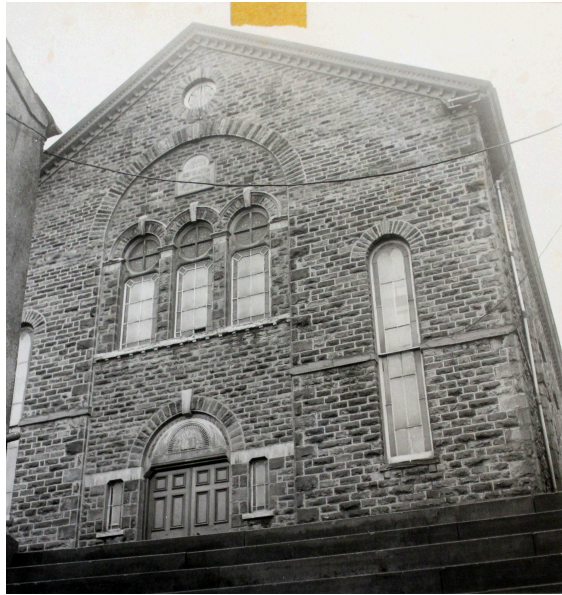


## A Brief History of Bethania Chapel from 1854 to 1900.



Bethania Chapel (courtesy Glamorgan Archives)  
The Chapel Lease

At the beginning of the year 1852 the members who lived in the village and Abernant started talking about building a chapel in the middle of the place; the third branch of Carmel and, before it was completed, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of December 1852 the Lease for Bethania Chapel was drawn up and was signed on the 12<sup>th</sup> of November 1853. Those on the lease were John Jenkins, Coed Owen, Cantref parish, Breconshire, farmer (and the owner (??) of the said land at the time) and David Davies, Ynysllwyd House, Aberdare and William Griffiths, Ironmonger, Aberdare. The chapel, vestry etc stand on what was then known as “Cae Tirion” property of Ynysllwyd and measuring nine hundred and twenty-six square yards and the Lease was to run for 999 years from the year 1852, at a rate of £7 14s. 6d. a year to be paid in two half-yearly instalments on the 1<sup>st</sup> of November and the 1<sup>st</sup> of May. The following were to be built on the land— one Chapel, or House of Worship, one Vestry or Schoolroom belonging to the Chapel, together with a Stable to be used by persons attending the chapel: also, two dwelling houses and the small buildings necessary for such buildings.

That, briefly, is the content of Bethania’s Lease, which is safe in the Concord Chest in Pontypridd. I do not think that many people know that the entrance to the Chapel was originally to be from Monk Street, behind the Black Lion but Mr. Griffiths and friends agreed with the owner of the Lion to change two pieces of land, the landlord to give a piece of land south of his house the present entrance to the chapel, for the piece of land behind the hotel, where the empty brewing house stands at present. This is not an unfounded assumption, but a fact that was published in the “Gwladgarwr” 54 years ago and an annoyance to some neighbours at that time.

We can now start on the brief history of Bethania, and it will indeed be brief, as there are no church records at all, apart from the names of the members and their contributions etc. It branched out from Carmel at the beginning of 1854, but why the branch was called Bethania we do not know unless it was named after the Bethania near Jerusalem, where Jesus often loved to visit, which shows that he had friends and disciples there, the ones he loved. We believe the name means “House of Poverty” and that lepers and paupers inhabited it at the time, although they do not reside there today, although the poor and poverty remain, as they do in Bethania, Aberdare.

Before Bethania opened, the Methodists of Aberdare and Abernant went up to Carmel and among the villagers was a large family the Griffiths, the biggest merchants in the place at the time and the father a respected deacon, generous and influential who died before the division. This was a large

family who moved to Aberdare from the parish of Llanwynno where the father was a farmer and lived in a place called Nantyrysfa (a bastardisation we think of the original Nant-y-Llysfa) and as proof that they lived there, the notice of the death of the old gentleman's widowed sister refers to her as being "previously of Nantyrysfa." Some of the members of this large family (including Mr Evan Griffiths, the father, Ann, the mother and eight sons, Thomas, William, Lewis, Evan, Jenkin, Daniel, David, and Griffith) were leading figures in the building of Bethania and under the leadership of Mr W Griffiths, Ironmonger (whom we believe to be a deacon at Carmel) this flock came down to the village of Aberdare.

William was the second son and the only Ironmonger in the village at the time. He had been unfortunate enough to lose his eye but could see better with one than most people can see with two. He was not a great talker but spoke purposefully and was a hard worker who worked quietly and without complaint.

Money started being borrowed with interest to build the chapel on the 17<sup>th</sup> of March 1853 and we are sure that the first money received was from Mrs. Morgan, Y Graig, the wife of William Morgan (the poet) who was also the chapel's first Secretary. The interest on the loan was 4% and the sums were as follows:

		<b>Receipts</b>	<b>£.</b>	<b>d.</b>			
March 17, 1853	Mrs. Morgan, Highland Place, Aberdare		500	00			
Oct. 25	From Trefecha Fund		500	00			
2 Jan. 1854	From Trefecha Fund		200	00			
Dec. 31 1853	John Jenkins, Merthyr		200	00			
<b>Total</b>			£1400	00			
		<b>Payments</b>	<b>£.</b>	<b>s.</b>	<b>d.</b>		
Dec. 1852	For Chapel Lease		3	05			
Dec. 9	Mr. Griffiths for transferring the Lease			13			
Jun. 11 1853	Payment to D Evans, contractor		238	01			
Aug. 12	For 100 Collection Books		16	06			
Jan. 2 1854	For Stamps		2	02	08		
Jan. 4 1854	Mr. Bassett for the Deeds		5	05	10		
Apr. 4.	For Gas Fittings and Candlesticks		25				
	Bills Mr Evan Griffiths for the Chapel		986				
	Again, for the Houses, Stable, Room etc.		300				
	Again, for the Plans, Specifications etc.		30				
	For Extra Work – Walls, Stove Flue etc.		26	10			
	Allowances for alternative plan alterations		33	10			
	Paid to Wm. Griffiths expense re: D. Evans in Merthyr		1	15	06		
Apr. 1	Paid for License to preach			02	06		
	Paid to Thomas Evans for the Clock		6	10			
<b>Total</b>			£1,659	12			

We can see that the late Mr. Evans, The Poplars, High Street was the Chapel's first architect, and the builder was one David Evans who undertook the work for the sum of £1,600, but before June he had failed to or was afraid to proceed, and he was released from his obligation and paid for the work he had done. The architect finished the work by employing builders daily.

By the opening day of April 14<sup>th</sup>, 1854, the membership had increased to one hundred and by the end of the year they had reached 150. The three first names in the old book are Ann Griffiths, the Shop and her two sons William and Lewis (rest in peace) and the seventh name is W. Edwards, the Nailer

and Mary his wife to follow. We can but remember the names of Mrs Lewis, the Boot, and Mrs Elias her daughter who was Mrs Roberts, Treforest's mother, the widow of the late James Roberts Sq.; David Jones, Timber merchant and his wife who was Circumstantial Treasurer to the Chapel for over twenty years; John Davies the Cobbler (the Rev. John Davies) and his wife Sarah, Eunis Rees (Dyfed mother), David Griffith (father of our most senior deacon at present); Margaret Evans (mother of the chapel's present Evan's); W. Morgan (the poet) the chapel's first secretary and his wife Mary; W. Moses and his wife (parents of Miss Moses, Elizabeth Street), David Harris the cobbler, Thomas Jones the shop, Mrs. Williams Ynyscynon, Mr Abraham Masson and his wife, Henry Thomas, W Christmas and Mary his wife, father and mother of J Christmas one of our present officers, and his sister; and the last in the membership book for the first year is my faithful old friend Edward Williams, Maesycar, whose wife was there at the beginning; their daughter, Mrs Lewis, is still here today. W. Christmas and his wife's names are recorded on the 7<sup>th</sup> of December and on the 14<sup>th</sup> the name John Jones, Draper is recorded.

67 children's names were on the register at the start of the year, and this increased to 90 by the end of the year. The first children's collection, on the 7<sup>th</sup>, of May was recorded as 7s 6d.

As mentioned, the opening date for the Chapel was Good Friday, 14<sup>th</sup> April 1854 starting on the previous night and, although we have not been sure to date who the ministers were who preached at the opening we are sure that a chapter was read at the start of the service on the Thursday night by Mary Davies, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Moses Davies, who was raised by her uncle William and his wife, William Morgan the poet and his wife, and that another chapter was read in the service on Friday morning by four young boys, William Griffiths and his brother Dafydd, and William Roberts and his brother Griffith, and none remain of the four apart from David Griffiths, Bethania's current eldest deacon and Precentor.

We have no record of the Sunday schools before the Chapel opened when they were held at the Long Room in the Black Lion, Abernant, or for some time following the opening of the Chapel and the Schoolroom, but we know they flourished because we have a register of the teachers for 1859, which included 136 names: we do not suggest that there were that many classes, but they were all received regularly in the Bi-monthly Meeting and ready for work. Like today, a school for adults was held at the chapel, and the school for children in the vestry above the stable (the stable at the time was the original entrance from Griffith Street), with stone steps and a rail leading to it. There would be around a hundred children there each Sunday, like sheep in a fold, taught by excellent and consistent teachers. We also know that David Griffiths, Griffith Street, father of the present David Griffith, was one of the children's officers in the vestry on Sundays and present during their weekly meetings, while Mr. J. W. Lewis (Homo Ddu) was hardworking and popular in every circle while he was there at that time.

It is obvious that Bethania's members had been famously gracious in contributing to the cause from the start and we hope not to lose this graciousness in the future. During the first nine months, closing the first year, £153 11s. 10d. was collected for the circumstances alone, and of this sum £32 came from the seating places, £54 from Mr. Charles, Trefecha's lecture, and £17 from the houses etc. In those days there was a collection on Sunday mornings and evenings and the most money was collected in the mornings, which proves that sixty years ago, religious people came to services on a Sunday morning, while today it is all they can do to drag themselves to the house of God by the evening: "Be not deceived, God is not mocked." In these payments for the nine months, we can see that they paid £65 15s. of interest, apart from usual expenses.

Discipline was especially important at that time. No one could become a member without being nominated, seconded, and received regularly and members were publicly expelled. Smoking on Sundays was also strongly disapproved of, especially on the roads, and working on a Sunday was also disapproved of, unless there was a true and righteous reason for doing so and cutting one's hair was considered a sin of pride.

By the end of the second year, 1855, the members had increased from 150 in the first year to 170. Among those we know well were Charlotte Powell, Mrs. Davies (Albert Street) mother, who was loyal and hardworking, while there was no Methodist more ardent than William her husband. R. Meredith, Bute Street, who, along with his family, lived in the chapel house before moving to Treorchy. At the end of this year also Benjamin Evans became a member with the Methodists, who was originally an Independent, but who was a hardworking member and officer in Bethania. In September of the same year, we see the name of Walter Lloyd, Printer on the church books, who worked for time in the office of the Rev. Josiah Thomas Jones, later of "The Aberdare Times," and who lived in Gloucester Street; and as he was married to a schoolmistress, she kept a school for a while in their dwelling house. At almost the same time we come across the name of Benjamin Evans the second, his wife Rachel, and Ann Edwards her sister-in-law, who is still with us today and have been known for years by the name Mrs. Powell y Gadlys.

There was only an increase of 13 children during the year, making a total of 113. It is interesting to read this list and see how consistent their monthly contribution was - from the small penny to the great sixpence.

Among the receipts for the year towards the circumstances, there is £47 for the seating places, £39 from the Rev. William Rees (Hiraethog)'s Lecture; with a total of various collections which comes to a total of £241. The first payment that caught my attention was the collection of £2 15s. towards the Rev. J. Mills, London's expenses, to Canaan; and after that the sums paid to the ministers who served in the annual district festival, Good Friday and Easter, Mr. Evans, Trefechna, 25s., W. Williams, Swansea, 30s., W. Evans, Tonyrefail, 20s., Evan Harris, Merthyr, 15s., for bread and cheese for strangers, 11s., bringing the total to £5 10s., interest paid of £61 leaving the treasurer at the end of the year 1855 with £284.

Among the first deacons elected at Bethania were William Morgan (the poet), as he was called, he came to Bethania when it opened, from Libanus, Aberaman and was elected the first secretary of the church. William Morgan came from Merthyr, and his brother was Mr. D. Morgan the Butcher who was a successful merchant in Merthyr for many years, but who died in Taff's Well. He was also brother to the late Mrs. Williams, Ynyscynon, mother of Judge Gwilym Williams, Miskin. Morgan came to Aberdare to work as Cashier in the colliery offices at Ynyscynon and Aberaman and lived in the house by Aberaman colliery before moving to Highland Place. He had lost one arm when he was a boy in Merthyr.

After coming to Aberdare and becoming acquainted with the place and its people he decided to marry a young girl named Mary Jones, who was a sister to "Y Cymro Gwyllt" (the wild Welshman) and was truly fortunate in his choice, because he had himself a truly competent home maker. In fact, he always called her Mam and not Mary. As well as being deacon and secretary at Bethania he was an excellent reader, particularly of verses and englynion (poems). As he was a good poet and a clever englynwr he would no doubt have had a hand in instructing and inspiring Dyfed and Nathan his brother in that fine craft when they were boys at the same church. He was a good and successful teacher of a large class of women for many years; he was like a father to them. If one of them was absent on a Sunday, she would have to give a reason, why, and this reason would be entered into a book next to her name. In his time, he used to call the name of each of the members as he received their monthly contribution, and he always called them by their first name, like Kitty, and Mary, and Ann with no Mr. or Mrs. for anyone. He was also loyal in all circles, the singing school, Band of Hope, prayer meetings and the society, a true Israelite. He was a teetotaler and a passionate temperance preacher.

We cannot give details of the host of meetings held and the minor affairs etc. but we can remember the most important. In 1855 a carpet was laid in the pulpit and deacon seat for the first time, and 25 people subscribed the largest from Mr. Williams, Ynyscynon. July 24, meeting of the Bible Society under the leadership of D. Davies Esq, Maesyffynon; the Rev. T. Phillips, supervisor. September 24, Lecture on Peace and War by the Rev. W. C. Williams, Llanrwst. Tuesday evening, October 16

Missionary Meeting, the Rev. James William, Brittany. Christmas Eve, Lecture on Palestine, the Rev. D. Phillips, Maesteg. This was the year a collection was started for the poor the Dorcas at that time.

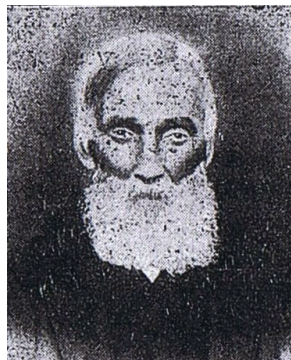
## 1856

By the year 1856 the membership increased from 170 in 1855 to 210. Among those received and who became prominent were, John Christmas, who was a deacon for years, he was received by letter on February 24<sup>th</sup>. Moses Davies and his wife Mary, who was a sister to the poet, daughter of the one that was raised by him, and who married George Rosser; this family soon emigrated to America. Another who joined the church by letter during that year was Magdalene Davies, sister of David Davies, Canton House, one of Nazareth's first deacons, who became Mrs. Christmas, by marrying John Christmas. Lemuel Treharne and his wife Catherine, William Pritchard, and David Rosser.

This year the tax for the seating places reached £48, the monthly collections £60 17s. Annual Meetings collection was £56 and the tax on the houses and vestry was £30. In the circumstantial expenses for the year, the cost of the Annual Meetings was £7 5s 6p; interest was £70 and £200 was also repaid to John Jenkins, Merthyr and at the end of the year the treasurer was left with £46.

22 names are mentioned in the deacon's seat (set fawr) during the year. The first of these is Richard Williams, Bute Street for we do not know what other than that he was a good and godly man, although some say he was chosen as a deacon with the first two or three. However, he did not live for long, and we are sure that he died before the end of 1861. One woman is mentioned among the brethren in the deacon's seat, Mrs. Woods, who had just come to the town and who took the shop next to Eschle and who sold ladies clothing materials etc., but she did not live long in Aberdare. Among those who sat in the gallery at that time were Mrs. Agnes Morgan, John and Walter Morgan's mother who remain faithful members in Bethania to this day; Daniel Griffiths, Jas. Miller, the hotelier, Whitcombe Street etc. We believe that W. Morgan (the Poet) was the master of song at the chapel at this time, followed by Joseph Hughes, David Rosser, Richard Owen, John Jones, John Evans (Chapel House), father of the present Thomas Evans, Grocer.

Bethania Annual Meetings were held on Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> during this year, and the following took part in the service Sunday morning was opened by the Rev. D. Saunders, Penclawdd and was followed by sermons from Mr. T. Thomas, a student from Trefecha, and the Rev. D. Morgan, Welshpool. At 2 p.m. in the afternoon Mr. Thos. Thomas and the Rev. D. Saunders (in English). At 6 the Revs. D. Saunders and D. Morgan. At 10 on Sunday morning sermons by the Revs. D. Morgan, and D. Howells, Swansea. At 2 p.m., the Revs. W. Howells, Carmarthen (in English) and W. H. Morris, Rhuddlan; and at 6, the Revs. D. Saunders and the Rev. W. Howells, Carmarthen. The meetings were excellent and £56 was collected towards the debt.



Williams Edward Nailer

William Edwards Nailer was one of the first deacons at Bethania and was versed in the Scriptures, as one of his fellow officers said of him; he was even an authority on the three laws of Moses. He was a clever logician and could hit the nail every time, although with his eyes closed most of the time when he

spoke. He was also a faithful Sunday School teacher, although not very adroit at getting his pupils to speak as he spoke so much himself. When he was accepted and was questioned by the Rev. Evan Harris, Merthyr, he said he could not see what his brothers saw in him to choose him for the post. When Harris asked him, "What are you willing to do?" "Well," he said, "I'm willing to put a stone under the wheel?" "Yes, but which side of the wheel? There are two sides to it back and front." "Oh, the back" said Edwards, and this was typical of his nature, and this is what he did all his life, without offending anyone.

His parents were Rachel and William Edwards, a merchant in furniture and silverware in Brecon, and he was born on 14<sup>th</sup> February 1814. After leaving the town school he was sent as an apprentice to a nail manufacturer in Dowlais; and after spending four years there he came over to Aberdare, honing his craft and selling the nails he produced to different merchants, builders, and colliery masters. It is uncertain when he became a religious member, but he attended Carmel chapel and came down from there to establish Bethania. He married twice. The first time on the day that the Aberdare branch of the Merthyr and Cardiff railway was opened, and he and his fiancée were carried to and from the Registry Office at Merthyr for free, like everyone else on the opening day. He had nine children and one of his daughters was the wife of the musician W. Rees (Alaw Ddu), who lives in Llanelli where her husband died. He has one daughter in Ferndale, where he lived, and the other children are scattered in this country and in America. Edwards was a strong and healthy man who did not spend one day in his bed because of illness in over 80 years.

He moved from Aberdare some 36 years ago, to live with his children and, as he had been in Aberdare, he was a consistent and unoffending religious man and a Sunday School teacher until the last Sunday of his life. "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things."

By the end of the year 1857, the church had increased to 266 members and among the newcomers were Mr. and Mrs. Saunders, the church's first shepherd and his wife, from Penclawdd. They arrived at the beginning of the year and before the end of the year the chapel was to welcome Joseph Hughes the singer, and Rees Lewis the candle maker and his wife, from Merthyr.

The seating tax for the year came to over £50; the monthly collections for the circumstances came to £34 and the Good Friday and Easter collections came to £59. Ieuan Gwyllt's lecture only raised £5 6s. while the expense for it was over £2. The tax on the houses and vestry was £30. The sum of all the public collections was £270. Interest paid for the year was £51 10s. The expense of the Annual Meeting was £6. This year £4 13s. was also collected towards a new chapel at Mountain Ash. The number of children on the books in 1857 was 130, all of them contributing as regularly as the adults.

## 1857

The monthly meeting was held in Bethania on Wednesday and Thursday the<sup>4</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> February 1857. The meeting on Wednesday evening was started by Ieuan Gwyllt, and the preachers were the Rev. D. Roberts Pontfaen (Pontfôn) and the Rev. D. Howells, Swansea.

At ten, Cadben Davies, Swansea started the proceedings and the Revs. W. Williams and R. Lumley, Swansea, both preached. At two, the afternoon was opened by the Rev. T. Lewis, Caerphilly, and the Revs. B. Evans, Llanilltud and W. Evans, Tonyrefail preached. At six, the evening was opened by the Rev. W. Jones, Cwm Bychan, and the Revs. Samuel Jones, Neath, and J. Walters, Ystradgynlais preached. At the end of the meeting Mr Saunders said thanks on behalf of the church and the congregation, for the generosity and hospitality shown to the visitors. The sermons were good, and the gospel preached with conviction.

At the bimonthly meeting in Llwydcoed, which was held on the<sup>17</sup> of June 1857, W. Griffiths, the Secretary, stated that the number of teachers in Bethania was 57, while the number of scholars was 333

and that it was the largest Sunday School in the District.

On Monday 27<sup>th</sup> July, the cornerstone of the Temperance Hall was laid, by Mrs. Williams, Ynyscynon, and all the gentry of the area were present, among them Mr. Bruce M.P. later Lord Aberdare. Most of the company in the Hall were Methodists and Mrs Williams was one of Bethania's members.

The number of church members at the end of this year was 268. Among those who joined the church this year was Mrs. Mary Powell, Dowlais, who became a member in June and, if I am not mistaken, is the mother of the Rev. W. Powell, who is a member of Bethania to this day. In October, Mr. John Williams, a printer from Llanelli, became a member who was for a short time at the office of "Y Gwladgarwr" (The Patriot). His family were printers in Llanelli, and he also published a successful journal in the town. In the same month Ieuan Gwyllt came to Aberdare and he was also involved in "Y Gwladgarwr" for a short while, when he was called to be the minister at Pant-tywyll Church, Merthyr. We remember him well when he was taught music by Edward Edwards, Aberystwyth, and who came to his attention due to his course, black, negro-like hair; but Gwyllt became a better musician than his teacher.

