

John Richard Jones.

IN the *Transactions* last year, Vol. VII, pages 147-181, appeared an article on the M'Leanist and Campbellite Baptists of Wales, which has by permission of the Baptist Historical Society been reprinted, with corrections and additions, in the weekly of the British Campbellites, the *Christian Advocate*, for January to March 1922. Reference was made at page 159 to the disputes between Archibald M'Lean of Edinburgh and John Richard Jones of Ramoth, the respective founders of the "Scotch" Baptists of Scotland and Wales. It was written in the midst of these controversies, and has never been published in either English or Welsh. The English of Jones is his own, very creditable for one who spent all his life in the Welshiest part of Wales and had no education beyond that supplied in his early boyhood at a Welsh village school. This letter was copied by me from the original in the possession of our friend Percy G. Waugh, W.S., of Edinburgh, a successor of Mr. M'Lean's. It may be interesting to know that the Baptists in Wales, of all colours are arranging to celebrate the centenary of the death of J. R. Jones in the summer of this year.

BANGOR,

T. WITTON DAVIES.

February 26, 1922.

TO ARCHIBALD M'LEAN, EDINBURGH.

RAMOTH, 5TH FEBV., 1806.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I received your favour dated 4th October, 1805, and have noted the contents deliberately. I have been since visiting the few churches and societies in our connection in North Wales;—and have now the pleasure to inform you that they are all "walking by the same rule, and minding the same thing"; and apparently alive to their profession in general. Our profession is too simple, unindulgent and self-denying to attract many followers, nor yet many hearers. However the few churches in our connection are upon the whole increasing, though slowly.

I have lately published a small Collection of Hymns, intended as an Appendix to my former Collection of Psalms and Hymns. This last collection is mostly a translation of some choice Hymns out of your Collection of Psalms and Hymns; and out of Mr. John Glas's Collection of Christian Songs. I have also published in my native language, a second edition, with large additions of my former publications, entitled, "A Summary of Scriptural Principles, and Christian

Practices, Published by Elders and Brethren of Several Christian Churches in North Wales," pp. 62, 12mo.

I received a letter last month, from a few Baptists in *Lleyn*, Carnarvonshire, about 40 Miles westward from this place. The letter is signed by *Nine* men, and *five* women, wherein they declare that they have conscientiously separated from the popular Baptists, in that country, and that from the same principles as we formerly did; and they invite me to pay them a visit, and with a view to form a junction with our connection &c. I have since wrote them a letter, signifying my wish to know something more of their *union*, and of their assembling together every first day of the week. For christians must not only be separated from the profane and religious world, but be united together as a visible society, in order to observe whatsoever Christ hath commanded. I hope to hear from the said people, not long hence. Now to your letter.

1. I can now say that I fully agree with your explanation of that ambiguous sentence in your former letter, with respect to the preacher's work in "*pressing home* the truth which he declares upon the hearts, consciences, lives and practices of his hearers." But one might think from the position of the sentence in your former letter, that the preacher ought to do something to influence the passions, and wind up the affections of his hearers into lively frames and feelings, as they are called by some. However, the illustration in your last gave me full satisfaction, and am sorry that I have so far mistaken your meaning in that sentence.

2. I think we should be always very cautious in forming our judgment of God's people, while they are in unscriptural connections, since they are not then "to be measured by the rule of God's word," as you partly allow. And if you think that "the Sandemanians, and some others are too liberal in their censures and harsh judgment of other professors"; are you not apprehensive of the danger of verging towards the opposite extreme; namely the Antinomian charity which so much prevails among the fashionable professors of the present day? I am fully persuaded that there is so much danger in "justifying the wicked, as in condemning the just; for each is said to be abominable in the Divine sight." And there is a safe medium in doubtful cases, namely to suspend the judgment until we have a scripture warrant for either. I think that this way is more safe than the *harsh judgment*, on the one hand, and the common *favourable opinion* on the other.

Although I highly approve of your late pamphlet on Marriage; yet, the concluding sentence always causes me to hesitate and stagger. It runs thus. "And though this does not prohibit christians of one denomination to marry those of another; yet they ought to marry none but such as they can

esteem real fearers of God, and believers in Jesus Christ." Here, you do not inform your readers what limits you have to these "Christian denomination." You know that Papists, Socinians, and Swedenborgians are commonly called *christian denominations*. Are you of opinion that some of these parties considered *as such* "can be esteemed real fearers of God, and believers in Jesus Christ"? And if christians are to be known as such, and to be married while they are in unscriptural connections, I would wish to know who is to judge of the christianity of such persons; whether their lovers or others. I suppose that their lovers have "the most intimate acquaintance with them," in order to form a judgment in that case. But we shall find them always very partial, and sometimes very erroneous in their judgment respecting that critical subject.

