

## POWELL, VAVASOR (1617 - 1670), Puritan divine

**Name:** Vavasor Powell  
**Date of birth:** 1617  
**Date of death:** 1670  
**Spouse:** Katherine Powell (née Gerard)  
**Spouse:** Joan Quarrel  
**Parent:** Penelope Powell (née Vavasor)  
**Parent:** Richard Powell  
**Gender:** Male  
**Occupation:** Puritan divine  
**Area of activity:** Religion  
**Author:** Robert Tudur Jones

Born in 1617, at Cnwclas ('Knucklas'), parish of Heyop, Radnorshire, the son of Richard Powell and his wife, Penelope, daughter of William Vavasor of Newtown (Grazebrook and Rylands, *Visitation of Shropshire*, ii, 324, 407, 468-9; C. B. Northcliffe, *Visitation of Yorkshire*, 329-31). He spent some time at Clun as schoolmaster (*Examen*, 16), if not as curate (*Life*, 124) with his great-uncle Erasmus Powell. Anthony Wood makes him a student of Jesus College, Oxford, from 1634 (*Athenae Oxonienses*, 169, ii, 343), but college records do not include his name. He was converted to the Puritan position when at Clun by the reading of Richard Sibbes, *The Bruised Reede*, and the preaching of **Walter Cradoc** (*Life*, 1-14, 116). He was arrested in 1640 for disturbing the peace by preaching (*Life*, 126-7, 10-11), and in 1642 appeared before the assizes at Prestatyn on charges of 'Inconformity,' but found not guilty (*Examen*, 10).

By 1642 he was in London (*Life*, 11), and in 1644 became vicar of Dartford, Kent (G. A. Tait, *The Church and Vicars of Dartford*, 1909, 26). He resigned 7 January 1646 (E. Hasted, *History of Kent*, i, 230). On 11 September 1646, he was granted a testimonial of approval by the Westminster assembly, after being named by the Committee for Plundered Ministers to preach in Wales (Bodl. MS. 325 (68)). He was with **Thomas Mytton**'s forces attacking Beaumaris in the autumn of 1648 (**Phillips**, *Civil War in Wales*, ii, 382-401). On 2 December 1649 he preached before Thomas Foot, lord mayor of London, and on 28 February 1650, before the House of Commons. Under the Act of Propagation he was an approver, and his name was closely linked with the institution of itinerant preachers (*Strena*, title-page). Powell consistently denied the numerous accusations made against him of misappropriating tithe-money. His adherence to Fifth Monarchy doctrines brought him into opposition to the Protectorate. His denunciation of Cromwell on 18 December 1653 (Thurloe, *State Papers*, i, 641) and the day following led to his arrest on 21 December. Released on 24 December, he fled to Wales in January 1654 to organize opposition to Cromwell, but put aside his differences to quell a Royalist rising in 1655 (*A true and full Relation of the great Rising*, 1655, 4). His opposition continued in the protest called 'A Word for God,' presented in November 1655 and signed by 322 people, which alienated many Welsh Puritans as well as the government authorities.

Powell was arrested on 23 April 1660 (*Life*, 129) and again on 30 July (*Cal. S. P. Dom.*, 1660-1, 123, 135). By September 1661 he was in the Fleet Prison, London, but removed in September 1662 to Southsea castle (ibid., 1661-2, 463; *Life*, 132). He was not released until November 1667 (*Life*, 132, 134). In March 1668 he preached at Blue Anchor Alley, London (*Cal. S. P. Dom.*, 1667-8, 318-9), and revived his Montgomeryshire associations (G. Lyon Turner, *Original Records*, i, 4). He was arrested in October 1668, after preaching at Merthyr Tydfil, and twice examined at Cowbridge (*Life*, 135-41, 177-82), and finally at Cardiff Town Hall, 13 January 1669 (*Life*, 182-8). His case was moved to the Court of Common Pleas, before which he appeared on 22 May and was committed to the Fleet prison on 24 May 1669 (*Life*, 188-9). He died after a painful illness on 27 October 1670, aged 53 (*Life*, 189-90), and was buried in Bunhill Fields burial ground.

His first wife was Joan Quarrel, widow of Paul Quarrel of Presteign, and his second wife was Katherine, fifth daughter of Gilbert Gerard of Crewood, Chester; she survived him (G. Ormerod, *History of Cheshire*, ii, 132) and later became the wife of **John Evans** (1628 - 1700). Powell had no children.