The seating tax for the year came to 45 pounds and 10 shillings; public monthly meetings came to 68 pounds and 12 shillings; collection for Good Friday and Easter was 43 pounds, and the rent for the houses and vestry was 30 pounds and 10 shillings. A collection was also held for the Preacher's Treasury. The cost of the annual meeting was 7 pounds and 10 shillings; Interest 51 pounds and 10 shillings. During this year, the chapel was granted a license to marry.

There were 175 children on the books at the end of this year. Among the new names are Jessie D. Lloyd, eldest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd "Y Gwladgarwr" and Mary Saunders, the Pastor's eldest daughter. The last, but not least, to come to Bethania that year was the late Isaac Thomas, carpenter, of Seymour Street. He was a highly, successful coffin maker as he cut the former price by almost half. He was a trusted and useful man in his day.

## 1858

Bethania's anniversary festival this year was, as usual, held on Good Friday and Easter, when the sermons were by the Revs. John Owen, Rhyl; Thomas John, Cilgerran; George Williams, St. David's; W. Evans, Tonyrefail and Owen Jones, Libanus, £43 pound was collected.

On May 25<sup>th</sup> of this year Mrs. Griffiths, High Street, mother of the Griffiths family was buried. Her husband had died some years previously and by this time all the multiple family members, eight boys have all changed worlds. Mrs. Griffiths was only 68 years old but had been a faithful and hardworking member of Bethania church since its establishment and before that at Carmel. There was hardly a preacher in the Organization at that time who did not know Mrs. Griffiths and had not enjoyed her kind hospitality. She was faithful to her denomination and her religion on every occasion and exceptionally kind. She lived to see two or three of her sons become useful members and prayed often that the others would have some true knowledge of the Redeemer.

Part of an elegy to Evan Griffith, Shop, Aberdare, the above-mentioned lady's husband which was found among the papers of Mr. Edward John, Aberaman, by William Morgan the Poet:

O ugly, senseless Death,  
Who kills the wise and foolish and all over hill and dale,  
Why do you not kill those who (although alive)  
Are good for nothing but weariness among, the human, race,  
And leave those who are excellent, loving and without treachery.

As grace for all around them, kings of town and country.  
Bread for the hungry, and eyes for the blind,  
Always ready to help the weak and needy.

Which shall we do - mourn or rejoice?  
When we lose close friends, as we have done?  
It is truly a loss for us, but a gain for him –  
who replaces earthly company with the pure company of heaven?

My weak spirit is joyful to think.  
Of dear Mr Griffiths, united with the saints,  
Who says, "Praise be forever to Him that loved us?  
long before we existed, yes, loved and cleansed us.

He was always lovable, peaceful and without treachery,  
Respecting all his brothers, at their feet.  
Thinking others better than himself  
With no violence or envy in his dear spirit.

On the 15<sup>th</sup> of June, Mr. John Christmas and Miss Magdalene Davies were joined in matrimony at Bethania, the former in the service of Mr. Lodge, Grocer at the time and the latter housekeeper for her brother D. Davies, Canton House, where the Co-operative Draper Shop now stands.

In July of this month, Aberdare was blessed (it that is the right word) with bells. It was said at the time that the churchgoers expected the bells to gather the religious bees back to the hive, like beating pans when a swarm of bees rises.

The first Sunday in October in Bethania, W. Morgan announced that a Library had opened in the Temperance Hall and encouraged all who were teetotal to use it, and for those young men who were not, to attest immediately, and do the same. We remember this Library in the Long Room in the Hall very well.

There were in Aberdare at the time, as there are now, ardent champions of all kinds of frivolity and immorality and they decided to hold Rustic Sports in the town. The champions of morality and religion decided to hold a march of all the Sunday Schools on the same day; but through the instrumentation of the Rev D. Saunders and others it was agreed that the Rustic Sports would not be held, and the Sunday Schools would not march. This agreement was made on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of August 1858. This was the year that "Y Gwladgarwr" and "Y Gweithiwr" (The Worker) were first published in Aberdare.

At the end of the year the total number of members was 333. Among the famous ones that arrived through later were Rees Williams and his wife, from Hirwaun, parents of Mr. Rees Williams, County Court today. This was a respectable and unaffected family and well-behaved members of the church for years.

## 1859

This was the year that George Rosser, Dowlais, came here (David Rosse's brother), who married Mary, the Poet's adopted daughter. Their son is a fitter at Penrhiwceiber colliery.

The seat tax for the year was £45; the monthly collections for the cause £62; tax for houses £19; Easter and Good Friday £50; all the public collections £186. Interest payments £51, leaving the cause in debt this year of £850.

The total number of children at the end of the year was 156 and this is the first time we come across

the name Evan Rees among Bethania's children, who is now the Archdruid and main poet of the Welsh world Dyfed. We also see the name of David Griffiths, Tŷ'r Farchnad (Market House) in the deacons' seat this year.

17<sup>th</sup> February in Bethania, Thomas Bowen, postman, and Mary Jones, daughter of David Jones, Timber Merchant, and treasurer of this church, were joined in marriage by the Rev. D. Saunders.

Bethania Anniversary Festival, 1859. This was held on Easter Sunday and Monday, with contributions from the famous, Hughes, Edeyrn, Llanengan; Richard Jones, Llanfair Caereinion; R Lumley, Swansea; Dr. Jones, Clos Y Graig (later Trefecha) and John Phillips, Bangor.

We do not know if Mr. Jones, who was always known as Sam Jones y Saer (the Carpenter) was a member at Bethania; but we know that this is where he and his family regularly came, and one of his granddaughters still comes Miss Edith Mosley, Highland Place. He and his sister, Mrs. Jones the Butcher, were from Defynog. This englyn in 'Y Gwron' (The Hero) characterises him well, but we do not know who wrote it:

He is a carpenter of many walks.  
Always cheerful to his carpenters.  
A kind teacher to his workers  
And ready with his payment.

September 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> 1859, a National Eisteddfod was held in Merthyr and three members of Bethania competed in two trio competitions and won both. The three were David Rosser, Daniel Griffiths, and William Davies. They sang "The Nightingale" and "Fairest Flower." The adjudicator was Ieuan Gwyllt, who was a member at Bethania at the time and editor of 'Y Gwladgarwr' with Llew Llwyfo; but Llew was soon exhausted (do not understand this it sounds like they soon grew tired of Llew' but does not make sense) and Ieuan Gwyllt lived a short life.

## 1860

The number of members at the end of the year had reached 378 and the church's success during the last six years had made people eager for a new chapel. Among those received as members during the year were Olwen Rees and her husband; Ioan Ellis, Printer who was in the office of 'Y Gwladgarwr' for a year; John Rogers and his wife who were faithful members for many years, particularly Mrs. Rogers. At the end of this year the Rev. D. Saunders' parents came to live in Aberdare.

The seating tax for the year was £43; monthly collection £63; Good Friday £55; taxes from houses £28; all public receipts close to £210. Interest paid as usual was £51; cost of Good Friday and Easter £6 and 5 shillings; the church debt was £771.

The number of children had reached 176. The only one we remember who was received during the year is Mary Jane Jones, daughter of Sam Jones and his wife who lived next door to David Harris, Ynysllwyd Street, who became a schoolteacher and who married in Swansea, and we believe still lives there.

As usual, Bethania's Anniversary Festival was held on Good Friday and Easter. Those taking part on the Thursday evening were the Rev. D. Phillips, Maesteg and the Rev. Owen Jones, Dowlais. 9 o'clock on Friday a General Society was held from each denomination, led by the elder from Tonyrefail. At 11, Mr. D. Jones opened the proceedings and the Revs. D. Phillips and W. Evans preached.

At 2.30 proceedings started with the Rev. W. Edwards, Ebenezer, Trecynon and the Revs. D. Griffiths, Aberaman and O. Jones, Dowlais preached. At 6 the evening started with the Rev. D. Price, Siloa and the Revs. Dr Harris Jones and W. Evans. On Sunday, the preacher was the Rev. R. Roberts,

Llangeitho at 11, 2 and 6 o'clock. £56 10s. 2d. was collected.

Sunday morning 20<sup>h</sup> May 1860 Mrs. Margaret Roberts, wife of Mr. R. Roberts, Carpenter, Bute Street, died aged 31. The body was brought to Bethania on the following Tuesday afternoon, and the preacher was Mr. John Davies, Aberdare. On June the 5<sup>h</sup> by license in Bethania, Aberdare, Mr. W. Thomas, Station Master, later Brynawel and Jane, daughter of Mr. Lewis, Iron Works, Aberaman were married by the Rev. Owen Jones, Dowlais.

“May Tomos’ season and life – and his rib,  
Live long lives to show the union of the two.  
And the greatness that awaits,  
By Alaw Goch

This is the year it was decided to build a new church in the neighbourhood of the Trap, Aberdare. The church organised a committee of members to undertake this task and those elected to the committee were the following twelve; Rev. D. Saunders, pastor of the church; John Evans, the Forge; W. Griffiths, Ironmonger; Benjamin Evans, Abernant; W. Pritchard, cobbler; Ebenezer Thomas, Henry Pugh, W. Williams, David Davies, Grocer; D. Jenkins and Evan Lewis.

They decided to build a new chapel on the piece of land where Nazareth Chapel stands, where there were two old houses, owned by Mr. William Williams, Iron Bridge which were bought for £270 and a land tax of 31 shillings 4 pence; but fifteen years later the land tax was raised to £5 5 shillings, because there was no lease on the chapel when it was built. The total cost of the chapel was £1,770. A committee was established to decide how much of Nazareth's debt Bethania would take on; but through some oversight, the members of Bethania failed to be present and as a result the following note was sent from Nazareth to their brothers in Bethania:

“To Bethania Church; Dear Brethren, in accordance with Nazareth Church's decision, those friends mentioned above met in Bethania Vestry on Thursday evening, 14<sup>h</sup> of this present month.”

At ten, Cadben Davies, Swansea started the proceedings and the Revs. W. Williams and R. Lumley, Swansea, both preached. At two, the afternoon was opened by the Rev. T. Lewis, Caerphilly, and the Revs. B. Evans, Llanilltud and W. Evans, Tonyrefail preached. At six, the evening was opened by the Rev. W. Jones, Cwmbychan, and the Revs. Samuel Jones, Neath, and J. Walters, Ystradgynlais preached. At the end of the meeting Mr. Saunders said thanks on behalf of the church and the congregation, for the generosity and hospitality shown to the visitors. The sermons were good, and the gospel preached with conviction.



Bethania Chapel (Picture courtesy of Glamorgan Archives)

On the 15<sup>th</sup> of June, Mr. John Christmas and Miss Magdalene Davies were joined in matrimony at Bethania, the former in the service of Mr. Lodge, Grocer at the time and the latter housekeeper for her brother D. Davies, Canton House, where the Co-operative Draper Shop now stands.

In July of this month, Aberdare was blessed (it that is the right word) with bells. It was said at the time that the churchgoers expected the bells to gather the religious bees back to the hive, like beating pans when a swarm of bees rises.

The first Sunday in October in Bethania, W. Morgan announced that a Library had opened in the Temperance Hall and encouraged all who were teetotal to use it, and for those young men who were not, to attest immediately, and do the same. We remember this Library in the Long Room in the Hall very well.

1860

“To Bethania Church; Dear Brethren, in accordance with Nazareth Church's decision, those friends mentioned above met in Bethania Vestry on Thursday evening, 14<sup>th</sup> of this present month, with the intention of meeting with many of you for the purpose of joint consultation to bring to a close the matter of the debt. We understand that you did not receive notice regarding the Committee. Therefore, we agreed to send you this request, which is that we undertake the large sum of £1,100 of the money borrowed, along with £30 of the interest still due at present. This is a total of £1,130. We therefore consider that £240 of the sum borrowed towards the building work should be repaid by you if your good will permits it. We would be very, grateful if you could permit this. Yours, on behalf of Nazareth, D. Davies, Secretary.”

Bethania Church replied: “April 27<sup>th</sup>. To Nazareth Church, Dear Brothers and Sisters, we received your request by letter from you secretary and gave it our most careful and detailed consideration. With regards to the forty extra pounds, we do not see that it is possible for us to undertake them, because we

need one hundred pounds, at least, to repair and paint Bethania Chapel. Also, we do not know what costs will be incurred in installing a drain from the latrine to the main road. Also, as you know, £23 is due to make up Mr. Saunders' wages. We agree that you need not contribute towards this. We will also undertake to pay all the balance due to the ministerial treasurer at the end of this month. Yours, Lewis Griffiths.

On Thursday afternoon, August 30<sup>th</sup> 1860, hundreds of people gathered to witness laying the foundation stone for the new Nazareth chapel. The Rev. D. Saunders presided, and the ceremony was opened with a prayer from the Rev. John Davies. After Rev. Saunders addressed the congregation, he called on Mrs. John Evans, the Forge, to lay the stone in place. Then there were speeches by Messrs. Benjamin Evans, John Evans, R. Saunders, John Davies, R. Edmunds, D. Griffiths, Aberaman, D. Daniel, Aberaman etc. The meeting was excellent and influential, and everyone was of the opinion, that the House had been consecrated with the laying of the foundation stone. Around this time Nazareth and Bethania split into two churches with separate accounts, although they worshipped together for some months because Nazareth was not opened until July the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> the following year, when sermons were held in both chapels.

Lewis Griffiths was another of the first deacons in Bethania and he was a great asset. He was one of the eight brothers previously mentioned. Lewis was an official who understood and excelled in his role: he knew everyone in his chapel and soon everyone knew him too. Whenever a stranger came to the town Lewis soon knew all about his history, nationally and religiously; and if he was a Methodist, he would be passionate for them to attend the chapel, and if he failed with the first attempt, he would surely try a second time, until he won him over. Lewis Griffiths was an incomparable shepherd. If strangers came to the chapel, he would ask them if they had work and he was heard to call on a prominent officer of the coalmine to find work for them. He once asked a theologian from Carmarthenshire what kind of preacher they had in the countryside and when the man replied that they could not keep a good preacher that they were attracted to the works; Griffiths replied "Yes, yes, you churn them, and we eat the butter." This is what one lady had to say about him:

"He was one of the gentlest men Bethania ever saw. He was a lively man, full of missionary spirit. He was in his element bringing people together. When we were children, I remember we used to think Mr. Griffiths owned Bethania, and everything in it, inside and out, and there was a great hullabaloo when he had to go to Trinity. At the time we thought Bethania would have to close its doors and follow Mr. Griffiths; but his parents explained that he was on loan from the brothers at Bethania. We often asked, "When is Trinity going to give Mr. Griffiths back?" A particular quality of his was being able to see a stranger. He would take his hymn book, singing, to strangers upstairs and wait for them to come out, and he would ask where they lived, and where they went to chapel and to school; and if the brother or sister intended to stay in Bethania, Mr. Griffiths would be after them like a sheepdog.

Griffiths was the announcer and he made sure that the cream of the organization came to preach at Bethania and was chided by bad preachers for not inviting them on a Sunday. It was worth looking at Lewis Griffiths' face when he was listening to a good sermon, and he would be moved and would look at William Morgan and John Jones the tailor and give them a nod, and who can forget his happy smile with the tears running through it. He had three types of Amens: one to help the preacher, another of enjoyment and another as a cue that it was time for him to finish.

1861

On the 14<sup>th</sup> of January, a testimonial was held for Alaw Goch (David Williams), as grateful

recognition of the part he played in the National Eisteddfod, led by the Archdeacon Griffiths, Neath.

January 21, Aberdare, and Merthyr's Monthly District Meeting was held in Bethania. At 11 o'clock, the Rev. John Roberts, Pant-tywyll, preached and the Rev. T. Rees Pontypool. At two o'clock W. Morris, Pant-tywyll opened and the Rev. John Roberts presided. It was an open meeting for all denominations, and the subject was God's readiness to forgive; and it was closed by the Rev. John Davies, Saron, Aberaman. At 6 o'clock the Rev. J. Griffiths, Aberaman opened and the Revs. E. Edmunds, Carmel, and the Rev. Owen Jones, Dowlais preached. This was the night that Mr. Lew. Lewis, the Boot, died who was the husband of Mrs. Lewis who was a member of Bethania for years after.

The income from the seats this year was £46 13s.; the monthly collection £47; Good Friday and Easter £51; rates for the houses £24 11s. A collection was started this year for the Society Bible, which came to £11. All the public collections came to over £180. Interest of £51 was paid. £240 of Nazareth's debt was paid, leaving Bethania in debt of £1182. There were 24 in the deacons' seat at the end of the year, and that was because of a lack of seats.

This was the year the membership split in two, Bethania and Nazareth and at the end of the year there were only 207 on Bethania's books.

This was the year that the author of this biography of the chapel and his wife became members at Bethania and he had to undergo an examination by Lewis Griffiths. We remember the evening well and the warm welcome we received, especially by the reverend pastor. We were followed by Rees Davies, D. Davies, Canton's brother, and Mrs. Christmas; Rees Lewis, Chandler, and his wife; William James our old minister and his friend Morgan James; Henry Lewis, Beehive; Owen Harris, Trecynon, who joined the Baptists when he got married; and Evan Rees, Blaengwawr, who was elected as a deacon and secretary of the chapel. All these remained at Bethania apart from Henry Lewis, whom we believed joined the English independents.

Good Friday and Easter, the meetings started on Thursday evening and meetings were held on the Friday and the Sunday. Because the audience was so large on the Friday sermons were also held in Siloa, the independents' chapel. The meetings were opened by the Revs. John James, Isaac Jenkins (W), W. Edwards, Ebenezer (A), W. Williams, Abercwmboi; R. Lumley, D. Price, Siloa (A), D. Saunders and O. Jones, Dowlais. The Revs. Thomas Levi, Evan Williams, Nevin; John James, Penybont; Edward Morgan, Dyffryn; R. Lumley and D. Price, Siloa preached. The meetings were all we could wish for, and the collection came to £51.

Opening Nazareth, Sunday and Monday 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> July, Nazareth Calvinist Methodist Chapel was opened in Aberdare and the preachers on this occasion were the Revs. J. Evans, Seion Chapel, Carmarthenshire, (A), T. Phillips, Hereford; W. Jones, Llandudoch; W. Williams, Swansea; E. Williams, Taibach; D. Saunders, Aberdare; and Isaac Jenkins (W) Aberdare. During the opening £51 11s. 11d. was collected while contributions made previously to the opening day came to £120 and it was expected that the sum would be made up to about £300 between this time and Christmas.

On August 29<sup>th</sup> of this year the Band of Hope, Bethania met in the chapel and at four they went to Nazareth and joined its' Band of Hope. Between three and four hundred of them marched as a musical crowd through the main streets of the town, coming to a stop at Bethania to feast on tea and bara brith. At seven o'clock, led by the Rev. D. Saunders, meetings of singing and reciting were held, attended by many adults.

On the morning of Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> September Richard Williams, Wind Street died aged 79. He had been a Methodist at Pontneddfechan and Aberdare and a Deacon at both these places. The following Saturday his remains were taken to the Great Western Station, to be taken to the family plot in

Pontneddfechan. Mr. Saunders gave an excellent sermon in the chapel cemetery on the words "A good name is better than..." etc. November 20<sup>th</sup>, 1861, the Rev. Evan Harris, Merthyr died aged 77. He was buried in Capel y Graig.

Tuesday the 26<sup>th</sup>.

Christmas Day, the Nazareth, and Bethania Bands of Hope Competition. The meeting was at two o'clock at Nazareth on Christmas Day, led by Mr. Lewis Griffiths; and the evening meeting was at six in Bethania led by W. Griffiths. The adjudicators were Owen Rees and D. Davies, Canton, and Mr. A. James, Carmel.

In Bethania on March 3<sup>d</sup>, the first half yearly meeting was held with both parts of the district (?) together. It was opened by Thos. Thomas, Aberaman and chose John Hopkin as Moderator. The accounts for the half year were read. In general, the schools looked good. The names of the teachers were called, and it was discovered that five had moved and three had left. 11 other places were received and seven that were new to the united class. Many brothers said a few words. It was decided that it would be a good thing for this meeting to nominate two missionaries to visit the classes of the school and to look at the quality of teaching and note what, if anything, needed improving. John Hopkin, Carmel, and Lewis Griffiths were chosen as visitors.

1862

On the 17<sup>th</sup> of February 1862, a testimonial meeting was held for the Rev. D. Saunders on his departure from Aberdare to Liverpool. The chair was taken by the Rev. R. Lumley, who said that he and the Rev. Saunders were born in the same county Cardiganshire. The following took part in the meeting, Mr. Lewis Griffiths, who recalled the five successful years he enjoyed here with the cause. He was followed, by Mr. John Evans (Cymro Du— Black Welshman), who said that Mr Saunders was a man in every sense of the word, and after that Mr W. Griffiths and the Rev. John Davies Aberaman. W. Morgan was to read the Address but great reader that he was, his emotions got the better of him this time. After the Address, Mrs Lewis, Market Street presented him with gifts from the Church. Mr Saunders acknowledged his thanks and promised to use them all to help him in his great work in life. Mr David Evans from Cardiff also offered his own comments and read the following poem by Alaw Goch:

Well, Saunders is one who has character,  
And Saunders earned the respect which he has.  
The way he conducts himself appeals to everyone,  
He will still be loved when he lies in his coffin.  
The feeling in town is that they want to keep him,  
In, spite of that, go away he will,  
Our wish is his wellbeing right up to his death—  
For him, his partner, and his children.

The twists and turns of Providence are complicated,  
We cannot understand them at this stage.  
The way wheels work within wheels is perfect,  
But there is a ceiling between heaven and earth.  
One must live in the present when comparing,  
And do that diligently all the time.  
It is the duty of every man to make, an effort,  
Whilst he dwells here on this earth.

It gives pleasure to each one of his friends.  
To shout – "All success to Saunders."

He has no one who is his enemy,  
And therefore, we all join in readily:  
The length of his journey in the folds of the train,  
A day's journey, is not that much,  
But the telegram will bring us news of him.  
Warmly, by the hour.

