

JONES, JOHN (1820 - 1907), minister (B) and historian

Name: John Jones
Date of birth: 1820
Date of death: 1907
Spouse: Anne Jones (née Rogers)
Spouse: Anne Jones (née Roberts)
Child: Annie E. Skewis (née Jones)
Parent: James Jones
Gender: Male
Occupation: minister (B) and historian
Area of activity: History and Culture; Religion
Author: Reginald Campbell Burn Oliver

Born at Lower Trelowgoed Farm, Cefn-llys, Radnors., 10 May 1820, elder son of the second marriage of James Jones, tenant farmer and pastor (1829-60) of Rock Chapel, Llanbadarn Fawr, in the same county. After scant formal local schooling he farmed with his father and after his confession of Christ in 1840 assisted him in his church work, including preaching. Four years later on the recommendation of William Jenkins, pastor of Dolau Baptist chapel, Nantmel, he was accepted as one of the 16 students preparing for the ministry under **principal Thomas Thomas** (1805 - 1881) at the Pontypool Baptist College. He was ordained in 1847 and was given the oversight of the churches at Gladestry and Evenjobb. A chapel had been built at the former through the efforts of his father in 1842, and one was built by John's efforts at Evenjobb in 1849. John also conducted a day school in Gladestry chapel, the salary derived from the Edward Gough charity. In 1849 he married Anne Roberts (born 1825 in Cheltenham but of a Methodist family) of Abbey Cwmhir. For a few years before her death she kept a girls' school in Kington. She and her husband had eight children, six of whom died young.

John Jones held pastorates at Usk (1850-53), Corsham, Wiltshire (1853-55), and Towcester, Northamptonshire (1856-61). Late in 1861 he accepted the pastorate of Rock, vacant by his father's death in 1860, but he lived in Kington until, in 1867, a larger manse was built at Rock where until 1888 he lived with his second wife Anne (born Rogers at Rotherhithe, Surrey, in 1825). He was instrumental in building chapels at Dolau, Llanfihangel Rhydithon, where he was pastor for 11 years, in 1870, and at Llandrindod Wells, where his second wife died in 1890 at the house into which they had moved from Rock two years earlier. In 1891 he gave up the Rock and devoted the rest of his pastoral life to his chapel in Llandrindod, until old age forced him to retire in 1897 to a less active life, though he conducted a service at the Friends' meeting house in Llandrindod within five weeks of his death on 1 March 1907. He left one daughter, Mrs. Annie E. Skewis (died 1910) and a son.

He travelled widely in Wales and in England to collect funds to clear the debts of the chapels which he had helped to build. In Wales and the Border he was known as Jones the Rock, and was described as ' the nonconformist bishop of Radnorshire.' He published two slight volumes of sermons which are of no great merit. His only valuable written work was his *History of the Baptists in Radnorshire* on which he started before 1876, but was unable to finish, owing to the pressure of pastoral work until 1895. He relied on printed sources such as the works of **Thomas Rees** and **Joshua Thomas** for the early period, but for the period 1795 to 1895 he depended on his personal knowledge and on the reminiscences of his father and his own friends about the development of the Baptist cause in the county. Despite careless proof-reading and the lack of index the volume remains indispensable for students of the history of the Baptist cause in mid-Wales.

Author

Reginald Campbell Burn Oliver, (1908 - 1993)

Sources

- Jones, *The History of the Baptists in Radnorshire* (1895), (1895)
- Baptist Record*, 1906
- Llandrindod Wells Baptist chapel archives from 1897
- Population censuses, 1851 (Usk), 1861 (Towcester), 1871 (Llanbadarn Fawr, Radns.)
- Hereford Times*, July 1876
- The Radnor Express*, March 1907
- correspondence with his descendants

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