

JONES, JOHN TYWI (1870 - 1948), Baptist minister and journalist

Name: John Tywi Jones
Date of birth: 1870
Date of death: 1948
Spouse: Elizabeth Mary Jones (née Owen)
Spouse: Ellen Jones (née Davies)
Parent: Rachel Jones
Parent: Thomas Jones
Gender: Male
Occupation: Baptist minister and journalist
Area of activity: Literature and Writing; Printing and Publishing; Religion
Author: David Jenkins

Born 7 January 1870 at Henllys Lodge near Llandoverly, Carmarthenshire, son of Thomas and Rachel Jones. He attended the British School at Llandoverly and then went to work on local farms before moving to Glamorgan where he worked underground and on farms. He spent time in Aberdare; which was an important printing and publishing centre in that period and where there were 18 printing houses at the beginning of the 20th c., as well as periods in the Rhondda and Merthyr Tydfil. He began to preach at Calfaria Baptist chapel Aberdare where **Rev. Thomas Price**, editor of the radical but short-lived newspaper *Y Gwron* was minister until his death in 1888. Through his own efforts Tywi Jones received further education at the Trecynon Seminary, **Rees Jenkin Jones**' school and proceeded to the Bangor Baptist college where **Gwili** (John Jenkins, and E Cefni Jones were his contemporaries. He was ordained at Llanfair and Pentraeth, Anglesey, in 1897 and remained there until 1906 when he received a call to Peniel, Glais, Swansea Valley. He ministered there energetically until the beginning of 1935.

From an early age he had contributed occasionally to *Tarian y Gweithiwr* published in Aberdare and in some sense a successor to *Y Gwron*; he later contributed regularly under the name 'Llewelyn'. Though a critic of political socialism, his Christian and liberal principles made him an unflinching advocate of workers' rights. He was a fervid supporter of the Welsh language and an ardent patriot. He became an early member of Plaid Cymru, a supporter of the eisteddfod and a member of the Gorsedd of Bards. Of the Welsh language he said: ' Nothing relating to the nation is more important than its language. The wealth of the life and ideals of a nation are enshrined in the language and literature. Poor indeed is the nation which does not possess a language worth preserving nor a literature worth nurturing '. And again, ' Our language is alive today ... It is sufficiently alive to live if Wales so wishes. If we neglect it, we will have broken our communion with the best of the nation's life in the past '. Increasing anglicization led *Tarian y Gweithiwr* to include some English reports. J. Tywi Jones formed the Tarian Publishing Co., Ltd. to safeguard the newspaper as a Welsh -language publication and he became the editor from 1914 until its demise in 1934. He was a convinced pacifist and a liberal in his theology.

He wrote a number of plays, some of which deal with the language and Welshness, e.g. *Dic Sion Dafydd* (1913), and stories for children and adults, together with some theological works, e.g. *Y Bedydd Ysgrythurol* (1900). He published numerous essays in *Seren Gomer* and hymns in *Llawlyfr Moliant*.

He married twice: (1) Ellen, daughter of Herbert Davies, a tailor of Aberdare; she died in 1915; and (2) **Elizabeth Mary Owen** ('Moelona') in 1917. There were 2 daughters of the first marriage. He retired in 1935 and he and 'Moelona' moved to Newquay, Cardiganshire. He declared his support for Plaid Cymru in *Who's Who in Wales* (1937) and listed his leisure activities as gardening and climbing. He died 18 July 1948 and was buried at Aion cemetery, Birchgrove, Llansamlet.

Author

David Jenkins

Sources

Seren Cymru, 30 July 1948

The Baptist Union of Wales Handbook and Diary, 1949

Noel Gibbard, 'Tywi yng Nghwm Tawe', in Hywel Teifi Edwards, ed., *Cwm Tawe* (Llandysul 1993), 240-65

J. Tywi Jones papers at NLW

personal information from Noel Gibbard

Further Reading

Priodas Golygydd y Darian a Moelona, *Y Darian*, 6 Medi 1917

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