We hope that the move he is making,  
Will bring neither worry nor affliction.  
But that Providence will smile upon him always.  
And that, blessings will adorn his life.  
We are not about to go to his funeral,  
It would be foolish for us to wallow in too much hiraeth.  
Should they not be happy there as a family,  
Let us accept them back to our midst with full respect.

In that year Evan Rees of Blaengwawr was appointed secretary of the church, instead of the poet, because he had left for Taffs Well. The numbers of the church had come down to 244, because Nazareth had become separated. Through death the previous year, they had lost deacon Richard Williams, Wind Street, but they had some twenty left, amongst them David Rosser, Isaac Thomas, and William James, a builder.

In the list of children in the church for that year can be newly seen the names of Richard and Samuel Thomas, Nant Row; John Rees, the first born of Evan Rees, Blaengwawr; and Elizabeth Mary Mills. The number of teachers at the Big School of Bethania for that year was 39; and the average number of pupils for the two months as 265.

The rent of the seats for that year was £38, and the monthly collections £38. On Good Friday £17 5s. was collected, and £10 on the Sunday, when Nazareth collected £6.18s., also £6.5s. in their annual meeting. The largest collection made in Bethania for that year was towards assisting the needs of the cotton workers of Lancashire, namely the sum of £23. The usual interest payment of £31 was made, with the usual questions, leaving the debt of Bethania at £1,149.15s. at the end of the year.

## 1863

Between five and six o'clock on the afternoon of the last day of February 1863, on the Bridgend Road, the patriot Alaw Goch (Red Lily) died, and his body was taken directly to his mansion in Miscyn, and on the morning of the Sabbath the shocking news suddenly broke upon the town of Aberdare and its neighbourhood, especially upon his family. He was buried on the following Thursday, and certainly, there had never been such a funeral before or since in our town as far as the numbers and the emotions were concerned. He was born in Ystrad Owen, near Pontfon, in the year 1809, and was only 54 years old at his death. He began work on the land of Ynyscynon in the year 1843, and Providence continued to smile upon him until his death. He began to write poetry at the age of 21 and first used the name Alaw Goch in the Eisteddfod of Quakers Yard, which soon became a well-known name in the whole of Wales. Ceiriog Huws said of him:

To your face, Alaw Goch,  
Praise is not appropriate.  
But behind your back,  
Praise is honourable.  
For love of your language, and love of your mother,  
And love of the old mountains,  
That is the reason that Wales too loves you.

Anniversary of Bethania, Good Friday and Easter Monday, 3<sup>d</sup> April, and 5<sup>th</sup>. The service for the occasion was held by the Reverends James, Caerphilly (B); Joshua Davies, Birkenhead; Evan Williams, Nefyn; W. Evans, Tonyrefail; and Lewis Williams, Seion, Aberdare. £156 was collected during the meetings.

This was the year of the great collection the year that Thomas Jones, the grocer, promised to contribute a hundred pounds towards the chapel's debts if the church gave £300 towards them. The task was undertaken, and the church collected £284, which was added to part of what the singers gave, being the amount, they won in competition, namely £17. 10s. to make up the sum and thus cleared £400 immediately.

The sum of £43 was received from the pews that year, and from the monthly collections, £37, Good Friday and Easter was £156, and revenue from houses was £20. Interest of £51 was paid, interest payments and money were £118.16s. At the end of the year £464 was in the treasurer's hand, whilst the chapel debt was now no more than £735.

The Eisteddfod Allan Elfed was held on July 22<sup>d</sup> when the main literature prize for the subject, "Weather Forecast" was won by one of Bethania's members. The following year it appeared in the Williams Almanac, Pharmacist, Pontardawe.

Competition meeting in Bethania, Christmas Day, 1863, under the direction of Lewis Griffith and the Rev. John Davies. The judges were William Morgan, Owen Rees, Daniel Griffiths, W. Griffiths, and John Christmas. Essays were won by J. M. W. Davies, Davis Davies, and Benjamin Evans, poetry, D. Harris, Hughes, J. M., and W. Davies.

## 1864

The first meeting of the Aberdare Union of Music Competition was held at Bethania on Monday night, 14<sup>th</sup> March, and was directed by the Reverend T. Rees, Libanus, Aberaman. The meeting was started by the Reverend Ebenezer Pugh, D. Rosser led on the melodies (Boston, Navarre, Glamorgan, and Verona,) and Ieuan Wild on the tune Rheidiol. The meeting was addressed by John Lewis, Ieuan Wild, Ebenezer Pugh, W. Morgan, Joseph Evans, and D. Phillips, Maesteg.

The annual anniversary was led by the Reverends John Phillips, Bangor; W. Williams, Swansea; G. Davies, Aberystwyth; Islwyn; and W. Williams, Abercwmboi. As a result of the zeal of temperance which had been created amongst the believers of the town, a number, of members of Bethania, and others, decided that the town should have a Temperance Hall; and on February 15<sup>th</sup>, a meeting was held for the participants, and David Rosser of Bethania was elected secretary of the company.

Departure of the poet W. Morgan, of Aberdare, in order, to look after his coal works in Taffs Well, which caused something of a stir of feeling here in the church, as he had been here since its beginning, and he was active as a member and as an official. In June they left as a family. Almost at the same time Gwilym Williams (Ap Alaw Goch) was made a paid magistrate, the office in which he served for many a long year for his own honour, and for the town in which he was raised.

The monthly county meeting was held on Wednesday and Thursday of the 20<sup>th</sup> and the 21<sup>st</sup> of July, in this the syllabus was extended with three young men who began to preach, namely, W. and D. Davies of Aberdare, (formerly of Dowlais), and W. Griffiths, of the Docks, Cardiff. Preaching was also carried out by the reverends E. Thomas, Llansamlet, Edward Mathews, T. Levi, and Dr. Jones.

The second meeting of the Aberdare Music Union Class was held in Carmel, Trecynon, Thursday night, September 15<sup>th</sup>. D. Rosser led the proceedings, and W. Morgan of Taffs Well conducted. An address was, given by Mr Abraham James and Ieuan Wild, and others.

At the end of the year the number in the church was no more than 250; although many were accepted in, many left as well. Amongst the number who were accepted was T. G. Davies, of respectful remembrance, who brought his letter to the church in May; David Davies, a mason; and John Morgan, a mason, also William Powell, father of Thomas Powell, who is now a member with us, and his two daughters, Mrs Lewis, and Mrs Lloyd.

The revenue from the seating came to £38; the monthly public collections to £39, and at Good Friday, £40. The communion donation of £50 of Mr. Williams, Ynyscynon, was accepted, and interest of £59 was bestowed to the Temperance Hall Company. The old shepherd, the Rev. D. Saunders, was here as well, delivering a lecture, with a profit of £35. Amongst the payments was the capital and the interest of Mrs. Morgan's, making the sum of £528, also, £100 of the money of Trefecha, which, with interest, made it up to £131.10s., thus leaving the chapel with a debt of £765.

Amongst those sitting in the gallery, we see the names of William Powell, Mary Griffiths, the sister of Edward Griffiths, the preacher of Bethania, who kept the post office in Crumlin (Mrs. Richards), Stephen Davies, and others.

In the children's book there are 111 names, and amongst them David, Elizabeth, and John Christmas: eight children of Benjamin Evans first, and then Iago Lloyd, 'Patriot'. The average number on the Sunday school book was 246.

## 1865

March the 25<sup>th</sup> David Morgan, shoe merchant of Cardiff Street, Aberdare, died aged 67. He had been a faithful member of Bethania for a long time. He was buried in Pontneddfechan (Pontneathvaughan). He, his wife, and daughter were faithful, until Miss Morgan married Mr Beddoe, a solicitor of Merthyr; but after the death of the father, the son, Dr. Beddoe, his mother and sister, left for Egypt. Dyfed and the secretary had been in their house in Cairo more than once. Mr Beddoe is a famous doctor in Egypt's capital.

The preaching on the anniversary this year was by the reverends J. Hughes, Liverpool; Joseph Jones, Wrexham; Thomas Edwards, Penllwyn; and Edward Mathews, Canton, Cardiff, £77 was collected, and the church decided soon to make it up to £100 in order, to clear as much of the debt as possible.

In the Meeting of the Christmas Competition, Islwyn was the judge of the poetry, essays etc, and D. Rosser and Daniel Griffiths the singing. Islwyn said that some of the entries were worthy of the National Eisteddfod, and he had not dreamt that there were so many good authors in Bethania. The two meetings were, conducted by J. Jones and Lewis Griffiths.

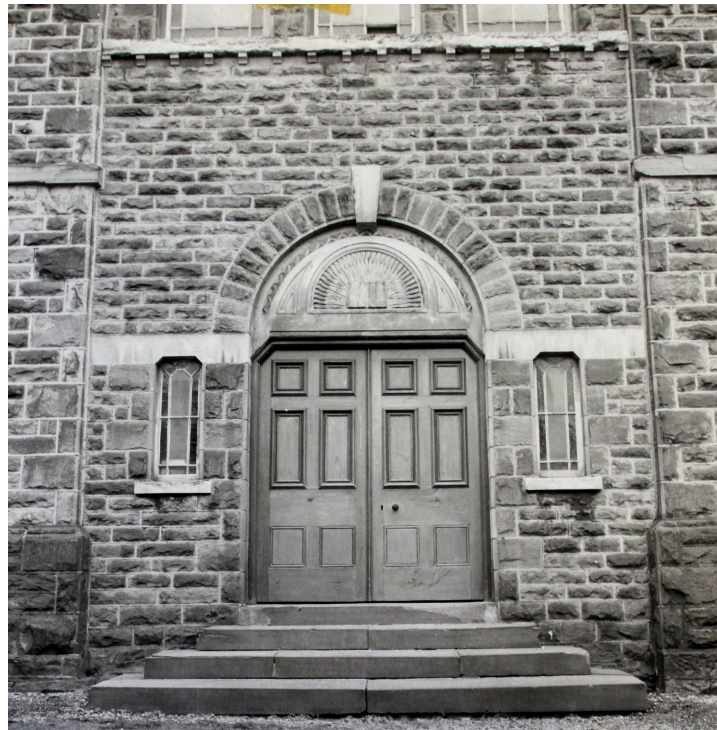
The meeting of the Music Union was held in Bethania on Monday night, March 1<sup>st</sup> Conductor Mr Howell Jones, Merthyr. It was started by the Reverend Thomas Rees, Aberaman, with D. Rosser leading. They sang Frankford and Barnabas, with an address by Islwyn Wild on the benefits that were emerging from these annual meetings. Dusseldorf, Rheidiol, Malvern, Verona, Trefeglwys and St. Peter were singing. Excellent meetings, and everyone was very much pleased.

Revenue of the seating for the year was £43, the monthly public collection, £45, Good Friday and Easter £77 13s.; and revenue of the houses £25. Some of the costs for the year were: alterations of the chapel by David Roberts, builder, £67 10s. painting the chapel by J. Jones, £45, interest of Trevecca, etc., leaving £5. 4s. 6d. in the hand of the treasurer at the end of the year.

There was no increase in the number of members of the church during this year. There are only two that we would like to name, that is, Mrs Agnes Morgan, whose name was taken in April, mother of Mr

John Morgan, Tanybryn, and Walter his brother, who are of the faithful among us. Their mother was a diligent and careful woman and raised her family honourably and devoutly.

Also in the same month, amongst the children of Bethania, we have the names of Agnes and John. One is the name of John Evans, a tiler, who was living in the chapel house, and after that was Nuisance Inspector, and who was the father of our friend Tom Evans, and his sister, Mrs Jones, Griffith Street, who are faithful and active among us. There is also mention of Mr John Evans. Amongst the names of the children, we also have the names of Lizzie and Arthur Rosser, one now dead, and the other living in Penrhiwceiber. The average number of the Sunday school for this year is 243.



Bethania Chapel (Picture courtesy of Glamorgan Archives)

1866

28<sup>th</sup> March, in High Street, Mrs Ann Walters, widow of Walter Walters, Nantyrysfa, Llanwynno died aged 76. She was the sister of Evan Griffiths, a merchant. Mrs. Griffiths was a member of Bethania, and an aunt of the Griffith's, a sister of their father.

6<sup>th</sup> May, Mary Rees, Bute Street, died aged 57 years old, leaving five sons to grieve after her, one of whom was the late W. T. Rees (Alaw Ddu). She too belonged to this church. The Anniversary was served by the Revs. Joshua Davies, Birkenhead; John Pritchard, Amlwch; Jas. Donne, Woodstock; and D. Howells, Swansea. Almost fifty pounds was collected towards the debt.

2<sup>nd</sup> of August a Thursday, the children of Bethania Sunday School, together with the Children of Abergwawr Sunday School were presented with a feast of tea and 'bara brith' on, the occasion of the opening of new Vestry belonging to Bethania, which is behind the chapel. After everyone had had their fill, and the leftovers, they formed a procession that went as far as Tanygraig House, the residence of Mrs Williams, formerly of Ynyscynon. Thereafter they returned to the Vestry, where a meeting was held, conducted by the Reverend John Davies, Bethania, and the children were addressed by Mr. J. Lewis, Ystradgynlais. Having had a tune from the children, the Rev. D. Rowlands, M.A., Llanidloes, was called upon to give an address to the young men on the theme of; 'Youth and the cultivation of their minds.' This was an address on the truth of the saying - "the right man in the right place." Then, there was a rendering of "The Last Flowering" by the choir, and an address to the more mature men by

the Reverend T. Hughes, Carnarvon. The whole meeting went well and ended with the choir singing the "Hallelujah Chorus."

The revenue from the seating for this year came to £42, the monthly public collections to £42 10s., and the anniversary festival to £50. Also, the revenue from the houses came to £15, and the production of a lecture Cranogwen to £32 14s., amongst the other collections that were made, three pounds was collected for the new chapel in Penderyn, which was opened the following year, and a collection of over £15 towards the British School. In the payments there was £22 paid to the committee of the British School, whilst £250 was paid to Mr David Richards, a builder, for the building of the new vestry. Interest for Trefecha had fallen to £27.

It was in this year that the holding of a Sunday school in Abergwawr was started, and there were at least 73 in it at the beginning. Church attendance this year increased to 265. The first new name entered was Edward Griffith, who became a preacher among us. There was also the return of D. Griffith, the eldest, and his family and, also William Morgan and his wife, one from Porthcawl and the other from Taffs Well. It was this year too that William Powell became the youngest member, and who also became a respected preacher among us.

On the big seat the numbers were reduced to 14, but despite that, two came in, and we were glad to see their names, namely, W. Morgan, having returned, and Owen Rees still came to his place on his chair. There are 60 children on the list for this year, and Mr. Richard Miles is among those newly arrived, and he is one of our most respected tradesmen.

## 1867

January 2<sup>nd</sup>, Mr. W. Griffiths, Ironmonger, died in the house in which he was born, and he had been a faithful and valued deacon in Carmel and Bethania for many years. Friday night, the first in February, a meeting was held in Bethania in, order to look, into the condition of a branch of the Bible Society in the place, due to the death of its secretary, Mr. W. Griffith.

Everyone present was content with the accounts given of the late secretary, and everyone thought that the town had suffered a great loss at his departure. He had been an official of the Society for over thirty years. In the meeting, Mr. David Jones, a butcher, was elected as treasurer, and Walter Lloyd as the local inspector.

A quarterly meeting of the Music Union was held on February 28th. It was started, by Mr. Delta Davies. President, the Rev. Edward Edmunds; conductor, Mr David Rosser. The melodies that were sung were "Comfort, Longing, Lausanne, Tiberias," "The Old 50," Luther's Hymn, and Farrant's Anthem. The meeting was addressed by Reverends Philip J. Walters, and T. Rees.

At the festival of Good Friday, conducted by Reverends Edward Morgan, Dyffryn, W. O. Williams, Pwllheli; J. Donne, Llangejni; and Morris Morgan, Penclawdd, over £30 was collected towards the debt.

At the bimonthly schools meeting, held in Cwmaman, the last Sunday in April, presided over by Mr. John Jones, it was announced that two schools had been opened in the past two months, namely, Aberdare English School, and Capcoch School, and there had been an increase of 50 pupils. Also, at this meeting J. Mills, Bethania, was elected secretary in place of Mr. W. Griffiths, who had filled the post since the start of Bethania.

The annual meeting of the Music Union was held in Bethania, Tuesday night, August 20, which was presided over by the Rev. T. Rees, Aberaman, and was addressed by Mr. Hogg, of the British School, and the Revs. Philip Walters, D. Saunders, Liverpool, and Cranogwen.

The English Cause. Monday, 7<sup>th</sup> October 1867 was the appointed day, and Mrs. Gwilym Williams, Miskin, had chosen it to fulfil the task of the laying of the foundation stone. Those present to take part in the service were: The Reverends W. Howells, Trefecha; W. Williams, Swansea; J. Davies, Newport; J. Thomas B.A., Merthyr; John Evans, Carmarthen; and D. Evans, Blaenau.

The meeting was presided over by Mordecai Jones, Esquire of Brecon, who called upon the Reverend D. M. Jenkins to start with a reading and prayer. Thereafter, Mrs. Williams, widow of the late Alaw Goch (Red Lily), Ynyscynon, was called upon to take the place of her daughter-in-law, which she did most competently. Under the stone were placed copies of The Patriot, Merthyr Express, Merthyr Telegraph, The Treasury, The Children's Treasury, Christian Treasury, and The Aberdare Times in a tin box, together with some coins of the day.

### A public meeting was held in the Temperance Hall.

The President first called upon Mr. Lewis Griffiths to give a history of the beginning of the cause in Aberdare. Mr. Griffiths said that a certain Mary Jones was the one who began the cause in the place and had held prayer meetings in her house fifty years ago, and only about four people had been present in the first meeting. In 1806, the foundation stone of the first Methodist chapel was laid, and the present Trinity was the twelfth; the cause began with three communicants, but their present number is 1400. The meeting was also addressed by the Reverend Mr. Williams, Swansea, W. D. Davies, Brecon; T. Price (B); J. J. Evans, Carmarthen; H. Wilcox (W); J. Davies (A); J. J. George (U); and D. Evans, Blaenau. The builder of Trinity was Mr. Simon Richards, of this place.

Monday night, October 17<sup>th</sup> Bethania, a lecture by the Reverend T. Levi was delivered on what he saw and heard on his trip to the United States. The lecture was well-illustrated with pictures on the lantern. Penny Readings were held in the Bethania Vestry during this winter, the first being on Monday night, October 28<sup>th</sup>.

A Christmas Literary Meeting was held, Dewi Wyn of Eysyllt was the judge. The subject of the poetry was, "Silence," which was won by Nathan Wyn. An essay on "The Judges," Talmage. "The foundation of the obligation of believers to practice socially with all means of grace," Berthog was the best. "The benefit of learning the English language," Three compositions, and that of the lad was the best. Six poetic compositions on psalm 65 by boys under eighteen were received, Neander was the best, but they were all poor. Poetic stanza on "Tenderness," nobody was worthy.

We have already referred to the school-house at Abergwawr: May 25<sup>th</sup>, 1865, the land having been bought from Mrs Kingsbury of Cwmaman freehold land for the sum of £300. William Christmas, the father of John, our present deacon, undertook the building work. Three guineas were paid to Evan Griffiths for the plans and the specifications, ten pounds to George Rosser for purchasing the land; to W. Christmas £334 for work, the land and the building being worth £645 2s. 10d. For this £200 was borrowed from John Thomas, £200 from the Temple Society, £100 from James Thomas, Heolyfelin, and £100 from W. Evans, the total being £600.

The dues for the seating this year amounted to £37 10s., the monthly public collections £45, and the collection for Good Friday and Easter £54, and production of the Levi lecture £26 14s. Interest of £160 for the vestry was raised, and £600 for the Abergwawr school house. £42 was paid to Simon Richards for seats for the vestry, money for interest £36.

Mr Stephen Davies, the present deacon, came to the church at the beginning of the year 1863, and his wife, Mrs Mary Davies, joined him on the book of the church in 1865. Mr David Griffith and his wife were joined together on the church's book in April 1867. The English friends retired of their own accord, ceased their contributions in Bethania, and went off to hold their meetings in the Vestry, where it is likely they'll stay until their chapel is ready.

On the list of the children this year there is Mary Ann Moses, and Sarah Ann Edwards, the one at the end of 1866, and the other at the end of 1867, and they continue to be faithful members. We should certainly take note of Miss Edwards, as she has taken a prominent part in our communal and festive singing for many years, and as a church we are indebted and grateful to her.

There are three new additions to the big seat this year, namely, John Christmas, Benjamin Evans, and Isaac Williams, two of those we know well. The Sunday school has grown smaller by twelve members during the year, mainly because the English left to set up a School of their own. The number in the English School at the end of the first two months was 61, and by December<sup>s</sup> 1, 1867, it had increased: teachers 13, pupils 99 – total 111 (?).

This year, on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, Mr. Edwin Thomas came to the church. He was no stranger to the place, but had been living with his parents in Griffith Street, and went back and fore to the school, etc. Anyway, having got married moved to Mardy since the beginning and kept a food store; but after the children grew up, and he himself married his second wife, he came back to Aberdare, leaving one or two of the children to look after the business, whilst he paid a weekly visit to the place

He lived the final years of his life in Stuart Street and was an enthusiastic member of Bethania church to his dying day. His two daughters continued to live in the same house, one was married, whilst the other was incapacitated from birth.



Owen Rees

Owen Rees came to Aberdare in 1860, and ran an excellent school at No. 1 Seymour Street, until his death in 1889. He was a gentleman by appearance and character and was respected in the town.

For a short while he wrote a weekly, special column for the "Patriot," and was a distinguished member of Bethania whilst he was alive. He always sat in a chair with the deacons, namely on one side of the table, with David Jones, Timber Merchant, on the other side, and each looking as much a gentleman as the other. He was never chosen as a deacon of the church, though some outside deemed that he was, and I never understood why not, though I had my own opinion about it.

