baptists*, speaks of him as preaching, in 1737, in 'a very extraordinary way', in the county of Carmarthen.¹ Though this author shows a disposition rather to lessen the effects of the ministry of Rowlands and his fellow-labourers, he yet bears a clear testimony to the great change generally produced by their labours. He leans rather too much to his own party, though on the whole he is a fair and candid writer, and manifests a kind and charitable spirit. Having mentioned the beginning of Rowlands' ministry, he proceeds thus:—

'Shortly after this, Mr W. Williams, and Mr Peter Williams, in the county of Carmarthen, and Mr H. Davies, in the county of Pembroke, came forth (to the work), and some others in different parts of Wales, who were ministers of the Church of England. Howel Harris was of this

church; but he was not brought up to the ministry. So an exhorter was the name given to him. They went abroad through the whole country; and there rose up a great many exhorters of various degrees (of gifts) some more eminent, and others preached in case of necessity. So the country was agitated. *The people forsook their sinful amusements, and began to talk about religion, and*

¹ See Appendix C.

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to assemble and form religious societies. And thus there came a great reformation in the country. From that time until now (1777) the knowledge of God has *spread wonderfully* through Wales. For there were before multitudes of people, who never went nigh a chapel, or to any church but very seldom: yet they went thus to hear, to houses and the highways and the fields.⁷

This is the testimony of a cotemporary, who was well acquainted with the country, and an eye-witness of what he has related; and he is not liable to the charge of partiality; His account extends over a space of forty years. He himself, as he tells us, heard Rowlands preaching in Carmarthenshire in 1737; and he published his book in 1777.

At the beginning, and for some years, Rowlands and his associates met in many places with great hostility and persecution. The treatment which faithful ministers in Ireland have met with during late years, has not been much worse than what Rowlands and his friends had to endure, nor generally so bad. The open violence of the people, excited and encouraged frequently by their superiors, was much greater; though there was no assassination or secret waylaying as among the Irish. There was in the country generally such a horror of murder, that none was actually committed, though very nearly in some instances. Howel Harris had more

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than once been brought to death's door, through the furious violence of the populace. Had it not been for one of the mob themselves, he would in all probability have been actually murdered on one occasion at Bala. The man, seeing that Harris was likely to be killed, took his part, and evidently saved his life. On many occasions, as the history of his life shows, he was most dreadfully and shamefully treated. The country was generally very dark and very degenerated; but not quite as dark and as

barbarous as where popery reigns triumphant. The people were very ignorant and very ungodly; but they were not so fanatical as the Irish papists, thinking it a meritorious act to destroy heretics, though there were some ecclesiastics who endeavoured to instil such a notion as this into their heads. They possessed all the enmity which ungodly men have to religion; but not that enmity drugged with fanaticism and superstition. It was the savage in his native state, and not brutalised by inebriating potions. Popery is an intoxicating drug, that maddens the populace, and renders their enmity to truth tenfold stronger, and their rage tenfold more furious. It is easier to deal with heathen savages than with ignorant superstitious papists. It appears from the account given of Whitefield, that though he had been often shamefully used by the mob in this country, he yet was never so brutally treated as by

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the papists in Ireland. He was there as nearly murdered as possible, having had as narrow and as providential an escape as ever was witnessed.

The itinerancy of Rowlands was not so frequent as that of many of his fellow-labourers. Harris, Peter Williams, H. Davies, and others, travelled through the country much more than he did. The opposition they met with was often very violent, and more so in North than South Wales; the strongholds of Satan being much firmer and faster there than in the southern division. The revival of religion, a century before, did not extend much to the northern counties: and this may account for the difference. The good which had been done by Rees Prichard, Powel, Gouge, Hughes, and others, was mostly confined to South Wales: and the effects of it had not yet wholly disappeared. The light continues for some time after the setting of the sun.

There is much in the intrepid appearance of a person to restrain and daunt a mob: and this was the case no doubt with Rowlands. His bold as well as dignified appearance frequently awed and checked the populace, when intent on mischief, and excited to it by others: for in most instances they were not only encouraged, but also instigated and bribed by their superiors. It is said that on one occasion he used what may be called the wisdom of the serpent, mixed with something of a chivalrous character, in

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order to avoid the violence of a furious rabble. Intending to return in the evening through a town in North Wales, where he preached in the

morning, he learnt as he drew nigh it, that a large mob were assembled at the other end, waiting for him, and purposing to insult, unhorse, and ill treat him. There was a person accompanying him, as usually was the case. He desired him to stop behind, and to follow at some distance. He then cocked his hat, rode very fast through the town, and as he came up to the crowd that had assembled together, he said, 'Ye children of the devil, what has brought you together here since the morning?' His appearance and his language completely puzzled them. Though what he said seemed to be strictly true, and he meant it so; yet they took it in a different sense. 'Oh,' said some of the rabble, 'this is not he, for he curses and swears.' Thus by some art and great boldness he wholly escaped their fury.

PART III

THE MANNER AND SUCCESS OF ROWLANDS' MINISTRY

ROWLANDS exercised his ministry at first mostly in consecrated places. The preachers who joined him were commonly called exhorters; and they preached wherever they could find a congregation, either in the street or in the field. But in course of time chapels were built, in which afterwards they commonly proclaimed their message. Several of these went usually to hear Rowlands on the Sundays, and afterwards preached in other places what they had heard. The churches of Rowlands were then somewhat like the country of Egypt in the time of Joseph. A great many resorted to his churches from almost every part of the principality, that they might be fed by the heavenly bread which he administered to them. And many came to hear him, that they might, as it were, buy corn for themselves, their families, and their neighbours. They obtained enough for themselves, and brought away abundant supplies for others.

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The place of the greatest concourse was Llanddewibrevi, before he was ejected from the church. That church is much more capacious than the other two which he served. It is about four miles from Llangeitho, and five from Llanwndelle: and the two last about two miles from each other. Llanddewibrevi is very large, capable of containing three thousand people or more: but it was not too large at that time. There were no seats for the greatest part of them. Most of them stood; and the church was filled from one end to the other. The appearance of the multitudes that assembled was very remarkable. Many followed Rowlands from one church to the other, and did not return home till late in the evening, and some, not until the following morning, and without eating anything from Sunday morning until Monday morning. The spiritual food they had was sufficient for a time to support them without any bodily sustenance.

Rowlands served his own churches most commonly on the Sundays. But on weekdays he was in the habit of going to several other places. It

was his custom for years to go once in the month to these chapels—Twrgwyn—Waenivor—Ystradfin—Abergorlech and Llanillian. He did not, as it has been already said, itinerate to the same extent as some others. On this subject a quotation shall be given from the periodical called 'The Treasury', before

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referred to. It is a portion of the conversation between *Scrutator* and *Senex*. The account which the latter gives is the following:

The Rev. Peter Williams came early here (North Wales). He was a strong man both in body and mind, and a good preacher. He laboured diligently and faithfully. His ministry was very useful; and many were called through him. The Rev. Howel Davies was here several times. He was a very meek, kind man, and a very winning preacher. It is also delightful to remember the labours of the Rev. William Williams. He was remarkable for strong and elevated flights of the imagination, and for a clear evangelical doctrine, which he delivered with much spiritual unction. These three were clergymen of the Church of England: but they ministered generally, not in the church, but in every place as they travelled through the country. The Rev. Daniel Rowlands has been here occasionally, though he ministered (usually) at Llangeitho, and was more stationary than they. His ministry as you know, was beyond measure *eminent, excelling in grandeur every other that I have ever known*.—No. iii. p. 136.

This account, as to Rowlands, refers to the time when he was excluded from the Established Church, and when a large chapel had been built for him at Llangeitho, about half a mile from the church, on the opposite side of the stream called Aeron, that runs

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through the valley. As this Part will contain some things which belong to his ministry both *before* and *after* he was forbidden to preach in the church, I shall notice here a few things connected with that event.

To specify particularly the year when Rowlands was ejected from the church is what I cannot do. It was somewhere about the year 1763, after his conversion, at least twenty-five years. The reason given for this act was that he preached in unconsecrated places, and travelled about to preach through the country. It is said that the bishop reasoned with him several times on this subject and advised him to lay aside the practice. He excused himself by saying that the circumstances of the country

required such labours. He fully believed that his work was owned and blessed by heaven; and he felt that he could not do otherwise than carry it on. It appears by what his late son told the writer that the conversation between the bishop and Rowlands was very similar to that which took place, nearly at the same time, between the Rev. John Berridge and his bishop. The two showed the like spirit of meekness and respect towards their superior, and still they manifested a higher respect and regard to what they conceived to have been the will of him who is higher than all. The eternal good of immortal souls is of infinitely greater consequence than any human

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arrangements, which may be *generally* useful, but not so under every circumstance. Had the bishop wisely considered the ignorant and irreligious state of the country, he could not with a safe conscience have acted as he did. His conduct towards Rowlands did great harm to the church. This, as I have heard, was the opinion of the late excellent bishop of St David's, Dr Burgess. He expressly told a clergyman, whom I knew well, that it was a very unwise thing in his predecessor in the diocese to turn Rowlands out of the church, and that a great injury to the church had resulted from that act. Correct no doubt was the opinion formed by Dr Burgess; and he is one whose judgment the Welsh have strong reasons to respect, as his plans and measures have been eminently productive of good to the church.

As Rowlands would not consent to relinquish his work of preaching through the country, the bishop determined to deprive him of his churches. This was done publicly on Sunday at Llanddewibrevi, according to what I have learnt, more than twenty years ago, from a pious old man, an inhabitant of the place, who remembered the event. Two clergymen entered the church just as Rowlands ascended the pulpit. One of them was the Rev. Mr Davies, brother to Captain Davies, of Llanvechan. The name of the other I have not heard. A letter was delivered to Rowlands in the pulpit. After reading it privately,

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he rose up and told the immense multitude present, that he was not allowed to preach. He said no more, came down from the pulpit, and left the church; and the large congregation almost all followed him, deeply affected, and many of them weeping.

In consequence of this prohibition, a large chapel was built for him at Llangeitho, where he resided: and there afterwards he ministered chiefly, for twenty-seven years, with very extraordinary success. I shall now proceed to other matters which appertain to this Part, and shall arrange them under three Sections.

SECTION I

The change which took place in his preaching, and its consequences.

It has been already said, that Rowlands at first was 'the son of thunder' and that in a degree seldom witnessed perhaps in any age. It was perdition to an ungodly world that he proclaimed with the earnestness and energy of one who deeply felt the danger of living in a state of sin and impenitence. A great many were 'pricked in their hearts'; and the common inquiry was 'What must I do to be saved?' It is not to be supposed that there was no reference to mercy in his preaching these years; but

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that was but very sparingly made. It was not mercy but condemnation that he chiefly set forth. The substance of his preaching was man's condemnation through sin, and the dreadful consequences of living and dying without a renewal of the heart and reconciliation with God. There was such seriousness, vigour, flaming energy, and melting sympathy in his preaching, that his words, like the sharpest arrows, penetrated into the hardest hearts, and produced the deepest convictions.

It may indeed be said that a change took place in his ministry; but this is not altogether correct. There was properly no change, but an addition. It was the Law he preached at first, and after some time he preached also the Gospel. He did not, throughout his ministry, leave off proclaiming the Law, in its high demands and awful threatenings; but he proclaimed as fully, as often, and as clearly, the unfathomable treasures of the Gospel. This was probably the reason that the deepest convictions were produced under his ministry, not only at first, but throughout the whole course of his life. There were old pious people in the neighbourhood of Llangeitho whom I well knew some years ago, who had been converted under his ministry; and according to their account, they had been under the deepest convictions for two or three years, before they were brought to enjoy the comforts of a free salvation. Breaking up the ground

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and harrowing was a very thorough work under his ministry. On this account probably it was, that the religion of those who had been converted through him was purer, more serious, and more heavenly, than I have observed in any other instances. There was something very tender and melting in their spirit, and their experience seemed deeper than what is found commonly in pious people. To break man down to nothing at first is a necessary preparation for his future rise and progress in real godliness. Deep and thorough conviction generally leads to an abounding enjoyment. The measure of our abasement is commonly the measure of our exaltation. If forgiveness be viewed as great, our love will be great according to the same proportion.

But there was a particular time, as it appears, when Rowlands began to preach more especially a free salvation to the chief of sinners. The clearness and authority, the power and vigour, the sympathy and earnestness, which he displayed before, while preaching the law, he displayed now while preaching the gospel, and that perhaps in a higher degree and to a greater extent. If he proclaimed before a righteous law, which required perfect obedience, and threatened eternal condemnation to its transgressors—he now proclaimed the complete obedience that was rendered to it by him who came in our place, as being fully sufficient for the justification

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of the worst and the most guilty of men, who saw and bewailed their miserable condition. The fullness of Christ, and his readiness to receive the vilest and the most wretched, and to forgive freely all their sins, he set forth with so much clearness and effect, that those who were before wounded by the arrows of conviction, were filled with amazement and with joy unspeakable. Having placed them before as on the very brink of ruin, he now pointed out to them a strong and a safe refuge to flee into. Having previously deeply wounded them, he now brought before them an infallible physician ready to heal them. Instead of the wrath they fully deserved as sinners, he now made known to them in a clear and vivid manner the love of God, flowing through his beloved Son, to the most unworthy who repented and turned to him. It was salvation, wholly free, complete, full and unexhaustible in its treasures, that he proclaimed now to the thousands who came to hear him, and in a manner so energetic and overpowering, that the most extraordinary effects followed.

As the convictions before produced were not common, the impressions made, when the Gospel was preached in the fullness of its blessings, were not common. As the convictions had been almost too much for nature to bear up under them, so it was with the joy that followed. The deep wounds of conviction

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made the people to weep and cry bitterly, and sometimes even to faint away: and this was not so much the case with women as with men, and those even the strongest. But when the remedy was made known and received, they could not but praise God and loudly praise him; yea they rejoiced, and even jumped for joy. This was the time that loud praising and jumping began among the people. The cause of it was the overflowing joy which they experienced. This practice commenced while Rowlands was ministering in the established church.

It has been told the writer by a good old man from Llanddewibrevi, that the thousands that assembled there at that time were often singing and rejoicing as they returned home; and that many did so, those on foot and those on horseback, both men and women; and that the country around, to a considerable distance, re-echoed with their joyful hallelujahs. This may appear strange and something worse to many. But we ought to consider every circumstance connected with it. It is not easy to conceal deep feelings of joy; and when once they break out, it is hardly possible to restrain them: and there is nothing in the word of God that opposes, but much that rather favours such loud expressions of joyful feelings. It is also agreeable to nature to express, in a lively and energetic manner, what we deeply feel, whether it be joy or grief. And what can possibly affect the mind.

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and feelings of an immortal being so much as a clear and realising view of the love of God, as displayed in the free and full salvation of the lost? The transition that took place with respect to many, nearly at the same time—the transition from a state of guilt, fears, and doubts, into a state of peace, comfort, and hope, is sufficient to account for the great joy that they so loudly and energetically expressed. There is nothing in the whole world that ought to create such strong emotions as the reconciliation of a sinner to the God of heaven. A clear view of this, accompanied by a corresponding feeling within, is what no man can have, without experiencing joy in a degree more than common. Our wonder therefore should be,

not that some Christians feel and show this joy so much, but that most Christians feel and show it *so little*.

Rowlands neither encouraged nor discouraged this extraordinary overflow of joy. He did not expressly approve of the practice of jumping while praising God, nor did he do the contrary. His energetic, powerful, and fervid preaching occasioned it; and it was under his ministry, according to what has been said, that the practice first commenced. Though he did not speak either for or against it, yet some of his associates acted differently. Some of them expressly approved and justified the practice. One of these was the excellent William Williams, the author of

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the hymns that are still in so much repute in the country.¹ Rowlands was evidently in some doubts respecting it; and hence his silence on the subject. Some of his friends in England felt very uneasy on the point, thinking that religion would thereby be degraded and injured. The good and benevolent John Thornton, Esq. was of this number. He wrote several times to Rowlands on the subject, and earnestly requested him to put an end to the practice. Rowlands had no wish to say anything respecting it; but as Thornton mentioned the matter several times, he thought it necessary to say something concerning it; and he did so somewhat in the following manner:—"You, English, blame us, the Welsh, and speak against us and say, "Jumpers, jumpers". But we, the Welsh, have something also to allege against you; and we most justly say of you, "Sleepers, sleepers". His late son, who told the writer this anecdote, said, that Thornton never mentioned the subject any more to his father.

After Rowlands was deprived of his churches, Llangeitho became the resort of thousands from every part of the country, and it continued to be so till the end of his life, and for some time after his death. People came there commonly from ten to fifteen miles around, and many from greater

¹ See Appendix D.

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distances. On sacramental Sundays, which were observed monthly, some came from the distance of forty, fifty, and sixty miles. It appears from the life of the late Rev. Thomas Charles, that several occasionally went to Llangeitho from Bala, a journey not less than sixty miles. From twenty to thirty travelled together, or in two companies, some on foot,

and some on horseback, both men and women. Those on foot started early on Saturday, and took a shorter course over the mountains, without any support except the food they brought with them, and their drink was pure water from the mountain springs. They had particular resting-places where they usually stopped to take some refreshment. After hearing one or two sermons from Rowlands, they returned home again, fully satisfied, and abundantly repaid for all the toil of their journey. The spiritual food they had for the soul, made them feel less the fatigue of the body, and tended to relieve its weariness.

But this journeying to Llangeitho was not peculiar to Bala; it was from all parts on every side; north, south, east, west, though not from every quarter to the same extent. The writer himself, when young, lived about six miles south-west of Llangeitho, and he fully recollects some springs on the hills at which, as he has been told by his seniors, companies of people going to Llangeitho usually stopped and

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rested, and quenched their thirst. There were some at Llangeitho at times even from Anglesea, more than a hundred miles distant. According to the account given to the writer by a pious aged servant of Rowlands, there were some there at times from every county in the principality; and often on sacramental Sundays, the communicants were from twelve to fifteen hundred. He had opportunity of knowing their number, because he usually prepared the elements. The same people were not at the sacrament every month, for those who came from far, were present only every two or three months, and perhaps still less frequently. It is probable that not half of the communicants were present at the same time. There were generally two or three clergymen assisting at the communion, and sometimes more. An aged clergyman, now living, has lately told the writer, that he was once one of *eight* engaged in administering the sacrament. None were received to partake of the ordinance, but those who were professed members, having joined the private societies.

Of this extraordinary resort to Llangeitho, the late Rev. T Charles has made express mention in one of his letters inserted in the Memoir of his Life, to which we have already alluded. It was sent to that excellent woman whom he afterwards married. The date of the letter is 25 December 1782, eight years

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before the death of Rowlands. The letter is the following:—

'I am glad that you returned safe from Llangeitho. Now that you are returned, I am very glad that you have been there. I join you most heartily in wishing I had been there also. The remembrance of the sermons I heard there six or eight years ago, does me more good than anything I have since heard. When at school at Carmarthen, my excursions there in the holidays, twice a year, were more profitable to me than all the sermons I heard in the intervals between. I have therefore every possible reason to think highly of that great and good man of God. It was a great disappointment to me not to hear him last summer: and there is nothing I so ardently long for, as seeing him before he dies; I thank you much for the excellent account you have given me of his sermons. I can evidently trace that great man in the outlines you sent. And there is also something of the Llangeitho taste and relish in the second edition given by you. I evidently perceive that you have not been there in vain; but that your journey answered the purpose. A spiritual blessing is worth obtaining, were we to go for it on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.' p. 162.

Another quotation shall be given from this same Memoir, as it shows the progress of the good work. It is a part of Charles's letter to a friend, in the

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month of August the following year, that is, in 1783. Charles speaks thus:—

'In the mean time I attended an association of the Methodists at Llangeitho, Mr Rowlands' residence. There were at the association about *twenty* clergymen, and between *sixty* and *eighty* lay-preachers, though not all that are in the connexion. You may suppose how glad I was to hear once more the old grey-headed Elijah proclaiming the deep things of God with that pathos, perspicuity, and energy peculiar to himself. I heard him twice, and three clergymen besides, and also several lay-preachers, endowed with excellent gifts. Preaching began on Saturday, and lasted till Wednesday morning ten o'clock. I shall add no more, but that it was good to be there.' p. 186.

According to the best information now attainable, the number that assembled at Llangeitho, especially every month, was very great, not less than four or five thousand, and sometimes larger still. They were not so numerous on the other Sundays. Rowlands was mostly at home on the Sunday when the sacrament was administered; and he commonly preached the previous Saturday at eleven in the morning. The assembling there,

as to number, was like that of a great *Fair*; though there was nothing of the noise and confusion of such an assemblage. The appearance of the people was solemn and serious,

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and there was no foolish mirth nor levity. Even the young people appeared serious and thoughtful. This extraordinary resort to the place continued several years after the death of Rowlands, when his son Nathaniel succeeded him; but it was not quite so great; and one reason was because chapels were built in several other places, and were served by clergymen and lay-preachers of considerable talents.

The writer well remembers that very large congregations used to assemble at Llangeitho, ten, fifteen, and even twenty years after the death of Rowlands. On sacrament Sundays many thousands usually came together. He has seen hundreds of horses standing in rows and tied to the hedges; and some of the fields were full of them, as if there was a large Fair kept. And even now, in the present day, the assembling is considerable, as the writer has lately witnessed. It is much greater than what might be expected, when the number of chapels in the surrounding parts is taken to the account, and also the number of churches in which the gospel is faithfully preached. The regard entertained for the place where Rowlands laboured still continues, and what has contributed to perpetuate it is this, that the clear and powerful preaching of the same doctrines that he preached there, has hitherto continued.

It is not probable, that there is any place in this

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kingdom, and it may be, in any part of the world, where so large a number of people have been assembling together to hear the gospel, and for so long a time, as Llangeitho. The length of Rowlands' own ministry was more than fifty years; and his congregation during almost the whole of that period, was probably on an average, between three and four thousand: and this average was not much less for twenty years more: and now after the lapse of a *century*, the number may be generally a thousand: for the communicants are even now about five hundred, as the writer has been lately informed. To collect together in a thinly inhabited country (as the case was in Rowlands' time more than now) where there is no town, but a very small village, such an assemblage as three or four thousand every Sunday, and for so long a time, must appear to all to have been a very extraordinary work. There must have been there a ministry of no

common character, and attended with no common blessings, otherwise such assembling could not have been so great, and could not have continued for so long a period. It was not like a large town, where a great number might come together without going far; but it was in a secluded part of the country, where most that attended had to travel several miles; not a few, ten; and some, twenty; and others, many more miles. Llangeitho, during Rowlands' time was as it were

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the temple, where the great assembly met, while other places were something like the synagogues. It was here that the tribes came together, nearly all the truly pious, at some time or another, who belonged to the church throughout the twelve counties. They came here from all parts for support and sustenance; and the principal, though not the only agent, employed by heaven for distributing the heavenly food was Daniel Rowlands. No other has ever been so honoured in the Principality as he has been, or has been so much owned by the Almighty. There was something more than human connected with his ministry. However great might have been his eloquence, and however excellent the gifts he possessed, yet these of themselves could never have brought together such vast multitudes, and secured their attendance so constantly and for so long a period. This must evidently be ascribed to a higher power. It was the voice of God accompanying the voice of man, and the Spirit of God co-operating with man's efforts, which rendered, as must be allowed, his ministry so effective and prosperous, so attractive and successful. What clearly drew together such large assemblies for so many years, were the treasures of heaven which were freely given to him to distribute. But he was no more than an instrument, which the Almighty had been graciously pleased to employ. No one was more sensible of

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this than himself. While he assiduously applied himself to his great work, and faithfully exerted his great powers, he had through life an abiding and a very strong impression on his mind, that all human efforts are wholly useless, unless accompanied by the powerful working of the divine Spirit. He looked to God for guidance and teaching when preparing for the pulpit. And when in the pulpit he looked to God for a blessing. His mind was at times much depressed. The withholding of divine light and influence he vividly felt, not only in his public ministrations, but also in private while preparing his sermons. An instance of this shall be

given. The following account has been received from his aged servant already mentioned.

One Saturday evening while Rowlands was walking before his house, he appeared very distressed, and depressed in mind. When he met his pious servant, whom he treated as a brother in the Lord, he addressed him by his Christian name, and said, that he could not preach the following morning, because he had nothing to say to the people. 'Oh, dear Mr Rowlands,' said the servant, 'do not say so; for who else can we get?' He still continued to say the same thing—that he could not preach; and said besides, that the Lord had not given him anything to say to them. In this distressed state of mind he continued, until he retired for the night.

The following morning, when the servant went into his room, he was awake, but in bed; and there was a book on a chair close to his bed-side. The servant told him that it was time to rise, it being then about seven o'clock. After waiting some time, he went in again and found him still in bed. He then reminded him that the time for going to chapel was drawing nigh. But his answer was the same as the preceding evening, that he could not preach, and that someone else must be sent for. But the servant used every reason he could think of to induce him to rise and dress himself; and then he went out, hoping that he had succeeded. It was now drawing towards ten o'clock, when the service at Llangeitho chapel was to begin, and the people were flocking there in great numbers from every direction. After a short interval, the servant entered into his bedroom again, and found him as before in bed, and still saying that he could not preach that morning. However the servant somehow or other prevailed on him at this time to rise, and assisted him to dress, which was not usual: for he seemed to have lost all strength, and almost the use of his limbs. But after he was dressed, he was still unwilling to go to chapel; and would not have gone, had not the servant brought him there very much against his own will.

When they reached the chapel, that part of the

service previous to the sermon was nearly gone through. The prayers, which were portions of the Church Liturgy, had been read by one of the clergy who usually attended, and the singing before sermon was nearly over. The servant was under the necessity of helping him into the pulpit, as he seemed extremely weak and feeble. But the pious old man,

as he related this, could not but make this remark—‘I knew,’ said he with great emphasis, ‘that if we once got him into the pulpit, everything would be well.’ And neither he nor the congregation were disappointed. When he began his sermon, he appeared very feeble, the voice low, the limbs relaxed, and his whole frame trembling. By degrees he revived and gathered strength; and in less than ten minutes he was preaching with unusual vigour and uncommon power and dignity. His words were like flashes of lightning, spreading over the whole assembly, both within and without; for there were nearly as many without as within. The effect on the whole congregation was very remarkable. Hundreds of them could not repress their emotions, but burst forth into loud praises, before he had gone half through his sermon, and continued singing, praising, and rejoicing for hours.

His sermons in general were not long. According to his late son’s account, he preached commonly for three quarters of an hour. He recollected, as he

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told the writer, that his father preached once at Llangeitho chapel for three hours; and that the vast assembly present manifested no symptoms of weariness, but seemed as if they had too little rather than too much. The reason for this unusual length his son did not mention. It was an unusual length at that period of his life, though not in his younger days: for it appears that at the commencement of his ministry he preached sometimes at Llancwnlle for three or four hours.¹ But this was not often; and it is astonishing that he did this at any time, when we consider the vehemence and energy of his delivery; and it is surprising that he could so long interest assemblies so large without wearying them. But we shall now proceed to our next Section.

SECTION 2

The Societies, private and public

Nearly cotemporary with the awakening ministry of Rowlands, were two sorts of societies or meetings which are still continued by his followers. One of them was a society or meeting called private, and the other was public, held four times a year at different

¹ See Appendix E.

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places. They have no doubt been of material service in the advancement of true religion through the country. The first was found useful in uniting and keeping together those who were religious; and the other, in spreading the knowledge of the Gospel by public preaching. Some few remarks shall be now offered on these two sorts of meetings or societies.

I. THE PRIVATE SOCIETY

The reason why it is called private is because none but members are allowed to be present. It was not Rowlands that commenced this meeting, but Howel Harris. Nor was it Harris that first devised and planned it, but one Dr Woodward, a clergyman in London, who lived about the beginning of the last century. But it was Harris that first formed and established such meetings in Wales. It continues to be kept still by the Welsh Methodists, and perhaps with more regularity and strictness than by any other denomination. I am not aware that it is much known in England, though first founded by an English clergyman. But how far it corresponds, as it now exists among the Welsh Methodists, with the original plan, the writer is not able to say, as he has not seen what Dr Woodward has written on the subject. The account which Harris himself has given of the origin of these societies is the following:—

‘The latter part of this year (1736) a man went about to instruct young people to sing psalms. This

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gave me another opportunity to show my love to my dear fellow-sinners. For the people being met to learn and hear him sing, there was no objection made, any more than to assemblies met for cockfighting, dancing, &c. I laid hold of this opportunity. When he had done teaching them to sing, I would give them a word of exhortation; and thereby many were brought under convictions, and many *religious societies* were by these means formed. I began in imitation of the societies which Doctor Woodward gave an account of in a little Treatise he wrote on that head. There were as yet no other societies of the kind in England or Wales; the English Methodists not being as yet heard of, though the Lord was now, as I found afterwards, working on some of them in Oxford and elsewhere.’—*Life of Harris*, p. 23.

Much service was doubtless done by these societies to the cause of religion then reviving in the country. The opinion formed by Wesley of

what is of a similar kind, was very high. He considered the *class-meeting* as almost indispensably necessary for keeping up an interest in the cause of religion, and that the effect of the public ministry could not be well perpetuated without the fostering help of such a society and its disciplinary aid. Circumstanced as his party is, being without what is strictly a stationary ministry.

¹ See Appendix F.

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this view may be deemed correct: and it is probable that such a society would be useful and edifying under a different state of things, and even where there is a regular and stated ministry. That there may be a real union, there must be a communion, a mutual intercourse, an interchange of thoughts and feelings. In public worship and in the sacramental ordinance, the communion held is a joint communion with heaven rather than with one another. The saints of old 'spake often one to another', and the Lord was present with them, and made a record of their spiritual intercourse, Malachi 3:16,17. This mutual interchange of thoughts on divine things, this speaking one to another on spiritual concerns, is, especially, the communion of saints, and the basis of real and actual union; it being the way and means of establishing and increasing mutual love and sympathy, and of creating an interest in each other's spiritual welfare. How is social union formed and perpetuated? How do men of business become united? What are the means by which the men of science and learning unite and advance their common objects? And how do worldly people, the pursuers of gaiety and pleasure, try to attain the ends they have in view? The right answer is, that it is by mutual intercourse, by associating, by coming into a friendly contact with each other. The same principle holds good in religion. That there may be an actual communion

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of saints, it is necessary that there should be some medium of intercourse, a meeting together for mutual converse. What are clerical meetings but a medium of this kind? The meeting of religious people for speaking one to another, is the same thing on an extended scale.

As soon as any number of people, in any place, became concerned for their souls, and were brought to the knowledge of the truth, it was customary for them to have a private society formed; which was found to be a bond of union and a means of mutual benefit. The advantages

were peculiarly felt, where preaching could not often be had, as was the case in many places at the beginning, and continued so in some, for a considerable period. This society was the church; the fold of the sheep. None but those who were deemed 'the faithful', were admitted as its members. It served the purpose of separating the church from the world; the professing believers from those who were manifestly unbelievers. In the earliest ages of Christianity, when true religion was persecuted, and the generality were idolaters, baptism formed the boundary between the saints and the world. But in a Christian country, where baptism has become general, and where the major part of the baptised are evidently irreligious and ungodly, belonging really, though not professedly to the world that lieth in wickedness, some measure of this kind, some

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mode of associating together, seems desirable and useful, and in a manner almost necessary. It serves to separate the religious from the irreligious, the servants of God from the servants of the evil one, the godly from the ungodly; which appears not only desirable, but also conducive to spiritual nurture, and to the preservation of such as are religious from the friendship and contamination of irreligious people.

Various are the offices performed by this society. Elders are appointed to conduct its proceedings; and they are assisted by the preachers. It is generally held after public service on a week-day; and the meeting continues about an hour or a little more. There are none allowed to be present except those that are viewed as members. The matters handled are such as pertain especially to those assembled. What are most discussed are points of spiritual experience and matters of discipline. An account is given by the members in their turn, of the state of their souls, of their trials and difficulties, of their temptations and defects, of the measure of their comforts and depressions, and of the causes of these changes and alterations. Others, especially the elders, express their sentiments on what is said and related; and if a preacher be present, he gives his opinion, his advice, and his warnings. If one member has a complaint against another, or if one of them had fallen into

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some sin or other, this is the court where the matter is to be examined and settled. And if any one wishes to join the society, this is the meeting to which he must come. One of the members must make known his wishes to those assembled. He (or she) is then examined as to his experience

and his motive in making a public profession of religion. If it be generally thought that he is a converted man, he is received into membership; otherwise he is rejected, or his reception is delayed. The power of rejecting is exercised without control by the society; but in case of ejection, an appeal, if I mistake not, may be made to the monthly meeting, and afterwards, if deemed advisable, to the quarterly meeting, or what is called the association.

Though Rowlands did not originate these societies, yet he gave them every encouragement; and they were formed and continued everywhere by his followers. He possessed in a high degree, that wisdom, discretion, judgment, and discrimination, necessary to handle the subjects which peculiarly belong to them. To distinguish between truth and error, honesty and hypocrisy, grace in the heart, and light in the head, is what requires a very discriminating perception and a very deep and extensive acquaintance with matters of spiritual experience. While ignorant ourselves of the subtle windings and deceptions of a corrupt heart, and of the cunning

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devices of the great enemy of our souls, we cannot be fit to discuss matters of this kind; and it is not all who are Christians indeed, who possess that quick perception and solid judgment, which such a work requires. To find out the wound, to know what the disease is, is doubtless the first and most material thing: though knowledge and wisdom are afterwards necessary, in order to prepare and properly to apply what may cure the wound, and heal the disease. An unskilful person may easily render the one worse, and exasperate the other. Rowlands possessed eminent qualifications in these respects. He had discernment to know the state of individuals, and he had wisdom and dexterity to apply what was suitable and necessary.

But there was one of his associates, who excelled him, and most others in the qualifications just mentioned; and he was his particular friend, and had been his fellow-labourer from nearly the commencement of his career. In the work of conducting the private societies, no one could equal Mr Williams, the author of the many hymns that are still in extensive use. His acuteness and discriminating penetration were more than ordinary; he could generally perceive what a person was, by a few words which he might have said. He could see through a man as by a sort of intuition. The 'discerning of spirits' was what he possessed in a high degree. He was

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also endued with great honesty, and showed no respect of persons; so that he never flattered nor spared any, whatever their station or situation might be.

In times of revival, these qualifications in ministers are exceedingly needful. Impressions are often made during such seasons, which are afterwards soon obliterated. When this happens, religion is exposed to contempt, and occasion is given to its enemies to blaspheme. It was possibly to prevent this evil, that 'discerning of spirits' was given to some in the early church. To receive and recognise as members such as believe only for a time, is what greatly injures the cause of true religion. Caution, discrimination, and judgment, at such junctures are of great service; and may, when duly exercised, prevent much dishonour to the cause of truth. The strict examinations at the private societies were no doubt eminently useful in this respect. No revivals can be safely and beneficially carried on, without something of this kind. These societies test and try the work done by public preaching. They form an ordeal, through which, when rightly managed, the unsound and the hypocritical can hardly pass.

But it is not only the prevention of evil that they are calculated to effect, but also the furtherance of much good. Cases may through them come to

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light, which the public ministry may not notice. There may be trials, difficulties, and temptations of a peculiar character, and those too not requiring from their nature, any particular concealment. Different sorts of wounds, bruises, and diseases, cannot be cured by the application of the same remedies. But when the real nature and character of the disease is known, it will then be more easy to know, what sort of remedy will suit. The exact adaptation of the one to the other, is often of great consequence. The diseases of the mind bear a similarity to those of the body. Comfort to the tried, strength to the feeble, courage to the tempted, and confidence to the fearful, have often no doubt been administered, and largely conveyed from above to many, while speaking to one another at these meetings.

These meetings, under some modifications, are now held by several of the clergy in the diocese of St David's, and are found to be very conducive to unity and spiritual improvement. Those who hold them, have generally,

if not in most instances, the best congregations, and the most numerous attendance at the Lord's Supper.

2. The society or meeting called the Association

The exact year, when these meetings were commenced, cannot now be ascertained. Rowland's late son could not specify the time particularly. They

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were begun early, most probably in 1740. We may collect this from his elegy by William Williams. He says that they had been then, that is, in 1790, about fifty years in existence. And this will bring us back to the year that we have just mentioned. Williams calls it 'the great association', signifying thereby the high opinion he entertained of its usefulness.

These meetings are kept up in the present day: and the number of people who resort to them, is much larger than can be well conceived by those who have never been present on such occasions. It has been usual to hold four of them annually, even from the time of their commencement. There was always one of these meetings every year at Llangeitho during Rowlands' life; and the time in general was about the end of summer, about the end of July or the beginning of August. The three other meetings were moveable, fixed at different places. They were at first confined to South Wales; but they have now for a long time been held also in North Wales. There is an association belonging to both divisions of the country, which meets in each four times a year.

It appears from Mr Charles' letter, already given, that this meeting at Llangeitho commenced on Saturday and continued to Wednesday morning. Whether this was the usual time and length of the

meeting, at that period, the writer does not know. But now, and for some years, the meeting continues only for two days, generally commencing on Tuesday or Wednesday evening. Ten or twelve sermons are delivered by the most popular ministers, who are fixed upon and appointed by the members of the church belonging to the place of assembling. There might have been more preaching formerly. Two sermons were usually preached, the one immediately after the other, nothing intervening, except a short prayer or the singing of one or two stanzas of a hymn. After some respite, another service was held: and thus the meeting was carried on until its conclusion.

Preaching was the special object of these meetings; and singular opportunities they were for that purpose, as many thousands of every sort usually assembled—high and low, rich and poor, churchmen and dissenters, young and old, religious and irreligious. And though the vast assemblies were so mixed, decency, order and sobriety for the most part prevailed. The most inconsiderate were awed, and the most vain and thoughtless were sobered, by the solemn nature and pungency of what was delivered. The light of heaven shone so much, that the works of darkness could not well be carried on. Rowlands was appointed to preach usually once, and sometimes twice on these occasions. Charles, as we

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have seen, mentions in his letter that Rowlands preached twice at one of these meetings, even at Llangeitho, where he resided. We may hence conclude that he did the same in other places. It has been told the writer by a clergyman who knew Rowlands well, and heard him many times on such occasions, that he was at such meetings pre-eminently great. 'However excellently' were his words, 'any one had preached before him, Rowlands would say in ten minutes what in matter, grandeur, and apparent efficiency, would surpass everything that had been previously delivered.' There was something very peculiar in his preaching.

There is an anecdote related of him in the life of the Rev. Christmas Evans, lately published, which we shall record. Evans himself was a very remarkable man, a great admirer, if not in some things an imitator (not in a bad sense) of Rowlands. He was an orthodox Baptist, and rose to considerable and well-deserved eminence under great disadvantages. Possessing a vigorous mind and a strong imagination, he sometimes allowed the latter to run rather wild, beyond the boundaries of sound judgment and at times of gravity. His thoughts were often original and remarkably striking, but sometimes bordering on the fanciful and the extravagant, and even on the ludicrous. He was no doubt a good man, and in a sense a great man, but somewhat eccentric. What,

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he relates, as reported in his life, of Rowlands, is in substance the following:—

There was an association held at New Chapel, Pembrokeshire, and, as it is said, near 'the dawn of the Reformation', there had been preaching the night before, but evidently with no unction from above. Rowlands was to preach the following day at ten o'clock. A clergyman preached

before him, but with no apparent effect on the congregation. There was present, as it appears, on the stage where the ministers stood, a preacher whose Christian name was David, and who was remarkable for prayer. After the clergyman had done, Rowlands, before he began, addressed this preacher, and said, 'David, you must go shortly to prayer before I preach, and disperse the thick cloud that is over us. You must not be more than three or four minutes: for the long prayer we have had here at the beginning, failed to disperse it.' David obeyed, and instantly began, and said, 'Lord Jesus, for the sake of thy blood and agony, hear me. Thy servants have been here trying to winnow the preceding evening and also this morning; but they could do nothing. Lord, not a single breath of heavenly wind has yet blown on this meeting. Wind, Lord; wind, gracious Lord; the wind is now, as ever, in thine hand. Amen.' The impression was great and instantaneous on the vast assembly; and Rowlands preached with visibly happy

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effect. This short account gives us an insight into the state of Rowlands' mind, and discloses the secret of his success. He looked for real, actual influence from above; and the manifestations of it alone satisfied his hopes and expectations. This was very thing in his view.

But preaching was not the only object of these meetings. The association was an assembly of ministers, and was a sort of bond of union between them. It became the centre of action and influence, the senate, as it were, of the whole connexion. It gave also an opportunity of forming and strengthening religious friendship between the preachers and also the people. And it was by its means especially at the first that the ministers made it known to members from different parts of the country, the time they should visit their parts; for itinerancy was the general character of their ministry, and continues to be so nearly to the same extent.

It was customary at first to examine the lay-preachers at the association. Two sorts of meetings were held in the interval between the public services—one into which were admitted the elders and other members—and the other which was attended only by the clergy and the preachers. Various matters were handled at these meetings, such as could not be settled at the private societies—complaints against any of the ministers, as to conduct or doctrine—

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and different things connected with different parts of the country as to religion and public means of grace. Points of doctrine, and matters of practice were also discussed, which any one wished to bring forward for the opinion of the brethren. In course of time, particular subjects were previously fixed for discussion; what was to be treated and handled in one association, was determined at a former one. This practice was first introduced, I believe, by the late Mr Charles. And this made the discussions more interesting and profitable, as there was time maturely to consider the subject beforehand. Things wholly religious and pertaining to the connexion were alone canvassed at these meetings. And the chairman from the commencement to the end of his life was Rowlands; and none wished otherwise than that this honour should be conceded to him.

Section 3

THE REVIVALS

By a revival, is understood an extensive awakening at a particular time. Occasional conversions are not considered revivals, but such awakenings as are numerous, and extend nearly at the same time

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over a large portion of the country. It was deemed a revival, when *many* were convinced and brought to the knowledge of the truth. It usually began in some one place, spread through the neighbourhood, and extended at times through several counties. The effects were similar to those which took place at the day of Pentecost. Scores, and even hundreds, were at the same time 'pricked in their hearts', and were led and constrained to cry out, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?' This evident outpouring of the Spirit did not continue long, but was repeated after certain intervals. It is said that *seven* of these remarkable revivals took place in Rowlands' life-time. And the writer knew some years ago, a pious old man at Llanddewibrevi, who had a full recollection of *three* of them; and they occurred each of them after an interval of seven years. Many at these seasons joined the connexion, and the interest of religion was extensively promoted through the country.

This wonderful work began while Rowlands was ministering in the Established Church. And it is commonly said that it commenced at Llangeitho church while Rowlands was reading the Litany, or rather praying in the words of the Litany, and while he was reading these words,

By thine agony and bloody sweat, &c. The words in Welsh are very expressive and affecting; *Trwy dy ddirvaur ing, a'th chwys*

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gwaedlyd, &c. The touching and melting manner in which Rowlands repeated these words, affected the whole assembly so much, that they almost all wept, and wept loudly. The extreme agony, as the Welsh expression is, of the Saviour, while suffering for their sins, was what touched their feelings, melted their hearts, and filled their eyes with tears. They 'looked on him whom they had pierced', and they mourned and wept. Many in the congregation were really convinced and converted, as their posterior conduct proved. But this awakening was not confined to Llangeitho, but extended through the neighbourhood. How far it spread, the writer has not been able to ascertain.

The *second* awakening began at a prayer-meeting at Llangeitho. The extent of this cannot now be ascertained. It spread through the means of prayer meetings, as well as by preaching, but mostly through the public ministry.

The *third* visitation of this kind took place a short time after Rowlands had been ejected from his churches. And it is probable that this is what has been called 'the great revival', and that on account of its extent, having spread through all the counties of South Wales; and on account of the great number who had been awakened through it, and brought from darkness into light, and from the power of Satan unto God. It began at Llangeitho chapel

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while Rowlands was preaching. His late son remembered the commencement of this: and as he told the writer, the effect was very wonderful. The whole chapel seemed as if it was filled with some supernatural element, and the whole assembly was seized with extraordinary emotions; hundreds of them, with tears streaming down their faces, some evidently from excess of sorrow, others from the overflowing of joy; some broken and contrite with penitence, and others rejoicing with the hope of glory. It may have been, that on this occasion a passage of Scripture had, as stated by his son, an uncommon impression on the people. The passage was, 'I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes even so. Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight' (Matthew 11:25,26). The penetrating manner in which this passage was

spoken, produced an effect so simultaneous and so powerful and overwhelming, that it exceeded all description.

As to the other revivals, the writer can give no particular account, except that one of them is said to have been occasioned by the hymns of W. Williams when they were first introduced into the chapel at Llangeitho. And this is not to be wondered at, when we consider how excellent some of them are. They contain thoughts truly evangelical, and often

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grand and sublime, conveyed in a clear and energetic language, and composed in easy and free metres, that are fit for public worship. The grandest and the most elevated ideas are set forth in them in the simplest expressions. And there are in many of them such exalted and glorious views of the Redeemer's dignity, of the greatness of his love, and of the abundance of his grace, that it is hardly possible either to sing or to read them, without feeling the strongest and liveliest emotions. Williams was not remarkable as a preacher; but there has been hitherto in Wales, none to equal him as a composer of hymns. He excelled in this nearly as much as Rowlands excelled as a preacher.

These revivals were deemed to be means most effectual for the general spread of religion. The impressions they produced on the community in general, were very considerable. But there were some things accompanying and following them, which made many disapprove of them: but this was the case mostly with the irreligious and the ungodly. That they should have been pleasing to such, could not have been expected. Some good men too, confined in their views, and too much inured to the ways and manners of the world, felt and expressed strong objections. There were accompanying these revivals, certain things which appeared to some immodest and unbecoming; jumping

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or leaping for joy was often the case. The feelings were allowed to break forth, in loud exclamations of 'gogoniant' (glory), or 'Hallelujah'. And what often followed them was the falling off of some of those who joined in these exultations. Several of such as united in these public acts of joy, afterwards returned to the friendship and follies of the world.

These things were no doubt true; and yet, after all, the revivals tended greatly to promote the extension of true religion. Many on such occasions were really converted, and brought to the knowledge of the truth, and continued through life to manifest its saving and sanctifying power. And

the revivals proved also very beneficial to those who had previously professed religion. It was an outpouring on the irreligious and ungodly for their conversion, and on the already pious for their renewed and invigorated progress in the divine life.¹ That they were

¹ The writer was lately on a visit in Cardiganshire, and he learnt that there is now a revival in a part of that county. It is yet confined to a few places. It commenced in a church not far from Aberystwyth; it spread to another, and to a few of the surrounding chapels belonging to the Methodists. And what was said to the writer by one of the preachers, who had been in those chapels a short time before, was this—that the revival was remarkable in this respect, that several of the oldest and most consistent professors of religion were affected by it, so that they seemed to receive a new life, and were even foremost in loudly praising God in the public service.

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special visitations from the Lord, cannot reasonably be doubted, as the effects on many clearly proved them to have been the gracious workings of the divine Spirit.

While forming an opinion on a matter of this kind, we ought to consider all the circumstances. We ought to remember the condition and the natural temperament of the people, and also the powerful and awakening ministry vouchsafed to them. They were commonly country-people, having strong and warm feelings, unrestrained by any rules of refined life. When their feelings were excited, there was nothing much in their usual habits to regulate and confine them; and when once a vent is given to the feelings, it is difficult to keep them within the limits of what may be deemed by some, grave, modest, and becoming. Many in the present day would consider it very unbecoming, and a breach of good manners, to cry out in a public assembly, as thousands did on the day of Pentecost, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?' The preaching too was very keenly-edged, piercing, vigorous, and yet melting; so that the deepest convictions were produced. There were several respectable people, both as to their education and worldly circumstances, who were sometimes completely overpowered, and joined the people in their loud praises and rapturous rejoicings and exultations. But these extraordinary outbreaks may

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be accounted for in a great measure, on the ground of the previous ignorance of the people as to religion. To those untrained in religious knowledge, the sudden discovery of the awful, and also of the glorious truths of the gospel, becomes quite overwhelming. During a revival some few years ago at Llangeitho and the neighbourhood, many of those

brought up in the Sunday Schools were deeply impressed; and some that never attended them, and scarcely ever resorted to any place of worship. The latter in general were apparently the most affected, most depressed under convictions, and most vehement afterwards in their rejoicings. As to the issue, some of both continued steadfast in the faith, and some few fell away, and returned to their old ways

But as to the defections which follow a revival, this may be said—that they take place under every ministry that is blessed for the conversion of sinners. If defections are more after a revival, the reason is, that there is a larger number at such a time brought under serious impressions. Sympathy is a strong feeling in human nature; and no doubt that many at such stirring times are merely influenced by this feeling: To see others weeping will make us weep, and that often when we are wholly uninfluenced by what occasions their weeping. Imitating, or following others, is also what is congenial to our

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nature, and in some especially, a very strong principle. This is the case in religion as in other things. But following will not last long in religion, except in what is formal; for there are such difficulties in the way of true godliness, that none but the really converted can go through them. When these difficulties and hardships occur, the habit of following will fail; it will grow lame, and proceed no farther. Thus it is, that through these two elements in man's constitution—sympathy and a disposition to follow others, many are led to join religious people, when there is a revival, and when that is extensively approved. But it is not to be forgotten, that there is a spiritual enemy at work, especially at such seasons. The Devil is never so busy as when religion revives and flourishes. It is among the good seed, that is sown in a well-prepared soil, that he sows his tares, and not in waste uncultivated places. To transform himself into an angel of light is not necessary among the children of darkness. It is among the sons of light, that this will be attempted.

These awakenings did not extend to North Wales for some time after their commencement in South Wales. The first account of them known to the writer, is about the year 1791, a short time after the death of Rowlands. It is given by the late Rev. T Charles of Bala, and inserted in his life, published some years ago. And as the character of these awakenings,

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described by Charles, was the same with those in South Wales, some quotations from his Letters shall be added here. The date of the following letter to a friend, is, Bala, Sept. 1791:—

‘You inquire about the state of the churches in Wales. I have nothing but what is favourable to communicate. We had lately a very comfortable association at Pwllheli. Some thousands attended; more than ever were seen before. And here at Bala we have had a very great, powerful and glorious outpouring of the Spirit on the people in general, especially on children and young people. *Scores of the wildest* and most inconsiderate of the young people of both sexes, have been awakened. Their convictions have been very clear and powerful; and in some instances so deep as to bring them to the brink of despair. Their consolations also have been equally strong. If the Lord should be graciously pleased to continue the work, as it has prevailed some weeks past, the Devil’s kingdom will be in ruins in this neighbourhood. Ride on, ride on, thou King of glory, is the fervent cry of my soul day and night. I verily believe that the Lord means to give the kingdom of darkness a dreadful shake; for he takes off its pillars. Those, that were foremost in the service of Satan and rebellion against God, are now the foremost in seeking salvation through the blood of the Lamb. It is an easy work to preach

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the gospel of the kingdom here at this time. Divine truths have their own infinite weight and importance on the minds of the people. Beams of divine light, together with divine irresistible energy, accompany every truth delivered. It is glorious to see how the stoutest hearts are bowed down, and the hardest melted. I would not have been without seeing what I have lately seen; no, not for the world.’ p. 249.

A pious minister from Scotland saw this letter; and he wrote to Charles for further information. Some portions of the answer are the following; the date of the letter is, Bala, 2 May 1792.

‘That it was the work of God I am not left to doubt in the least degree. It carries along with it every *scriptural satisfactory evidence that we can possibly desire*: such as deep conviction of sin, of righteousness, and judgment—great reformation of manners—great love for, and delight in the word of God, in prayer, in spiritual conversation and divine ordinances. These in particular in *young* persons occupy the place and employ the time that was spent in vain diversions and amusements. No harps, but the golden

harps, of which St John speaks, have been played on in this neighbourhood for several months past. The craft is not only in danger, but entirely destroyed and abolished.

'But I am far from expecting that all those who have experienced these impressions are savingly

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wrought upon and really converted. If that were the case, all the country had been converted; for at one time there were but few who had not felt awful impressions from the Lord's hands on their minds, producing foreboding fears respecting their future existence in another world. It was a most solemn time indeed. I never saw a livelier picture of the state of men's minds at the day of judgment, according to their respective conditions. That awful dispensation lasted but for a few weeks. But the ministration of the word is still lively and powerful: and fresh awakenings take place, though not so numerous as at first.

'As to the further spread of the work, the prospect in our country is in general very pleasing. In Carnarvonshire and Anglesea, the congregations are very numerous. Thousands flock together at the sound of the gospel-trumpet, and hear with great earnestness and attention. Awakenings also are frequent.'—p. 251, 252.

There is another letter from Charles to the same minister, which gives additional information. From this, dated January 1794, nearly two years after the preceding, the following extract shall be given:—

'As to the present state of religion in this country, through distinguishing and unspeakable mercy, I have nothing to complain of; unless I complain of myself, for which there is abundant cause. In the

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course of last year the almighty power of the Gospel has been most gloriously manifested in different parts of our country. I think it never in general presented a more promising aspect. There was last year a *very great and general awakening* through a very large and populous district in Carnarvonshire. In the space of *three months some hundreds* were brought under concern for their souls. I travelled last month through that part of the country, and the prospect still continues delightful indeed. Ah, my dear Sir! it is a melodious sound, yes, in the ears of Deity himself, to hear poor perishing sinners by *scores* crying out—'What must we do to be saved?' But this was the sound heard in almost every congregation, as I lately passed through that part of the country.'—p. 255.

These extracts clearly show what those singular visitations were and the account is given by one who witnessed them and witnessed their progress and *effects*. They were of the same kind and character with those which had previously taken place under the ministry of Rowlands and his fellow-labourers. Possibly the awakenings in South Wales had been at some seasons more extensive than those in the North, and accompanied probably with greater power.

The testimony of the intelligent, wise, as well as pious Charles, respecting these revivals, is clear and

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unhesitating. He formed his judgment according to Scripture, the only sure test of truth. He adopted a Scriptural rule—'By their fruits ye shall know them.' He justly thought and rightly believed, that the work was good, because it produced good fruits, not only for a time, but in most instances, permanently. There are various ways by which the land is cultivated, and various modes by which the seed is sown; but the way to judge of the quality both of the land and of the seed, is to notice the produce, the fruit that is brought into perfection. Whatever may be said of these extraordinary revivals by those who are open enemies to true religion, or by its disguised friends; that they were the operations of him who worketh all things according to his own will, is what their effects most clearly testify. Sinners were converted; they repented and believed, departed from iniquity and followed the paths of righteousness. The thoughtless became thoughtful; the vain and frivolous became serious; the proud became humble; the vicious and the wicked forsook their evil ways; the prayerless and the profane and the ungodly were no longer such, but devout, given to prayer, and attentive to all the duties and ordinances of religion. Can such holy and blessed effects be ascribed to the working of any but of him who is the fountain of holiness, and from whom cometh every good and perfect gift?

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A great variety may exist as to the way and manner by which the gospel may be rendered effectual to the conversion and salvation of sinners. But if the *great object* is attained, that is, the restoration of fallen man to the favour and service of God, there is no reason to find fault or quarrel with the way in which this is brought about, provided it be not contrary to the divine word. Conversions may be many at one time, or may be single and insulated. They may be instantaneous, or they may be gradual, at

least in their development. Were all to regard *principally* this all-important object—the conversion of sinners, bearing with one another as to other matters, it would be of great advantage to the interest of true religion. The conversion of sinners is not only the chief thing, but comparatively the only thing needful. This or that way, this or that mode, this or that system, this or that instrumentality—all these things are of importance only as they are blessed for turning men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. We may make too much of, and depend too much upon, the very means which God himself has expressly appointed: and we do so, when they are regarded in any measure of themselves sufficient, independent of that blessing, without which they were never designed to be sufficient. The ‘increase’ was alone from God even under the ministry of his inspired apostles.

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But it must be observed, that in these revivals there were only the ordinary means employed—public preaching, prayer, and singing; and these in their usual mode and manner. There was no praying for individual conversions, nor many praying together, as is the case with some kinds of Methodists in this country. Nor was there any particular system adopted for carrying on the work, as in America some years ago; which had the appearance of making it too much the work of human agency. According to some of the accounts given, there seemed to be there a sort of a forcing system, as if the work could be propelled and urged on by a systematic plan of acting—a kind of *opus operatum*. But there was nothing of this nature, as far as the writer knows, adopted in the Welsh revivals. They were effects produced under the ordinary means, especially under the preaching of the gospel. However they might have appeared, whether while praying or singing, the grand means was the ministry—the proclamation of divine truths. And there was no officious interference with those apparently impressed. They were generally left to make their own case known, and to offer themselves as members. There is a human agency and a divine operation. The declaration of the truth and prayer belong to man; but the conversion of souls belongs wholly to God. And when he works, there will naturally be a desire of

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union with his people, as was the case on the day of Pentecost. The application came from the converted; it was attended to, and they were received into the company of believers. The forcing system, as to individuals,

is calculated only to increase the number of unsound professors. Let there be everything in the public ministry to persuade and to constrain; but in individual cases there ought to be a difference.

PART IV

ROWLANDS' QUALIFICATIONS AS A PREACHER

THE writer feels himself unequal to the task of handling this subject as it deserves. It is probable that none of those who frequently heard Rowlands felt themselves capable of fully expressing their ideas of him as the herald of heaven, the proclaimer of divine truths. Many arose in his day, both clergymen and lay-preachers, who possessed superior gifts as God's messengers: but the testimony of all who knew him has been, that none of them were to be compared with Rowlands. He far excelled all others as a preacher. This has been the unanimous consent of all—intelligent and illiterate, preachers and hearers, without a dissentient voice. Some men of superior talents have arisen since his death; but the opinion of all who knew him is still the same: that they have never heard such a preacher as Rowlands.

His son Nathaniel was in some things very like him, but he did not preach like his father. Williams

has indeed in his Elegy conceded to him 'greater learning, and equal gifts'; but it was an overstatement; and this was expressed to the writer by an eminent and a judicious clergyman who knew them both intimately. The Rev. David Jones of Langan was a very engaging preacher, and excelled in what is attractive and winning; but he was not to be compared with Rowlands. There was some resemblance between the Rev. D Griffiths of Nevem, and him; but there was no equality.¹ It is said that the most like him was Robert Roberts, a remarkable preacher from North Wales; but he did not come up to the excellences of Rowlands. Comparisons have been made between him and Whitefield. Perhaps of all the late reformers, there were no two more alike, and both unrivalled in their way. It was the testimony of those who knew them both, that in some things the priority belonged to Whitefield; and in other things to Rowlands. In the power of arresting attentions of convincing and alarming sinners, they both excelled, and excelled perhaps any of whom there is any record in history; but of the two, Whitefield was probably in this respect the

greatest. In the work of arming the Christian for his spiritual warfare, of guiding, directing, and strengthening him in his difficult and arduous course,

¹ See Appendix G.

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they were both eminent, but the superiority, probably in this respect, belonged to Rowlands: his ministry being more stationary than that of Whitefield, a work of this kind was more necessary.

We have already seen what Joshua Thomas, the baptist, in the history of his own denomination, has said of Rowlands in the year 1737, that he was then preaching 'in a very extraordinary way'. He says besides, that some Dissenters said of him then, that 'they never heard his like in the Church of England except Mr Griffith Jones'. He was but beginning to preach at this time, being young in age and young in the ministry, and still younger in acquaintance with true religion.

In Dr Gillies' *Life* of Whitefield there is given an extract from his papers written in the year 1743, and a part of it is as follows:—

'Last year,' says Whitefield, 'I visited several places (that is, in South Wales) but now I went to more, and in every place found that not *one half* had been told me. The power of God at the sacrament under the ministry of Mr Rowlands was enough to make a person's heart to burn within him. At seven of the morning have I seen perhaps ten thousand from different parts, in the midst of sermon, crying, *Gogoniant—Bendigedig*,¹ ready to leap for joy.' Chap. ix.

¹ *Glory—Praised*. Neither of these English words are half so expressive as the Welsh. *Hosannah—Hallelujah* would be more suitable to express them.

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Such was his celebrity at this early time that at seven o'clock in the morning so large a number assembled to hear him.

The testimony of a venerable clergyman now living, and nearly ninety years of age, the Rev. Thomas Jones of Creaton, gives us a very high idea of Rowlands' character as a preacher. He was intimately acquainted with him and heard him often, and what he has frequently said, is, that 'he has never heard but one Rowlands', signifying thereby, that none of the many he has heard in his day were nearly so eminent as he was. When asked by the writer, whether he recollected the first time that he heard Rowlands, his answer was, 'Yes, very well. He was the first preacher that attracted

my notice; and it was at a place not far from *Ystradmeirig*; it was at *Monachlog*. I was then about twelve years of age (about the year 1764). I used to go to church, stay there during the service, and return home, without taking the least notice of what was said there. It was the remarkable *manner* of Rowlands that drew my attention. I have now a perfect recollection of his manner, though none of his sermon.

The writer has had lately an opportunity of conversing with this aged servant of God, and proposed to him this question—'What were the *peculiar* excellences of Rowlands as a preacher?' The concise answer given was the following—'DEPTH and

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FERVOUR.' He mentioned that his knowledge of divine things was remarkably profound. 'He was at times,' he said, 'like those birds, which dive under water for their prey, and having caught it, suddenly emerge again. I often thought of such birds while hearing him: for he sometimes went, as it were, out of sight; so that we could not exactly see or know what he was aiming at: and then he brought suddenly to view what he had been diving for, and set it forth in a few concise and expressive words, to the great astonishment and delight of his hearers. But as to his fervour,' he added, 'it far exceeded everything that I have ever observed in any other.'

What Charles says of him in his Diary, given in his *Life*, is the following:—

'On January 20, 1773, I went to hear Mr Rowlands preach at New Chapel. His text was Hebrews 4:15. A day much to be remembered by me as long as I live. Ever since that happy day I have lived in a new heaven and a new earth. The change which a blind man, who receives his sight, experiences, does not exceed the change which at that time I experienced in my own mind

'The earth receded and disappeared;
Heaven opened to my eyes:
My ears with sounds seraphic rang:'

'It was then that I was first convinced of the sin of unbelief, or of entertaining narrow, contracted,

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and hard thoughts of the Almighty. I had such a view of Christ as our High Priest, of his love, compassion, power, and all-sufficiency, as filled my soul with astonishment, with joy unspeakable and full of glory. *My*

mind was overwhelmed and overpowered with amazement. The truths exhibited to my view appeared for a time too wonderfully gracious to be believed. The glorious scenes then opened to my eyes, will abundantly satisfy my soul millions of years hence, in the contemplation of them I had some idea of gospel truths before floating in my head, but they never powerfully; and with divine energy, penetrated my heart till now.' p. 6.

Such was the impression made on Charles's mind, that he noticed this day every year in his diary. For the year 1780, we meet with these remarks:—

'Jan. 20. Every return of this blessed day is refreshing to my soul. The remembrance of the mercies which I received, can never be forgotten.' p. 42. And in a letter, in the same year to that excellent woman whom he afterwards married, he speaks thus of Rowlands:—'I think with you, that not only *Bala-back* (dear Bala,) but Wales itself is a highly-favoured country. That *aged herald* of the king of glory, D Rowlands, *is, and will be, an eternal honour* to it. I seldom can speak, of him in *moderate* terms. I love him dearly, and honour him as my father in Christ; and not without reason; for to him

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under God I am indebted for whatever light I have into, and experience I have of, the glorious salvation through Christ. I hope to see him once more, if the will of God be so, before he takes his flight. I shall never forget a sermon I heard him preach, from Hebrews 4:15, January 20, 1773. I remember the blessed time with infinite delight.' p. 52.

There are references to Rowlands in the Welsh periodical, the 'Treasury', already mentioned. In the *third* number of the *second* volume of that publication, there is a short account of William Llwyd, Esquire, of Henllan, in the parish of Caio, Carmarthenshire, who was a lay-preacher of considerable repute. The writer most probably was Mr Charles. From this account the following selection shall be made:—

'The eminent ministry of Daniel Rowlands of Llangeitho was remarkably edifying and instructive to him. He went there monthly (distance between twenty and thirty miles) when circumstances did not prevent, during his life, and with the same delight and edification at the end as at the beginning. Though the ministrations of other servants of the Lord were in those days beneficial to him, it was yet under the ministry of Mr Daniel Rowlands that he chiefly attained his progressive improvement in the faith. There was loftiness, and grandeur, and every other excellency in

the endowments of Mr Daniel Rowlands,'—profound thoughts, strength and sweetness of

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voice, clearness and lively energy in proclaiming the deep things of God to the astonishment and effectual arousing of his hearers.' p. 103.

In the same Number of this publication, there is given the 'second conversation between Scrutator and Senex'. And the sentiments expressed by the latter, on the subject in hand, are these:—

Llangeitho in those days was the resort of all the religious people. Most of the preachers met there every month. This circumstance, in connexion with the illustrious ministry of Mr Daniel Rowlands, made the religious people flock there from all parts. Thence the fructifying streams flowed in those days over the whole country. The repeating of the sermons, on their return, by those who had been there, made them known through the land, and induced others to go to hear for themselves. The gifts of Mr Rowlands, and the power that accompanied his ministry, were *such, that no hearers in the present age can form any adequate idea of them*. There is no one who has not heard him, that *can imagine anything equal to what they were*. Oh! how wonderful the authority and light that accompanied his ministry, and how wonderful the effects on the hearers! After having heard one or two sermons from him, the vast multitudes betook themselves to their various long journeys, cheerful in mind, and thankful to the Lord for his unspeakable gifts.' p. 137.

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Wholly consonant with the foregoing testimonies were the views entertained of Rowlands by the late Rev. David Griffiths, of Nevem, Pembrokeshire. He was himself possessed of very superior gifts, seldom equalled. He was but young, in the last days of Rowlands: but Rowlands, on account of his preaching talents and usefulness, was very fond of him, and regarded him with the affection of a father, and treated him with the same kind and loving familiarity as one does a dutiful and a beloved son.

While in Griffiths' company, the writer on one occasion received from him an account of a conversation that took place between him and the late Rev. Henry Foster, a pious and a well-known clergyman in London, during the latter part of the last century. Griffiths, while in London, called on Foster: and it was a short time after the death of Rowlands. Foster had heard some extraordinary things of Rowlands, and he asked

Griffiths whether they were true. What he had heard was respecting his celebrity as a preacher. Griffiths assured him, that he could have hardly heard anything beyond the truth respecting him, as he was the greatest and the most wonderful preacher that he had ever heard. This astonished Foster: and he wished much to know in what his great excellences consisted. 'Well,' said Griffiths, 'you have here some good men, who preach remarkably well, but they *excel* only in *some* things,

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such as Romaine, while speaking of faith and its glorious object; but as to Rowlands, he was eminent on every subject, and handled whatever he took in hand in a way far superior to that of anybody else.' More still was the astonishment of Foster; and he requested Griffiths to give him some idea, if he could, of the manner in which he preached. Griffiths confessed his inability. But, said he, I will mention one thing he said in a sermon which I heard him preach a short time before his death. His subject was repentance; and while speaking of it as the effect of the mighty power of God, he spoke thus:—'God pierces the very heart of the sinner; and, inasmuch as sin has tainted his very marrow, in order to get at it, he *breaks* his bones; hence the Psalmist prays, "Make me to hear joy and gladness, that the *bones* which thou hast *broken* may rejoice"' With this short specimen Foster was pleased and much delighted. But what made his preaching so remarkably striking and powerful, was the peculiar force and energy with which he proclaimed the great truths of heaven.

Having thus given the views of several good, and some of them eminent men, respecting the superior character of Rowlands' ministrations, the writer will now attempt to analyse, as it were, the peculiar excellences which belonged to him. Known to him were the great powers of address which his son

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Nathaniel possessed, and the superior gifts of Griffiths of Nevein, two that resembled Rowlands in several things, especially the first. Many things have also been reported to him by several clergy and laity, who had the privilege of enjoying for some time the ministry of Rowlands. His published sermons are also well known to the writer. These are his advantages: and he will proceed to state the following things:—

FIRST.—Rowlands possessed *faculties of mind* and also of *body*, which peculiarly fitted him for his great work.

1. His powers of *perception* were very *quick* and clear.

His gait was remarkably quick, and so was every action and movement of his body, which in his case was symptomatic of the character of his mind. His perception was quick, clear, and penetrating. His mind apprehended the great truths of God in such a way, that they appeared to him with much of the distinctness, clearness, and reality in which the objects of sense present themselves to the natural eye. This clear and strong perception enabled him to handle divine things with so much perspicuity and plainness, that the understanding of the weakest could comprehend them. For this purpose he frequently employed suitable and appropriate comparisons, such as were commonly familiar to all. He

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was remarkable in this respect, and approached perhaps nearer than most to the example given us by our Saviour himself. He occasionally used similes which might have been thought low or even vulgar, and which might be supposed by some capable of causing levity or of exciting contempt: but the *manner* in which he used them, prevented any effect of this kind. There was a singular and peculiar dignity in the way he said everything: and the suitability of his similes to explain or elucidate what he had in hand, and especially the earnestness and gravity which he manifested, dissipated every vain and light thought. None of his hearers ever smiled, except when enlivened and cheered by that inward joy which they felt and strongly felt at times; and this was not unfrequently the case.

An instance may be given of the homeliness of some of his comparisons, whether borrowed or original, the writer is not able to say. He was speaking of humility, and representing it as necessary in order to obtain enlarged communion with heaven. 'The Christian,' he said, 'is like the hen; the lower she crouches the higher she flies.' Another may be added. Whether it was his own or not, the writer does not know. The subject in hand was God's providence, as being often mysterious, and not *appearing* to us calculated to answer any beneficial purpose, but the reverse. 'It is like,' he said, 'the stick that is put

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aslant in the water; which appears crooked to us, while it still continues quite straight.'¹ What is in itself mean loses its own character, when appropriately introduced and uttered by an earnest and impassioned

speaker. Nothing comes amiss from a man burning with zeal for the good of his fellow-creatures, and especially when he possesses a dignified

¹ A few instances of a similar kind shall be added here from his Sermons.

'Reason indeed is a good gift, and of a royal origin; but like Mephibosheth, it is lame on its feet. That person would never have come to David, had he not been carried in some way or another. Thus it is with reason; it desires to die the death of the righteous; it sees in some measure what is good, and commends it, but it does not follow it, except it be drawn. "No man can come to me, except the Father which bath sent me, draw him."—Sermon on Matthew 2:8,9.

'Some wheels in a watch move contrary ways, and some quicker, and some slower; and yet all answer the purpose designed, to make the watch go and keep time. So everything is made to turn and move, through God's secret hand, for good to his people.'—*Idem*.

'Those who are accustomed to play ball know that according to the force with which they strike it on the ground will be its rebounding upwards. So it is with men; those commonly who are struck down with the greatest force, and the lowest, as to the view of their own misery, rise the highest in glory. They to whom much is forgiven, will love much: but they who see and feel but little of their own sin and misery, will not see nor feel but little of God's mercy and goodness. He who slowly goes down into a right view of his own wretchedness, will rise but slowly to a clear view of God's glory; and he who will not thus go down at all, will never rise.'—Sermon on Jude 20.

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mode of address, as was the case eminently with Rowlands.

The energy of his mind and the quickness of his perception did not allow him to be idle wherever he was. Everything around him attracted his attention; and he turned everything to some good purpose, to answer the great end he always had in view, the preaching of the gospel.¹ Like the Psalmist, he frequently meditated on the visible works of God, minutely noticed them, and borrowed whatever he could accommodate and apply to the illustration of divine truths. Whatever occurred to him, while walking, journeying, or conversing, as suitable, he employed it for the purpose of explaining and enforcing some doctrine or duty. Things of this nature, known to all, answered two important ends—they drew attention, and they assisted the understanding.

2. He possessed a remarkably strong *memory*.

This is a faculty that is found very useful in the ministerial work, and even necessary to those who preach as Rowlands did. His acquaintance with Scripture was minute and extensive. According to his own son's testimony, he knew almost the whole Bible, as the expression is, by heart; so that hardly a passage could be mentioned to him, that he could not tell the chapter and verse where it was to be

¹ See Appendix H.

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found. The Scriptures were no doubt the principal materials of his meditations. His library contained but few books; and those few were the works of some of our illustrious Reformers, and of such as agreed with them in the fundamentals of religion. Bishops Andrews and Gurnal were his favourite authors. This is what his son told the writer.

Such was his memory that he never wrote, from the time that his son knew his practice, but a very small portion of his sermons. What he did at the commencement of his ministry, the writer has not been able to learn. His practice, as described by his son, was to put down a few notes on a small bit of paper, not larger than the palm of the hand; and these were so full of marks and contractions, that none could well understand them but himself. This slip of paper he took with him to the pulpit; but he made very little use of it. He was not in the habit of reading the texts he referred to in his sermon; but he repeated them off hand, as almost every part of Scripture was quite familiar to him. This knowledge was doubtless very serviceable to him in preaching, and helped to attain that ease and readiness so necessary to secure attention.

3. He was naturally possessed of very *strong feelings*.

There may be a penetrating mind and a clear perception, while the affections may not possess any

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peculiar vigour. Such a connection does not unfrequently exist. But this was not the case with Rowlands. His capacity of feeling was equal to his capacity of comprehending. As the mind was clear and quick in its perceptions, so his affections were capable of the liveliest and strongest emotions. As he understood things clearly, so he felt them deeply. The views he had were substantially realised in his mind; and what he realised produced on his feelings an effect proportioned to its weight and importance. This reciprocal adaptation, this remarkable concomitancy, is not what is often witnessed. It was this singular agreement between the different faculties of his mind, that accounts in some degree for his eminence as a public speaker.

It was the saying of one who knew him well, that 'he possessed as much animal spirits as were sufficient for half-a-dozen men'. These elements of liveliness, being naturally in his constitution, were not a little useful, as they served more fully to show and express the feelings. They acted

as wings to them. What belonged to the body was thus auxiliary to what belonged to the soul, affording assistance towards its fuller display.

Many possess feelings which they are not well able to make known; or if they give vent to them, they have no power to control and moderate them. Rowlands could do both these things. He could

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most easily express his feelings—and could even keep them under his own command; at least he could so far command them, that they never interrupted his discourse, nor confused his ideas. When the tears streamed down his cheeks, which was often the case, his speech was not impeded, his voice never faltered; but his words flowed much more freely, and his voice grew clearer, louder, and wonderfully penetrating. This was remarkable in him, and also in his son Nathaniel, whom the writer has often heard. In this he was very peculiar. The emotions of the feelings, however strong, never caused any confusion in the mind; but on the contrary, they seemed to have sharpened it, quickened its pace, and increased its vigour.

4. He possessed a *penetrating and melting voice*.

His voice was not what is properly called loud, but very clear; not high-sounding, but penetrating. It was keen, but not shrill; sharp, but not harsh. He never bawled, though he preached at times with amazing energy. To shout without sense or meaning was what he never did. His elocution was peculiarly pleasing and persuasive, such as none could otherwise than approve and be delighted with.

But his voice was not only clear, and piercing, but it was, especially at times, uncommonly tender and melting. When his feelings were much excited, his voice became extremely pathetic and affecting. The

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Giver of every good gift, that belongs either to body or soul, doubtless employs this gift—the voice, like other qualities, as means to communicate to sinners his saving blessings. He adapts his instruments to answer his high and gracious purposes. How many have been first attracted by a winning voice to listen to the great truths of the gospel! There is no gift of God, with which he endows either the souls or bodies of men, which may not be useful in his work; even wit and humour, which some are too apt to condemn, have been often made instrumental in the conversion of souls, and in administering comfort to the saints. It may be observed,

SECONDLY, That the faculties of his soul were *purified* in a high degree, and *fitted by divine grace* for the great work of the ministry.

It is not the character and strength of mental faculties that the grace of God changes, but their disposition, temper, and employment. We may have a strong mind, a clear and discerning perception, and lively feelings, while yet the objects on which these may be engaged, may not comport with holiness, and therefore not be coincident with the nature and perfect will of the Highest. To restore man to the image of God is necessary, in order to fit him for his work and service. It is indeed true that this restoration tends to strengthen his mental powers:

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but their peculiar characters as to strength and vigour, depends mainly on the creative work of God. To change their moral qualities is what is done by divine grace. Rowlands was naturally endowed with a strong and penetrating mind; and this was the basis of that loftiness and dignity which characterised his thoughts in setting forth the great things of God. And the ground of that confidence and authority, with which he delivered divine truths, was the realising view, which God vouchsafed to him, of what he proclaimed. They were evidently made so clear to his mind, that he possessed the firmest confidence in their truth. What he had seen, heard, and felt, were the things he delivered with such amazing power and authority.

Such were at times his realising perceptions of divine things, that nature was hardly able to bear up under them. As he was on one occasion going through the service at Llanwnlle, his views had a wonderful effect on him. While praying before sermon, his mind was led to the contemplation of our Saviour's great sufferings; and he cried out in the most affecting manner, 'Oh, empty veins! Oh, pale countenance!' And then he fainted away in the pulpit. After having recovered, he preached with astonishing power and energy.

It may be said further, that his affections were highly spiritualised, and largely endowed with divine

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graces. The love of God was evidently poured into his soul in no common measure. He felt a deep concern for the welfare of immortal souls. His sympathy was great, and also his compassion towards impenitent *sinner*s. He had a large share of this heavenly temper; and it was this in a great measure that rendered his preaching so winning, persuasive, and affecting. This compassion filled his soul, and appeared in the tears he frequently shed while exhorting *sinner*s to repent and turn to God.

A circumstance has been mentioned which proved what a large measure he possessed of this heavenly disposition. He was riding, at an early period of his career, in company with the late Thomas Gray,¹ a very pious man and a preacher of considerable repute. They were ascending from the vale of Aeron, on a road that passes by the church of Llanccwnlle. When they came to the highest point of the ascent, Rowlands turned back the head of his horse, and looked for some time on the extensive valley that opened to his view, and spoke of the irreligious state of its inhabitants. While thus conversing, he was greatly moved and affected, and not only shed tears, but the tears streamed down his cheeks. His compassion seemed to have completely overpowered him. But it must be particularly noticed

¹ See Appendix I.

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THIRDLY, That God *owned* and *blessed* his ministry in a *remarkable* degree. However great the qualifications with which God had endowed him, all would have been of no avail, had not God given the increase. It was the divine power that accompanied his ministry that rendered his gifts so eminent and so acceptable, so illustrious, and so effectual. When the Spirit works powerfully, the most common talents will appear great; how much more so when they are more than ordinary. But after all, the blessing of God is the chief thing, and that which is alone really important. When granted, it will stir up and enhance ministerial gifts; and these gifts, when exercised diligently and energetically, are means in God's hand to convey his blessing. The indispensable, necessity of a divine influence to render the word effectual, was what Rowlands felt deeply and habitually. Hence prayer was deemed by him a most important duty; and it was what he himself practised much, not only in private, and on public occasions, but while abroad, walking or riding.

What follows, took place when he was going at one time to officiate at *Llanbadarnodin*. This church stands on an elevated spot, on the side of the vale opposite to his own residence. It is not far off, for his house could be easily seen from the churchyard. The people assembled as usual before the time in

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great numbers. As they stood around the church, they saw Rowlands leaving his house on foot, and crossing the stream that runs through the middle of the vale. And when he approached the rising ground on their

side, they lost sight of him, owing to the position of the ground and some trees that were in the way. They expected presently to see him again; but they did not. And as the time for beginning the service was now past, some of them went in quest of him. As they proceeded by the side of some trees or brushwood, and looking attentively around them, they saw him on his knees, among the trees a little way out of the path. They were at first doubtful what to do. As however the time was past, and many were waiting, they determined to go to him. As they drew nigh, he perceived them, arose from his knees and went with them, saying, that he was sorry to detain the people, and adding, 'Dear brethren, I have had a sweet opportunity in that place'. And this was afterwards made apparent; for he delivered his message with amazing power and effect.

To these *three* particulars respecting Rowlands' excellences as a preacher, might be added the style of his discourses. But this shall be hereafter noticed. And here shall be transcribed some extracts from the description given of him by the late Rev. Christmas Evans, who has been already

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mentioned. The following are translated from his life, lately published in Welsh. To translate the works of Evans is difficult; as the flights of his thoughts often carry him beyond the reach of any grammatical rules. His figurative ideas are also foreign to the English language, though some of them are remarkably striking, as will be seen from the following extracts. Speaking of Rowlands, he says:

'His doctrine was Calvinistic; his mode of speaking was axiomatic, in sentences, neat, accurate and pregnant with sense. His mode was his own, inimitable. I seem to see him now, dressed in his black gown, opening the little door that led from the outside to the pulpit, and making his appearance to the multitude. His whole countenance was clothed with a majesty that betokened sense, eloquence, and authority. His forehead was high; his eyes were keen and piercing; his nose was Roman or aquiline; his lips comely, and his chin projecting and rising a little, and his voice was sonorous¹ and high-toned.

'Some preacher read and prayed, usually, according to what I have heard, before he rose up to preach. He then very frequently gave out to sing the following stanza from Prys' Psalms:

¹ This is not quite correct. There was not a great body of *sound* in his voice, but clearness and shrillness tempered with melody.

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Un arch a erchais ar Dduw Nay,
 A hyny a archav eto,—
 Cael dod i Dy yr Arglwydd glân,
 A bod a'm trigvan yno.¹

One stanza only was given out at a time in those days, remarkable for powerful influences. After singing the stanza with great fervour, and yet without much doubling it before the sermon, lest the heavenly ointment should overflow the vessels too soon; then Rowlands stood up, and read his text clearly to the hearing of all. The whole assembly were all ears, as if they were going to hear some evangelic oracle, and the eyes of all were fixed on him. He had some stirring thought, as a small ointment-box, before opening the great one of the sermon, which he opened, and the odours of its ointments spread over the whole congregation, and prepared them to expect the opening of the other boxes, one after the other, throughout the sermon (which he did) until the whole house was filled with the heavenly odour, as at Bethany formerly, with the odour of Mary's alabaster-box of ointment. After thus

- 1 Psalm 27:4. Former part. The Welsh version is nearly this:—
 I've made to God this one request,
 To this I still adhere,
 That I may in his house be blest,
 And have my dwelling there.

There is a peculiarity in the very words, which no translation can convey.

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rousing the congregation by some striking thought, he divided his text, and began with the first division, bending downwards his head a little, as if to glance at the notes he had on a slip of paper. After glancing thus at the paper, more as a matter of form than anything else, he began to speak with an audible and free utterance.

'Rowlands (soon) grew warm; his voice rising and becoming authoritative, and resounding through the whole chapel, so that you could see nothing but smiles, and the tears flowing down the faces of the people, accompanied with exclamations throughout the assembly; and all this arose from the flame of his voice; and this flame arose from the flame that was in the thoughts which he delivered. When this first flame of heavenly devotion, under the first head, had become tranquil, he began the second time to melt and render supple the minds of the people, until he brought them

again into the same heavenly temper; and this he did, as some say, six or seven times in the same sermon. The face and voice of Rowlands underwent changes and emotions, until there was a sort of vehement flame transforming and driving away the earthly, dead and careless spirit; and the people drew nigh as it were, in the cloud, to Christ, and to Moses and Elias, and eternity and its realities rushed into their minds. I cannot think, but with respect, of Rowlands and his associates.' p. 116.

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Not less striking, but more elegant, is another description, which shall be added here, and which may be justly applied to Rowlands. It is the picture which Southey has drawn of Whitefield, in his life of Wesley. The Doctor is not disposed to say anything favourable of Whitefield: he indeed takes every opportunity to depreciate his character; and that evidently, because of his dislike to some of his sentiments. The following, however, is the correct, elegant, and striking way in which he speaks of him as a preacher; and the words most suitably express what Rowlands was in that respect:—

'An ignorant man,' says Southey, 'described his eloquence oddly, but strikingly, when he said, that Whitefield preached like a lion. So strange a comparison conveyed no inapt a notion of the force and vehemence, and passion of that oratory, that awed the hearers, and made them tremble like Felix before the apostle. Believing himself to be the messenger of God, commissioned to call sinners to repentance, he spoke as one conscious of his high credentials, with authority and power; yet in all his discourses there was fervent and melting charity, an earnestness of persuasion, an outpouring of redundant love, partaking of the virtue of that faith from which it sowed, inasmuch as it seemed to enter the heart which it pierced, and to heal it as with balm.' Vol. i. p. 150.

PART V

ROWLANDS' TRIALS—SELF-DENIAL AND ORTHODOXY— SHORT ACCOUNT OF HIS DEATH

THE design of every biographer should be, not to exalt the man, but the grace of God displayed in him. And such an account may be useful to show to us what sort of instruments and qualifications God is pleased to employ in carrying on his great work. This kind of knowledge may be the means of leading ministers now to seek and cultivate those gifts which others possessed, and which God has employed in the great work of awakening sinners, and of bringing them to the true knowledge of himself, and to the enjoyment of his favour. That ministers may be extensively useful in the ministry, those qualifications must be sought, which the Almighty usually bestows, when he is about to pour down largely his blessings for the conversion of sinners. He can indeed make any means or instruments he pleases,

effectual for this purpose. But his usual mode is, as history abundantly testifies, to qualify and endow his servants, and thus adapt them for their work; and then to bless their ministrations. He first makes suitable instruments, and then employs them in his work, owning and blessing what is done by them.

As there are several things respecting Rowlands which have not been hitherto mentioned, some of them shall be stated under the following heads. We shall notice,

1. *His trials*

It seems that trials are necessary for man in his present state. We may in general form an opinion of the usefulness and success of ministers, by the measure of their trials. There have been hardly any, if indeed any, eminent and prosperous in the ministry, who have not met with trying: dispensations in some way or another. Who so successful as Paul! and who ever had to go through so many hardships and trials! not only from without, through persecutions, and through troubles from brethren; but within also, on account of the spiritual contest. Such was also the case

with the renowned Luther, the instrument peculiarly employed by God for the overthrow of the kingdom of darkness, which had assumed the name of the kingdom of light. The same has been the case with all reformers and revivalists, ancient and modern, in every age of the

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world. Their hardships, afflictions, and trials, were somewhat commensurate with their success.

There is in every man some peculiar infirmity, and some propensity to some sins more than others. And his best gifts are in general those things which render him most liable to fall, and expose him mostly to the temptations and devices of his great enemy. The liveliness of Rowlands' feelings was calculated no doubt to render him hasty. Though the writer has never heard of any instances of this kind, yet this is what has been said of him. But in whatever way this infirmity may have manifested itself, it was not very prominent, as it did not intercept the progress of his great usefulness. It might be easily supposed, that there was in him a disposition to aim at pre-eminence, and to exercise authority over others, because of the amazing influence he possessed. But according to the express testimony of one well acquainted with him, the late Mr Griffiths of Neven, this was in no degree the case with him. The priority that he always declined, according to the words of this eminent man, was most willingly conceded to him at all times, and even forced frequently upon him. The ground of this humility was not human policy, though that dictates clearly such a course; but the deep and abiding sense he had of what man is, together with the realising and habitual conviction, that whatever excellences any

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one may possess, must be ascribed wholly to the free and sovereign grace of God.¹ He had afflicting and even bitter trials in his own family; but as these pertain not to his public ministry, it is not proper nor right to mention them here.

No small annoyance had on various occasions been given him, by attempts made to introduce false doctrines. His elegist, Williams, mentions Arminianism and Baxterianism, as systems which Rowlands had to

¹ Let us hear him himself on this point. What he preached, he laboured through God's grace to attain and practise. The following extract is from his sermon on Jude 20:

'Sacrilege is a great sin; how much greater sin is it to steal from God! One says, I have gold and silver in abundance. Will you be proud on that account? Remember, that they are your Master's rent. Another says, I have a fulness of treasures, not only rich mines, houses, lands, cattle,

and other possessions, but also eminent gifts, sense, understanding, knowledge, &c. Remember thou also, that they are all God's gifts and talents. Thou art but an overseer, and must shortly give an account of them all. Paul was not a robber of this kind; oh no. Though he says, "I have laboured more than they all"; yet he would not have us to suppose that he robbed God of his glory; for he adds, "Yet not I"—I myself have not done all these great things—"but the grace of God which was with me". Worse than a highwayman is he who glories in the flesh, in gifts, and performances. "God forbid," says Paul, "that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Grace makes those who possess it very lowly and self-denying. It is sin that makes any proud and high-minded. But they who are partakers of the Holy Spirit, are inwardly adorned with humility; they are like Christ, meek and lowly in heart.

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oppose. The writer has no particular information on these points. An unhappy difference took place rather early between him and Howel Harris, and that respecting the person of the Saviour. Harris was in some things rather fanciful, and hasty in his temper. Rowlands kept invariably and unflinchingly to the doctrines of the old Reformers, without giving heed to any new fancies. It is not easy to know exactly what this opinion of Harris was: but it was not probably of that importance which he attached to it; for when a man gets a new notion and believes it to be true, he generally makes far too much of it. Harris, as it appears, would have all see as he did, and receive implicitly what he taught on this subject.

This unhappy discord proved very injurious, for a considerable time, to the progress of the reformation, which the labours of Harris very materially promoted at first. The reviving power which accompanied the work, was for a season evidently withheld: and some years passed without any general awakening among the people. When discord and strife enter, the Spirit of God departs. This difference, and its evils, were however at last terminated, and mainly through the wisdom and influence of Rowlands: and Harris lost much of that honour and repute which he once enjoyed. What is said to have been the principal means of sweeping away the

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evils of that discord, was the revival called the great revival, which commenced at Llangeitho, under the preaching of Rowlands, to which we have already alluded. Rowlands expressly referred to this unhappy difference, some years after, at an association, when the affair of Peter Williams was discussed. Williams wished to introduce some peculiar views respecting the Sonship of Christ; and when he had spoken and manifested a considerable degree of resoluteness, if not of pertinacity, Rowlands arose, and in a kind and feeling manner said to him, 'Beware, dear Williams, beware; take heed to thyself. Remember poor Howel Harris. He wished to be the head, but God made him the tail.'¹ This,

having been no doubt spoken with that emphasis and dignity peculiar to himself, must have produced very great effect.

The system called *Antinomianism* occasioned great disquietude and disturbance for a short time. It was embraced and propagated by a preacher of popular talents, who for a brief period possessed great influence over a considerable portion of the people: and he lived in the neighbourhood of Llangeitho. But Rowlands set himself wholly and firmly against this system, and opposed it with the greatest resoluteness and vigour, showing publicly in

¹ See Appendix K.

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his sermons, its inconsistency with the gospel of Christ: and he succeeded wonderfully, by God's blessing, in eradicating it. When this preacher failed in his purpose, and found that he could not succeed in propagating his error, or even in sustaining it, he left the connexion, and gave up religion at the same time. This proves the complete overthrow of his system in the estimation of the people: for had he any followers, at least any considerable number, he would have in all probability formed a party of his own. Having given up religion, he joined the world again, and continued in this state till the end of his days; but he never became a professed unbeliever, though an immoral man. His convictions were in favour of the truth, and continued so through life; while his conduct was inconsistent with it. He never would scoff at true religion, nor suffer anybody else to do so without reproofing them. He has been known to declare after his failing away, that if any wished to know the truth, they would find it at Llangeitho. He presented a singular instance of one wholly worldly in his spirit, and immoral in his conduct, and yet retaining respect, and even reverence for true spiritual religion.

There is a peculiar seduction in the Antinomian system to some, and even to some pious minds. Under the pretence and appearance of exalting the Saviour, and the perfection of his work, a strong

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appeal is made to their feelings; and they are sometimes seduced and led astray. But the deception succeeds through a partial and incorrect view of what redemption really is. The very reverse of what is professed to be done by this system, is actually done. Instead of exalting the Saviour and his work, the system degrades both; instead of doing justice to divine

grace, it awfully misrepresents it. By confining grace in a great measure to the removal of guilt, and the promise of life, it takes away its moral influence, the effect which it produces on the heart, affections, and conduct. Salvation is not merely the forgiveness of sins, and restoration to God's favour; but also the renewal of man's nature, and a conformity to the divine image.

Offences, it seems, must come in this sinful world; as long as sin exists, they are evidently unavoidable. But God makes them often beneficial to his servants. Wherever God's cause prospers, there will be always attempts made to impede it, either in a direct or an indirect way. Satan will transform himself, if there be no other mode, into an angel of light. Rowlands used to say, 'Wherever God builds a church, Satan is sure to build a chapel by its side'. But he often does what is worse than this—he creeps, under some plausible disguise, into the church itself, and creates discords, and foment all kinds of evils.

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It has been said, that religious revivals create errors and generate heresies. That they have often been attended and followed by such evils, is readily admitted. Such was the case at the first promulgation of Christianity, and at the Reformation. That revivals generate errors is not true. They indeed occasion them, affording an opportunity for them to arise, which is not afforded when religion is dead and lifeless. It is in a field well cultivated and sown that the enemy casts his tares, and where the tares grow up together with the wheat; and not in an uncultivated and unsown wilderness. While the world is without religion, it contains neither godly people, nor those who pretend to be godly. When the truth is not known, there will be no attempts made to pervert it; for how can that be perverted which does not exist? Every effort to debase the truth, is a proof that it is known, and by some professed and embraced. It is the circulation of the true coin that occasions, and not causes, the attempt to pass what is base. But we shall go on to notice—

2. *His self-denial*

The whole course of his life was an evidence of this. Had he regarded present advantages, he never would have commenced, and never would have pursued the path he chose. To preach the gospel in those days was not the road to preferment or worldly honour: but it led to dishonour and shame,

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to persecution and poverty. The writer does not know what means of support he had for many years after he began his heavenly and arduous work. He possessed but little property himself; and it is probable that he received some assistance from those who wished well to the cause he laboured to promote. Few, especially of the first converts, were in circumstances to contribute much, they being mostly poor. He lived evidently somewhat in the same way as Paul did, and the other apostles. But he never lived 'sumptuously', but in the plainest way that can well be conceived. His residence through life was but a small cottage, possessing no great accommodations. His usual mode of living was quite primitive, and as it may be said, apostolic. Having 'food and raiment', he seemed to have been 'therewith content'. And more is not really needed by any of us. It is pride and ambition that prompt and feed any higher desires.

While travelling abroad to preach, especially at the beginning, he was obliged to put up with very poor fare, and very indifferent lodging; and that often in cold and wet weather. Could any willingly undergo and submit to such hardships, were there no motives felt except those with which the world is acquainted? What the apostles felt, he doubtless felt; his spirit, his work, and the effects of it, were like theirs; and there is no reason to deny him, and

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those who acted with him, the influence of those high motives which ruled and guided the first messengers of the gospel. These hardships were referred to by Rowlands on one occasion, in the hearing of the late Mr Griffiths of Nevem. It was at an association at Llangeitho. The circumstances, as related by Griffiths to the writer, were the following:—

There was a clergyman in the vicinity of Llangeitho, who could speak well on religious matters, but his life was not consistent with the gospel. This clergyman, in the interval between the services, pushed himself into a conversation with Rowlands, and mentioned some place where he thought there was an open door for preaching the gospel. He said much of this place, evidently showing that he wished to be deputed to go there. They were both on their legs, and Griffiths was standing by them. Rowlands evidently disliked the talk of this man, and at last addressed him thus:—

'I remember, sir, the time, when we had but a poor reception and a poor fare; while travelling over hills and mountains, on our little nags,

without anything to eat but the bread and cheese we earned in our pockets, and without anything to drink but water from the springs; and if we had a little buttermilk in some cottages, we thought that a great thing; but now, sir, they have their tea and their

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brandy; and if I mistake not, thou hast had too much of this brandy. Away! devil, and begone!' and as he said this, he waved his hand in such a way as to show, that he wished him to depart from him. This may appear to some severe, and deficient in good manners. But it was a treatment suitable to the character of the individual he had to deal with. To reprove sharply is sometimes necessary. The devil has formed many of our good manners, and he often employs them to cover and shelter from due reproof the hypocrisy, and wickedness of his own works.

There is nothing so agreeable to the nature of man, as to live independently. It is no easy matter to live only, as it were, on providence, dependent on the liberality of others. But Rowlands submitted to this, for the sake of the Gospel, though naturally a man of the most independent mind. He did this, when he might have done otherwise. A living was offered to him in Pembrokeshire, by the munificent Thornton. He was at first disposed to accept it, and signified his intention of doing so, to that benevolent, man. But when his people around Llangeitho heard of it, they were greatly distressed. They flocked in great numbers to his house; and their entreaties, their importunities, and their weepings, were such as can hardly be conceived. They were like children on the eve of being left by a

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beloved father, the staff of their support, and the supplier of their comfort. And they succeeded, having prevailed on him to give up his intention of removing from them. His son was at this time the medium of communication between him and Thornton. He wrote to Thornton and detailed the circumstances which induced his father to change his mind and decline his kind offer. Thornton's answer, as stated by his son to the writer, was substantially this:—

'I had a high opinion of your father before, but I have now a still higher opinion of him, though he declines to accept of my offer. The reasons he assigns are highly creditable to him. It is not an usual thing with me to allow other people to go to my pocket; but tell your father, that he is fully welcome to do so, whenever he pleases.'

His self-denial appeared in things still higher. The tendency of great success is to make a man think highly of himself. He is too apt to appropriate to himself what belongs only to God. Rowlands was preserved from falling into this snare. The view and feeling he had, with respect to his own unworthiness, and his entire inability as to the doing of any good without strength and blessing from above, kept him humble, dependent, and self-denying. There was a deep and an habitual impression on his mind of the absolute necessity of a

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divine agency in convincing men of sin, and turning them from darkness into light. While travelling with a friend, he saw a person at a distance, 'There is a man,' he said, 'whom I converted.' His friend replied, 'Very probably, sir, but you have converted many besides him.' 'Nay, friend,' he added, 'you do not understand me; it was I, and not God, that converted him; for he is gone back, poor man, to the world: but it would have been otherwise, had God converted him.' It was his firm belief that conversion was God's work, which preserved him from applying to himself the honour which belongs only to God.

The conversation that is said to have taken place between him and Robert Roberts, the first time that that eminent preacher came to Llangeitho, clearly shows that this was the habitual state of his mind. Rowlands had heard that this young man possessed preaching talents of a very high order, and he wished to hear him. But he would not have Roberts know that he was among his hearers, thinking that this might in some degree embarrass him. He therefore went secretly to chapel, so that he could not be perceived, at least by the preacher. He was greatly pleased by the eloquence of the young man: and after the service was over, he followed him into the house where the preachers usually resorted, and saluted him in a very kind manner. After conversing

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a little while together, Rowlands asked him, 'Will you receive a word of counsel and advice from an old grey-headed man?' Roberts answered him in a very humble way, and said that he should be very thankful for such a favour. 'Well,' said Rowlands, 'you know, that shopkeepers have several small holes in their counters, in which they put all they receive; whatever it be, whether gold, silver, or brass; they deposit all in these holes. Now, dear brother, do exactly like them. Whatever you receive, put it all in the treasury. Do not pocket any, no, not a farthing.' His

meaning evidently was, that all the honour should be given to God, for every success obtained, for every sinner that may be converted, without taking any portion of it to ourselves. Rowlands knew well, and that no doubt by what he had himself experienced, how disposed man is to appropriate something to himself in this respect. To work diligently, and to work successfully, and yet to attribute all the glory to him who is the only effectual agent, is what is above the reach of man without the teaching and influence of divine grace.

Agreeable to the foregoing, is the following passage which occurs in one of his sermons:—

‘The greater our eminence, the greater should be our humility. Humility is an angelic grace. No creature is higher than the archangel, and yet no one is so humble. The highest is the humblest. No

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one is so low and vile as the devil, and yet no one is so proud. Humility is the beauty and honour of angels; but pride is the deformity and disgrace of devils. If heaven will not retain a proud angel, it will not receive a proud soul. In every high station, let us beware and pray, that our thoughts should not be as high as our stations. Thieves and robbers are those, who will not acknowledge the Lord Jesus as the author and bestower of every good. “What hast thou,” saith the Apostle, “that thou didst not receive?” If thou hast received, give the glory to its right owner. “Not unto us, O Lord,” says the Psalmist, “not unto us, but unto thy name give glory.” Every faithful servant will put all the money, he receives for his master’s goods, to his master’s account.’—We shall now notice

3. *His unshaken adherence to orthodoxy*

He was not correct in his views as to some things at the beginning of his career. But it was not long before the light of truth shone clearly and brightly on his mind, and continued to shine till the end of his course. His views on all fundamental points were the same with those of our illustrious Reformers in the sixteenth century, as they are set forth in the articles of our church. He embraced the truths delineated in them according to their plain and ‘grammatical sense’. He adhered strictly to these doctrines throughout his long life, having proclaimed

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them with great energy, clearness, and power, without any change or any difference. The old truths of our renowned Reformers, by the means of which they overturned, in many places, the strong truths, by which

the early Church destroyed the massive edifices of idolatry—yea, the old truths, which Christ himself and his apostles preached—these were the truths which Rowlands proclaimed to his fellow-countrymen, through life, without any addition or diminution; and through which, by God's blessing, hundreds, yea, and thousands, were brought from a state of sin and condemnation, into a state of godliness and life.

There had been several attempts to corrupt and pervert these truths; but he held them unmixed with any dross, and defended them firmly and boldly at all times. He was graciously preserved on the one hand from legalising the gospel; and on the other, from turning the grace of God into licentiousness. He proclaimed an entirely free salvation—free in its origin, free in its progress, free in its consummation, granted without any merit on the part of man, but wholly through the merits of the great Redeemer. He showed also its holy effects on all who became possessed of it, through sin being crucified, and the soul freed from its ruling power, the mind being enlightened as to the things of God, the

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will being turned and changed, the affections being weaned from the world and its things, and fixed on things above, and the whole man, inwardly and outwardly being really made a "new creature". It was justification wholly free, only through faith in the glorious Mediator, together with real sanctification through the Spirit, that he taught diligently, proclaimed vigorously, explained clearly, testified constantly, and defended powerfully, throughout the whole course of his ministry, without deviating either to the right hand or to the left.

This is the view given of him by the author of his elegy. He says of him, that he kept closely to the truth throughout his long life, and never embraced any error that had been broached, but invariably opposed everything of this kind. The following is a literal translation of the passage referred to:

Though many men went astray,
 Some on the right hand and some on the left;
 Yet the divine purpose preserved
 Honest Rowlands in his place:
 And whosoever deviated
 From the pure paths of divine grace,
 He exposed their errors,
 Until all saw them hateful.

A few words only shall be said on our last subject, and that is,

4. *His death.*

His wish and prayer was, that he should not lie

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long on a sick-bed. He and Whitefield were in this respect alike: for it is said, that this was also the wish of that remarkable man. Rowlands' desire was to depart when his work was finished. To go almost instantly from his labours to his rest, was his wish: and his wish was granted. He had been for some time in a declining state of health, but not so as to be kept from doing his duty. Though he did not for nearly a twelvemonth go abroad much, yet he preached at home almost as regularly as usual. He was taken rather unwell on the Wednesday previous to his death; but he was not considered to be seriously ill, until Friday; and on the following morning, near the time that he was expected to preach at Llangeitho chapel, as was customary before the sacramental Sunday, his happy soul left its earthly tabernacle, and entered into the rest of the blessed, having finished its work and its labours here below. The news reached the chapel when the people had assembled, and some of them were expecting to see and hear him, as his illness was but partially known. Such effect the intelligence had on them, that they all dispersed in the most mournful manner without having had any service. This event occurred 16 October 1790, when he was seventy-seven years of age, after having laboured in his Lord's vineyard with great activity and diligence and with unusual success, for fifty-three years, more

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than half a century.¹ And his name deserves to be in everlasting remembrance.

Great and very deep was the grief, lamentation, and sorrow, on this occasion; though the event was no more than what must have been expected. The bereavement, though anticipated on account of his age, was very deeply felt. There were many, not only in the neighbourhood of Llangeitho, but throughout Wales, yea, throughout all Wales, who viewed and felt his death as a great loss. There has been hardly an individual perhaps in any age, whatever his station may have been, whose death has occasioned a lamentation so heartfelt, and at the same time so extensive. The thousands who used to hear him, felt that their principal guide and leader was gone. They had lost one who had been to them for many years a kind, dear, strengthening, and comforting father. He had been to

a great number the instrument of their conversion, their spiritual father, their father in Christ, and to more still, an uncomparable teacher and a wonderful channel of divine blessings. But what moderates and alleviates all grief and sorrow of this kind, is the thought and the truth, that the fountain of all goodness remains the same, endures still, and will ever continue full, and will be ever sufficient for the supply of all wants. He who

¹ See Appendix L.

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endowed Whitefield and Rowlands, has the same power still. May the Author of all good favour this country and all countries with men of similar gifts, and of a similar spirit, and bless them with similar and even more abundant success.

PART VI

ROWLANDS' PUBLISHED SERMONS

TO preach, and not write, was the peculiar province of Rowlands, as he was evidently more qualified for that work. All that he published were *eleven* sermons; the *twelfth*, now printed with the rest, was found in manuscript after his death, and does not appear to have been fully prepared for the press. Several of them went through repeated editions in his lifetime. The first that he preached was that, the title of which is, *The sincere milk of the word*, and this was composed near the commencement of his ministry. He refers more in this to the irreligious state of the country than in any of the others. A few quotations on this subject shall be added.

‘There are some [he says] in our land, who will confess God, while the goddess Diana will permit them, but no longer. There are those who prefer being at home among their cattle, serving the Devil, to being in the church, serving God. Others choose rather, that Satan should tear and deform their souls

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at home, while at their own fire-side, than that a shower of rain should in any measure soil their clothes while going to the house of God.’ And further on he speaks thus: ‘There are many, alas! who feed on dragon’s milk, and who take pains to learn the language of Egypt, and not the language of Canaan. They hear, but it is to no purpose. They are at church in the morning, but in the public house in the afternoon, or among their cattle, or by the sides of the hedges, talking vanity and folly. Oh what ungodly practices are these!’ Another feature of the age, too common still, he thus describes: ‘There are many people in our country, who think it too soon to begin with religion until they approach their end. As Christ was sent for to heal the ruler’s daughter, when she was at the point to die; so there are many, who desire not the prayers nor the company of ministers, until they receive the summons of death. They then wish to die in the Lord, though they lived to the devil. They now cry, ‘Oh! oh! for repentance’; though they despised and rejected the offers of it before; They seek not the ark, until they see the deluge coming; they care not

for repentance until the devils are around their beds, waiting for their souls.'

There was another sermon which Rowlands composed, and intended to publish, and of which he had a better opinion, than of his other sermons. His

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son Nathaniel also entertained the same view, according to what he stated to the writer. But this sermon was somehow lost, and never could be found again. The text was 1 Corinthians 15:32. 'If after the manner of men', &c. Its particular object was to show the character of the Christian's spiritual warfare, especially with regard to the temptations and assaults of the Evil Spirit. It is rather remarkable that the same thing happened to this sermon, as to one on the same subject by the late celebrated Robert Hall. His biographer says that it was lost in a way that seemed very singular and unaccountable. Mr Hall had prepared it for the press; but it was suddenly lost, and could not be recovered.¹ In both instances no search was successful. These are facts, well attested, let the reader view them as he pleases.

An English translation of eight of Rowlands'

¹ The present writer had conversation with Mr Hall respecting this sermon, which tends to confirm what is said by his biographer. When asked and pressed by the writer to publish a course of lectures which he had been preaching against Socinianism, his answer was substantially this:—That the subjects had been largely and most ably treated by other writers, and that of late, especially by Archbishop Magee, and Dr Pye Smith; and that therefore no new publication was wanted. But he added, that there was *one* subject, which had not been *much* handled by previous writers, and on which he intended to publish; and that was, 'The personality and influences of the Evil Spirit'. He was then, he said, preparing the materials for the press.

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sermons was published in 1774. They were then probably all that he had written. The editor was one Thomas Davies, Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire. He acknowledges his obligations to the Rector of Estcourt, as one who had the *greatest* share in the translation. It appears by this that more than one was concerned in it. No great praise is due to this translation, as it is not so literal as it might have been, and that without doing any violence to the English idiom. There was an attempt made to dress Rowlands in fine clothes, made in fashion. It would have been better to allow him to appear in his own homely, but neat and dignified dress. The brief, sententious, and striking mode of speaking is changed into what is long and wordy. The *style* is altered; by which the sermons lose much

of their pithy and striking character, and much of that power and energy, which in their original they possess. Their contents, and the texts on which they are founded, are the following. The last *four* have not been translated:

1. Good news to the Gentiles. Matthew 2:8,9.
2. Christ all in all. Hebrews 1:9.
3. Reproof and brotherly love. Matthew 18:15.
4. Free grace. Luke 23:42, 43.
5. The happiness of the godly. Romans 8:28.
6. The Redeemer's voice. Revelation 3:20.
7. The humble better than the proud. Jude 9.

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8. The sincere milk of the word. 1 Peter 2:2.
9. The lost sheep. Luke 15:5.
10. Comfort to the afflicted. John 5:6.
11. God answering prayer. Psalm 65:5.
12. Success at the throne of grace. Jude 20.

An opinion is often formed of the eminence of a preachers by the sermons written by him: but an opinion so formed is found often incorrect. It is indeed possible to know in this way what doctrines he delivered, and what mode he generally adopted in handling them. But no idea can thus be obtained, in many instances, of the powers of eloquence he may have possessed. Some will now hardly believe the wonderful things said of Whitefield, because they do not observe anything very remarkable in his printed sermons. In the same manner some may judge of Rowlands. But a judgment so founded is not correct. Manner and action, vigour, spirit, and energy, ease and readiness of utterance, strength and melody of voice, and especially the accompanying divine power—these are the things which constitute the highest eminence of a preacher; and they are not such things as can be transferred to what is written.

The merits of his sermons are not commensurate with his merits as a preacher: and yet their merits are not common. The sermons are peculiar; there is nothing like them to be found in the Welsh

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language. Conciseness, vigour, and rapidity are their characteristics. Some examples shall be given. In the sermon on Romans 8:28, after quoting Psalm 25:10, 'All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth', he proceeds thus:—

‘Mark what he says. Make thou no exception where he makes none. “All!” remember, he excepts nothing. Be thou therefore confirmed in thy faith, and give glory to God, and resolve with Job, “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him”. The Almighty may appear to be thine enemy for a time, that he may be thine everlasting friend. Oh! believer, after all thy sorrows, and troubles, and afflictions, thou must say at last with David, “It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes”. “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding, out.” His glory is seen, when he works by means: it is more seen, when he works without means; it is seen above all, when he works contrary to means. It is a great work to open the eyes of the blind: a greater still, by applying clay and spittle, things more likely, as some think, to take away than to restore sight. He sent dreadful darkness on Abraham, when he was preparing to give him the best light. He fearfully shook Jacob, when he was going to bless him. He smote Paul with blindness, when

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he was intending to open the eyes of his mind. He refused the request of the woman of Canaan for a time, but afterwards she obtained her desire. See therefore that *all* the paths of the Lord are mercy, and that everything works together for good to them who love him.’

From the same sermon is the passage which follows:—

‘He does not say, that “all things” *will*, but *do* “work together for good”. The work is on the wheel, and every movement of the wheel is for your benefit; not only the angels who encamp around you, or the saints, who continually pray for you, but your enemies also; yea, the dragon and his angels are engaged in this matter. It is true, this is not their design; no, they think that they are carrying on their own work of destroying you, as it is said of the Assyrian in Isaiah 10:6, whom the Lord sent to punish an hypocritical nation, and to purify the wheat by taking away the chaff; “howbeit he meaneth not so”: yet it was God’s purpose that he was carrying on, though he did not intend to do so. All the events that take place in the world carry on the same work—the glory of the Father and the salvation of his children. Every illness and infirmity that may seize you, every loss you may meet with, every reproach you may endure, every shame that may colour your faces, every sorrow in your hearts, every

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agony and pain in your bowels, every aching in your bones, are for your *good*: every change in your condition, your fair weather and your rough weather, your sunny and your cloudy weather, your ebbing and your flowing, your liberty and your imprisonment, all turn out for your *good*. O Christians! see what a harvest of blessings ripens from this text. The Lord is at work; all creation is at work; men and angels, friends and foes, all are busy, working together for good. O dear, dear Jesus! what hast thou seen in us, that thou shouldest order things so wondrously for us, and make *all things—all things* to work together for our good.'

The sermons are remarkably *Scriptural*, both in their materials and in their style. The Scripture is continually referred to, on every point. Much use is made of Scriptural *examples*; and the *figurative* language of Scripture is continually adopted. A striking specimen of this kind is contained in the following extract, taken from the sermon last quoted.

'Every affliction is of great benefit to the godly. The prodigal never thought of returning to his father's house, until he was humbled by adversity. Hagar while in Abraham's house was ready to domineer over her mistress: but in the wilderness she was meek and humble. Jonah slept while in the ship; but he watched and prayed in the whale's

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belly. Manasseh lived at Jerusalem like a libertine; and practised enormous evils; but when in bonds in Babylon, his heart was turned to seek the Lord his God. Bodily sores and diseases have been the means of constraining many to seek after the Lord Jesus, while those in health have made no effort to know him. The earth that is not broken and mouldered by the plough, will bring forth nothing but the fruits of the curse—thorns and briars: but when cultivated and manured, it brings forth "herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed". The vines will grow wild in time, if they are not trimmed and pruned. So our hearts would grow wild and produce hateful and poisonous fruit, were it not that our dear Saviour, the true vinedresser, is frequently pruning them by crosses and sanctified afflictions. "It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth" (Lamentations 3:27). Our Lord says, "Every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit" (John 15:2). No use can be made of gold or silver without fire; nor can fine houses be built except the stones be trimmed and smoothed by hammers. So it is by no means probable that we can be vessels of honour in our Father's house, until we be first melted

in the furnace of affliction, and refined as silver is refined; nor can we be living stones in the walls of Jerusalem, except the Lord's hand breaks off our lumps of pride and lust by his own hammers. But the ungodly are

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for the most part rotting in their prosperity, and like stagnant waters, they breed many ugly and loathsome animals. "Because they have no changes," says the Psalmist, "therefore they fear not God" (Psalm 55:19). It is said by Jeremiah, "Moab hath been at ease from his youth; and he hath settled on his lees, and hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel, neither hath he gone into captivity; therefore his taste remaineth in him, and his scent is not changed" (Jeremiah 48:11). O Lord our God! rather than that we should have on us the scent of the body of death, and live without the fear of thy blessed name, and be knit to our sins; nay, nay, heavenly Father! rather than this, empty us from vessel to vessel, let thy blessed hand be upon us to waken us; purify us by fire, beat us with rods, remembering at the same time, gracious Lord, the promise thou hast given to the Son of David, "I will chasten him with the rod of men, but my mercy shall not depart away from him" (2 Samuel 7:14,15).

Many extracts exhibiting this kind of style might be adduced. This is indeed the general character of the sermons. Scripture examples are continually referred to, and the figurative language of Scripture is constantly used. Hardly anything can exceed the *simplicity* also of the language. Hannah More, as it is mentioned in her Memoir, complained in her day, that she could find no sermons simple enough.

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as to style, for the poor. Among other sermons she mentions those of Rowlands as being not sufficiently simple. This was the fault of the translation. Had their original simplicity been retained, there would have been no room for this complaint. To omit specifying any further the excellences which belong to them, some few quotations shall be made on interesting topics.

I. *On giving the heart to God.*

'The door of the heart must be opened; not only the doors of our lips. These also must be opened, for our Saviour has said, "When ye pray, say"—not meditate, but "say". We must yet do more than confess with the mouth, and that is, "believe with the heart". There must be not only the mouth but the *heart* also. "My son, give me thy heart"; not thy outward

posture, not thy eyes darting to the sky, nor thy knees kissing the ground, nor thy hands beating thy breast, but “thy *heart*”. The heart is a pearl: give it to thy God. He prefers this to mountains of diamonds. All thy sacrifices without this are but sacrileges. If thy heart is upright and pure, “thou art all white as snow in Salmon”. It is the Lord that made it pure—give him what he has himself formed. It was he that created it pure; Keep thy alms, though they be sweet odours to the Lord; thy prayers, though they be as incense before him; thy “thousands of rams, and thy myriads. of

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rivers of oil”. It is true, that a crown of glory awaits your alms and every other good work, if done through faith: yet what are all these, without godliness in the heart. The temple must sanctify the gold, and the altar the gift. As Daniel said, “Let thy gifts be to thyself, and give thy rewards to another”; so Jehovah says, “except thy heart be with thy gift”.—Sermon on Revelation 3:20.

2. *On the power of God's word.*

‘Oh! how barren and unfruitful is man's soul, before the word descends like dew upon it! Oh! what fruits will proceed from a few drops! Is the heart malicious? No bended knee can obtain its pardon; it is easier to calm the sea when tossed by winds. Is it covetous? No misery will melt it to compassion; not a penny can be drawn from it. Is it lascivious? It is as easy to fill the sea with gold as to satisfy it. But see—“My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew; as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass” (Deuteronomy 32:2). Then suddenly the flint turns into flesh, the rough sea is calmed. Gilboa is covered with grass, where there was not a blade before. See the great change! Zaecheus is merciful—Paul as meek as the lamb—Ahab clad in sackcloth—Felix trembling like the aspen leaf—Peter leaving his nets, and catching thousand of souls at one draught. See the world brought

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into the faith, not by the wise men of Egypt, but by the sweepings of Judea.’—Idem.

3. *On the value of God's word.*

‘The word is a land, flowing with milk and honey; and we should spare no pains nor labour in order to gain it. God has given it eminent names, that he might draw our affections more towards it. It is called a *lamp* to guide our feet, and a light to our paths. It is a *guide* to conduct us; a

medicine to heal us; a *bridle* to restrain and hold us in; a *sword* to defend us; *water* to wash us; a *fire* to make us warm; *salt* to season and purify us; *milk* to nourish us; *wine* to cheer us; a *treasure* to enrich us; and a *key* to unlock for us the gate of heaven. Thus the word has every name given to it, that we may seek it instead of everything else. Therefore the word should not be of small repute among us; as we know not what great blessings it may convey to us. It is the word of salvation; and it saves many a soul from perishing. As Elisha said of Jordan to Naaman, "Wash and be clean"; so we can say of the word to every hearer, "Receive it, and be saved". It is called the word of life, because it quickens the spirit. It is called the word of the covenant, because it is the golden chain that binds God and man together.'—Sermon on 1 Peter 2:2.

4. *The sympathy of the Redeemer.*

'Christ took our nature upon him, that he

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might sympathise with us. Almost every creature is tender towards its own kind. The bear will not be deprived of her whelps, without resistance. She will tear the spoiler to pieces, if she can. But how great must be the jealousy of our Lord Jesus for his people he will not lose any of them. He has taken them as members to himself. Oh! how much will a man do for one of his members, before he suffers it to be cut off. Think not, O man, that thou wouldest do more for thy members than the Son of God. To think so would be blasphemy; for the pre-eminence in all things belongs to him. Yea, he is acquainted with all thy temptations, because he was in all things tempted as thou art. Art thou tempted to deny God? So was he. Art thou tempted to kill thyself? So was he. Art thou tempted by the vanities of the world? So was he. Art thou tempted to idolatry? So was he. He was tempted from the manger to the cross. He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. The head in heaven is sympathising with the feet that are pressed on earth, saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou *me*?"—Sermon on Hebrews 1:9.

5. *The Redeemer's appeal to sinners.*

'This is the Redeemer's voice to the sinner: "Thou art *naked*; open to me, and I will clothe thee with my own garments: Thou art *blind*; open to me, I have an eye-salve, that will make those see

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who are born blind: Thou art *poor*; open to me, and I will enrich thee with the unsearchable treasures of my grace: Thou art *wretched*; open to

me, and then if my love, my blood, my consolations, my kingdom, myself, can make thee happy, happy shalt thou be." But if the sinner still refuses, what will the Son of God do, but put on human infirmity and weep. See and behold the wonderful compassion of our dear Redeemer! If he should be asked, as Mary was, "Why weepest thou?" He would say, "Not for my own sake, but because sinners choose rather to perish than to open to me, and will rather forsake me than forsake their sins. When I come to them, they will not know me; when I knock, they will not open; when I promise, they will not believe. As my compassions will not touch their hearts, there is no remedy for them."—Sermon on Revelation 3:20.

6. *True dignity*

'How mean, vile, and insignificant is man, though clothed in scarlet, purple and gold, yea, though his head should wear a crown, if he be not the servant of Jesus Christ. What is he but an evil spirit in a fine dress, a devil in Samuel's mantle, or the devil himself dressed in gold! Oh! unspeakably better are the servants of Christ in rags. And what are they? Good spirits in a mean attire, or angels unclothed.'—Sermon on Jude 9.

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7. *Sin and holiness*

'There is opposition between sin and holiness in everything. This enmity reaches beyond men; it reaches angels too. It is within, between man and himself. It is without, between men and men, between men and angels, and between God and both. Holiness and sin are implacable; they can never be reconciled. Holiness cannot endure sin, nor can sin endure holiness. The saint cannot endure the sinner; nor the sinner the saint, as such. They may love one another as creatures; but the grace of one cannot love the sins of the other; nor the sin of the latter, the grace of the former. The following comparison will explain this: One may have good and wholesome food, well dressed and with excellent sauce; but if something be mixed with it, disagreeable to a weak stomach, it will not be eaten; and the other will say, "This is good food, and pleasant too, were it not for that disagreeable thing that is mixed with it". So the sinner says, "This is a good man; and I could love him, were it not that he is one of the singular people. He is too particular. Were it not for his religion, I could make a friend of him." The godly man has his objections too. "This man," he says, "would be an excellent friend, had he possessed

grace. What a pity it is that he is without it." The godly may hence learn two things: first, to take care not to expect quietness in this

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world, so long as they be holy. They must be content to meet with strifes, slanders, and persecutions, were they endowed with all the virtues of angels. Let them also take care not to give up their holiness, that they may obtain quietness from the world: for the moment the world ceases to disturb them, God will begin with them. That quietness is too dearly bought which is obtained at the expense of God's favour. They may, secondly, learn, to take comfort under all the disquietness which the world may give them. It is no more that what angels have received from wicked spirits; yea, it, is what Christ himself has received from men and devils. The unfavourable testimony of the world is no unfavourable evidence.'—Sermon on Jude 9.

8. *Revenge and forgiveness*

'When one sins against us, we wish instant judgment to fall on him: but let us fear the Lord. Which of the two sinners ought to be smitten—he who sinned awhile ago, or he who sins now, by wishing judgment on his enemy, contrary to God's word? Who hath injured thee? if a brother, forgive him; if an enemy, pray for him, for he knew not what he was doing. What mad folly and cruelty would it be for thee to strike and tear to pieces a *dead* man; for every such person is spiritually dead! Wilt thou delight to prosecute a man out of his mind? Such is every unrenewed sinner; he is not himself at any

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time; and does more harm to himself than to any body else. By seeking to destroy what belongs to thee, he destroys himself. By smiting thy body or tearing thy garments, he smites and slays his own soul. By injuring thy temporal life, he ruins his own eternal life. He is far more the object of compassion than of judgment. Remember the Saviour's words, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do". Wilt thou continue to contend with a man that is leprous, or seized with the plague? Beware, lest thou shouldst catch one of his diseases. If he has injured thee, do not thou injure thyself. There is no greater honour, than that man should get the mastery over his own revengeful heart. Even Saul perceived this, 1 Samuel 24:18,19. He who returns good for evil, and loves those who hate him, overcomes by patience, and follows the example of his God.'—Sermon on Jude 9.

9. *Man's disposition to rely on means*

'Men are too inclined to depend on everything short of the true rest; yea, even on hearing, partaking of the Lord's supper and praying. But our Saviour puts, as it were, bitters on everything, as the nurse who wishes to wean her child from the breast. He exhausts and dries every cistern. And why does he employ means so insignificant? Is it not, that he might bring his children through, and from, them, to himself? He raised up a serpent, and

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not man—made of brass, and not of gold, lest the people of Israel should depend on man and on gold; for who would rely on a serpent of brass? So he sends, not angels, but men, to preach the gospel; not the rich, but the poor; not the wise, but "the foolish things of the world", in order that he might lead us through aid from everything else to himself. So in the sacrament, what is there to be had? Not the feast of Elijah, bread and meat—not much, no more than a morsel. It is nothing but a morsel, in order to lead thee on to seek him who is the bread of life. And why art thou left cold, heavy, and dead, often in thy prayers? Is it not to show, that prayer is not salvation, but the Lord? Was he alone that quickens, awakens, and warms the soul in prayer.' (Sermon on John 5:6.)

10. *The sinner's plea at the throne of grace*

'Rise, sinner, he calls thee. Come to the Lord and say, Behold, here I am, for thou hast called me. I have had strength to come for little water; I have come also for some wine and milk. I have brought no money with me, because thou hast said, that I might buy without money and without price. If I have no grace, I come at thy word for grace. If I cannot call thee Father, I can say that I am fatherless, for I forsake all others; and if fatherless, it is with thee that I can find mercy. Is mercy shown to the fatherless after the flesh? and can nothing be

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done for those who feel their need of the Father of Spirits? If I am not a son, thou canst make me a son. Oh is there not a blessing left for me. Bless me, yea, even me, O Lord. I will not go from thee: I cannot go; for where can I go? With thee are the words of eternal life. I dare not say, "be just to me, a saint"; and yet I do say, and will say, yea, I must say, "be merciful to me a sinner".—(Sermon on John 5:6).

11. *Perseverance in prayer*

'The wise men left Jerusalem, when they found not the Lord there, and went to seek him in another place. This is an encouragement to us to hold fast our profession. If we fail to find today, let us still seek tomorrow. If our sins be not mortified at first, let us not despair, but wait for the victory over them. Let us do according to what is said in the Psalms, "As the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until he have mercy upon us" (Psalm 123:2). How long did they wait? For a year, or two, or a hundred, or more? No, no. How long then? Until God had mercy on them. But when will that be? There is no knowing whether it will ever be. Man! hold thy tongue; blaspheme not God; hath he not said, "He that seeketh, findeth". But many seek without finding. No,

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not one, if you understand what it is to seek. But what! says some one, is it not written, "Many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able?" True, but observe the *time*; they are not now seeking, but will seek hereafter. Oh this will not do: there is rejection to be. There is no entering into glory, though sought for, without seeking now to enter into the kingdom of Christ here. Men will be disowned and rejected at the gate of heaven; but in the kingdom of grace there is no rejection: for how can any be rejected who seek not? Therefore, precious souls, seek and seek and seek again, until God will have mercy on you.' Sermon on Matthew 2:8,9..

There are a few sayings of Rowlands appended to his sermons in Welsh. It is stated, that he frequently mentioned them during his latter days, and that he used to say, that 'he had four lessons which he had laboured to learn during the whole course of his religious life, and yet that he was but a dull scholar even in his old age'. And these lessons are the following.

- 'To repent, without despairing.
- 'To believe, without being presumptuous.
- 'To rejoice, without falling into levity.
- 'To be angry, without sinning.'

It is further mentioned, that he used to say—

'That a legal spirit in man is like his shirt, which he puts on first, and puts off last.'

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Common report ascribes to him also the following pithy and significant expression—

'Be silent, tongue; speak thou, foot.'

A few similar sayings shall be selected from his sermons; some short, and others more diffuse. Such striking expressions are likely to be remembered; and they often contain a vast deal in a very few words. One sentence is sometimes capable of being expanded into a sermon. The following extracts shall form the conclusion.

'It is better to go to heaven by ourselves, than to go in company with the multitude into hell.'

'Bad examples are like a flood, which hurries along with it everything that has *no root*, or that is not too heavy.'

'Some men have tears enough for losses among their kine, were they as lean as those of Pharaoh; but for their own souls they have none.'

'Life was lost in a state of virtue, and found in that of transgression; paradise was lost in Adam, but found on the cross.'

'There are no limits nor boundaries to the Lord's mercy; let man call and cry, the Lord will hear; let man seek grace to repent, God will forgive him.'

'This is the root of spiritual courage, to know that all things turn out for good to the Christian?'

'Small is his loss who loses his garment, and keeps his body whole; so it is with the Christian'

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when he is wounded even unto death: he still retains what he mostly values, his soul, and knows that his body is but a corruptible garment.'

'Man's patience may be great, but to God's patience it is as a drop to the ocean.'

'Had not Paul had the Devil to buffet him, he would have buffeted God by exalting himself too much.'

'Were prosperity always to shine on us, what a wandering star would man become? how would the monster spread his wings!'

'Worthy of being kissed is that rod which beats out our sins.'

'Happy the man that takes warning when he sees another under chastisement.'

'Slander is like black soap, which seems to soil at first, and then makes clean and white.'

'The most angelic Christian is he whom Satan hates most. They who are troubled by Satan the least, are those who give the least trouble to Satan.'

'The nearest enemy is the worst. Behold, our sins are the nearest; let them be counted the worst.'

'The fear of man will make us hide sin; but the fear of the Lord will cause us to hate it.'

'The iron must be made hot, before it can be worked: so the mind must be heated by the fire of divine meditation, before it can be fit to be wrought upon by the word of the Lord.'

'God will pull down in thee what is strong, before he builds up what is weak.'

'If thou goest to church as a knowing man, thou wilt come back without attaining knowledge: but if thou goest as one blind, thou wilt come back with a restored sight. If thou appearest before him as one that is foolish, thou wilt return, having been made fully wise unto salvation.'

'Say not, my unworthiness prevents my praying. No, on the contrary, it is an inducement to pray. Thou canst bring thy gift to the altar, though not thy worthiness. Thou canst beg heaven, though thou canst not buy it.'

'The emptiest in themselves are the most successful before the throne of grace.'

'No beggar has ever been too poor to be an object of charity. Hold thy hand to receive, though it may be a trembling hand.'

'The fire of discord is more ruinous to the Church of Christ than the fire of persecution.'

'Man is a devil; God is God: man is hell; God is heaven: man is death; God is life.'

'The spirit of our spirit and the soul of our soul is the Holy Ghost.'

APPENDIX A

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THERE is related in this same 'conversation', an interesting event as connected with the 'nightsinging.' It happened at a place near Bala, about the year 1740, most probably. The person, Jenkin Morgan, named in the account, was one of the schoolmasters employed by Griffith Jones, in keeping his free schools. He was in the habit of going at night to such families as would receive him, to read and pray with them, and to do what was considered preaching. The account is the following:—

'There was (as often was the case at that time in the country) a *singing night*, kept by the young people of the neighbourhood, every Saturday night, in the barn of Tynant: and the barn was wider the same roof with the house. An old man, one of

the Dissenters, felt a strong wish to ask leave for Jenkin Morgan to come to that house close to the barn and preach there, and that on one of the nights when the young people came together for dancing. Somehow or other a leave was obtained. And so Jenkin Morgan, and the old Dissenter with him, went to the house. They came there just at the time that the young people assembled. Jenkin went to the house, and his party with him (I mean the high God) and began his work. They also, and their harper and their party (I mean Satan), engaged in their work in the barn. As the house and the barn were so nigh, the sound of one party reached the other. The young people began their dancing with great eagerness and vigour, thinking to drown the sound in the house, and wholly to prevent the proceeding. But the hand of the Lord was on them in a secret way, so that they had no ease or enjoyment, notwithstanding all their attempts and efforts. Jenkin had now been engaged for some time in his work, and was helped in it. One of the dancers separated from his companions, and drew nigh the door of the house to listen; and while he was hearing, the word stuck to him; so that he felt constrained to go forward into the house. In a short time another followed him, and a third,

and a fourth, and a fifth, and so on, until they all came to the house, and the old harper too. They

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felt constrained to hear. While they were hearing, such a powerful spirit of conviction fell on them all, the harper as well as the rest, that they cried out like the three thousand formerly at Jerusalem (Acts 2:37), if not in the very same words, yet in words which manifested the same dread and fear as to their souls. After the meeting was over, they returned thus crying to their houses, along the roads and the fields. I knew myself five of these people, who were called at this meeting; and they, continued serious and sound in their religious profession until they died.'

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There is mention made of Rowlands at this time, in two places in Howel Harris's life, which was published at Trevecca, in 1791. The first mention is made in his diary for the year 1738, in these words:—

'By this time (1738) the Rev. Mr Rowlands and some other young clergymen were called in Wales to preach the Gospel, in the same extempore manner as I was.' p. 27. What he meant by 'extempore', is previously explained by himself, and his words are remarkable:—'I was constrained to go on, by the importunity of the generality of the people, and by the visible good

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tendency of my labours, and the united call and approbation of many whom I esteemed as gracious ministers, and by the *continual power I felt with me in the work*. Thus my spirit was much enlivened, especially when in the Lord's work, and I *feared neither men nor devils*. As to the subject of my discourse, it was all given unto me in an extraordinary manner, *without the least premeditation*; it was not the fruit of my memory, for naturally my memory was bad: it was therefore the effect of the immediate strong impulse which I felt in my soul; I was not able to rest, consequently necessity was laid on my spirit to go and awaken souls.' pp. 26,27.

The other reference to Rowlands is in a letter to Whitefield, dated 8 January 1739; it is the following:—

'There is a great revival in Cardiganshire, through one Mr Rowlands, a clergyman; and he has been much owned and blessed in Carmarthenshire also.' p. 113.

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The following passage, translated, shall be given from this author. It speaks of Harris and Rowlands. The character of their preaching, especially at first, was similar:—

'When Harris travelled through the country,

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thundering most awfully he was against cursers, swearers, drunkards, fighters, liars, and sabbath-breakers, and in a sense kindling among them the fire of hell. He exhorted in houses and in fields: he cared not where, if he had people to hear him; as Walter Cradoc, Vavasor Powel, and others did in Wales, about a hundred years before. But this was a very new thing in our days; therefore a great many assembled to hear. And about the same time, or soon after, Mr Daniel Rowlands, a clergyman of the Church of England, in the county of Cardigan, began to preach in a very extraordinary way in the Church. I remember to have heard him about the year 1737, in the county of Carmarthen. A large multitude was there to hear him; and I heard some of the Dissenters mentioning the sermon as they were returning home (the author at this time was probably but a young man); I remember that a part of the conversation was this:— 'We have never heard his like in the Church of England, except Mr Griffith Jones; there has not been in our day such a light among Church people.' p. 53.

D

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Williams wrote in behalf of loud praising, and even of jumping, and tried to justify it by scriptural

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authority. It is said that on one occasion, a respectable person remonstrated with Williams on the subject, and endeavoured to persuade him to

discountenance the practice, alleging that it was very unbecoming, and that many who had engaged in it had been known to have afterwards fallen away, and become wholly irreligious. After having listened attentively to what this gentleman had to say, Williams spoke to him somewhat in this manner:—

‘There were three people, two men and a woman, living on the side of the same hill, who began the world nearly at the same time. Their names were Evan, Thomas and Betty. When they went there to live, each of them borrowed a hundred pounds. They thought that they could in time by thrift and industry, be able to repay this money, but instead of being successful, the three were very unfortunate. And in course of time they were threatened with law: and at last the bailiffs came upon Evan to put him in prison. And as he was going with them, they passed by the house of Sir John Goodman, who lived on the other side of the hill: and they met Sir John himself. ‘Well,’ said he, ‘where are you going, Evan?’ Evan respectfully replied and said, ‘Oh, Sir John, I am obliged to go to prison for debt. It is just, it is right, I confess; for I owe the money: but I have no hope of repaying it.’ ‘Indeed, indeed,’ said Sir John, ‘I am very sorry

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for you: but how much is your debt?’ ‘A hundred pounds,’ said Evan, ‘and the costs.’ Then Sir John said, ‘I will pay thy debt, Evan, and the costs too’; and turning to the bailiffs, he said, ‘Let him go, I will be answerable for him’. Evan of course felt more than he could well express; and having thanked Sir John in the best manner he could, he returned home. Having reached the top of the hill above his house, he stopped and cried out with all his might, ‘Thanks, thanks to Sir John Goodman’. Betty heard him and wondered greatly. She however went up to him, and enquired the reason: and when he told her what Sir John had done for him, she also joined him and shouted, ‘Thanks to Sir John Goodman’. Soon after they were observed by Thomas. He also went up to know the cause: and when it was told him, he could not do otherwise than exclaim with them, ‘Thanks, thanks, thanks, to Sir John Goodman’. But in course of a short time the demand for the money was made on Thomas and Betty, and as they had nothing to pay, they were apprehended and put in prison, and there they both died. Though they joined Evan in his rejoicing, they never applied to Sir John Goodman.’

The evident design of this supposed case or parable was to show two things: the great cause which those have to rejoice who have their sins forgiven

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them, and how it is that many may seem to rejoice with others without having obtained forgiveness themselves. Imitation and sympathy account for much that exists among men. The religion of too many is no more than to do as others do.

E

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There was then a sufficient reason for preaching long; but now, in general, there is none. There was then but little preaching, especially such as was worth anything. The writer remembers going, more than twenty years ago, with the late Griffiths of Nevem, to a church near Cardigan; and while conversing together, that good man told him that in his early days he preached in that church once for four hours, to a congregation, the half of which the church could not contain. These were remarkable days. That he should have unwearied attention for four hours, as the case was, seems extraordinary. But at that time there was a power accompanying the word, by no means common.

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It appears from the life of Howel Harris, that the private societies increased quickly, and spread widely

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through the country. There is given in a note a portion of Whitefield's journal for 7 March 1739, in which he mentions the first interview he had with Harris, of whom he says the following things:—

'He is now about twenty-five years of age. Twice he has applied (being every way qualified) for holy orders; but was refused, under a false pretence, that he was not of age, though he was then twenty-two years and six months. About a month ago he offered himself again, but was put off. Upon this he was, and still is, resolved to go on in his work, and indefatigable zeal has he shown in his Master's service. For *three* years, as he told me

from his own mouth, *he has discoursed almost twice every day for three or four hours together*; not authoritatively as a minister, but as a private person, exhorting his Christian brethren. He has been, I think, in *seven* counties, and has made it his business to go to wakes, &c. to turn people from such lying vanities. God has blessed him with inflexible courage— instantaneous strength has been communicated to him from above. He is of a *most catholic spirit*, loves all that love our Lord Jesus Christ; and therefore he is styled by *bigots*, a Dissenter. He has established near *thirty societies* in South Wales, and still his sphere of action is enlarged daily.' p. 31.

One extract more shall be made from this journal

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of Whitefield, as it contains what deserves the attention of all who desire and pray for the success of true religion. His words are these;—

'Blessed be God, there seems to be a noble spirit gone out into Wales; and I believe ere long, there will be more visible fruits of it. What strongly inclines me to think so, is, that the *partition-wall of bigotry and party zeal is broken down*, and ministers and teachers of different communions, join with one heart and one mind, to carry on the kingdom of Jesus Christ. *The Lord make all the Christian world thus minded. For till this is done*, I fear we must despair of any great reformation in the Church of God.'

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As the writer, in the year 1835, wrote two letters respecting Griffiths, which appeared in a Welsh periodical called 'The Watchman' (Gwyllydydd) pp. 176–178, and 205–209, and as Griffiths' talents were in some things like those of Rowlands, he deems their introduction here not unsuitable. They are the following:—

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Letter I.

THE REV. DAVID GRFFITHS, OF NEVERN

June, 1835.

I did not perceive until this week, what is said in your Number for January, respecting the eminent man mentioned above. It would be useful, as it seems to me, were some of those who were acquainted with him,

to transfer to the 'Watchman' what they know of him, that it might be an assistance to someone that is capable, to write some account of his life and ministry. This would be an useful way for such a purpose, as a fuller account would thereby be attained. Griffiths was not a common man, but eminent, especially as a preacher. I can say with truth, that I have never heard his equal in some things, though I have occasionally heard some of the most celebrated in England and Wales. About twenty years ago I heard him several times, and once or twice since, and I have had the privilege of being a little in his company. Expecting others to do the same thing, I shall state a few things respecting him, and give my views of his excellences as a preacher.

1. None could be in his company without perceiving that Griffiths possessed naturally *strong good sense*, and superior mental faculties.

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The powers of his mind were such as would have made him to excel in any profession. He was formed to be a leader in whatever station he might have been placed. Strong understanding, vigorous perception, and sound good sense, were the characteristics of his mind. Had he had suitable opportunities, and pursued a course that might have led to such an office, he would have made an excellent Lord Chancellor. He possessed every mental qualification that would have fitted him for such a situation. Many have no doubt occupied that high station, who did not possess the superior qualities vouchsafed to him. I might say of him as he said to me, the last time I saw him, of Rowlands and W. Williams, 'that they possessed powers and qualifications sufficient to order and rule a kingdom'. He said this of the first, on account of his gifts as a preacher, and his competency for being a leader and guide in the cause of religion; and of the latter, on account of his qualifications to handle matters of religious experience.

2. His *perception* or *discernment* of character was not common.

The power of discerning spirits was given him in no small measure. He quickly perceived the motives and purposes of others. There was hardly a cloak or a cover which people might put on, through which his piercing eye could not see. The first time, as he told me, that he went to London to preach in

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Lady Huntingdon's chapel, what follows took place:—He was to preach morning and evening on the Sabbath, and the afternoon service was generally performed by some of the young men from the academy

established by that eminent lady. The first afternoon that Griffiths spent there, one of these young men preached, and his sermon was so truly evangelical, and was delivered with so much eloquence as quite astonished him. The following morning he called on Lady Huntingdon, and she asked him how the young man preached. Griffiths said that he preached remarkably well, and that he possessed very superior talents. She wished further to know what was his opinion of him; and when she pressed him on this point, he said that he was afraid that the young man was not experimentally acquainted with true religion; and at the same time he added, that he did not wish that his opinion should operate unfavourably to him. No more took place at this time. But when Griffiths went to London the next year, he made enquiries respecting this young man, and found, that instead of preaching the gospel, he was spouting vanity and folly in one of the theatres. He had become a player. Griffiths knew nothing of him, until he saw him in the pulpit, and he had no conversation with him afterwards. He perceived by his preaching that he had no piety, though there was nothing in his sermon but what was truly evangelical.

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At the same time, that is, about ten years ago, when I spent a night at his house with no small enjoyment, he told me several things, which clearly proved that he possessed a very large measure of penetration. He mentioned the joy he felt, some years past, when Bishop Burgess encouraged young popular clergy; and when several rose up, who were endowed with considerable talents. 'But,' said he, 'my fear then was, that many of them did not possess true piety; and that, whenever the bishop should be removed, and a different course pursued, the zeal displayed would evaporate; and my fear was not groundless, for this has already taken place. The design of the good bishop was excellent, but he did not possess that discrimination necessary to distinguish between a plausible appearance and real piety. He was therefore deceived by several. It was owing to this that he gave encouragement to some that did not deserve it, and overlooked others who were truly pious, though not endowed with a large share of popular gifts.'

While conversing with him on the same occasion, I laid before him this question, 'What reason can be assigned for the fact, that those who afford the least tokens of real piety, are often much more free and gifted in prayer, than those whose spirit and conduct evidence a piety of a genuine character?' His answer was as follows:—

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'It is not difficult to specify the reason. They who know not God in truth, have nothing more to do in prayer, than to frame words and to employ such expressions as they have learnt. All their care and concern is about the work itself, to use such petitions as they think are approved by those who pray with them, without seeking any communion with God. But with respect to the truly pious, who fear God, and feel their sin and their need, their chief care and endeavour is, to hold intercourse with God in prayer. They, in a degree, see God as present, and they cannot think of fine words and thoughts, but of suitable ideas and feelings, while speaking to one so great. Their effort is to hold communion with God, and to obtain his blessing; and they cannot presume to use expressions which do not proceed from the heart. They seek to converse with God, and therefore cannot talk vainly, as many do on their knees.'

This was substantially his answer, and it dwelt ever on my mind; and it clearly contains what we ought seriously to consider. To say the words of prayer, and that apparently in a devotional manner, is easy; but really to pray, is what none can do but the truly godly, and that only with great effort.

3. His preaching talents were such, that I know not how to speak of them in a suitable manner.

He was endowed with qualifications, which I

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cannot well describe. His appearance in the pulpit was dignified, his yoke was melodious, and his utterance easy. But what distinguished him were the *onsets*, if the word be allowed, which he made at times on the congregation, so that it was hardly possible to resist him. His voice was not raised high, except at times. He would mostly treat what he had in hand in a quiet way, and yet clearly, simply, and persuasively. He was, when he began, as if he sought to lay hold on the understanding and attention of the people, and to prepare the way for bringing forward what he wished especially to impress on their minds and hearts. As he approached to what was most important, his countenance brightened, his voice gathered strength, and his whole frame became animated; and then he broke out in the most powerful manner, and his words penetrated through the whole assembly. I have seen hundreds filled at once with amazement, and the tears flowing down the countenances of many. This powerful storming did not continue long, no more than necessary. He

resumed again his former attitude and manner. Another point was taken in hand. There was seldom any deficiency as to matter or words, though he was often proceeding rather slowly when he commenced a new subject. He handled perhaps the next point in a different way. He made use of short and weighty sentences, and spoke in a way that was

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clear, persuasive, and melting. He adopted a conversational mode with a suitable voice, and still in a way that seemed as if his heart was speaking. There was a greater variety in his manner, than I have observed in any other. He opened and explained his text very clearly and quietly; he conversed familiarly, reasoned slowly, exhorted kindly, consoled tenderly, reprov'd sharply and yet compassionately, thundered most awfully, and rejoiced with great fervour; and at the same time the whole was done with the greatest propriety.

There was no appearance of art or design in anything he did. All was natural, proceeding evidently, from the state of his mind and his inward emotions, and was suitable to what he delivered. He at first, no doubt, strived to obtain a becoming and appropriate manner; and he succeeded by long practice. He doubtless studied human nature, and endeavoured to use that mode and manner most calculated to arrest the mind, to draw attention, to impress the heart, and influence the feelings. This should be a greater object than it is with ministers; not to gain popularity, but to win souls. There was nothing in Griffiths that manifested any other purpose. His object most evidently was, not to please the ear, but to reform the heart. He never employed big 'swelling words', but the words of sobriety and truth. It

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was not the wisdom of man that he proclaimed, but the wisdom which is from above.

I will not add more at present; but if my wish be encouraged by some of your correspondents, by sending to you what they know of this remarkable man, you shall hear from me again; and I shall state, as far as I know and have heard, what was commonly the *substance* of his Sermons, and their *effects*.

'Your's truly,

'AN OLD FRIEND.'

Letter II

July, 1835

I promised conditionally in my last letter, to send you something more respecting Mr Griffiths. I am inclined, without waiting for the performance of that condition, to transmit to you what follows, thinking that it would be better that my communications should appear in two successive numbers. I have already named *three* things; I shall proceed now to the next, which is:—

4. The *substance* of his sermons in general, and also their peculiarities.

The opportunities afforded me of hearing him, have not been many, seven or eight times at most. But I have more recollection of his sermons, than

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those of any other, they were so remarkably excellent. The state of fallen man, his misery and condemnation, the evil of sin, the righteousness of Christ, his abounding grace, the free, holy, and comforting influences of the Spirit—these formed the most common subjects of his sermons. I never heard him handling anything sectarian, curious, or fanciful. Things important and connected with salvation, were the points he discussed every time that I have had the opportunity of hearing him. There was nothing that he introduced, but what showed that his principal and special object was the present and eternal benefit of the souls of men. None I think could hear him, if they reflected at all, without perceiving and confessing that his only object was to lead them to a full enjoyment of God's salvation. But I will

¹ He had nothing of the sectarian in his composition. He possessed a most catholic mind. A striking instance of this was incidentally mentioned by him to the writer. There was a Dissenter from some distance who usually came to hear him. This person came to him one day, and told him that he wished to become a member of his church. Griffiths asked him his reasons. His only reason was, that he preferred the ministry of Griffiths to that of his own minister. 'Well,' said Griffiths, 'if this be your only reason, my advice to you is, to continue a member where you are, and where, it seems, you have been a member for some years; and as to your coming to hear me, you are quite welcome to do so, as long as you like, and while you derive any benefit by so doing.'

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specify things more particularly. His preaching was—

1. *Scriptural*.

This is true, not only as to the substance of his sermons, but also as to his style of speaking. The great truths of the gospel were the truths he

proclaimed; and he delivered them in a great measure in the words of scripture, by using its expressions and following its style, and by comparing things spiritual with spiritual things. This was not done by quoting long strings of texts, but by bringing them in appropriately (not too often) to explain or confirm what he had in hand; and that frequently in such a way as to throw light on the very texts referred to. The application he made of them tended to show more clearly their pregnant import. All his reasonings were founded on God's word. It was on—'Thus saith the Lord', that he built everything. He spoke the word as the word of God, and grounded on it all that he delivered.

He had a singular gift in making use of the history of scripture and of its parables. He would show their adaptation to various cases, and handled them with that dexterity, art, and effect, which I never observed done by any other. If what he referred to contained an account of the ungodly or godly, such as the Pharisee and publican, he would by questions and answers, or by way of familiar

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reasoning or a dialogue, set forth the matter in such a striking manner, that none could otherwise than attend to, and also remember what he said. Though I cannot relate, yet I well remember the touching manner in which I heard him describing, more than twenty years ago, the reception of the prodigal son by his compassionate father. But his preaching was

2. *Very clear and intelligible.*

There were none, no, not even the most ignorant, who could not understand his sermons; though they contained nothing low, mean, or vulgar, nor anything that did not engage the attention of the intelligent. There was a dignity in his mode of delivering the plainest things, and a clearness in the way he treated the most elevated subjects. There is no need of a learned mode in order to attract the attention of the learned, while declaring the high things of God, as too many think. Divine truths are so grand and important in themselves, that there is no need of any human ornaments. The wisdom of speech never adds anything to the word of God, but it always takes away from it; it does not raise, but lower it; it does not adorn, but debase it; it does not strengthen, but weaken it; it does not sharpen, but blunt it. The word alone is the sword of the Spirit, and not the word as ornamented by man's device, to please and tickle the ears of such as love a fine style and elegant expressions.

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Wonderful was the art which Griffiths had, to bring down to the level of the weakest capacity the high and exalted truths of revelation. He would unravel what appeared intricate, throw light on what was dark, and make plain what was difficult, and that with an ease and simplicity peculiar to himself. He would set forth the highest doctrines of the gospel in a light so clear that almost the weakest capacity could comprehend them. He would do this, not by degrading what was grand, but by a lucid exposition, and by enabling weak minds to understand them by means of simple and familiar reasoning, or of apt similies.

Too many handle high truths in such a way as to render them still higher, and drive them further still from the reach of common minds. By trying to enlighten, they darken. By attempting to make things clearer, they make them more intricate. Wholly contrary to this practice was that of this excellent man. There were two things in his preaching that were remarkable in this respect:—

First, he gained the *attention* of his hearers. His affectionate and kind manner of speaking induced all to hear. He set the mind at work, moved the affections, and put the people in a posture to understand. This is of great importance. If there be no attention, there can be no understanding of what is said. He led and allured them to hear; and this

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was necessary in order to lead them to understand. Many preachers are very deficient in this respect. They are not sufficiently careful to secure the attention, and make people, as it were, to prick up their ears. This ought to be the first object; for without this, the plainest things will not be understood, because the mind is not at work.

Secondly, he spoke very *plain*, and he was as if he *would* have people to understand him. He seemed not anxious to astonish them by the depth of his thoughts, but to enlighten their minds and to do good to their souls. His object was not to feed curiosity or to fill their heads with useless notions, but to transfer right sentiments to their minds and to convey divine treasures to their hearts. He appeared determined to lay hold, as it were, on the conscience, in order to awaken it, and resolved by all means to take possession of the inward man. He seemed to say to each, 'I have a business with thee; thy mind, thy conscience, and thy affections, are what I have to do with'. He assailed these in turn with all his might, as one determined to gain his object. He was like a valiant

soldier attacking a stronghold, and using every means for its overthrow, that he might take possession of it. His preaching was—

3. *Free, easy, and well arranged.*

There was nothing elaborate in his sermons, as if

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he took much labour and pains in preparing them. His words flowed so easily, and his thoughts so naturally, that they seemed to proceed from an overflowing spring. But though they were free and apparently without effort, they were yet well-arranged. They were evidently prepared, and with considerable care, otherwise there would not have been such order and such facility of expression.

I do not think, judging from what I have heard of him, and from his preaching, that he wrote much of his sermons, probably the main divisions, and some of the principal thoughts. The work of meditation, as I think, were his sermons principally. I heard him say that on one occasion while in London, he made a sermon for the evening by hearing a preacher in the afternoon. It is probable that his common mode of preparing his discourses was similar to that of the justly celebrated Robert Hall, who told me himself, that for the first twenty years of his ministry he never wrote a line of his sermons. He afterwards usually put down the divisions, and a word here and there merely to show the course that he was to follow. This appears very extraordinary, when we consider his unrivalled eloquence and the incomparable elegance of his style. The mind prepared, and the memory retained, all that was put in its keeping. Where this is practicable, when a person is *capable* of this, the speaking will no doubt be

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freer and easier, than when the sermon is written. But this is a gift which very few possess.

I might enlarge, but I will not do so now. I shall only name a few other characteristics of his preaching. It was doctrinal, practical, experimental. It was persuasive, penetrating, and dignified.

While speaking of him as a preacher, I overlooked two things which I shall mention here.

First. His *action* in the pulpit.

His attitudes were becoming and suitable. He used his hands sometimes with great effect; and his countenance was often very animated. He looked, at times in such a way as if he had something very great, of vast

importance, to deliver (as no doubt he had). The appearance of his face was frequently quite sufficient to draw attention and induce people to listen. This was not put on; for he doubtless felt deeply how weighty and important his message was.

None can speak suitably of divine things and of the high concerns of the immortal soul, without seeing and realising in their minds their worth and dignity, and without feeling their powerful influence on the heart and affections. When the mind is full of exalted thoughts, and the heart of heavenly emotions, there will inevitably be some expression of them in the countenance. Men can, it is true, counterfeit and imitate the best feelings, though not

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quite effectually. Yet, if the weighty nature of the work be felt, if a deep concern for the souls of men impregnate the heart, the countenance will show this naturally, without any effort. The object should be to obtain right views and suitable feelings, and then the expression of the face will be befitting. The reason why eternal things are delivered (as they are, alas! by many of us) without emotion, without any expression of feeling in the countenance, is, because their value is not seen, and their importance is not felt, at least in any suitable degree. There must be water in the spring, before any can flow from it.

Secondly. The largeness or extent of his gifts.

He was not a man of one subject, but was acquainted with every part of evangelic truth. He excelled no doubt in handling some points more than others; but he could discuss most subjects in a way superior to most. I have heard some saying, that the doctrine, which he excelled mostly in handling, was the glorious doctrine of justification by faith, and that he was more inclined to take that in hand than any other. He yet showed great adroitness and facility in treating any subject, whatever it might be,—doctrine—practice—or experience. What he said of Rowlands, of whom he delighted to speak, was true of himself to a great extent, that is, that he excelled all he ever knew. not only in treating a particular subject, but in treating every subject. This

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excellency belonged no doubt to himself in a considerable degree. I shall mention—

5. Some of the *effects* of his preaching.

The effects I can speak of are those I observed on many persons in hearing him, and those of which I have heard from others. I never saw one making a stronger impression on the hearers; and my own feelings were hardly ever so much moved as in hearing him. I remember to have heard him some years ago in a church near Cardigan, where he preached, as he told me, once, when young, for *four* hours. Preaching was not very common in those days. But when I heard him there, his sermon lasted about an hour, if quite so long. His text was, 'I am the Lord thy God'. The design of his sermon was to show the excellency of the relationship and union between God and his people—*thy* God. It was a grand sermon: and the effect on the hundreds that had assembled, was very wonderful. There was great power attending his words. He seemed as one endowed by a spirit from above. While speaking of the *permanency* of this relationship, having before shown in a very affecting manner the *shortness* of every other, he became amazingly animated, and poured forth such a strain of impassioned eloquence as filled the whole assembly with the strongest emotions. He evidently preached with 'the demonstration of the Spirit and of power'.

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I heard him after this at Llanddewibrevi, Cardigaishire. There was an aged minister present, well known by his writings both in England and Wales. This clergyman did not know Griffiths before: but he was greatly astonished at his sermon; nor could he restrain tears of joy on the occasion; and said afterwards, that he never heard before one so like the incomparable Rowlands of Llangeitho. He said some things in that sermon so striking and powerful that most of the vast assembly present were deeply affected.

About the end of last century he preached a very remarkable sermon at Llanconlle, near Llangeitho which I have often heard mentioned by several that were present. His text was Psalm 32:5. The readiness of God to forgive sins was his subject. Several were converted, were brought out of darkness into light, and from the power of Satan to God, on that occasion, who afterwards joined the church of God. There are some now living who remember that sermon—a circumstance, which of itself is sufficient to show that it was no common discourse. The saying of the venerable old Gray respecting it, was, that 'It was like grapeshots, having wounded and destroyed many at once'. It wounded the sinner, and destroyed his sin. I shall next put down—

6. A few *anecdotes* respecting his preaching.

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The *three* which follow were told me by a respectable clergyman (the late Rev. Hugh Loyd, Cilpill) who heard him on the occasions mentioned:—

Griffiths was preaching at Llangeitho; and his subject was *prayer*. He was showing how effectual it is, and as an instance he referred to the case of Peter when in prison, and when prayer was made for him by the church. ‘Wonderful,’ he said, ‘is the effect of prayer. See it ascending into heaven and bringing down an angel of God into the prison. And when he came there, striking Peter’s side, he cried, ‘*Peter, arise!*’ And while pronouncing the last words, he struck the pulpit with his hand, and his voice and his looks exactly corresponded with the action; and the people seemed to feel, as if they had seen the angel awakening Peter. This evidently tended much to deepen the impression as to the efficiency of prayer, more probably than the most eloquent discourse on the subject.

At another time, and if I well remember in the same place, he was preaching on the *Resurrection*. He named some of the strongest objections against that doctrine. ‘Some hold,’ he said, ‘that it is impossible for such a thing to take place; for they ask, “How can those bodies be raised again which have been cast into the sea, and devoured by fish, or those which have been burnt, and their ashes scattered by the wind?” Such are the objections; but how vain

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and foolish are they all? *Who is he*, that will raise the dead? THE ALMIGHTY!’ and stretching forth horizontally his hand, he added, ‘It is HE, who holds the sea on the palm of his hand’; and then closing his fists and stretching them forward, he exclaimed, ‘and HE, who gathereth the wind in his fists’. All this was done so easily, naturally, and in so becoming and striking a manner, that it produced an amazing effect on the whole assembly. They no doubt ever afterwards remembered this clear and plain answer, which is *quite sufficient*, as an answer to any objection that either the wit of man or the device of Satan can ever invent.

It was customary in Pembrokeshire, and is still, so far as I know, to hold an annual meeting near the shore where the French landed about the beginning of this century. Several sermons were delivered on the occasion. Griffiths, as he was beginning his sermon, observed several people, and some who seemed respectable, talking together, some walking, and some on horseback, at the extremities of the vast multitude that had assembled; and as he could not endure such a sight, he exclaimed in these words—

'Hear!' he said, 'hear ye who are sauntering yonder (pointing out to them with his hand) at the outside of this vast assembly. It grieves me to observe you so thoughtless and inconsiderate. We are assembled here today to commemorate the mercy

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and goodness of the Lord towards our country, in having preserved us from being destroyed by our enemies: and it is a matter of deep regret that any among us should make light of his goodness. But remember, that if you continue regardless and forgetful of the Lord's goodness and mercy, the time is coming, when you shall howl like dogs in hell.'—He spoke these words with such power and authority, that there was instant silence; and they drew nearer and listened attentively to the end.

This is all that I shall communicate now respecting this eminent man. It may do good to bring to view those gifts and talents which God bestows on his servants, and which he extensively blesses to the conversion of sinners and to the edification of his church. God can and does bless gifts of various kinds and degrees; but he most commonly owns such as are suitable to make impressions on the minds and hearts of men. It is the work of wisdom to adapt the instruments to what they are designed to effect; and the God of infinite wisdom is our God. And yet the best gift is a burning love towards God and man. This will endow the least endowed; and the most gifted without this, is but 'a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal'. Where this love is strong and lively, success will be there doubtless in some measure: but to possess this in connection with a clear understanding, quick perception, ardour of

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spirit, and an eloquent tongue, is to possess very high qualifications for the work of the ministry. Let it be the care of all ministers to seek every suitable gift by employing every suitable means, especially, meditation on God's word and prayer. But the chief care should be, to have the *love of God shed abroad in the heart.*

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The writer remembers a conversation he once had with the late excellent Robert Hall, connected with this subject of converting everything to answer one great object. Calling on him one morning, he found him

reading Gibbon on the Decline and Fall of the Roman empire. 'And so,' said I, 'you are reading Gibbon.' His answer was, 'Yes, but with an especial view to the work of my office. I endeavour to make everything I read subservient to the ministry, useful for the pulpit.' Thus indeed it *ought* to be with every minister, that is, to gather everything for the work of his office. Wherever he may be, whatever he may be doing, everything should be viewed as capable of affording some help towards accomplishing his work as a minister of the Gospel. But with how few of us is this the case!

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Thomas Gray was at first a miner in Glamorganshire. His conversion, according to what has been reported, was singular. It took place when he was about twenty years of age. He and nine or ten others usually worked in the same pit. His master one morning called him and sent him to some distance on an errand: and he, though rather unwilling, went. About twelve o'clock the same day, the pit fell in and killed all his comrades. He returned home about four o'clock in the afternoon; and a man from the place met him on the road, and seemed quite astonished to see him, not knowing but that he was killed with the rest. 'What,' said the man, 'is it Tom Gray, or his ghost! Why! I thought you were in hell since twelve o'clock today.' This singular saying was the means of his conversion.

He began his religious course with the Presbyterians, and was trained up for the ministry. He became a minister at two places not far from Llangeitho. But in course of time he joined the Methodists. He was a large man, strong in body and strong also in mind, and in disposition remarkably kind and sympathising; not very polished in speech, but very correct and evangelic in his doctrine. His preaching was unadorned and very clear, both practical and

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experimental; and he was very firm and unshaken in the faith. It was not in the form, but in the power of godliness that he excelled. He was perfectly honest, sincere, and devotional, and possessed a large measure of sympathy, brotherly love, and liberal spirit. Rowlands was very fond of him; and when people asked him, whom they should have after his

death, he used to say, Tom Gray. He knew his worth, on account of his strong understanding, sound good sense, and deep piety. Though Rowlands did not despise great gifts, yet he valued piety more than anything else.

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Peter Williams joined the Methodists rather early; and had been very useful in his day. He excelled in strength of mind and boldness of spirit. He did more than all his cotemporaries in spreading the Scriptures. The first Bible in Welsh, with explanatory notes, was published by him; and it has been, and is still, much approved by many. Several thousand copies have been printed. It has gone through several editions. The notes have been generally thought orthodox, except on one point, the doctrine of Christ's Sonship. It is to be regretted that he introduced anything on this subject that

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appeared inconsistent with what is generally deemed correct. It would have been much better had he been silent on the subject, as the difference is not material, but confined to some few expressions. It is not well to raise a dispute on a subject so mysterious and sacred as the *mode* of the divine existence. If we believe, according to the word, that the Father is God, that the Son is God, and that the Spirit is God, and that yet there is but one God, it ought to be deemed sufficient; and we ought not to pry into things which it belongs not to man to know, and which probably he cannot know. The pernicious heresy is that of denying the Divinity of the Son and the Spirit, as it at once overturns and destroys the work of salvation. It is probable that Williams' views did not differ much from those of Romaine, William Jones, and Bishop Horne. He held, as it appears, his opinion too obstinately; and there were those who opposed him too obstinately, especially after the death of Rowlands. *His* endeavour was to calm the dispute, and to induce both sides to be silent. But Williams would not do so, nor would his opponents do so.

After the death of Rowlands, matters grew worse, and proved very painful to Williams. He was cut off from the connexion in his old age; and this was a very great grief to him. There were faults on both sides. The venerable old man ought to have

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yielded a little for the sake of peace; and his opponents ought to have dealt more kindly and tenderly with him, considering his age and his previous usefulness. But it is easier to blame, than to maintain a suitable conduct under difficult and trying circumstances.

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The last time that his son Nathaniel saw Rowlands, a short time before his death, he said to him in substance what follows:—‘I have been persecuted until I got quite tired; but you shall be persecuted more; but stand by the church by all means. You will not perhaps be repaid for doing so; yet still stand by it, yea even unto death. *There will be a great revival in the Church of England.* This is an encouragement to you to stand by it.’ The son said, ‘Are you a prophet, father?’ To this he answered, ‘No, I am not a prophet, nor the son of a prophet; but *God has made this known to me on my knees.* I shall not live to see it.’ Then the son asked, ‘Shall I live to see it?’ He then put his hand for a time over his eyes, and afterwards said, ‘Yes, you may live to see it.’

This was told the writer by the son himself about the year 1826; and when he had finished, he said,

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that he had frequently thought of his father’s words, since Bishop Burgess came to the diocese of St David’s, and since he had seen so many evangelical clergymen rising in the established church.

By the ‘persecution’ mentioned above was meant no doubt the opposition he met with by adhering to the church order as to the ministry. There was an attempt made in his day to introduce the plan of appointing some of the lay-preachers to administer the sacraments, as is done by the Wesleyan Methodists. Rowlands was much opposed to this plan. He by no means wished to separate from the established church. He was from principle a thorough churchman; though he could not, owing to uncontrollable circumstances, conform with some of its rules. It is probable that his hope and expectation was, that in course of a short time, there would be such a change, as to true religion, in the church, that his people might conform more fully with its regulations. The preceding conversation with his son does, in my view, clearly show this to have been his expectation.

And it would not have been groundless, had the rulers of the church conducted matters with a greater measure of forbearance and wisdom. Serious religion in the church, and the exercise of some forbearance as to things of minor importance, would probably have been the means in time of uniting completely this numerous body with the established

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church. Whether this would have been of permanent benefit to true religion, the writer will not undertake to determine. The chief thing to be regarded is true religion, and not its form. Whatever the system maybe, except the religion of the Bible be promoted by it, it is of no value. Uniformity without religion, that is, without real vital religion, is worthless. Combined with true religion it is very valuable. But the *chief* uniformity that is wanted, is that of mind, heart, and spirit, as to things essential to salvation. We too often begin at the wrong end, labouring for uniformity in external matters, when we ought first to seek uniformity in principles, in essential doctrines and in spiritual experience. To amalgamate discordant elements is a vain attempt. They may be put in juxtaposition, but they cannot mix. The church are the faithful, true Christians, and none but such can unite well together.

THE END