His published works were: 1, *The Scriptures Concord* (London, 1646); 2, *God the Father Glorified* (London, 1649); 3, *Christ and Moses Excellency* (London, 1650); 4, *Saving Faith* (London, 1651); 5, *Christ Exalted*, 1651 (printed with no. 4); 6, *Three Hymnes [sic]* (London, 1650); 7, *Common-Prayer-Book No Divine Service* (London, 1660); 8, *The Bird in the Cage* (London, 1661); 9, *The Sufferers-Catechism*, 1664; 10, *A New and Useful Concordance* (London, 1671); 11, *The Life and Death of Mr. Vavasor Powell*, 1671 (including his autobiography), 1-19; 12, *Divine Love* (London, 1677); 13, *The Golden Sayings ... of Mr. Vavasor Powell* (n.d., one leaf - collected by John Conniers); see also **NLW MS 366A: Vavasor Powell and others: Poetry** and **NLW MS 1961A: Vavasor Powell, &c.** .

### Author

**Reverend Principal Robert Tudur Jones**, (1921 - 1998)

### Sources

Edward Bagshaw, *The Life and Death of Mr. Vavasor Powell, that faithful minister and confessor of Jesus Christ. Wherein his eminent conversion, laborious, successful ministry, excellent conversation, confession of faith, worthy sayings, choice experiences, various sufferings, and other remarkable passages, in his life, and at his death, are faithfully recorded for publick benefit* (1671)

Alexander Griffith, *Strena Vavasoriensis a New Years gift for the Welsh itinerants or a hue and cry after Mr. Vavasor Powell* (1654, 1915)

*Vavasoris Examen et Purgamen or Mr V. Powell's impartiall triall who being apprehended upon the late hue and cry raised after him, hath appealed to God and his country, and is found not guilty* (London 1654)

David Davies, *Vavasor Powell. The Baptist evangelist of Wales in the seventeenth century* (London 1896)

*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*

### Further Reading

Edward Bagshaw, David Richard (trnsL.), William Richards (trnsL.), *Hanes bywyd a marwolaeth y Parchedig Mr. Fafasor Powel y gweinidog a'r milwr dewrwyh hwnnw o eiddo Iesu Grist* (Caerfyrddin 1772)

John Howells, *The history of the old Baptist Church at Olchon, together with the life and martyrdom of Sir John Oldcastle, the Lord Cobham; and the life of Mr. Vavasor Powel* (Aberdare 1887)

Wikipedia Article: **Vavasor Powell**

### Works

Vavasor Powell, *Tyred a chroeso at Iesu Grist: sef ymddiddan rhwng yr Iesu a'r publican, yr hyn sydd er addysg a chysur i'r Cristion gwar* (Caerlun 1767)

Vavasor Powell, *Ymddiddan rhwng yr Arglwydd Iesu a'r Pharisead hunan-gyfiawn, yr hwn sydd yn pwysu ar ei weithredoedd ei hun* (Caerfyrddin 1768)

Vavasor Powell, *Canwyll Crist, sef, Ymddiddan rhwng yr Arglwydd Iesu ar credadyn ammheus sydd yn gweled i anheilyngdod yr hynn sydd er addysc a chysur, i'r penaf o bechaduriaid. A ddychwelo at yr Arglwydd mewn gwirionedd* (Caerlleon 1767)

William Perkins, Vavasor Powell, Oliver Thomas, *Cyfarwydd-deb i'r anghyfarwydd, sef, Llyfr yn cynnwys, 1 Agoriad byrr ar Weddi'r Arglwydd: 2 Ymddidanion rhwng y Carwr a'r Cymro: 3 Ymddiddanion rhwng Crist a'r Publican, rhwng Crist a'r Pharisead, a rhwng Crist a'r Credadyn ammheus, sef canwyll Crist. 4 Amryw reolau duwiol* (Llundain 1677)

Oliver Thomas, Vavasor Powell, *Drych, y Cristion: neu Gadwedigol Ffydd, wedi ei Datgyddio mewn Ymddiddanion. I. Rhwng y Carwr a'r Cymro: Iw Gymell i Addoli Duw yn ei Dy. II. Rhwng Iesu a'r Publican. I Gyfarwyddo y Pechadur sy'n gweled ei Anheilyngdod. III. Rhwng Iesu a'r Phariseaid. I Argyhoeddi y Rhagrithiwr, sy'n pwysu ar waith ei hun. IV. Rhwng Iesu a'r Credadyn Ammheus. I Gysuro y Gwir Gristion* (Dublin 1766)

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