He was well educated in the scriptures, and I heard on several occasions that as a young man in Llandovery, he had decided to prepare for the priesthood. He was an excellent Sunday school teacher and was eloquent in his language. He was a man of independent thought and judgement, and an enemy of the clique culture, especially in church. I'm pleased to have found this picture of him, so that people today might have some idea of one of the dignitaries of Bethania of former days, even though he was not an official there.

1868

"Ventilation in the Coalfields:" The "Colliery Guardian" of January 1868 said that they had

received a copy of an excellent book on this subject from the work of Mr. William Thomas, Cwmaman Colliery, Aberdare, at that time, and Brynawel, Aberdare after that, and I feel proud that the author of the book had belonged to Bethania for years before his death, and his widow had continued to remember the occasion in the chapel for years afterwards.

A public meeting was held in the Temperance Hall on Thursday, February 27<sup>th</sup> in connection with the Penny Readings that were held in the vestry of Bethania, led by Mr. D. Rosser; also taking part were the Glee Party of Siloa, Mr. T. D. Howells and his friends, Mr Silas Evans, Mr Griffith Jones, Daniel Griffiths and others.

This year, the Reverends John Jones, Caernarvon; J. Pritchard, Rhosllanerchgrugog; J. Lewis, Gower: and Robert Llugwy Owen, Flintshire, were invited to the Preachers Circle. There was disappointment however as two of the preachers were unable to fulfil their promises; but despite that there were excellent meetings, and the collection was close to £50 towards the debt.

A bimonthly meeting was held at 8 o'clock on Sunday morning, May 16<sup>th</sup> in the Blaengwawr schoolhouse, with Mr Lewis Griffiths presiding. The meeting was also addressed by Mr Evan Rees of Blaengwawr and others. Thursday night, July 13<sup>th</sup>, an annual meeting of the Bible society was held in Bethania, when the Rev. H. Wilcox (W.) presided, and the meeting was, addressed by the Rev. T. Phillips, D.D. On behalf of the Mother's Society.

Annual meeting of the Musical Union, Thursday night, August 19<sup>th</sup>. It was commenced by Mr William James, of Trefecha College, and presided over by the Rev. P. Walters, Bryn Seion. The songs sung were Amsterdam, Beverly, St. Bride, Salem, Vesper, Clod (Praise), and the Halleluiahs Chorus. The meeting was addressed by Mr. Delta Davies, and the Rev. Griffith Parry of Llanrwst.

Tuesday, September 15<sup>th</sup> John Maldwyn Mills, the only son of the elder secretary, died aged three years of age, and was buried on Friday 18<sup>th</sup>.

Maldwyn was pure, and his cheeks flushed red,  
A jewel, a jewel he was.  
And his eyes as bright as the light of day,  
A jewel, a jewel he was.  
His brows so beautiful, and his forehead so full,  
We would present a picture of him if only we could.  
We cannot well describe his fairness.  
A jewel, a jewel he was.

His innocent heart was tender and generous,  
Fair, fair he was.  
A child, more, dear we could never find.  
Fair, fair he was.  
He was graceful from his heel to his chin,  
His temperament so gentle, so loving his smile.  
His fairness was too brief to grow old.  
Fair, fair he was.

His mother, saw in him a picture of his father.  
Gentle, gentle he was.  
And she felt the pleasure of heaven in her breast.  
Gentle, gentle he was.  
Faultless Maldwyn was the true hope of his family.  
Every one of them watched over him as a guardian angel,  
In case he was injured.

Gentle, gentle he was.

But oh! Such disappointment when Maldwyn fell sick.  
Sick, sick he was.  
His parents sent solemn prayers to the Lord.  
Sick, sick he was.  
To save their little one that he might soon get well,  
And they would again feel their original pleasure.  
But at length they were in nothing but deep sadness.  
Sick, sick he was.

His spirit flew to the breast of our God,  
Well, well he is.  
Some angel snatched him and took him home to live.  
Well, well he is.  
In the gallery of the children of Wales, his voice is loud.  
If the anthem is sung, "Always and ever to Him."  
Until the most perfect dwellers of Heaven are in wonder.  
Well, well he is.

(Nathan Wyn)

An open meeting of Trinity was held on October 5<sup>th</sup>, and an open meeting of Trinity was held on October 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup>. Those taking part in the service were the Revs. W. Howells, Trefecha; R. Thomas, Liverpool; J. C. Gullan, Swansea; and J. Evans, Glasgow, the chosen minister of Trinity. The collection as promised by the members amounted to £200.

3<sup>rd</sup> of August, Ann Mills, wife of Mr. David Mills, Cardiff Road, and sister to Dyfed and Nathan Wyn, died. She was one of the children of Bethania.

The revenue from the seats this year amounted to £36, the monthly public collections to £44 10d and the collection for Good Friday £43; the revenue of the Abergawwr houses and Bethania was £21 10s. For work on Trinity chapel £20 was paid to David Rosser, and interest of £27 for Trefecha.

There was nothing particular with regards to problems with the children, other than that this poor man had lost his only son, as was seen above. Although Trinity was opened, the children of the Sunday school went back to the vestry instead of being in the chapel, for the English brothers had the service of the vestry.

The deacons for this year are Wm. Edwards, Lewis Griffiths, John Davies, David Jones, John Price, John Jones 1st. John Jones 2nd. Morris Saunders, Samuel Jones, Owen Rees, William Morgans, Benjamin Evans, Isaac Williams, John Christmas, John Roberts, (New this year).

I understand that Mr. James is in Trefecha College these past years, and thus we are not able to see or hear him in his old home. He it was who was the first preacher to be raised in the church, and like the others who were raised here, he received £10 towards his expenses in the college. The average number for the year of Bethania School is 253, an increase of 20 for the year. Abergawwr is 106, an increase of 16.

In May of this year a scheme was launched for all the churches of the town and the community to preach the Gospel on street corners and other convenient locations, in order to try to bring in those who are negligent. The scheme was launched and undertaken with the cooperation of all the Nonconformist churches for the months of May, June, and August.

In Trinity, Monday night, July, an induction meeting was held for the Rev. John Evans as a shepherd, with those taking part being Rev. J. Thomas, B.A., Merthyr; Joshua Davies, B.A., London; D. Saunders, Abercarn; W. Williams, Crickhowell; and T. Rowlands, Aberdare; also W. Lloyd, D. Rosser, and Lewis Griffiths.

The annual meeting was held on Good Friday and Easter Sunday. The ministers were the Revs. Jones, B.A., Croesoswallt, (Oswestry); Evan Jones, Corris; J. Pritchard, Rhosllanerchrugog; and D. Evans, Treffynon. There were excellent meetings with numerous congregations, and the collections amounted to £44.

The annual meeting of the Music Union was held in Bethania on Thursday, August 1<sup>st</sup>, which was initiated by the Rev. John Evans, Trinity. The chair was taken by the Rev. T. Rees, Treherbert, (late of Aberaman), who addressed the meeting, and called upon Mr. Daniel Griffiths to the task of conducting the singers, and the songs sung were Manheim, and Bombay, Caerllyngoged, Melancthon, Leaford, and the anthem, "Come, let us sing to the Lord." An excellent address was given by Ieuan Gwyllt, who had left Pantywyll, Merthyr, for Caernarvonshire.

Tuesday night, October 5<sup>th</sup>, a Missionary Society Meeting was held here, presided over by the Rev. John Davies, when the missionary, the Rev. Thomas Jones, was present, and a long and excellent address was given by him. The chapel was packed to capacity, and a motion was passed to support the Society more than ever.

The evenings of Monday and Tuesday, the 8<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup>, of November, in Bethania there was a lecture on "The Astronomy of the Bible" by the Rev. W. O. Williams, F.R.S.A, Pwllheli. The chair was taken on Monday evening by Mordecai Jones, Esquire, Nantmelin, and on Tuesday evening by the Rev. John Rees, Sion. The profit went towards the debt of the chapel.

There was very little change in the church this year. This is the year that Mrs. Griffiths, wife of Thomas Griffiths, Ynyslwyd Street, came from Llanwrtyd. A good woman, though not physically strong, and her husband and children suffered a loss when she died. This is the year too when Evan Jones came to the church, whom we believed had been a deacon in Bethania, and was known as Evan Jones of Nant Row. Also, John Jones, Tregaron, who had lived in Cardiff Street, and his widow Mrs. Jones, who now lives in Seymour Street.

Revenue from the seats, £33; monthly collections, £41; Good Friday and Easter, £45; Abergwawr and Bethania houses, £12. 14s; produce from the lecture by the Rev. W. O. Williams, £38. Payments of various debts £148, leaving the debt of the chapel at £1,295. We understand that John Price, a blacksmith, was now living in the chapel house. No change amongst the deacons.

Amongst the children we note that Elizabeth Edwards came in the company of her sister onto the book, and we are grateful for her service. We also have the names of William and Walter Morgan for the first time amongst the children.

The numbers of Bethania Sunday School increased to an average of 55, that being in part as a result of the common movement that took place amongst the different denominations, together in unity, to go around inducing people to attend the schools and the chapels. On the other side, Abergwawr School lost eight from their number during the year.

## 1870

The neighbourhood was served by the Reverends D. Saunders, Abercarn; Griffith Parry, Llanrwst, T. J. Wheldon, B.A., Newtown; D. Phillips, Maesteg; and John Davies, Dyffryn.

Wednesday and Thursday, June 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>, the monthly county meeting was held in Bethania,

when the preachers were the Revs. David Jones, Dowlais; T. Lewis, Morriston; S. Jones, Cefn, W. Evans, Tonyrefail; J. Lewis, Gower; Evan Williams, Llansawel; Morris Morgan, Penclawdd; and J. James, Bridgend.

On Sunday evening, July 17<sup>th</sup>, after a short illness, Mrs. Evan Rees of Blaengwawr died aged 33. She had been a faithful member of Bethania, where her husband was a deacon and secretary of the church. She left a husband and three children to grieve after her.

In Bethania, Monday, July 25<sup>th</sup> Mr. J. W. Jones and Miss Sarah Daniel, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Daniel, Seymour Street, were married by the Rev. W. James. This family had been faithful in Bethania for years, and Mr. David Daniel, Confectioner of Ebbw Vale, their son, is a deacon within the body of the Church, whilst his youngest sister is married to the Rev. T. G. Jones, Pontygof, Monmouthshire.

Monday night, February 21<sup>st</sup>, Lewis Jones was established as a shepherd in Ebenezer, Cwmbach, and on the 25<sup>th</sup> of July the Rev. Morris Morgan was established as a shepherd in Nazareth.

This year Margaret Griffiths came to the church to her sister Mary and her brother Edward. She had been married to Mr. Jones of Treharris for years, he having been a deacon, but had recently passed away. Mrs. Jones continued to live in Treharris, whilst her sister was a widow living in Crumlin.

David Christmas, the brother of John, became a full member, and Margaret Davies. The names of Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Powell came onto the book this year, namely Mrs. Powell, Gadlys, and her husband; but we don't remember the circumstances. Also, John Thomas and Mrs. Thomas, formerly of John Street, but the two are now dead. In February Mr. William James was established as a Pastor, and was ordained in August 1871, in Aberystwyth.

Income from the seats this year was £34; the public collections, £44. 10s; Good Friday and Easter, £43 10s income from the houses £15 14s income of the lecture of the Rev. Edward Matthews £38. Apart from the debts and normal collections, interest and loan money of David Evans, the sum of £62 10s was paid; and the interest on the money of Trefecha was £27, leaving the debt of Bethania at £1225.

We see the loss of David Christmas amongst the names of the children, but the name of his cousin John Christmas enters making the children of John Christmas complete, though we believe that three of the five are alive, but only one is in Aberdare. The average number of the Sunday school was 302; whereas the average number of Abergwawr School was but 70.



Rev. D. Saunders, D.D.

The first Pastor of Bethania was this big man in Israel, and a true Israelite. He was born on May 20<sup>th</sup>, 1831, in that part of Newcastle Emlyn that is known as Trefhedyn (Seed Town), on the Aberteifi

side of the town, where his parents had settled on their marriage. His father, as many of us know who remember him, was a larger man physically than many other men, but was also large in his nobility, sociable and happy, and would fill every seat and position. As for his mother, she was physically neither large nor small, but bigger than ordinary women in her knowledge of scripture and her religiosity, a worthy mother to her only son, as he was a worthy son to her.

When he was a baby, his parents moved to Lampeter, when his father was working at his craft of leather merchant in Aberystwyth. When he was eight years old his parents moved to Morryston in Swansea; and as one of them said, "If it was in Aberteifi that his life began, it was in Glamorganshire that his abilities developed." Whilst in the environs of Swansea, they tried to make him into a food merchant, and after that a cabinet maker; but neither one nor the other had any attraction for him; and when he reached the age of eighteen, he began to devote himself to preparing for the great work of his life as a preacher. In August of 1851, he went to Trefecha College. At the end of two successful years, he was released by the Assembly and our Monthly Meeting to go to Glasgow to minister to the Welsh there, and to enjoy the excellent privileges of the university at the same time. He remained there for a year. His first occupation as a pastor was at Penclawdd.

Soon after that he married Miss M. Howell, daughter of Mr. J. Howell of Pencoed, a main elder of the Body of the Church, and Secretary of the Monthly Meeting of Glamorgan (when there was only one monthly meeting in the county), a post he had held for forty years without payment. Although the father of the bride was not happy at the time for his daughter to become his wife, they soon all came to agree in unison that the marriage was beneficial after all. In one year there came both sweetness and bitterness; he had a church, a wife, and a child whom he lost. His salary in Penclawdd was but £40 a year, but he and his wife both said that they lived happily at that time, and that on less than 16s a week. At the end of the year 1856, he received a call to this church, Bethania, Aberdare.

There were many younger men of Bethania who had laboured under the esteemed sum of £25 a year. In February, 1857, he came to Aberdare, because we see that both he and his wife were paying their first monthly contributions in March of that year, for our former Pastor, Mr. James, had come here from Cardiff only two months before him, and had had the privilege, along with other younger men of the church, of contributing to his £25 pastoral salary. It was in August, in the Pontfon Meeting that he was ordained, that same year of his and his wife's huge grief that his first-born son, William Howell, died and was buried in our old parish cemetery. This situation caused the father much trouble, and it's said that it affected his preaching and his sermons from then on.

His short stay in Aberdare was of benefit to the Methodists of the whole valley, and he was looked up to by all denominations. In his weekly Bible class, he was renowned greatly in his own church, and the class became very-popular. His reputation as a preacher became very well renowned throughout the whole community, such that his services were called upon from both near and far; and as a result, he received a call from the united churches of Liverpool, and agreed to move there in February 1862, having been here for close to five years. Within four years however he withdrew from the populous tumult of Liverpool to the secluded church of Abercarn, a church that Lord and Lady Llanover had presented as a gift to the Body of the Methodist Church. His next and final move was to Swansea, and though his health was failing for the last two years of his life, he continued to preach until the first Sabbath in April of 1892. On the lid of his coffin was carved the words, "David Saunders, born May 20th, 1831; died 19th of October 1892." His mortal remains were buried in the public cemetery at Aberdare. On the night before his funeral, his coffin was laid in Bethania chapel, the doors of which were opened in the morning, and thousands came to view the coffin, and shed many salt tears of longing for him. His funeral was such that it's like had never been seen before or after in Aberdare, a crowd of eight thousand and more, of every rank and age.

1871

As usual, the festival of Good Friday and Easter was held, where the preachers were J. Hughes,

Liverpool; D. Saunders, Abercarn; and T. Roberts, Bethesda. £90 was collected, and the friends decided that it should be made up to £100 in order to lessen the debt.

The annual meeting of the Music Union was held in Bethania, Tuesday evening September 1<sup>st</sup> 19 The meeting, was started by the Rev. W. Edwards (A), Ebenezer, and the chair was taken by the Rev. W. James. After a suitable address, the Rev. E. Stephens, Tanymarian, was called upon to lead, and the songs sung were Mendelsohn, Saxony, Mamre, and Alexander. Then an address was given by Rev. P. J. Walters, Trecynon, and the Rev. M. Morgan of Nazareth. After singing Vienna, the conductor shouted at the top of his voice, "Well done, boys, that's real music." Having sung Malverne, an address was given by Rev. W. Edwards, and following the wish of the conductor, the choir sang the tune Moriah with the words, "In the great waters and the waves...etc.," and to finish, the whole congregation joined in. The emotion had risen to such a degree that it was not just an ordinary joy.

September of this year we find the names of Mr. William Davies and his wife on the books for the first time, and I deem this to be William Davies of Abernant, who is thought to have been a member, deacon, and secretary in the church for years. They came here from the neighbourhood of Ystradgynlais, where also they are both buried. Mr. Davies suffered for years with rheumatism, and as a child had spent years in bed. The two were buried from Stuart Street. In August of this year, we find the names of Mr. William Rosser and his first wife on the books, that is, the father and stepmother Mrs. Davies, ironmonger, who came here as the manager of Blaengwawr colliery.

Income from the seats this year came to £31, the public collections to £44, and Good Friday and Easter £100. Amongst the other collections, we had £3.12s. towards the Howel Harris Chapel of Remembrance, whilst income from the Abergwawr and Bethania houses came to the sum of £26. This year £200 was paid off the debt of Bethania, whilst still leaving £1100 to be paid. Amongst the payments we have one of £208 towards the capital and interest of the Temple Society, interest of Trefecha and John Thomas was £36; and £14 towards cleaning of the chapel and vestry.

This year the name of Richard D. Griffiths appeared, and to our surprise the names of four children of Walter Lloyd, 'A Patriot,' and having looked again, we then find the names of the father and the mother reappearing amongst the members of Bethania. Also, Thomas Edward Powell and David Morris, the two eldest sons of Mrs. Powell, Gadlys. At the end of this year an average of 325 was counted in Sunday school, and 71 in Abergwawr.

In Bethania chapel, January 25<sup>th</sup>, a public meeting was held by the Bands of Hope Bethania, Abergwawr and Carmel, around 300 members, when there was singing and recitation of various pieces, and the children were addressed by the ministers of the Class. Mr. William James presided, and called upon Mr. Edw. Williams, Cross Street, to the task of leading the children to sing the tunes; "Keep To The Right, Time To Work, When thinking of Heaven," The Spiritual Battle, Like an Armed Host, and Mendelsohn. The children were singing from their hearts. Also, there were reports by Seth Phillips, John Morgan and Morgan Davies, and an address by Mr. Benjamin James, Daniel Griffiths, and Mrs. John Thomas. The piano was played by Miss Evans, Carmel; Miss Jones, Bethania; and Miss Lloyd, Trinity. The meeting was lively, and the chapel full to capacity.

The six-monthly meeting of the Sunday School Class, Aberdare, was held in Bethania on March 17<sup>th</sup> having received the accounts and noted that the numbers of some schools had fallen during the six months, an excellent address was given by Rev. W. John, Bridgend. At 11 o'clock the schools of Carmel and Cwmdare came down to recite a topic, and it was started by one from Carmel reciting Psalm 102, and Mr. John praying. At 2 o'clock Nazareth School came together to recite, and at 6 o'clock Blaengwawr and Bethania.

Good Friday and Easter festivals; the Reverends R. Roberts, Carneddi; T. C Edwards, Liverpool; and Ed. Mathews, Cardiff did the preaching. An aim of £200 was set to be collected by the church, and by Sunday evening the sum had reached £223.

Thursday night, May 23<sup>rd</sup>, the second meeting of the Union of the Bands of Hope of Bethania and Carmel was held under the leadership of Mr. Benjamin James. The Rev. Thomas Rowlands presided over the meeting, and an address was, given by “Son of Dyfed” and Mr. Lewis Griffiths. The children played an excellent part this time.

Monday, June 24<sup>th</sup>, and the days following, a General Council was held in Aberdare. On Monday at 10 o'clock and 4 o'clock the committees gathered in Bethania, and the representatives at half past six. In this meeting the Rev. Edward Mathews delivered his leaving address from the Chair, and the Rev. Roger Edwards, Mold, was elected. Also, the Rev. D. Saunders was elected as secretary in place of Rev. T. Levi. At 10 and 2 of the second day, items associated with the occasion were dealt with, and at half past six a paper by the Rev. T.C. Edwards, M.A, Liverpool, was read out on the subject of, “The obligations of Christians to labour personally in the service of the Gospel. This was one of the best papers ever to be read in a gathering, and everybody was anxious to get it printed, and to live as worthy of the Gospel. After Mr. Edwards, the Rev. Owen Thomas, E. Mathews, D.C. Davies. R. Lumley, G. Parry, Hughes “Above the Well,” and Mr. Hughes, “Under the Stairs” talked about the same subject. At the same time, in Nazareth, the Rev. R. Roberts, Abergele, and Dr. Edwards, Bala, preached. Wednesday night, a missionary meeting was held in Bethania, when a number of senior ministers spoke on the Union.

Monday morning, 24<sup>th</sup> June, having suffered a long illness, Miss Jones, eldest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. David Jones, butcher, High Street, died. She was one of the most simple and religious girls to have been raised in Aberdare. Her father belonged to Siloa, and her mother to Bethania, and the three children used to come with their mother.

It is her name that has the scent of perfume,  
And her sleep is so silent.

How strange that I rise – and am cold,  
Margret, with losing you.  
Wounds that injured me:  
My heart is an open wound.

Men wait for you,  
In longing at this hour,  
How strange, the trials  
Given by this beautiful character?

Innocent to all our eyes– she was,  
A gift her whole life.  
Search – she is immaculate,  
A white lily, still white.

In age, she had more tenderness, - no kinder  
Breast in one dwelling place.  
There never was one brighter,  
Driven to lie in the, the dust of a grave.

In Aberdare, a black morning- right was the time.  
To be sick at heart,  
Pure of heart, what use to hide it! - to lose a saint!  
For the sake of glory, I rise to sing.

Dear Lord, to her parents – this work,

And Thomas and Phoebe,  
Give them strength, our Dear Lord,  
To go on and to worship. - WILLIAM MORGAN

The annual meeting of Aberdare Music Union was held at Bethania, Tuesday night, August 27. The meeting was started, by Rev. Lewis Jones, Cwmbach, and the chair was taken by Rev. W. James, who uttered a few words, and said that he was proud to have the privilege of calling on the Rev. D. Saunders, Abercarn, to address the meeting. Mr. Saunders said that he had had musical talent within him since a child, that his father was a conductor in the chapel, whilst he was the closest to him, and he spoke excellently about music and its beneficial effects upon men. The verses were given out by Mr. W. Morgan and conducted by Mr. Daniel Griffiths.

This year the daughter of John Christmas became a full member, she now being a member in Trinity, and having been married for years to Mr. Dan Jones, conductor of the singing in Trinity. This year also we first find the name of Mr. David Evans, Bute Villa, on the book of membership of Bethania, who moved from here after a while to Bodringallt, he and his family, as manager of a colliery under Mr. Davis, Blaengwawr at that time, but after that Blaenllechau. This is the year that Hannah, eldest daughter of J. Mills, became a full member.

Income from the seats came to £32, public collections £46, the festival £256; product from the lecture by Rev. T. Levi £30, and income from the houses £29. Amongst the payments was the money borrowed, and the interest to, Mr. John Thomas, £209; interest on the money to Trefecha and Mr. Evan Rees, £37, leaving the debt at the end of the year at £900, and in the hand of the Treasurer £17. The Sunday school numbers reached 324, namely teachers 50, and scholars 274, and Blaengwawr School 100. We add the name of Annie Powell to those of her two brothers.

## 1873

Wednesday morning, February 14<sup>h</sup>, 1873, Hannah, daughter of John and Hannah Mills, died aged 15. She had been in poor health for a long time. The following Monday, a large congregation came together, including some scores of the Good Templers, of whose Order she was a member. The funeral was ministered by the Revs. W. James, Lewis Jones, Cwmbach, and Morris Morgan, Nazareth.

After long distress -  
Hannah fell asleep in her prime.  
Clear tears long continued,  
Flowing fresh upon our cheeks.

Speech overflows, - a cold grief  
Is heard trickling to our lips,  
as we remember - the modest cheeks,  
Of the dear and pure girl fallen into sleep.

Her quiet life was always like silver in its virtue.  
And a cauldron of memories, above a hollow grave.  
Of flushed and fair honour.  
Quick in her schooling - she was seen,  
O vigorous heart,  
And pleasant, divine lessons - of the fair heaven  
She would always study.

Do not weep, for the light of Paradise is her place,  
Above the pain of every care:  
And its enchanting singing - a cold challenge

Of breezes of adversity reached her cheeks.

We follow the gold thread of her short life,  
Though so sad and dark,  
And we live in the pavilion of hope,  
For gentle Hannah in a better Paradise. DYFEDFAB

Hannah grew weak and fell asleep,  
The painful struggle was ended.  
Your cheerful, divine, good daughter,  
You will reach her through age.

You are sad no doubt- for Hannah.  
Sharp are your feelings!  
What sort of man would not be saddened,  
By his fate in this world of death!

From the beasts we are separated – by longing,  
For the dead that are lost,  
And often lament.  
For their own dear long season.

And is it not fair to allow this,  
new freedom to us?  
The Lord arranged the floodgates.  
Genially to lighten our load.

From grief and weeping – lovely it is to you,  
Brother and sister, to remember.  
That a better life from suffering,  
Will come to her when she awakes.

You will both see together - after this,  
In the celebration of blessing.  
Everyone who is there will resound,  
Through the dear gift of eternity.

Also, at the start of this year I have the task of noting the death of the Rev. John Davies, who died suddenly at 11 o'clock on Tuesday morning, February 1<sup>st</sup>, in his residence in Commercial Street, after suffering greatly for days on end of inflammation of the lungs. He was a gentle man, a friendly preacher and well known to a wide circle. He left a widow and six children to grieve after him, and he was only 52 years old. His mortal remains were buried on the following Friday, after holding the main part of the service in the chapel. He made his living as a cobbler and selling shoes in a shop in High Street, where Mrs. Chew's shop is presently located. The late David Harris, Ynyslwyd Street, one of our former deacons, used to work and live with this family before he moved to live in Commercial Street, where he kept a bookshop and newsagents, of which Harris took great care, and where he worked for his own benefit from then on.

The festival of Easter and Good Friday this year was ministered, by the Revs. Owen Thomas, Liverpool, Peter Jones, Llanllechid, and Samuel Jones, Tresimwn (Bonvilston). The collections were over £337. Monday, September 15<sup>th</sup>, the Good Templars of Aberdare turned out in a large host from the Bethania vestry, proceeding from there along the main streets of Aberaman, and up to Trecynon, before returning to Siloa Chapel, Aberdare, where the crowd was, addressed by some deacons of the Urdd.

At the end of this year, it came to the notice of the church that its nurturing shepherd (deacon) had accepted an invitation from one of the richest English churches in Liverpool, inviting him to come there to minister to it. The first had gone there, but his feelings were not such as to be very, supportive of the second, and before the end of the year the decision had been sent. The long purse of the rich Methodists of Liverpool had disturbed many in the church in Wales in the past, but perhaps its length had not shortened enough so as to cease being an influence on some in the future, even though gold is not all that glitters in Liverpool.

To our deep sadness, we see on the list of members for this year the name of our daughter and our eldest child, crossed out by the handwriting of the secretary, and the word "died" across it – died, but not losing her, "as not lost" etc. O! we cannot get the whole family back. In this year the name of Harriet Powell has been added to the names of her parents and her brother on the church's book, and despite changing her name to Mrs. Lloyd, she continues in the same fold.

The income from the seating has reached the sum of £38, the monthly collections to £49.11s, and the collection for Good Friday and Easter to £333. This was a year of great struggle, for the Trefecha Fund was calling its loan money in, a sum reaching £613, between the capital and the interest. Besides the large collection, a hundred pounds was borrowed from J. Lewis, Blaengwawr; a hundred pounds from John Powell, and fifty pounds from Mary Davies – making the loan £250. The revenue of the houses came to £28; such that after paying the Trefecha money, our remaining debt was but five hundred and fifty pounds, whilst there was close to fifty pounds in the hands of the treasurer.



Edward Williams

The Sunday school had increased to 331 in number at the end of this year, on average – the highest it had been before or after. It's not easy to pass this blessed opportunity without indicating it and wishing to see its like again. At that time the school looked like a living gathering every teacher was punctual and already in their place, and beginning the lessons without delay, and if it happened that one teacher was absent through some misfortune, one could pick another one without delay from a similar class to take their place, for it was easier at that time to have three suitable teachers for every class, than to find one now. I almost feel an urge to give a list of the giants of those days. Blaengwawr School could scarcely maintain its ground at the end of the year.

About this time in the history of our church, Mr. Edward Williams, Cross Street, was the leader of the Band of Hope among us and applied himself earnestly to his task. He was born in a farmhouse called Coch Gareg (Red Rock), and that was before his parents moved to Maes y Car, Defynog, but it was by the name Edward Williams, Maes y Car, that he was mostly known. When he was with his parents in the last place, he married a young girl called Catherine Powell of Tyle Garw, and the two young people went to live in Tyle Garw Bychan, where they stayed for some years, and that is the place where three of their children were born. Anyway, around the year 1849, it was decided to move to Glamorgan, where there was the pull of the host at the time. One of the first things that Edward did upon coming to Aberdare, was to build two houses in Cross Street, and the family lived in

one of them for quite a while; but because of an increase in the family, they went to live in Bond Street, then back a second time to his old house where he and his wife lived and died.

Williams was an excellent musician, as good in one notation as the other, and he taught the Sol Fa system to a host of children in Bethania, as well as leading the Band of Hope. His main wish was to do what he did without disturbance and unnoticed, without anyone else apart from the children and himself being present, except for one special person of his own choosing. Though not a great vocalist himself, he possessed the talent of teaching others. For most of his time in Aberdare he was at the Abernant works, as an honest official between the master and the workers, though he was not in high office. The whole time he was engaged with musicians, like birds of a single colour being pulled to one place and always taking his place among the ranks and being content to do so. I'm happy to be able to give a picture of one who would not display himself, a good man, quiet and unassuming, to people who are now in Bethania, and who are often wearied by people who are full of wind and are great hypocrites. Everyone remembers him and are respectful of his memory and that of his wife, who was always called by the Poet, her teacher, by the name of Citti. They had ten children of those only four are still alive now, and only one, Mrs. Lewis, Elizabeth Street, in Aberdare, continues in Bethania.

1874

This year was rather troublesome in connection with our church. May 4, Benjamin Evans, the first, died very suddenly, who along with his numerous families lived in Oak Street. He and his wife came to Glamorgan some years before the opening of Bethania, for his wife, Margaret Evans as she was called, had been attending the first chapel of the Body- chapel Twyn Bach, a member of Carmel, and one of the companies who came down to the opening of this chapel. Benjamin was born in Pentre Fach, Llanboidy, district of Narberth, the county of Carmarthen, a neighbourhood of ancient renown, for it was in Cilmaenllwyd, in the time of Camden, that silver Roman coins were discovered, when Julian Road, Pencaer Fach, etc were founded, something out of the past of the neighbourhood.

Although Evans was originally an Independent, and his wife a zealous Methodist, when this chapel was opened, he became a member here, even though they were a tight knit family. Ann, the eldest daughter, the late Mrs. Hughes, was born before the family left Cheshire. Benjamin was not long in Bethania before he was noticed, and having been noticed, was put to use, especially in connection with the children and the youth, and he was so faithful and industrious, that in 1867, he, John Christmas etc, were elected as deacons. Whilst alive he was a faithful member, even though it was not for long, for he was only 46 when he died.

On the corner of Ynyslwyd Street and John Street is where the family lived when they came here, from which place they moved to the corner of Monk Street and Clifton Street. He was taken from his large family after a short but difficult illness, leaving a mother of ten children a widow. His two sons, Benjamin and David, became full members the year their father died, whilst the names of Thomas, John, and Joseph were among the children of the church at the time. At the moment, only four of the children are alive, three continuing as faithful members in their mother church, namely the two: Mrs. Evans and John, whilst the other, like the prodigal son, remains in the 'land of the pigs and the pods,' but he will return.

Among those who came to the church this year was Dinah, the youngest daughter of Mrs. Davies, Bookseller: Miss S. Dawson of Carmarthen, who became a housekeeper to Mr. Powell, formerly of the Bank, but who married John Thomas, Carmel, and remains true to her obligations and her faith. Another who came to the church, a young man, of Elizabeth Street, and that mainly through the influence of David Harris, was Evan Davies, who was a coal merchant for some years, and a secretary of this church for a while. The church knows the whole history of his wife's and his death, without me having the pain of recording it. This year the church lost Mr. David Evans, Bute Villa, and his family, and that was because he moved to be a supervisor at Bodringallt colliery, Rhondda. Not only was he a man of influence, but a useful person in the, the world and the church. Round about July of this year,

Benjamin Mills and his family came here, and they were faithful and industrious for some years, he being an ecclesiastic official.

The income for the seats this year came to the sum of £33, the monthly public collections to £49, collection for Good Friday and Easter to £61.14s, and income from the houses £35. The annual collection of the Bible Society is one that increases continuously, and this year it increased to a sum of over £14. Amongst the payments, the loan money and interest to William Evans was paid, namely, £104, and interest of four pounds to John Powell, leaving a remaining debt of the chapel of £400.

Some news on the children's book this year is Evan Davies, Lizzie Mills, John and Joseph Evans, and William and Mary Jane Rosser, Blaengwawr. This year the numbers of the Sunday school are fewer, for the average is now only 311, and Blaengwawr school has reduced to an average of 61.

## 1875

April 11<sup>th</sup>, in the house of Mr. James Roberts, Llwydcoed House, very suddenly, aged 79, widow of Lew. Lewis, former owner and keeper of the Boot, Aberdare. The old lady, her daughter, and her Grand-daughter. Mrs. Roberts had been faithful members of the church for years. The mortal remains of Mrs. Lewis were buried in the same grave as her husband, in the cemetery of the old church.

Monday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>, under the leadership of Ieuan Gwyllt, a Gymanfa Ganu (choral assembly) of the Aberdare class was held, the first meeting in Bethlehem, Mountain Ash, the second in Nazareth, in the night in Calfaria (instead of Bethania, for it was bigger, and the assemblies were more popular.)

June 10<sup>th</sup>, after three years of grievous affliction, aged 66, Eunice Rees, mother of Nathan Wyn and Dyfed. She had been a member with the Methodists from cradle to grave. She left behind five children:

Being perfectly realised,  
The pain of living without a mother.

To my dear mother God gave unconditionally,  
The eternal breadth of Heaven and its poetry!  
The same good God, O! Shatter my wearisome tribulation.  
To me the wonderful breast of my mother,  
With its peace is more wonderful than the orbit  
Of the stars entwining the ages of the earth below

(Nathan Wyn)

Tuesday morning, December 20<sup>th</sup>, Mrs. Jones died, wife of David Jones, timber merchant, and occasionally treasurer of the chapel. Though she had been weak for some years, she enjoyed religious issues until the end. She was buried in the cemetery of the old church. The body was carried from her daughter's house, Mrs. Watkins, from the edge of the chapel.

Tuesday, within the week, Mrs. Thomas, Ynysllwyd Street died, having suffered badly from inflammation for some days. Mrs. Thomas was the mother of the Rev. Dr. Thomas, Llandyfri (Llandovery), and a number of his brothers and sisters and amongst them was John Thomas, Ferndale; Daniel Thomas Nazareth; Mrs. Davies, Ferndale etc. The three last named, and who died during the year, raised numerous and honourable families.

At the end of this year, the second English Methodist Church gathering in Trinity, after the long and painful misunderstanding with the Presbyterians, who wanted to take the chapel from the Body of the Church, for the church itself, in its ignorance, under the leadership of D. Rosser, had elected to do that. When the attempt failed, the Methodists returned, and the Presbyterians built their church in High Street. When departing this time, it was decided that Lewis Griffiths should go with them, and to help them for a while; and thus, it was, but when Griffiths died, both churches felt the loss. I must confess

that Lewis was an exceptional pastor in Bethania and took as much interest in the success of the church as if he were a conscientious, paid servant.

At once, Bethania lost over 30 full members, besides their children, and because of that the cause has never been so successful since then. But although we lost so many, several more were accepted in during the year, and amongst them was Rees Lewis, his wife and daughter who had been in Aberaman for some time; Mrs. Thomas, wife of Edwin Thomas; Miss Rosser, Blaengwawr; Mrs. Thomas Richards, Mary Powell, (though her sister Sarah had moved), Gwilym Moses, Miss Jones, Beehive, Mary Jane Jones, Margaret Evans, Margaret Daniel etc. This is the year that William Landeg Powell went to Trefecha.

This year the income from the seats came to £33, the monthly public collection to £39.14s; income from the houses £30, and collection for Good Friday and Easter was £50. This year the collection for the Trefecha memorial chapel was the sum of £3.6s.8d. Also, the sum of £7.14s was collected towards the college at Aberystwyth. The production of the lecture belonging to Cynddylan came to £19. The two William Powells had permission to proceed as preachers, and to begin in Trefecha, for each of them received £10 towards their expenses from the church, even though the collection for that was only £6. The debt of the church at the end of this year was £300.

The chapel gallery seems to be emptying, without anyone new taking a seat there, though I notice that Benjamin Mills has been invited to the big seat (as a deacon). No change amongst the children, except that the eldest daughter of W. Lloyd has gone from their midst and taken her place amongst the full members.

## 1876

Amongst the children of the church who became full members this year, was Mary Daniel, Bessie Mills, Lizzie Rosser, and Richard Thomas, Nant Row. Amongst those who remained in Bethania rather than going after them to Trinity, is Mr. and Mrs. Davies, Commercial House; whilst Rees Lewis and his family, just returned from Aberaman, have gone to try dwelling in Trinity. Arriving at the church, amongst others, Evan Mills and his wife, father and mother of the late Rev. John Mills, (B), Abernant, and the Rev. Matthew J. Mills, Nantymoel, who is with the English Methodists; also, John Protheroe and his wife, who were in the chapel house; John Rees and his wife, of Aberaman; and the last I shall name, David Thomas, photographer, and his wife, those who, I'm sorry to say, got drunk on their success in the market, and as a result left the place in order to go to the neighbourhood of Swansea.

Revenue from the seats this year came to £26; the monthly public collections to £24: Good Friday and Easter to £41. This year's collection towards Trinity was £12; to Aberystwyth University, £6.14s and £28 was received from the houses. It was decided as well that the case of Abergwawr was not likely to succeed, and the property was sold to William Moses for the sum of £555, and the possessions that were in the vestry were sold for £10.

Amongst the payments there was £102 for the loan and interest to Jane Thomas, interest money for Evan Rees, J. Powell, John Lewis, and Mary Davies amounted to £14. The loan money and interest to these people was paid up at the end of the year, being the sum of £358, leaving £183 still in hand.

Costs of Good Friday and Easter were £16. 10s.; and the preachers were the Reverends W. Evans, Tonyrefail; Llew. Edwards, Aberystwyth; J.M. Jones Cardiff; and Hugh Jones, Liverpool. On the children's book was the new addition of Kate Griffiths, even though she was only born on February 22<sup>nd</sup>: Gwenhwyfan, David, and John B. Davies, Commercial House.

Monday, May 1<sup>st</sup>, the Musical Assembly Class of Aberdare was held, meeting in the morning in Mountain Ash under the leadership of Rev. T. C. Phillips. The meeting, was started by the Rev. D. Saunders, Swansea, and the assembly was led by Ieuan Gwyllt. At the end of this meeting Abergele

was sung, with the words: 'So blessed are those through faith,' etc. in memory of W. Edwards, leader of the singing in Mountain Ash, who died some time during the year. The two following meetings were held in the expansive chapel of Siloa, Aberdare, instead of at Bethania. The meeting started at 2 o'clock by calling on Mr. James to preside, and the Rev. T. Rowlands, Carmel, to start the meeting. Having sung several tunes excellently, the Halleluiahs Chorus was sung to finish the meeting, and that to the great satisfaction of the crowd who were present. By the time of the 6 o'clock meeting, the chapel was full to capacity long before that time. The final meeting was started by the Rev. W. Davies, Cwmaman, and it was after this that the president - Mr. James, called the leader to his work, and all the tunes were sung with conviction, especially the Lost Sheep, and the leader said that the morning meeting of this assembly was the best in his life.

We could never in our lives cease to record the death of the old father, Abraham James, Carmel, who died on May 27<sup>th</sup> this year at the age of 69. He had led the singing in the chapels Twyn Bach and Carmel for over fifty years.

We have mentioned numerous times the old Road House at the start of our history, and now we record the story of the death of Dafydd Williams, aged 52 years, 43, Bute Street, Aberdare.

October 8th, very suddenly, Thos. Bowen died aged 45 years, postman, Dean Street. He was a native of Pont Fon but came to Aberdare when he was twenty years old to work as a cobbler. Soon after that he went to the post office, and there he worked until his death; but he received a pension for a while after failing to make his way. He was married to one of the daughters of David Jones, occasionally the treasurer of Bethania, and belonged to our church. The Good Templars were held in great honour in our midst at this time, and the popular Open Temples are often being held in our vestry.

## 1877

Our Jubilee - On the last Good Friday and Easter Monday, Bethania's Jubilee was held. The chapel was built 22 years ago, and the festivals are held annually on the same days. We are now completely debt free, with not a halfpenny remaining upon the chapel nor the buildings, and everyone feels joyful. The ministers who were serving this time were the Reverends D. Saunders, Swansea; Francis Jones, Waunfawr; and D. Davies, Abermaw. The congregations were as numerous as usual, and the preaching was good and influential. The expenses for the meetings of the Jubilee were £14.5s.

Though the friends had been busy collecting every penny of old debt, and though we were free on the day of the Jubilee, in the hands of the Treasurer of the Festivals (Note: This translates literally as Treasurer of the Circumstances or Occasions, so I can only surmise from the context that it's Treasurer of the Festivals that is implied here. A.D.), at the end of this year, there was £142, whilst the Treasurer of the Ministry was in debt to a sum of over three pounds. Income from the seats this year came to £27.10s; the monthly collections to £19; and income from the houses to £19.

April 6<sup>th</sup>, Mrs. Alice Peek, Canon Street, died. She was the daughter of Mrs. John Jones, fruiterer, Cardiff Street, and was stepdaughter to John Jones, who began to sing in Bethania. Mrs. Peek was also a faithful member of Bethania.

Here, I cannot refrain from recording the death of the Rev. John Roberts (Ieuan Gwyllt), which took place at his home in the neighbourhood of Caernarvon, Monday, May 1<sup>st</sup> after a few days of illness. He was buried on the following Friday in Caethaw cemetery near Caernarvon.

A religious investigation was carried out in this town by different denominations, with the result that 33 houses refused to answer the questions. 1753 houses were visited, in which 8271 people resided. The number of those who frequented a place of worship was 7346, and those who did not frequent any place of worship was 753. Children who attended Sunday school, 2884, and 665 did not go to any Sunday school. The number of families who wanted to see ministers visiting them was 17, whilst there were 468 persons who used to frequent a place of worship, but do not do so now.

Because the father and the mother, and the families belonged to Bethania, I will include the following death: June 15<sup>th</sup>, four years old, Ceridwen, little daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jonathan Rees, (Nathan Wyn), Heol Fach, Ystrad:

Carry to the grave of little Ceridwen - the girl.  
Of whom there were none more cheerful.  
Asleep in her wholesome spring,  
That makes longing more bitter.

O! Beloved Ceridwen - for in  
The graveyard is your sunshine,  
No, the gay sight of your muse.  
On the court beyond the veil.

I believe that little Ceridwen - is at the feast,  
Of angels from now on,  
She was a beautiful one, but of wholesome orders,  
The image of Jesus is more precious - Her Uncle (Dyfed)

September 21<sup>st</sup>, in the registry office, Merthyr, united in pure marriage, Mr. Thomas Williams, the Black Gorse, parish of Llangynin (the parish got its name from St. Gynin, though there is a brook of the same name in the neighbourhood), Carmarthenshire, and Miss Mary Ann Thomas, Wind Street, Aberdare. They are now known as Thomas Williams, Minawel, and his wife, Tanybryn Street, who, like established pieces of furniture, have been among us for years, and I hope that they will be so for a long future of filling the place they are in at present in Bethania.

December of this year we have Joshua Davies, St. Clears, being named first in the church book, who has been a faithful member ever since then, and a deacon for twenty-two years. There is occasionally one, who like him make their home in the church and undertake to be a member of the religious family, such that his loss would be a grievous thing, whilst there are others like lodgers, whose absence is not missed. When it happens that this friend is absent, everyone notes his loss, as it should be for every member of a church, as a member of a family.

Almost the same month also Miss Gwladys Jones and her mother became members of our church, though they are living on the Gadlys. They had been faithful and active members, especially Miss Jones, until she left for Carmarthen to get married.

Also, this is the year that we first see the name of Mrs. Richards, Wind Street, who is faithful to Bethania, even though all her children except one have flown the nest.

Amongst the list of the children, Bessie Mills has moved into the circle of full members, whilst Rees Protheroe has come amongst the children for the first time.

Since last year we have lost Mr. Saunders, father of the Rev. D. Saunders, and by this year Miss Roberts, eldest daughter of Mr. Owen Roberts, has come to Mrs. Saunders the eldest to live in

Aberdare. I have failed to find the date of his death, but I know that he died early in the year of 1876.

## 1878

The monthly collection of various occasions this year came to £20.10s; income from the seats was £24. 10s, collection from Good Friday and Easter £24, and income from the houses £13. The church also gave a loan of £100 to Blaenllechau chapel; whilst the expenses for Good Friday and Easter were £12; leaving £120 in the hand of the treasurer at the end of the year. Including the children, £106 was collected towards the ministry, whilst the expenses towards the Pastorate was £188.

It was this year that John Christmas, David Price Street, came onto the book of full members, and from there on he is one of the deacons of our church. In this year too Mrs. Davies died, she having been the wife of T. G. Davies, and mother of Samuel and Tabitha Davies, Glannant Street, who continue to be members of our church. At the end of this year as well, Mrs. Darby of Dean Street, came onto the list of our members, and was a full and regular member until the day she died. She was a good, devout woman, was a native of Llanddewi Brefi. About July of this year David Griffiths the eldest and his wife returned to Aberdare from Porthcawl. It was at the end of the year that Mr. David Jones, Schoolmaster, and his wife came to the church, he went from here to Hirwaun. About June, Mr. Owen Roberts and his wife, now from Victoria Square, came onto the book of our membership.

Amongst the children we have Mary, Archibald, and Tegwedd Maria Davies being added to the children of Mr. and Mrs. Davies, Commerce House; Mary Powell, Regent Street; Maria Roberts and Anne, Hannah Thomas, Lizzie Thomas, David, Polly, and Jenne.

March 16<sup>th</sup>. Margaret Rees, died in the house of her sister and brother-in-law, Mountain Ash; she, being the sister of Nathan Wyn and Dyfed, and she was raised with her family in Bethania. She was buried in the cemetery of St. Fagan, Aberdare.

A grand musical Gymanfa was held in Aberdare Valley on Monday May 1st. The first meeting was in Bethlehem, Mountain Ash; the second in Libanus, Aberaman; and in the evening at Bethania. It was decided that Ieuan Gwyllt would be the leader, but he was suddenly struck down, and his place was, taken by Mr. John Thomas of Llanwrtyd, though he felt inadequate to fill the place of Mr. Roberts. Amongst the various tunes that were sung we had the Requiem of Dr. Parry after Ieuan Gwyllt in the three meetings, and it was sung excellently. Addresses were given by the Revs. J. Hughes, M.A., Dowlais; Thomas Evans, Merthyr; D. Saunders, Swansea, and others. It was a popular and very satisfactory Gymanfa.



David Griffiths Senior

The two David Griffiths, the father, and the son. (Pictures show David Griffiths. When I first came to Aberdare in 1861, one of the first people I got to know was David Griffiths the eldest. I wanted to get to know him for one thing, as his second wife was from the same town as me and my wife, and through that I got to know more about him than anyone else in Bethania, and another thing was that we heard that he was one of the main men of the church in connection with the children.

I remember well the first Sabbath when I went to the School, when I was shown the children's room above the chapel stable, and the stone stairs to go up, and the one I saw first when I'd climbed the steps was David Griffith the eldest, busy with a room full of youngsters, and he like a king in their midst. Having spoken a few dry words with him, I descended, having pulled my little tape measure over every foot, externally and internally, as was my habit with everyone, and I went to the big School, and to one of the nearest classes to the door on the left-hand side. I discovered that Griffiths was a native of Breconshire, that part which borders Carmarthenshire: He had come to Hirwaun very, early on and stayed there for some years. Anyway, he left Hirwaun in 1850 and went to Aberaman.

In 1852 we find that he and his family moved to the village, to a house in Nant Row, becoming a member of Carmel; but because the Methodist villagers kept schools in the village, in the Long Room of the Black Lion, as the present entrance to Bethania, and in Abernant etc. Griffiths worked in these rather than going up to Carmel for two on the Sabbath. When he left that part of the village from Carmel, Griffiths was the eldest among them, he, and his family, he was faithful and industrious, as every member should be.

At this time, he built houses in Griffiths Street, and he himself went to live in one of them. In the first register of the members of Bethania in 1854, he and his wife Elizabeth were in it, and they paid their monthly contributions regularly— the number in the church being 150. At the start of the year of 1858, his wife died, she being the mother of David Griffiths who is here at present, and other children. In 1860 we find the names of the father and the son together in the book of the church. In 1861, whatever, the father married again, when David Griffiths the youngest went to visit his brother in Australia.

In 1864 the father, his mother-in-law and the daughters went to live in Gamlyn, and joined Brynseion, and our Griffiths got married. In 1865 the father, his wife, and his daughters came back to the village; but at the start of 1868 they moved to Porthcawl. In August of this year Mr. Griffiths the eldest, and his wife returned from Porthcawl, and they joined this church. On Saturday, May 31st, 1879, in his dwelling in Weatheral Street, he died quietly at the age of 66: "There is no hurry for him who believes."

As for David Griffiths the youngest, he's well known to the people of Bethania for the past fifty years, continuing to be active amongst us and having been faithful and industrious in his life. Not only has he worked particularly well with the children of the church, the Band of Hope etc. but for years he's been a leader of the singing in Bethania, and continues in such a task, and he's been an ecclesiastic deacon since 1879, and now the eldest deacon of many years standing. Rather than that we should heap our own words upon him, I believe it's better that I give here the Address that was given to him together with a monetary gift:



David Griffiths Junior

“Presented to Mr. and Mrs. David Griffiths on the occasion of their golden wedding anniversary, August 19<sup>th</sup>, 1915, by Bethania Church M.C. Aberdare. - Dear Brother and Sister- We wish you heartfelt congratulations on the occasion of your fifty-year married life. We beseech you to accept this little gift as a sign of our respect for you, and our gratitude for your great service, and for your incomparable loyalty to this church all though the years. We thank God for us having you, and for His care of you during the journey, and for the increasing grace given to you that you are more abundant in your goodness and usefulness to His cause and His people. Our prayer is for the Lord to bestow you upon us for many more years and may that light that was promised in the darkness gently and peacefully shine upon the late afternoon of your lives. I am, on behalf of the church, W. Davies, Minister.”

It was women of the church who had been most prominent in connection with the gift of £24 and its presentation. The thoughts of Mr. Griffiths about Bethania:

“We've had excellent leaders, and I'm sorry that I cannot live similarly to them. The spirit of God helped us to follow them in all that was good in them, so that we too might succeed in maintaining the cause in this place. To me, Bethania is the dearest place here outside of heaven. This is the place to which I came to grasp the blessed hope that is in the Gospel, and in this sacred place I was joined in holy matrimony, and where I introduced the children that were gifted to me, and from where my parents went to a Better Land, and from where I too mean to go to join the dear ones who have gone before me. Do you think I could think any higher of Bethania? I have sweet memories of Sunday morning meetings, and of the Sunday School, I could say something similar to what T.G. Davies said about Pontmorlais: This is a meeting place of many; having been a college to many English people. The books were formerly kept beneath the pulpit, but in 1876 there were niches made in which to store the books. A woman suggested this, and it was carried out by Mo. Evan Rees, and his co-superintendent.”

Tuesday, June 25<sup>th</sup> in Bethania chapel, by Mr. James the minister (shepherd or pastor) and the registrar, Mr. John Davies, Ironmonger, at that time from Ferndale, and Miss Rosser, eldest daughter of Mr. W. Rosser, colliery manager, were married. After the service, a beautiful Bible was presented to the young couple by Mr. and Mrs. Jones, clothiers, and they partook of the wedding breakfast at the abode of Mrs. Mills, Cardiff Street, before setting set off for the train to spend a few days on honeymoon.

On Saturday September 7<sup>th</sup>, at seven o'clock in the morning, our companion William Morgan (The Poet), Aberdare, quietly fell asleep in Jesus. He was a native of Cefncoed-y-Cymmer, where he was born on July 13<sup>th</sup>, 1816; but spent most of his life in Aberdare, working as a financial officer in the Williams workshop, Ynyscynon. The workers looked upon him as a true man and a friend, working for their benefit and their success. Although he was away from here for a time in other places, he still considered Bethania to be his spiritual home. There were at least 600 people at his funeral, and his body was brought to Bethania before being taken to the cemetery, where a service was conducted, and from there to a grave that he had prepared for himself some years before his death. The service was conducted by the Revs. D. Saunders, D. Phillips, Swansea, J. Lewis, Carmarthen, and W. James.

The fog of anguish and the toll of death that saddened.  
The sobriety of our days,  
All through them they continue,  
Under showers of sorrows.

The blow is so crooked, - full of pain,  
As we lose our faultless Poet,  
Another day of another loss- a land again  
That weeps upon the grave of its 'William.'

A just man, and true – the living God

Flourishing in his life,  
A lively father! Until the end,  
The light of grace shining upon his face.

And he, strong in his religion— that lasted.  
To the final challenge of the storm  
He was brave to the end of the day— never pulling back,  
Pure and godly in every kind of weather.

A man of hope, as he was known— with abundance,  
To uphold him,  
And his soul could sing.  
Within the deep black river.

The weapon of his joyous success  
Was the name of the days of his comfort.  
The grace of the Lord to a wretched world, unto the grave,  
Was the foundation of the majesty of his laborious life.

His task remained to wait for Heaven,  
And enjoy its continuation.  
This nature lighted the journey  
of the pure gift of the dear Poet.

From your song comes lamentation,  
Flooded with the cry of longing.  
And through remembering him too,  
To the edge of the grave, carries away his tears.

From the sound of pain that wakens the valley  
Where the Emperor of poetry walked  
The final bitterest enemy -the pure  
Poet and his sweet harp is placed beneath a mantle.

His virtues are brilliant white,  
And follow him like the angels.  
From the high ground of struggles, - a dome of pearls  
Carried him to his divine crown. DYFEDFAB (Dyfed)

Thursday, November 7<sup>th</sup>, 1878, in No. 2 Griffith Street, one of the houses of Bethania, after a long illness, which was borne gently and patiently, Elizabeth, wife of T. G. Davies, died. She was buried on the following Monday in Aberdare cemetery, with the Revs. W. James and T. Rowlands ministering. She left three children, the youngest of them being baptised in the house before the funeral.

A South Wales Temperance Gymanfa was held on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> and Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> of September in Swansea; but a conference was held in Bethania on the Tuesday before that, under the leadership of Mr. James the minister, when it was decided to work for the cause throughout the valley, and to attempt to get the public houses closed on the Sabbath. In the evening, a public meeting was held in the same place, under the leadership of Rhydderch ap Morgan, Bethel.

Friday, September 21<sup>st</sup> the old co-worker of the recorder, D. Evans, the father of Eos Dar and his brothers and sisters, died. He was a conscientious worker for his master, W. Lloyd, "Patriot" and deacon in Siloa.

Wednesday, November 20<sup>th</sup>, the famous poet-preacher Islwyn died, following Mathetes within two days. The following is two stanzas of the work of Dafydd Morganwg, from a volume that appeared in "Shield of the Worker":

After Islwyn is long gone - a sad muse  
Is most grave in Wales,  
Her weeping is severe through grief,  
For her good Poet is taken.

He drew a picture of Heaven in his ode,  
Beautiful amongst the hosts,  
His whole intention was to portray.  
His dear Jesus and his many Courts.

Thursday, December 5<sup>th</sup>, the Rev. David Price of Siloa died aged 68 years old, having been a minister there for over 35 years.

## 1879

The monthly collection of the congregation for this year came to £19; income of the seats £23 10s; Good Friday and Easter, £24; chapel houses, £14; and by the time all of the demands were paid off, there was more than £11 in the hands of the treasurer than there was at the end of the year before. The sum that was paid for the ministry of Good Friday and Easter is as follows: The Reverends D. Saunders, £3.10s; M.D Jones, £2; Robert Jones, £4.10s; S. Jones, 10s; R. Morgan, 15s. - the total £11. 13s.

This year, from the seed of the church we received as full members, Sarah Ann Edwards, Mary Ann and Hannah Richards, Samuel Thomas, Nant Row, and Elizabeth Williams, Cross Street. Again Mr. and Mrs. Davies, Ironmonger, returned, having been in Ferndale for a while, and Thomas Griffiths, Ynyslwyd Street, coming to the church to his wife.

Monday, February 17<sup>th</sup>, after a long period of debility, Mrs. Watkins, wife of John Watkins, died at the age of 42. The departed was a daughter of David Jones, Timber Merchant, who had occasionally been a treasurer for many years in our church, and who raised a devout family of four or five. Mrs. Watkins had been in the service of the Rev. D. Saunders and was a devout woman. She was buried on Friday, the 21<sup>st</sup>. Within four months, namely June 14<sup>th</sup>. Watkins married Rachel Elias, his maid, in the Registry Office, Merthyr.

Wednesday, June 4<sup>th</sup>, after a long illness, Mr. Thomas Hopkins, 4, Whitcombe Street died aged 58 years old. The body was taken to Carmel chapel, on the way to the cemetery. He was the brother of John and William Hopkins, all of them belonging to Carmel. I shall give a line about him because of the kindness I received from him on the first day that I came to Aberdare, and that was because of my name and my place of birth.

A Methodist Musical Cymanfa was held at Aberdare on May 26<sup>th</sup>, the first meeting being in Bethlehem, Mountain Ash, under the presidency of Mr. James, Bethania, and the singing under the leadership of Mr. Thomas, Llanwrtyd. The chapel and the vestry of Libanus was packed to capacity, and many had to be turned away for want of space. The meeting was started, by the Rev. T. Rowlands. About the middle of the meeting an address was given by Hywel Cynon, who said that he had heard singing of the anthem, "The Lord be blessed," many times, but he had never heard it sung as well as in this meeting. It began at six o'clock in Bethania, by the Rev. Richard Morgan, Llwydcoed. The conductor said that he was really struck by the day's singing, and he considered it an honour to be chosen as conductor of this Cymanfa. A tune in memorial of the poet was sung, namely, David's Harp. The opinion of the throng was that the singing in this Cymanfa had reached almost to perfection.

Tuesday morning, July 15<sup>th</sup>, a daughter was born their first born to John Davies and his wife, Ironmonger, Aberdare.

Monday, September 1<sup>st</sup>. Evan Davies, butcher, Aberdare, and Joan, daughter to Mr. James and Mrs. Lacey, Cwmdare, were married in the Calvinist Methodist chapel, Hirwaun, by the Rev. W. J. Williams. Mrs. Davies has been a faithful, hard-working, and generous member of Bethania church ever since then, but our concern now is that that she has been bedridden for some months, and our prayers and our hopes are that she gets well soon.

## 1880

Sunday night, 18<sup>th</sup> of January, in Pontypridd, Mrs. Rosser, only daughter of Mr. D. Williams (Alaw Goch), Ynyscynon, died. She had suffered with ill health for several weeks, but nobody thought the end was so near. She was only 36 years old. This lady had her upbringing amongst the children of Bethania, and because she had married David Rosser, she was left with no dowry after her father.

Monday night, March 14<sup>th</sup>. The Rev. Owen Thomas delivered his excellent lecture on "Old Preachers of Wales" in this chapel. The chapel was packed to capacity, and the lecture that was given was worthy of the famous lecturer.

On the 8<sup>th</sup> of April this year, Thomas Harris, Carmel, and Mary Williams, Glan Road, daughter of W. Williams, and sister of the late Sir Marchant Williams, a paid magistrate, were married.

Tuesday morning, April 20<sup>th</sup>, the first-born daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Davies, ironmonger, Aberdare, died aged nine months. The following stanza was written along with the announcement, but the author is unknown:

Why was it given to you to turn inward, and to flee above? Was it the fear of the woe and the pain of the world that drove you to Paradise? A saint will tell of the turning of the world, through singing as he remembers. You too will say, and that is all— Amen to the five of us there.

Monday, April 19<sup>th</sup>, he who was known as John Davies, Carmel, was buried, a strange old character, who followed no laws in connection with world or church. Though he was a member of Carmel, he was in Bethania more often than he was there. He was buried at the expense of these churches, by Isaac Thomas, the undertaker. In June, Mr. W. O. Powell, of this chapel, received a call to minister Bryntirion church near Treforest, and he answered the call.

On the morning of Wednesday, May 26<sup>th</sup>, Annie, dear wife of Mr. Owen Roberts, one of the supervisors at the Alcan works, Gadlys Uchaf, and adopted sister of Dr. Saunders, died during childbirth. She had been a member of the Methodists in Treforest and in Bethania. A woman liked by everyone, and who was an angel of happiness. On the afternoon of the following Saturday a crowd gathered to fulfil the final kindness of accompanying her to the public cemetery of Aberdare. The service was ministered by Rev. W. James, and J. Lewis, Carmarthen. She left a husband and five children to grieve after her. Mr. Roberts is still among us to this day, with a son and two daughters still living, but not in Aberdare.

The day before this, Mr. Evan Lloyd, draper of Aberaman, died suddenly. He was the brother of the late John Lloyd, Ystrad, and Barry. These brothers were natives of the Llanidloes area and were zealous Methodists in every place.

Monday, June 21<sup>st</sup>, a Musical Cymanfa of the Aberdare District was held. The first meeting was in Mountain Ash, the second in Libanus, Aberaman; and at six in the evening at Bethania. The conductor was Mr. John Thomas, Llanwrtyd. The Cymanfa was as popular as ever, and the singing extremely good. As Mr. Thomas the conductor said, the image of Mr. Daniel Griffiths was in every tune that was sung.

Monday, August 2<sup>nd</sup> the Sunday Schools held a festival in connection with the centenary of the institution. A prayer meeting in Siloa at 7 in the morning; a conference in Calfaria at 10 a.m., under the presidency of D. Davies, Esq., Maesyffynon, when papers by J. Mills (The Shield-bearer), and the Rev. T. Jones, (B). The first subject was, "Are Sunday schools worthy of our support? If so, what is the best way to increase their numbers?" The second subject was, "The best way to behave towards scholars of different ages, in order to keep them in Sunday school?" There was a procession in the afternoon of 20 schools; that included 20,000 scholars of all ages. There were night meetings in the various chapels, where crowds had gathered together, and there were interesting and constructive meetings that included singing, recitation, and speeches. In the December 22<sup>nd</sup> edition of 'Darian Y Gweithiwr' (The Worker's Shield), the following correspondence appeared from the Rev. T. Price, D.D. (Doctor of Divinity), the minister of Calfaria:

Mr. John Mills and the Sunday school. To the Editor of the Shield.

"Gentlemen, allow me, through your world-famous paper, to acknowledge the work and kindness of Mr. John Mills, Bethania, on the excellent paper that he read in Calfaria chapel on the day of the great festival in Aberdare, on August 2<sup>d</sup>. 1880. It gave me great joy to hear Mr. Mills reading the paper, in the face of great weakness; but such prudent and considered reading has deepened his value in my eyes. It's known by now that Mr. Mills has published and distributed the paper completely at his own expense. It's considered of great value for Mr. Davies to come to Calfaria School; and now, on behalf of myself and of Calfaria Sunday school, may I express our heartfelt gratitude to him for their valuable gift. I would be most grateful to see the usual and worthy suggestions of the paper being carried out in the letter and in the same spirit. Yours faithfully, Thomas Price, Rose Cottage, December 15<sup>h</sup>, 1880."

Saturday afternoon, October 16<sup>h</sup>, in Brown's Pit, a young man, Benjamin Evans, 22 years old met his death when preparing to leave the mine due to a heavy fall upon his head, and he died shortly after. He was the son of Benjamin Evans the 1<sup>st</sup>, and his wife, and was a more faithful member than any of the other boys in Bethania. Whatever meeting there was in the chapel or in the vestry, Benjamin was sure to be present. He was buried on the following Wednesday. Two of his sisters and his brother are in our church at present.

Wednesday, December 9<sup>h</sup> Mrs. John Lloyd, Commercial Place, died. She was the dear wife of Mr. Lloyd, a shoe merchant. The deceased was a daughter of the Rev. John Davies, Bethania, and she was brought up since infancy in this church and continued her education in the faith here. She was buried on the following Saturday in the public cemetery in Aberdare, and a suitable sermon for the occasion was given on the Sunday night by Mr. James.

The monthly, public collection for this year came to the sum of £19; the collection for Good Friday and Easter came to £19; the lecture of the Rev. O. Thomas generated £19; income from the land £12.14s; the seats generated £27; and the interest from Cwmaman, £2.10s.

Amongst the expenses there is a gift of £150 to Trinity, to the preachers' fund, £2, leaving £21.9s in the hand of the treasurer at the end of the year. For ministering in the meetings of Good Friday and Easter, the Revs. J. Cynddylan Jones; D. Jones, and Joseph Thomas, Carno; payments came to £11.10s. The church and the children contributed £107 during the year, and besides the pastorage, £102 was paid out for the ministry.

This has been a year full of changes in the church. To begin with, Elizabeth Davies (with Mrs. Christmas) is changing her name to Mrs. Rees; that is David Rees, now in the Chapel house. David Davies, Elizabeth Street, has died, and if he were not the father of the late Evan Davies, we would not

know who he is, for the mother and Evan are connected to him on the book. Benjamin Evans the youngest, has passed away; and William Evans has become a full member. Next, Jonah Evans, Highland Place, is moving to Blaenllechau on January 9<sup>th</sup>. Miss Edwards, joining her father, has become a full member. John Pascoe Grugg, through a letter, is coming to the church on March 1<sup>st</sup>. Miss Mills, also joining with her father and mother, is coming onto the book. John Protheroe and his family are moving to Merthyr in January. Mrs. Owen Roberts has died, and her place on the book of the church is being taken by her daughter Mary.

## 1881

The first event in the church this year is the marriage of the Rev. W. L. Powell, Carmarthenshire, and Miss Mary Evans, Aberdare, and that was by Mr. James of Bethania in Pontmorlais chapel, Merthyr. Powell was one of the boys of Bethania, and there is one brother and two sisters still members here. Our readers in Bethania remember him being killed in an accident on the railway when he was returning from his engagement on a Monday morning. At the time, he was living in Caerphilly, where he is buried, and where his widow still lives.

Tuesday, April 26<sup>th</sup>. In Little Wind Street, Aberdare, a son was born to Mr. and Mrs. Davies, Ironmonger.

May 21<sup>st</sup>, Isaac James, 79, Wind Street, Aberdare, died aged 27 years. He had a long and difficult illness, but he bore it all quietly and patiently. He left a widow and six children after him, all of them daughters. The mother was a member in Bethania until her death, and two of her daughters are members, with a brother and two sisters. Mrs. Hughes died this past year, leaving three or four male orphans.

Monday, June 5<sup>th</sup>, Evan Mills of Seymour Street, Aberdare, died aged 62 years old. He was a native of the Llanidloes area but had lived in this neighbourhood for years. He was the father of the late Rev. John Mills (B), Abernant, and had worked in Werfa colliery. John went with other children to the Baptist chapel, and he remained there until his death.

Evan Mills was buried in Llangurig on the 9<sup>th</sup> of the same month. He and his wife were both members of Bethania.

Monday, August 1<sup>st</sup> a procession of the Nonconformist Sunday Schools of Aberdare took place. At seven in the morning, under the presidency of Mr. Lewis Griffiths, a united prayer meeting was held in Calfaria hall. At nine o'clock, a paper was read by Mr. Dan Thomas, Siloa, and one other by Rev. R. H. Johnson, a clergyman, with a general talk on the contents of the two papers. At two o'clock all the schools turned out, going through the main roads of the town, followed by a feast in every chapel.

On August 7<sup>th</sup> Mrs. Jane Williams, Chandler, Aberaman, died quietly. This good and devout woman, a sister to the Hopkins family of Carmel, had a zeal and a devotion like those of her brothers. Her funeral was attended, by a large host of her religious brethren. Her daughter's husband was the late Jim James, an Auctioneer.

September 8<sup>th</sup> William Powell the 1<sup>st</sup> died at age 59, leaving a widow and nine children, one of them being the Rev W. L. Powell, whose memorial had already been held this year. He was an unassuming, religious man, a husband and caring, diligent father. He came to Aberdare as a religious man and had belonged to this church for eighteen years. He went to his grave believing in Him who had created him. In Bethania, a son and two of his daughters are faithful members to this day.

September 16<sup>th</sup>, John Jones, Fruiterer, died at his home in Cardiff Street, aged 50. Mr. Jones was a quiet and religious man, and a useful member of Bethania with the singing. He left a widow and one son. Mrs. Jones was a member of Bethania for years after burying her husband, but she went to her

son, Rev. William Jones, in Cardiganshire, who had been a clergyman, and who had died in Pontygwrdrwg.

Monday morning, 20<sup>h</sup> of December, Mrs. Jones, widow of the late Howell Jones, Saddler, Merthyr, died at home. She said to the doctor that she believed that there was no point in troubling himself with her, that her heavenly father was calling her, and she was content with the call. She and her daughter (formerly Miss Gladys Jones) were members of Bethania, and our church is poorer through losing them.

The monthly, public collection this year was £17; the seats, £23; income from the houses £14; collection from Good Friday and Easter £28.10s; and from production of the lecture of D. Jones £10. All the other collections being the same as usual, and thus the expenses, leaving £50 in the hand of the treasurer.

The cost of the ministers of Good Friday and Easter, namely the Revs. D. Saunders, John Jones, and John Lewis, £13, leaving the ministry £7.15s in debt to the Treasurer.

The new name of Caledwyn Davies appears on the children's book, also Maggie and Tudor Williams.

This year David Evans left the Methodists and joined the State Church. About the middle of the year the names of Thomas Hamer and his wife (the 1st) appear on the church book. They had been regular members here until moving to Aberaman. The two have died, but some of their children are still alive, and Thomas Hamer, the eldest son, is a good and diligent deacon in Hebron, and his wife and children are members there. The name of J. Jones, (the 2nd) with 'died' after him, and also after the name of Mrs. Jones, Gladys, Evan Mills, William Powell, Regent Street, and Mr. and Mrs. Rees, Nith Street, having died in the same year. The name of Catherine, daughter of Edward Williams, Cross Street comes onto the book to join her family.

## 1882

Monday 6<sup>h</sup> of March the first wife of Isaac Thomas, undertaker, died after a long illness. She was a thrifty and orderly woman and had cherished her husband for many years. Mrs. Thomas had been a member of Bethania for years. She was buried in the new Aberdare cemetery on March 8th. Almost all of the ministers and merchants of the town were at the funeral, all of them in vehicles; and never before nor since have so many vehicles been seen at a funeral. Those who took part in the funeral service were Dr. Price, the vicar, W. James, his minister, T. Rowlands, Silwyn Evans, and others.

The Good Friday meetings were held as usual, ministered by the Revs. T. C. Edwards, M.A. Aberystwyth; W. Prydderch, Gopa; and J.M. Jones, Cardiff. They were excellent meetings.

Monday night, April 24<sup>h</sup>. A rendering of the Cantata "Joseph" (Dr. Parry) by the Bethania Band of Hope. Joseph was represented, by T. Evans, Jacob, D. Griffiths; Pharaoh, W. Evans; Judah, Evan Davies; Reuben, T. Williams; the Queen, Lizzie Rosser; and the female attendant by Margaret Evans; and the choir playing the rest. The leader was Mr. James, the minister.

A district Cymanfa Ganu was held this year on Monday, May 22<sup>d</sup> conducted by John Thomas, Llanwrtyd. A morning meeting was held at Cwmaman, the second at Libanus, Aberaman under the presidency of Dyfed; and the evening meeting was held in Bethania, under the presidency of Mr. James, the minister. The gathering was packed as usual, and the singing was excellent. At the evening meeting, a small gift was presented to Mr. Daniel Griffith on behalf of the district, in recognition of his valuable work, namely a picture of him; an oil painting, six feet in length, and a gold watch. Speeches were delivered for the occasion by G. Williams, Esquire, Miskin, J. Mills (Shield Bearer); D. Davies, Canton; M. Edwards, Aberaman; the Rev. W. Jones, and Dyfed. Dyfed read the following stanzas for

the occasion:

It's easy to give signs- of the best,  
Love of the grave,  
Friends of Daniel, the only love  
Was to create this fair gift.

A picture of Daniel as alive, hale his appearance,  
A song hardly audible,  
A living picture it is,  
And is a beautiful gift to the musician.

A suitable watch to give him- a gold watch,  
The best he ever possessed,  
Rest is his reward,  
And his virtue is like that gold.

He deserved his honour - a giant of a man,  
Of musical power,  
In the free tone of a dear heart,  
That brought a soul to sing.

A burning heart of our feasts,  
And his wisest choice of our suggestions,  
Intrepid are the notes,  
In heaven's form to bring us joy.

Nobody grows nor acknowledges his pure taste,  
Without the sadness of death to teach them  
His whole dear musical gift,  
Brings a nation to sing together.

The renown force of the hymns,  
And the dewy burden of their thoughts,  
Behold them all manifested,  
In the tender sanctuary of their melodies.

Heaven gave them to float free, and to sing,  
Without complaint or weeping,  
That place of renown- wherever it may be,  
O Daniel! Go to it.

Tuesday, May 30<sup>th</sup> in the hospital of Dr. Evan Jones, Jenkin Jones died aged 71. He was buried on the following Thursday in the public cemetery of Aberdare. He had been a member of Bethania, but he was in Nazareth when he died.

Wednesday, July 12<sup>th</sup>, our dear brother Mr. J. Jones, Rose Villa, Aberdare, fell asleep in Jesus. He moved here 35 years ago, such that he was considered to be a native of this place. As, a merchant and, a clothier, his connections were legion, and he formed a wide circle of friends, and he was respected as an honest and inoffensive man by all who knew him. He was chosen as a deacon in Bethania church about twenty years ago, and his sharp, capable mind, and his unshakeable faith, soon secured him a very, important place in that office. Up to now, he was the eldest and most influential deacon in the church, and there is a general feeling of grief after him. He was completely conscious during the past six months that his end was drawing near, and he spent months in serious research on the light of the

Word of God, like a man looking over his accounts before they came under the final great examination; and before being confined to his bed, he had a clear contentment that his judgement was sound, and that nothing else awaited him but to submit to the will of his heavenly father with an eye on the time of that movement. He had the strength to that as well, and he departed in peace.

On the following Monday, a great crowd gathered at the funeral. A sermon was given in Bethania by the Rev. D. Saunders, Swansea, who had been present in Bethania church when Mr. Jones had been elected a deacon. There was a large number of ministers present.

O! Aberdare, and your gentle sky  
Look upon your sad black clouds,  
From the country of oak, for she is lovely,  
Death drove the dearest gems in his crown.

His slow pace was a wonder- so wise,  
So good his patience,  
A zealous man who bore the foundation  
Of his faith from cradle to grave

And a more daring deacon,  
Never walked any border,  
A holy angel sought his counsel,  
A fitting choice of the Lord.

Now who will aid our pulpit - but he.  
Most hale and diligent man,  
O! black disappointment that moved him,  
His great talent that today is now silent.

Thursday morning, August 3<sup>d</sup> our young friend Thos. Thomas, a coal miner 28 years old, and living in 18, Bute Street, suffered a fatal accident in Graig Pit, Gadlys. He was one who was loved amongst a wide circle, and that was due to his virtues as a sober and religious man. He was a member of our church. He left a wife, a mother, and sisters to grieve after him, as well as a number of relatives.

Monday, August 7<sup>th</sup> an annual Cymanfa of the Aberdare Sunday School circle was held. A prayer meeting was held at half past seven in the morning, at half past nine in Calfarfa chapel, with an address by Dr. Rees of Swansea on the work of the Sunday school. A procession through the main streets of the town took place in the afternoon; that gathered in the town centre, with the singing being conducted by Rees Evans. Then the different schools separated to their own locations to enjoy cups of tea together.

Wednesday night, September 20<sup>th</sup> a recreational meeting was held in Bethania vestry, presided over by Mr. James. Those who took part in the meeting were: T. E. Powell, E. M. Powell, J. Davies, J. Griffiths, Misses M. A. Richards and Naomi Hamer, J. Moses, M. A. Moses. M. Rees (Blaengwawr), and Polly Morgan. Addresses were also given by Mr. Evan Rees, J. Evans, and the president. It was Mr. William Davies who taught the children on that occasion.

Death of the "Patriot" As we have had the privilege of serving our deceased friend, day, and night, for a period of 14 years, allow us to offer here a part of his memorial that appeared in the "Darian" (The Shield), November 3<sup>d</sup>, 1882:

It was with heavy hearts that we read of the final story of our old friend. We had been friends for over twenty years, and under all circumstances. We sometimes quarrelled with each other, but during all of that time we never ceased to contribute pennies towards his upkeep. But deep as was our respect for him, and as high as were our thoughts of our old, departed friend, we were not surprised when his

death knell rang out, for it had been obvious for eight years that consumption had taken hold of his vital parts. It was with great trepidation that we watched his body, once so graceful and fair, stiffen and wither, and a deathly paleness was taking hold of him slowly but surely across his face. It was often in doubt and perplexity that it was attempted to restore him to his former strength and gaiety.

The most brilliant talents of Liverpool, Pontypridd, and Maesydre would prepare drugs for him, but all medication was in vain. He would slip back every week, more than ten times the degree than when the sun once shone upon the face of Ahaz. Some friend thought that perhaps a change of air would be of benefit to him, and attempts were made by gentlemen of London to take responsibility for his care; but the Cymrodorian (a Welsh fellowship) feared that he would be stone dead before he got halfway from Canon Street to the capital. Thus, they were compelled to leave him at home again to patiently await his dissolution.

The monthly public collections this year came to £17; annual collections of the meetings £23; income from the land, £13.12s; and the seats amounted to £25. 10s. Other collections were as usual. Expenses for Good Friday were £13. 17s. The Fund for the Ministers £36. 11s.

Church Library. In case we forget, I understand that the movement for a library belonging to the church started in 1878, and £20 was paid for books that year, and £8 for furniture for the room. £4 7s 6d was paid for the "Encyclopaedia" in May 1881, and 26s. for the commentary of James Hughes, etc. Over £44 was spent during the first three years. The books are still there, but are used by very few, and few there will be too, unless there is some arrangement for them that has not been so up to now.

In April of this year, Mrs. Beddoe came to our church; we remember her well, but we didn't know much about her. In August Mrs. Joshua Davies came with her letter to Bethania; having been living in Aberdare for a long time before getting married and was the daughter of a godly mother and father in Llancadle, Glamorgan. One Joseph Evans came to the church in August; we are not sure whether or not it is Mr. Joseph Evans, our new deacon, but we believe it is he. Alfred Hayman came among us for a while; but because he was an Englishman, he deemed it best to go to the English, and thus it was. In July, as was seen, John Jones of Clifton Street died, and it was a deep grief and a loss to the church. In April, Richard Jones, a tiler, came to the church with his letter, but was not long in Bethania, choosing instead to go to Seion (W) with his wife.

This year as well the two Miss Moses, Martha and Mary Ann, came on to the book as full members; the last one is still here, but the first of the two (Mrs. Morgan, Monk Street) has been buried. This is the year too that Walter Morgan joined the church, and that was on July 27. He is still here in his usual perfection to this day, along with his wife and two children. Arthur Rosser came onto the book of membership of our church this year, under the wing of Mrs. Morgan, Clifton Street, widow of the poet. We believe that he is a Fitter in Penrhiwceiber, and we hope that he will continue with the respect of the devout society there. We see also that Mr. John Rees, Blaengawwr, came with his letter of membership in October, we think he had been in the school. This gentleman is at present the harbour master in Llanelli. Also, Annie Roberts has come onto the book of membership, she, being the second daughter of Mr. Owen Roberts, Victoria Square.

## 1883

First of January, a young man called D. Saunders died in Swansea at the age of 19. He was the son of the Rev. D. Saunders. He was brought up to the family crypt on the following Tuesday, January 6, and a host of friends of the grieving family gathered to minister the final kindness to the body of the hopeful young man.

A few pages back, we noted the death of the "Patriot." Here also we have the grave task of noting the death of his publisher and relative, Mr. Walter Lloyd, who died on Wednesday, the last day of January 1883, aged 61 years old. He was buried the following Monday in Aberdare cemetery.

Those taking part at his funeral were the Revs. J. Jones, E. Williams, Trinity, W. James, Bethania, and W. Edwards, Ebenezer. Lloyd was a native of Carmarthen. Though his widow still remains among us, fresh and well.

The annual festival was held this year again on the same days when they were ministered by the Revs. Cynddylan Jones, Cardiff; Griffith Roberts, Carnedd; and D.M. Jones of Dowlais.

On April 10<sup>th</sup>, a daughter was born to the wife of Nathan Wyn, now of Rhondda, but formerly of Aberdare, and the name she was given was Euronwy.

May she have a life of health— upright,  
Of joyous faith,  
Under a thousand smiles that bring true morality,  
May they be a part of Euronwy, and may her life be long.

Saturday, May 12<sup>th</sup> in 33, Bute Street, the old lady Mrs. Edwards died a sorrowful death, aged 87 years old. Through a great misfortune that could not be explained, she fell into the fire when nobody else was present and was burnt to death. She was an honourable and devout person, and one of the oldest members of the Methodists in the town and was in regular attendance at Bethania. She was the owner of the furthest four houses in Bute Street.



Rev. W. James

### Testimonial to the Rev. W. James, Minister, Bethania.

Tuesday, July 3<sup>rd</sup> valuable gifts were presented by Bethania church to its pastor (shepherd) as a small recognition of him staying in their midst, even though he had received an offer of salary more than any other from one of the churches of the Body (the Anglican Church) in London. The gifts consisted of a full-size portrait of Mr. James, of the finest manufacture, a gold watch, and a greeting in the form of an album. The proceedings of the day were started with a wide-ranging tea party in the vestry of the chapel at 5 o'clock, when amongst the hundreds of those attending, there took place scores of activities by ministers, deacons, and laypersons of the Body of various neighbourhoods. At seven o'clock a public meeting was held, when the chair was taken by D. Davies, Esq. Y.H. Maesyffynon.

The president said that he had no idea why he had been chosen to take the chair if he was not one of the people of Aberdare. He had known Mr. James for years, and he considered him to be an excellent preacher, and he'd formed the plan himself, and did not follow others, as the Indians are depicted walking in the tracks of each other. After the president's address, Mr. John Christmas, London House, and Mr. John Davies, ironmonger, were called upon to explain the reason for presenting the testimonial- one as an official of the church, and the other as a member. Mr. W. Edwards of

Blaenllechau was also called upon, he having been a deacon in Bethania for over twenty years, and who had noticed among other things, that Mr. James did not belong to the ninth generation of Demas, who had gone away with a love for the riches of this world.

After him too came Mr. Lewis Griffiths, who had also been an industrious deacon in Bethania, and had been a Sunday school teacher to Mr. James. Next, one of the secretaries was called upon to read the long address, which had been signed by John Christmas, Evan Rees, Presidents of the committee; John Davies, Treasurer; John Mills, David Griffiths, Secretaries. Then the President called upon T. Phillips, Esq., Swansea, to present the Testimonial. Mr. Phillips said that he considered the picture to be perfect, and that he wanted Mr. James to leave it to him in his will. Both he and Mr. Saunders had something to do with preventing Mr. James from going to London, and Mr. Saunders went so, far as to say that he should not go. Also, the full address was as good as the one given the day before to Mr. John Roberts, M.P. in Swansea, if not better.

After accepting the gifts, the Rev. W. James answered in chosen words. The meeting was addressed after that by Mr. D. Evans, Bodringallt; Mr. D. Evans, Dyfed and Cardiff; Rev. D. Phillips, Swansea; Rev. J. Wyndham Lewis, Carmarthen; Rev. Morris Morgan, Morrision; Rev. T. Jones (B) Aberdare, Rev. Lewis Jones, Ystrad; Rev. J. M. Owen (W), Aberdare; Rev. E. Williams, M.A. Trinity, Rev. J. M. Jones, Cardiff.

May 28<sup>th</sup>, a Musical Cymanfa was held. For the benefit of strangers, this time the first meeting was held in Bethania, Aberdare; the afternoon meeting in Bethlehem, Mountain Ash; and at Aberaman in the evening. The leader was Mr. D. Jenkins, Aberystwyth. The audience was frightfully large, and the crowd considered that entrance should have been by tickets, in order to have more-quiet and air.

Saturday, August 18<sup>th</sup>, in the registry office, Merthyr, Mr. William Evans, Merchant Street, Aberdare, married Miss Elizabeth Evans, David Price Street. This William Evans is the present W. Evans, David Price Street, and is one of the officials of Bethania church. He and his brother Joseph were two of the four new deacons elected in the year 1917.

June 20<sup>th</sup>, after a long illness, Rachel Mills of 20, Seymour Street, Aberdare, died aged 60 years. She was born near Bonterwyd, Cardiganshire, and was raised in Brynchwith in the same neighbourhood. She went to the capital when she was young, where she was joined with Evan Mills, who himself had moved to London from Llanidloes. After a while they moved to Aberdare, and she and her husband were faithful members of Bethania. Her husband died some two years before her. Her body was taken to be buried in the same grave as that of her husband in the church cemetery at Llangurig. She was the mother of the late John Mills (B), Abernant.

The monthly public collection this year is £21.13s, income from the houses £13. 13s the seats £27; Good Friday and Easter £22 15s and the other usual collections. Expenses for the festival £12 10s; and £17 10s was paid to J. Morgan for renovation, colouring, and painting of the vestry; and to the pastorate, £8; leaving £23 in the hands of the treasurer at the end of the year, whilst in the hands of the ministry treasurer there was £7.

This year, round about November, we had Mr. and Mrs. Roderick come to our church. This family has remained faithful and useful to this day, and we hope that it is here that the father and mother will end their days, for there is no hope that all the members of such a large family will remain when Providence continues to scatter them.

In this year too Isaac Thomas and his second wife came to the church- Mr. Thomas being married this year to Miss Ann Davies, St. Clears, sister of Joshua Davies, came to the church through a letter, but she was not long here before going back, but not to stay for long, because the next time her name appears on the book, she has changed it to Mrs. Price.

In February we have the names of Tom Davies and his wife, Wind Street, and they had been a happy and faithful family whilst the wife and mother was alive. The husband and some of the children continue to live in Aberdare.

1884

Wednesday morning, 13<sup>th</sup> February, our old friend Dafydd W. Joshua, Dumfries Street, fell asleep in the house in which he was born. We are giving out a memorandum of his death, not because he belonged to Bethania, but because he was in our service in the office of the "Tarian" for the last five years of his life. He was an old literary man, and a well-known person.

The Methodists of this district held a Cymanfa Ganu this year on Monday, May 12<sup>th</sup>. The first meeting being in Bethlehem, Mountain Ash, under the leadership of Mr. John Thomas, Llanwrtyd, who was aided by Mr. Daniel Griffiths. At 2 o'clock in Nazareth, Aberdare, and the third meeting was in Bethania. Amongst the strangers this time there was Mr. John Watkins, Morriston; Mr. D. Evans, Cardiff; and Mr. J. T. Rees, Aberystwyth, and it was they who addressed the meeting. The congregation was very, large, and the singing as good as ever.

In Bethania chapel, Edward Evans, Grocer, Ferndale, and Miss Louisa Emily Jones, School Mistress, Ferndale, were married by the Rev. T.E. Edwards, assisted by the Rev. W. James. The young man was one of the children of Bethania, and the family had been living here for years before moving to Ferndale, and some of the same family still live here.

Wednesday night, December 10<sup>th</sup> an interesting and constructive meeting was held by the children of Bethania, under the presidency of Mr. James, when a host of children took part. Addresses were given by Mr. Evan Rees and Mr. John Edwards and tunes by the Band of Hope under the leadership of Mr. D. Price.

We note here the death of the Rev. Edward Davies, Rhymney, one of the powers of Wales, and that through the many years of his connection with "Tarian." He was born on December 27<sup>th</sup>, 1811, in a place known as Tainant, Dyffryn Gwy, that lies between Llanidloes and Rhaeadr. He began to preach with the 'Body' when he was 18 years old and was one of the first students of Trevecca College.

At the end of this year, the average number of teachers in our Sunday school was 35, with 215 pupils, the two together making 250. It was decided in the Bi-monthly Meeting that a person belonging to each school should write a history of their school and its growth, and these histories are to be read in the future Bi-monthly Meetings, with Libanus and Bethania to be the first. From this Bi-monthly Meeting the first request was sent out for Certificates on learning this field of study.

£95 was paid for the ministry during this year; for the lodgings of preachers, £3 14s 6d; towards the Monthly Meeting Cwmaman, 30s; money in hand, £7 19s. Public monthly collection, £25; Good Friday and Easter, £22; income from houses, £13 11s; seats, £19 18s; towards the two Missions of the Bible Society, £26 15s 6d; towards Gilfach Goch church, £2 10s 6d; cost of the Festival £12 10s; to the Treasury of the Pastorate, £6 15s; in the hand of the Treasurer, £56 18s.

This is the year in which Rees and Gwilym Christmas became full members, two sons of the late John and Mrs. Christmas. Also, John Evans, David Price Street, who is in our midst as young and lively as ever; and despite having disappointments, they do not have much effect upon him. Again, Mary Jane Davies, Elizabeth Street, who many years since has gone with her husband to the Baptists. This year we see the name of Miss Ann Davies, sister of Mr. Joshua Davies, who is among us, but is now Mrs. Price, Glannant Street. Again, from the seed of the church, two daughters of Mr. Tom Evans, Grocer; also, Elizabeth Edwards, Cross Street, came in the company of her father and her sister. The father has been dead for years, but the two daughters now live in College Street. Again, at that time, Mary Ann James, Wind Street; David James, Wind Street; Thomas Edward Powell, Ynysllwyd Street.

In April of this year, we have the names of John Price and his wife on the book of membership. Price came to Aberdare about the year 1871, but due to the Great Strike of 1875, he had wandered until this year, but is now settled, and is here since then. The two sons are in the service of the country, doing their part against injustice and ambition. John Price is a native of Llandeilo Arfan, or Fane, or better, Llandeilo on Fawen, for this river flows through the village. The parish stands in the Hundred (cantref = a division of land originally containing a hundred towns and villages) of Merthyr Canog, in Breconshire. Mr. Price has been a widower for years.

This year we have the eldest daughter of Mr. Owen Roberts accompanying her father and her two sisters, because the eldest Mrs. Saunders is moving. James Thomas, another of the children of the church, is taking his place as a full member with his mother and father, who is now an official in Bryn Seion, Trecynon.

## 1885

Friday, February 19<sup>th</sup>, Dan Daniel died suddenly at his residence in 37, Seymour Street. He left a widow and several children. This family had been in Bethania for years. We believe that the eldest son, Mr. David Daniel, is an official with the Methodists in Ebbw Vale, whilst the youngest daughter is the wife of the Rev. Thomas Gray Jones in the same county.

Wednesday, April 8<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Lewis Griffiths departed this life, aged 63 years old; a good man, and a worker in the vineyard of his Lord. He was known throughout the whole town and neighbourhood, and everyone felt that the district had suffered a great loss, as well as the whole circle of the Methodists in the county. There had never been a man more totally devoted to religious work: he lived for religious work, even to the point of neglecting his trade. He spent most of his time in the service of the church in which he found himself its Sunday school, its ecclesiastical meetings, and those who neglected it. He worked to the end of his days, full of the same spirit to the last, and we knew of nobody more worthy to receive the greeting, "Good, good and faithful servant; you were faithful on so little, but I will place you upon so much: come unto the joy of your Lord." Griffiths was a tireless pastor (shepherd) for the church, knowing every member and child.

Monday, May 18<sup>th</sup> the annual Cymanfa Ganu was held, this time under the leadership of Mr. T. Rees Alaw Du, (Black Lily), Llanelli. The first meeting was in Mountain Ash, the second in Libanus, and the third in the Temperance Hall instead of Bethania because the chapel was being extended and renewed at the time. This was the first Gymanfa that Alaw had led, though he had been one of the children of Bethania in Aberdare.

Watkin, who had also been preaching in Newbridge and Maesycymmer; but had died whilst in the service of a solicitor in Cardiff. We understand that his sister was a member in Carmel, and her son is the person who looks after this chapel today. This friend was not blessed with a strong body, which was a disadvantage to him as a preacher, for he often was unable to fulfil his public obligations. That's how it is these days, but he is full of zest for his favourite task. He has a very, good library, including hundreds of books, and he himself makes good use of them. He wrote much in his life for *the Wales*, and "The Treasury," etc. and he loved to mention Islwyn, and about flowers, because he admired them.

The total of the monthly collection this year was £28; Good Friday and Easter, £61; tithes for the houses, £9.10s; the seating, £29; and £8.10s towards Gilfach Goch. Interest paid on the money was £19, and £100 for renovation to the Vestry, leaving the sum of £8 in the hands of the Treasurer. Two children of the Rev. Richard Morgan come onto the book of Bethania- Oswald and Vincent Morgan: also, five children of Tom Davies, namely Joseph, Jacob, Tommy, David Edwin, and Benjamin.

William, the son of Mr. Steven Davies comes onto the book of full members; Mrs. Davies following

the name of Joshua Davies for the first time by a letter; Gwen Davies coming onto the book to her sister Elizabeth; Mrs. Grigg coming on with her spouse, John P. Grigg at about the beginning of August. Bessie Mills leaves her father's house to go to Treorchy with Evan Davies, whom she married. The number of members at year's end is 288.

Mr. J. L Thomas, Nantmelyn, accompanied by Mr. Edward Moses. The hall was prepared and decorated free of charge by Mr. and Mrs. Davies, Drapers, Commerce House, and Mr. J. Morgan. The hall was once again full to capacity, and the children went through their work honourably.

Wednesday night, 26<sup>th</sup> of December, T. J. Evans, son of Mrs. Evans, David Price Street, died aged 25 years old. He had been very-ill for some months. He was a young man, well known in many circles, especially in sacred music, and in possession of an excellent tenor voice, and Bethania suffered a loss when he died. The following Saturday he was interred at Aberdare cemetery, his funeral being presided over by Rev. W. James. He left a vexed mother, brothers, and sisters to grieve after him.

This year's monthly collections amounted to £25. 15s. 5d; Good Friday and Easter came to £25. 11s; income from the houses £13 13s. £4. 13s 6d was received for the old furniture of the chapel; again with the return of the collection books £1.12s.6d, the rest of the expenses for the Gymanfa, £12.3s; other collections came to £25.12s.3d. Interest paid was £27, and £100 of debt, leaving 23s in the hands of the treasurer at the end of the year.

This was the year that Miss Lizzie Harris changed her name and her position, when she became Mrs. James, and now lives in Abernant Road. Also, Mrs. Tudor Williams, Gadlys Terrace, died at the end of this year.

## 1887

January 20<sup>th</sup>, a successful, competitive meeting was held in the chapel vestry under the patronage of the Band of Hope. Before the competition, an excellent feast of tea and cakes was enjoyed. Chairman of the meeting was Rev. W. James, and the various competitions, were judged by Mr. Daniel Griffiths, Mr. T. Roderick, and Mr. Owen Rees. Also, during the meeting, there were songs by Miss Moses, Bute Street, and Mr. David Phillips. The piano was, played by Mr. Edward Moses. The meeting was one of the best that was ever held by the Band of Hope.

On March 5<sup>th</sup>, Mrs. Hannah Richards, wife of Mr. Thomas Richards, Wind Street, died suddenly. She was the daughter of deceased Cadben David Morgan, Trefdraeth, Pembrokeshire, and sister to the late Rev. John Morgan, of the same locality. She had been an enthusiastic Methodist since a child, and she had been accepted into the church by the renowned Rev. T. Richards, Fishguard. She had been joined in matrimony to Mr. Thomas Richards, Wind Street, and had been here for some years. A studious and thoughtful woman.

Good Friday and Easter this year, as usual, our festival was held and ministered by the Revs. J. Pritchard, Amlwch; W. John, Bridgend; J.M. Davies, Dowlais; and W. H. Thomas, Llansamlet. The preaching was good, the congregations well attended, and the collections were as full as one would expect.

June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1887, in Demmler, near Pittsburgh, America, Mrs. Mary Corley died, aged 44 (or when she lived in Aberdare, Mary Rosser). She was the daughter of Moses Davies and his wife, she being the sister of the Poet, and Mrs. Williams of Ynyscynon. She was brought up by her uncle, William (the Poet). Her illness was cancer in her internal organs. An obvious change had taken place in her for some time, and she had joined the Methodist church in Pittsburgh. She had a charming singing voice, and she sang a lot in her life. Saturday, June 4<sup>th</sup>, her remains were laid to rest in the local cemetery, and many came from the Welsh community there to administer the final kindness to her. She left a husband and a son after her in America, whilst her two children by her first husband (George Rosser) were in this

country. Her son Arthur, as noted previously, lives in Penrhiwceiber.

Tuesday morning, June 20<sup>h</sup>, the Rev. Dr. Lewis Edwards of Bala, died aged 78 years old. He had spent the most part of his years in educating his students for the priesthood and was one of the most renowned men of his time. He was born in Penllwyn, near Aberteifi on the 27<sup>th</sup> of October 1809, and gained his M.A. at Edinburgh University. He settled in Bala in 1831.

Friday, June 24<sup>th</sup>, Bethania Sunday School, together with the Band of Hope, enjoyed an excellent tea and cakes party in a field near to Brynawel, the home of the respected and generous gentleman, W. Thomas, Esq. Y.H. This took place with the consent of, and invitation, from him and his generous wife, who took the whole expense thereof upon themselves. After tea, the whole group gathered together to express the warmest gratitude of the church to the gentleman. It was offered by the Rev. W. James, and seconded by a young girl - Miss Margaret Griffiths, a teacher - which gave quite a lot of pleasure, and Mr. Thomas indicated this in a very pleasant way, saying that he was grateful for their kind words, especially to the young and praiseworthy lady. Then they played various pleasant games together. At 7:30 in the evening, the Band of Hope gave a rendering of the popular cantata, "Queen of the Seasons," which they had performed, successfully some time ago under the leadership of Mr. D. Griffiths. A platform had been erected in front of the house, where the children were sitting, a place where those in the front rooms of the house could comfortably hear and see them. The children were wearing the Jubilee medals that had been presented to them by Mr. Thomas.

November 3<sup>rd</sup> in his home, 1, Seymour Street, Aberdare, Mr. Owen Rees died. He had been a faithful member of Bethania for many years, and a special kind of Sunday school teacher. He was buried on the following Monday, when a large crowd came to his old long-time home to accompany him. We have mentioned him before and given a picture of him.

December 30<sup>th</sup>, at home in Cross Street, Mr. John Edwards, a butcher, who had been father to two daughters, College Street. I understand that he was born in Capel Betws but moved to Llanddewi-Brefi when he was young, and whilst he was there, he began to transport bacon, cheese, eggs, etc., from Cardiganshire to Aberdare. After some time, he kept a shop where he sold a variety of goods, those that were bought by others and brought from that county. He joined Bethania in 1854. His second wife died in 1863, and he married his third wife. He was an open and simple man, bearing various characteristics of the county in which he was born. On one occasion, at a church meeting, with Rev. J. M. Jones visiting, Mr. Jones asked whether all the members got on well together; and as nobody answered, he turned to Edwards, saying, "I know you, John Edwards, and know that you will answer my question truthfully." "Well," answered Edwards, "if any disagreement exists anywhere, it's amongst the deacons, but they are wise enough to keep it to themselves anyway." Everybody knew that there was some lack of understanding between two officials, but one of them was wise enough to suffer it in silence for the sake of the cause. Mr. Edwards was buried on January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1888, and Mr. James, the minister conducted the service.

The monthly collection of the circumstances amounted to £29 this year, the collection for Good Friday and Easter came to £108; additional money with collection books, £10.6s; the seating £33.5s. £28 .10s was received from the Band of Hope, after paying for new chairs for the deacons, and for a new banner. £26.8s was paid to the two missions: the Bible Society and Gilfach Goch. Interest payment came to £24 of the debt on the chapel, £100, and other further costs left £46 in the Treasurer's hands at the end of the year.

Costs for Good Friday and Easter: Rev. J. Pritchard, £6; Rev. William John, £2.10s; Rev. Wm. Thomas, £2; and Rev. J.M. Davies, £1.10s. Total £12. £104.15s was paid towards the ministry, and the monthly meeting of Cwmbach, £2.

The children's book - The name Ivor J. Davies comes onto the book, joining his two brothers, Cledwyn and Aubrey: also, the brothers John and Rees Evan Price, and Henry Roderick.

1888

At one o'clock on the morning of Thursday, March 22<sup>d</sup>, the unassuming companion, Mr. John Christmas, Grocer, Commercial Place, died aged 53 years of age. He had suffered serious illnesses of various sorts for some weeks. He was a native of Llanwrda, Carmarthenshire, from whence he came to Aberdare aged 30 years old. He was a successful and responsible merchant and was admired by people of all classes. He had been a deacon in Bethania for years, and a gap has been left that will be difficult to fill. He left a wife and five children to grieve after him, namely, three sons and two daughters- the eldest daughter being married to Mr. Daniel Jones, clothier, and the other to Mr. Griffiths, station master at Maesycwmmmer. He was a man of tender, inoffensive feelings, and a quiet and thorough friend. He was a man useful in many pursuits, a good deacon, a faithful teacher, who took great interest in singing. Monday, March 26<sup>th</sup>, the funeral took place, which was one of the most well attended funerals to have been seen for a long time here. The body was taken from the house to the chapel of Bethania, where the service was taken by Revs. W. James, the minister; R. Jones, Treherbert; Morris Morgan, Swansea; Phillips, Abercarn; J. M. Jones, Cardiff; D. Jones, Dowlais; and T. Davies, Treorchy. Service at the graveside was taken by Mr. James and Rev. L. Jones, Pentre Ystrad.

March 21<sup>st</sup> in Bethania, by the Rev. W. James, minister, aided by Twrfab, Evan Davies, Treorchy Coal Office, was married to Bessie Mills, Aberdare.

The meetings of Good Friday and Easter were ministered by Headmaster Edwards, Aberystwyth, Llanidloes, and Abraham Roberts, Swansea.

At 8 o'clock on Monday night, 1<sup>th</sup> of June, Mary Williams, 1a, Albert Street, died after a long illness, age 26 years old. She was the wife of Mr. William Williams, formerly of Arthog, near Dolgellau, where he had been in service with D. Davies Esq, formerly of Maesyffynon, Aberdare. Due to her illness, they came to Aberdare, where her father and sisters were living, namely Morgan Griffiths and his family. She had languished for some three months as a result of giving birth to a child. Mary was raised, like her sisters, in Bethania church, where two of them continue to be members.

Thursday, September 20<sup>h</sup>, was a day to remember by members of the Band of Hope and the children of Bethania Sunday School, for the gift they received from the generous gentleman, William Thomas Esq, Y.H. Brynawel. The fire, and water, was prepared by John Evans, Ty Capel (Chapel House). The following ladies prepared the tea and food: Mrs. J. Christmas; Mrs. Evan Davies (butcher), Mrs. John Thomas, Engineer, Mrs. D. Griffiths, T.V.R.; Miss Gwladys Jones, Gadlys; and several other young ladies who carried the tea and cakes to the children who were lying on the grass around the place. It was a great delight to see the friends Mr. Thomas Roderick and Joshua Davies from the Little School, and Mr. David Griffiths, leader of the Band of Hope, and also the Rev. W. James. Several parts of the Cantata that was intended to be performed at the beginning of November in the Temperance Hall were sung.



Rev. W. O. Powell

The Bethania Band of Hope, under the leadership of Mr. D. Griffiths performed the Cantata, "The Holiday" in the Temperance Hall, November 1st. The performance was excellent, and there was a large audience. It was accompanied this time with instruments under the leadership of M. C. Chew. This year the Rev. W. O. Powell, Bethania, Aberdare (formerly of Llanilltyd), was suffering poor health, and was unable to attend some of his engagements; but we understand that he has improved, such that the churches where his engagements were, can now be sure of his services.

As we have had occasion to note the illness of our friend in his relationship to Bethania, perhaps this is the best place to mention a little of his life story, accompanied by a true picture of him. He was a native of Dowlais, and was brought up in Hermon, where his mother, at least, was a faithful member, and the late Roger Rogers, Llwydcoed, said that John Powell, eldest brother of our friend William, had been baptised in the same bowl or basin, when they were children, and that was by the Rev. Evan Harris, Merthyr. We find the name of Mrs. Mary Powell, Dowlais, appearing on the old book of membership of Bethania in 1858, when it's likely that the whole family came over to Aberdare, and they lived in Dean Street for a while, a family of a father and mother, and six children five brothers and one sister. In 1862 the name of William appears as a full member, and is noted as W. Powell, carpenter, for he was brought up in that trade, and we know more about him, namely, that he was a skilled carpenter, and he was called to most of the houses belonging to the Gadlys Company at the time. In March of 1862, the family, like so many other families in Bethania, suffered the grief of losing their mother. In 1874, our companion, a religious and studious young man, had permission to go to Trefecha College. That was a year before Mr. W. Landeg Powell, of the same church, went to the College. Before going to the College, the name of William is on the list of teachers at Bethania, and we hear his old pupil, Dyfed, indicating that he was his teacher in Bethania. He was in the College for four years, and as soon as he left he was called to Llanilltyd church, not far from Treforest, where he remained for about ten years, and that he was an industrious and successful deacon, such that one of the children of his church who had been baptised by him, after a while, was worthy of being ordained as a priest in the Established Church. Not much is known about his brothers, with the exception of.????

1889

On the morning of Friday, February 1<sup>st</sup> after a long illness, the gentle and quiet Mrs. John Powell, Wind Street, died aged 52 years. She was the wife of John Powell, brother of William and Watkin Powell. The deceased was the mother of the niece of the Rev. W. O. Powell, who is presently caring for her uncle, and is sister to Jane, the old spinster Lloyd, "Patriot," who married one Griffiths, son of Griffiths the Market, and who belonged to Nazareth.

We present here part of the writings of a friend of Carmel that appeared in "Shield of the Worker" on February 28<sup>th</sup>, 1899: "Bethania, Aberdare. The church above is a branch of the mother church in Carmel, Trecynon, and it has made a large increase in its membership and its financial subscriptions. The chapel was built in 1853, and I remember the Long Room above the chapel, where they taught the children; but about three or five years ago the vestry was built behind the chapel, where the Little School was held, and the weekly service, and they held a Jubilee from there when they are here, which is undeniable proof that they have been extremely hard working. About two or three years ago, they went into debt to the sum of £310 in order to rebuild the chapel, and it is one of the most beautiful in the county. The Little School too has increased so much after the Vestry itself had become far too small; the number of children is about 180, until it has become intolerable, and they had to decide to rebuild it, and they took about half of the house next door to the chapel, until it is now forty feet in length, and twenty four and a half feet in width, such that it is almost as big as a small chapel, and it has made it very beautiful, and the two buildings complement each other exactly, and adorn each other. I would venture to say that they are comparable to any building in the county and other counties around. The architect of the building was the Rev. William Jones, Ystrad; and the schoolhouse, Thomas Roderick, Esq., Clifton Street, Aberdare; and the builder was John Morgan, Clifton Street, who has made a name for himself as a builder of chapels and schoolhouses.

Thursday, February 21<sup>st</sup>, a tea party was held to celebrate the re-opening of the schoolhouse, when many hundreds of people came, and really enjoyed themselves with the excellent delicacies that had been prepared on their behalf. The children had their teas free, but everybody else paid sixpence each. In the evening, a meeting of recitation and singing was held by some who belonged to the chapel, under the direction of Dr. Morris, Trecynon, in the absence of W. Thomas Esq. Brynawel, who had been called suddenly to London. The children looked very beautiful, as they were in the Hall performing the Cantata, "The Holiday," under the leadership of Mr. D. Griffiths, T.V.R, to whom we are greatly indebted for his work with the children, and I would venture to say that they should be very proud of him too. I would say that I had excellent enjoyment of everything that took place there. The reciting was excellent, especially the talk on the Bible, the Tongue, and the Sky. The accompanist was Mr. Edward Moses, Bute Street, who was always ready to attend with the children. They continued until they achieved perfection, and great success should follow the cause in the place- Bearer.

As usual, the Festival of Good Friday and Easter was held this year on April 1<sup>st</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> when the preaching was carried out by the Reverends Griffith Roberts, Bethesda; Barrow Williams, Wrexham; and David Charles Edwards. The preaching was powerful, with large congregations, and the collections reached almost £120.

In Bethania, April 18<sup>th</sup>, Mr. William W. Morgan, grandson of the late Mr. Howell Jones, Saddler, Merthyr, was married to Miss Martha Thomas, Schoolmistress, daughter of Mr. