

THREE ROCKS IN THE NIGHT - A WELSH WIDOW'S HOMECALL

Fanny Jones

Extracts from

Cofiant Mrs Fanny Jones, Gweddw y Diweddar Barch. J. Jones, Talysarn

by

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Translated

by

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¹ O. Llew. Owain, *Cofiant Mrs. Fanny Jones, Gweddw y Diweddar Barch. J. Jones, Talysarn* (Machynlleth a Caernarfon, 1907). Hereinafter *Cofiant Fanny Jones*.

THREE ROCKS IN THE NIGHT

As Welsh people we are under a great debt to this woman, ...we can never measure the work she did in being an instrument to give 'the People's Preacher' to the people...In her self denial, Wales heard a message from Heaven - her efforts facilitated the way for Wales to be drenched by the irresistible eloquence of the 'hero from Talysarn'.²

In May 1877, [Fanny] went to Llandinam to comfort her son, the Revd D. Lloyd Jones, MA, who had newly lost his wife. When she had been there for about three months, she got an inflammation of the lungs, and after being in bed for a short while, she died at the fair age of 72 years - twenty years after her dear husband, i.e. 13 August 1877.

While in Llandinam, she was quite calm and cheerful and yet, one day she said she thought she had come there to die. It was as if she had received a private message from the spiritual world. Around five days before her death she related her experience to the Revd Daniel Rowlands, MA, Bangor, as spiritual as ever. In the seiat (fellowship meeting) that night, the reverend gentleman came to her and said, "Well, Mrs Jones, bach, what is on your mind tonight?" "Oh," she said, lifting up her hand, "I am very glad, Mr Rowlands, that I have such a God to trust in - the same God I have here as I had at home - a God whose faithfulness I can trust in every place. Blessed be His name for ever! for ever!"

And she told her daughter Fanny one day, "I came here, my girl, because I am anxious in your company. Thomas told me you were poorly, and I was afraid for you to come home and leave your brother in his trouble, and his two little children in the care of strangers, I will help you to raise this dear little baby." On the last Sabbath of her life, she said to her daughter Fanny, "The time has come to an end." "What do you mean?" asked her daughter. "Don't you know that it is twenty years since your father died; yes, the twenty years are up." It is appropriate to mention here the strange coincidence relating to the twenty years. When John Jones was moving to death, he called Fanny Jones to his bedside, and naturally she

² Ibid. 43.

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was greatly troubled, and seeing her, he said, "Don't break your heart, my girl, you will come to heaven to me." "Oh," she said, "What breaks my heart is the fear that I won't be able to spend eternity with you. I shan't mind if my Heavenly Father leaves me behind for twenty years, as long as I can come after you then, John bach." "Oh, you will, you will," he said, "don't let the devil pain you, Fanny bach."³

It is glorious to see God's saints sailing for their home from the wilderness of this world - turning their backs on the tears and sighs, and facing endless blessedness, leaving a world of great afflictions and going to the eternal paradise, ending mourning and beginning bliss. Our subject when leaving this world was like a noble vessel going into the heavenly haven from the stormy ocean of life; and the virtues flowered so beautifully in her life like white banners on the vessel, and waving quietly under the gentle touching breezes of the land 'where the gentle sky is always clear'.

When as if on the doorstep of another world, she called her daughter Fanny, and said to her, "What do you think of your mother's faith?" "Oh," she said, "It is a true faith," - and Mrs fanny Jones added, "I had three rocks to rest on through the night," and raising up her right hand she said, "here they are - and I give unto them eternal life,"⁴ and the other, she said, lifting up her left hand, "and they shall never be lost;"⁵ and the third, she said, while beating her hand on her heart, "none shall pluck them out of my hand"⁶ - "Blessed be God" - "Oh my dear Jesus."

At this, David entered, and she said to him again, "I was telling your sister that I have three rocks through the night," and then she began shouting - "Glory ever for the might of the method [of salvation]." "What do you think of your mother's faith, David bach?" "It is a splendid one," he said. At that time, Mr Davies, Llandinam came in, and seeing him, she raised her hand and said, "Yes, Mr Davies, everyone in these circumstances are on the same level, aren't they - on equality, isn't it?" "They are, Mrs Jones," he replied, "but you will soon be on higher ground than I." On going down the stairs, he said with tears running down his cheeks, "Pray for the Lord to take her to Himself, she is too good for this world - yes, too perfect indeed -

³ Ibid. 57.

⁴ John 10: 28a.

⁵ John 10: 28b.

⁶ John 10: 28c.

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let her go." Isn't it a glorious death? - to die with every certainty that 'the everlasting arms were under her', and her entrance abundant into the glory of her Lord.

This is what the Revd D. Lloyd Jones, MA said of her death: "One night, the door of my room was knocked and I was told she was worse. I got up and went to the room, and going behind her, I lifted her up to a sitting position by putting my arms under her armpits; and while I was holding her up, she looked towards heaven, and her immortal spirit flew to the unseen world."

By this time her industrious and troublous life was over - a life of faithfulness and incomparable comfort to her husband. Her spirit flew to the 'One who gave it',⁷ and she left the world with the Great Sun of righteousness shining on her soul.⁸

Histories are speckled with men of philosophy having been destroyed by petulant wives, like Titian, Carlyle, Dickens, Thackeray, etc, but here is one whose wife was every comfort to him. One who had been a blessing to him, and not a curse, one who had helped and not hindered him. 'Fanny' kept thoroughly pure to him, and she assisted him in all the circumstances of his life. She did not give one minute of hindrance to her husband but aimed to facilitate every part of his life. Sir Romilly Allen once said, "Nothing gives me greater benefit throughout my life than correct observations, good judgement and the sincere backing of a kind and sensible woman." The immortal John Jones could have used exactly the right words - there wasn't ever a more apt citation to anyone.

After all the weary work, a life full of effort, in a troubled age, her spirit was taken away to 'swim in love and peace', and these lines would be her experience:

After the cares of a difficult journey
And thousands of tribulations,
A pleasant balm, of heavenly kind
To the weak and weary, a bosom,
We shall rest in heaven.

⁷ Ecclesiastes 12: 7.

⁸ Malachi 4: 2.