I must confess that I cannot understand the following sentence in your last letter. "I have known several persons who have differed from me in their sentiments as to certain particulars, whom yet I could not but esteem as real christians, who knew the saving truth and loved it, and had a conversation becoming the gospel." As you do not inform me what are those *certain particulars* wherein those good people have differed from you, I might think that such particulars do not include any part of the obedience of the gospel, since you declare that those people "had a conversation becoming the gospel." However, be it far from me to say that any of the most serious and devout professors "have a conversation becoming the gospel," while they live in disobedience to the institutions of the gospel. A conversation becoming the gospel and a decent and devout conversation may be yet two different things.

3. I rather wonder at the lame shift you made to turn away the force of my objections to your view of the Millennium, and the first resurrection. I was hoping that you would either confute the objections, or else, that you would own and acknowledge the force of them:—but I was disappointed in both these respects. Then I have thought, and still think that such is the state of the human mind, even in the best of men, that when it once attains a superiority in knowledge and and critical learning, it distains to yield an inch, to those whom it deems as its inferiors. Although I can sincerely declare that I have been much instructed and edified by the perusal of your writings, and do still highly esteem your understanding, judgment and knowledge of the scriptures; nevertheless, I do not think you infalible or perfect in your judgment, nor yet correct and sound in your sentiments of the Millennium, and the first resurrection. You refer me to the connection of Rev. xx. 11-12 with Math. xxv. 31-32, but this connection does not clash with my views of the

subject; for our Lord in that passage does not speak a word about the resurrection of the dead, but only of the glorious proceedings of the last judgment. The *resurrection of the dead*, and the *eternal judgment* are two different things, and the former must precede the latter. And as I find the words *hour* and *days*, in John iv. 21-23, 2 Cor. vi. 2 including a period of more than thousand years, I see no reason why the Millennium should be thought a period too long to be expressed by the same words. And I am the more confirmed in this view of the subject, when I find the second coming of Christ termed, "The *times* of restitution of all things." Acts iii. 21. I also might refer you to a very striking connection in the following texts. Rev. i. 10. Chap. xxi. 1 (Thes. iv. 16. But if this last text "does not shew whether the dead in Christ, or the wicked dead shall rise first";—I see no reason why the apostle affirms that "*the dead in Christ*" shall rise first. But if *all* the dead both *just* and *unjust* shall rise together before the *alive* shall be changed, I cannot find any propriety in the scriptural phrase, "*the dead in Christ* shall rise first." I have also the same reason to believe that *all* God's people shall *reign on earth*, as I have to believe that they are *all* made kings and priests unto God. Rev. v. 8, 9, 10. Chap. xx. 4-6. As to the binding of satan, you ask me "if I allow any sense to that expression." Yes, my dear Sir; I am persuaded that the Son of God is that "Angel coming down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit." (Rev. xx. 1. Compare with Chap. i. 18. Chap. xii. 7-9), and I believe that he will "bind satan for a thousand years, and that he will cast him into the bottomless pit, and will shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he shall deceive the nations no more till the thousand years shall be fulfilled; and after that he must be loosed a little season." And if any man will ask me "How can these things be?" I am ready to reply in the words of the learned and judicious Dr. Newton on the Prophecies. "Prudence as well as modesty requires that we should forbear all curious enquiries into the nature and condition of this future kingdom; as how satan should be bound for a thousand years, and afterwards loosed again, &c, &c. These are points which the Holy Spirit hath not thought fit to explain; and folly may easily ask more questions about them than wisdom can answer. Wisdom, in the mysterious things of God, and especially in the mysterious things of futurity, will still adhere to the words of scripture; and having seen the completion of so many particulars, will rest contented with believing that these also shall be, without knowing *how* they shall be. "It is of the nature of most prophecies not to be fully understood till they are fully accomplished, and especially prophecies relating to a state so different

from the present as the Millennium." Dissertations on the Prophecies. Vol. III. p. 252. And when we consider the imperfect knowledge we have of *future events* it is natural to expect some difficulty in understanding the *predictions* of them. A disputer might have raised many objections against the literal sense of the ancient predictions respecting the first coming of Christ; yet his coming shewed that the most mysterious parts were to be literally fulfilled.

With regard to your objection on 1 Cor. xv. 26, I still find this argument starts an objection which is common to both opinions. For let the saints be raised when they may, still it is after the resurrection when death is destroyed that all the wicked are cast into the lake of fire. Let my dear friend remove this objection from himself, and he will have also removed it from his unworthy correspondent.

I shall here add a few Arguments more, which lead me to differ from your view of the Millennium, and the first resurrection.

1. If I am not to believe that what is declared in Rev. xx. 4, 5, 6, will literally come to pass; I see no reason why I am to believe that what is declared in ver. 11, 12, will literally take place. Some, I suppose, have run the metaphorical sense, even to this length! But I have often thought and still think that no plain Christian of common capacities, without the help of some skilful and artful expositor would never have understood *the first resurrection* in a metaphorical sense. Such explication of scripture would be highly pleasing to our modern deists and philosophical writers.

2. Your view of this subject clashes with itself, by taking *the first resurrection* in a *metaphorical sense*, and the *thousand years* in a *literal sense*. I think Dr. Priestley, in former years, was more consistent with himself concerning this subject, for he was then of opinion that the *first resurrection* signifies only the *revival of religion*; and that the *thousand years* should be interpreted *prophetically*; then every *day* would signify a *year*, and the Millennium would last for 365,000 years! This opinion is, indeed, to be found in his *Institutes*, published many years ago, but latterly he has inclined to the *personal reign of Christ*, as you may see in his *Farewel Sermon*, preached at Hackney previous to his immigration to America.

3. The literal sense of the first resurrection and the Millennium may be traced up to *Papias*, a bishop of a church in Hierapolis, and a disciple of John, who wrote the Revelation. It also appears that this sense prevailed until about the time of the rise of Antichrist, when it gave place to the prospect of reigning in this mortal and imperfect life. See Newton on the Prophecies, vol. 3, p. 209-213.

4. When Christ is spoken of as destroying the Man of

Sin, who sits in the Temple of God, the context leads me to think of His *personal coming*, 2 Thes. ii. 1-9, but according to your views Antichrist will be finally destroyed a thousand years before His coming.

5. Your opinion of the Millennium carries in it a strong reflection on the hope and expectation of the primitive Christians in their sufferings and tribulations, and coincides with the popular delusion of the present day; for every popular party that I know of, is full of expectation that its own distinct way in the Christian profession shall soon prevail over every other party, and over all the world!

6. It would be a very poor encouragement to sufferers for Christ's sake to rejoice in affliction and death, in hope that some other persons in time to come should live happy and reign, on account of their calamities. Our Lord made no use at all (as I can recollect) of such arguments to encourage His followers in their sufferings for His sake; but the self-denied obedience, labour of love, and sufferings of His people are always personally connected with the immortal reward in the most literal sense. But this view of the subject clashes with your view of Rev. v. 9, 10, chap. xx. 4, 6.

7. I cannot reconcile your view of the Millennium with that excellent passage in your book on the Commission. second edition, p. 200, 207. Though I have more objections to your views of this subject, I shall not trouble you with them, as I find at the close of your letter that you are ready to account my questions and arguments, as "means of gendering strife and contention among brethren." However, the brethren in North Wales can bear testimony that the investigation and discussion of this subject has been productive of much good, and godly edification which is by faith.

I have showed your last letter to our brother, Edmund Francis, of Carnarvon. We are both of the same opinion respecting this subject, and our Welsh brethren in general seem to be of the same view.

You intimate that you wish to know "What it is I condemn in Mr. Fuller's Pamphlet on the Great Question." But I find that this subject must be reserved for another opportunity, as I have neither time nor paper to enlarge here at present. I suppose that I have told you formerly that my Remarks are composed in reference to the *Welsh translation* of Mr. Fuller's Pamphlet. I never saw the original, and for that reason I cannot refer you to the pages. There are some excellent passages in Mr. Fuller's Pamphlet, as I acknowledge in my Preface to my Remarks; and for that reason I think it much more pitiable to find the author jumbling several things together as he does in the said and same pamphlet. And I am still of opinion that he has not only left the Great Question un-

answered, but enveloped the subject in darkness and confusion.

I shall conclude this long letter, and shall be very thankful if you please to show it to your colleagues, with my Christian respects to both of them, and accept the same yourself, from

Yours affectionately in the Gospel,

JOHN R. JONES.

PS.—My colleague writes with me in Christian respects to you, and all the church in Edinburgh. We are both glad to hear that you are now engaged in publishing your whole works. May the Lord bless your labours to promote primitive Christianity and the cause of pure and undefiled religion.

Books on English Baptist Church History.

THE Baptist Bibliography, published 1916, 1922, by the Kingsgate Press, catalogues all sources from 1525 to 1837, manuscript and printed.

Seven volumes of the Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society contain much original material. And in Welsh, the Transactions of the Welsh Baptist Historical Society. The Hanserd Knollys Society published early records of the Broadmead, Fenstanton and Hexham churches, with Tracts on Liberty of Conscience, 1614-1661. William McGlothlin edited in 1911 several Baptist Confessions of Faith from all parts of the world, 1609-1879. The works of John Smyth, 1603-1612 were published by the Cambridge University Press in two volumes, 1915. Roger Williams' Bloody Tenet of Persecution by the Hanserd Knollys Society in 1848. Stinton gathered by 1719 much early material, which was printed hurriedly by his brother-in-law Thomas Crosby in four volumes, 1738-1740.

Modern studies of origins are: The Early English Dissenters [1550-1641] with illustrative documents; by Champlin Burrage, 1912: John Smith, Thomas Helwys, and the first Baptist church in England; by Walter H. Burgess, 1911. Benjamin Evans in 1862-4 did good work in his Early English Baptists. Lofton in 1899 dealt with the English Baptist Reformation (1609-1641); and Shakespeare in 1906 with Baptist and Congregational Pioneers.

The parochial reports of 1669 and the licence documents of 1672 were published by Lyon Turner as Original Records (three volumes, Fisher Unwin, 1911-14). Evans' census of 1715 is in the B. H. S. Transactions, II, 95. Studies of 1750 are in volumes VI and VII for England, Wales, and the colonies. Thompson's census of 1773 is in the Congregational Society's Transactions, volume V.