

## JONES, EVAN (Gurnos; 1840 - 1903), Congregational and Baptist minister, poet, critic, lecturer, and eisteddfod conductor

**Name:** Evan Jones  
**Pseudonym:** Gurnos  
**Date of birth:** 1840  
**Date of death:** 1903  
**Child:** Giraldu Jones  
**Parent:** Mary Jones  
**Parent:** John Jones  
**Gender:** Male  
**Occupation:** Congregational and Baptist minister, poet, critic, lecturer, and eisteddfod conductor  
**Area of activity:** Education; Eisteddfod; Literature and Writing; Poetry; Religion  
**Author:** Evan David Jones

Born 14 April 1840 at Hendrelywarch (others say Penrhipyn), Gwernogle, Carmarthenshire, the son of John and Mary Jones. The family removed to Ystalyfera about 1848. Within two years his mother died, and he lost his father five years later. He was educated at a school kept by the Rev. Daniel Evans at the Plough and Harrow in Gwernogle, and at the works school at Ystalyfera. He became interested in poetry and the strict metres at an early age. At the age of 20 he began to preach at Gurnos, Ystalyfera. He returned to his homeland for further education, before entering Carmarthen Presbyterian College in 1863.

In 1867 he was ordained pastor of Tabernacl church, Treorchy, before moving north to take charge of the churches of Drws-y-Coed and Tal-y-sarn, Caernarfonshire, in 1872. Whilst settled there he married (1875), but his wife died at the birth of a son in 1876. He passed under a cloud, and in about two years returned to South Wales, left the Congregational ministry, was baptized at Llwyn-y-pia, and in 1881 was admitted to the Baptist ministry at the Tongwynlais Association. He was a pastor of Baptist churches at Betws (Bridgend) (1882-6) and the Temple, Newport, Monmouth (1887-91). By 1892, he was living at Porthcawl, though he is said to have taken charge of churches at Pyle and Bristol about this time. In 1893 he was living without pastoral charge at Pyle and had returned to the Congregational ministry.

About 1898 he remarried, and in 1900 assumed the pastorate of the congregational church at Llanbradach. He died 16 December 1903, and was buried at Groes-wen 22 December 1903.

He won bardic chairs at Blackwood, 1870; Ystradyfodwg, 1871; Bangor, 1874; Cardiff, 1879; Racine, Wisconsin, 1881; and Rhyl, 1892. The Bangor and Rhyl eisteddfodau were national. At Pontypridd national eisteddfod (1893) the majority of the adjudicators placed an ode by **Ceulanydd** first and an ode by Gurnos second; another adjudicator, **Gwilym Cowlyd** created a scene on the platform by protesting against the award. He secured the prize for a drama on **Owain Tudur** at the Caernarvon National Eisteddfod, 1894. He excelled in shorter poems, proverbial stanzas, and poems for recitation. He was one of the chief public lecturers of his day, and for the last twenty years of his life was the leading Welsh eisteddfod conductor. He published the following works: *Rhian-Awdl: 'Alis Arthur'* (Aberaman, 1871); *Awdl Y Beibl ... [a] Drama gysegredig ar adeiladu Jerusalem* (Caernarfon, 1875); *Greddf* (Treherbert, 1879); *Caniadau Gurnos* (Cwmafon, 1885); and *Caneuon ... Llyfr iii* (Cwmafon, 1890). In this book reference is made to the sale of the second book, but the running title has 'Ail Lyfr Gurnos' throughout.

At Tal-y-sarn, he started a newspaper entitled *John Jones*, but only one number, January 1878, appeared.

His son Giraldu began to preach but did not continue. He was an accountant at a colliery (*Tywysydd y Plant*, 1940, 222).

### Author

**Evan David Jones**, (1903 - 1987)

### Sources

*Y Geninen* (Gwyl Dewi), 1904

*The Congregational Year Book*

*Baptist Handbook*

O. Llew Owain, *Hanes y ddrama yng Nghymru, 1850-1943* (Liverpool 1948), 59-60, 93

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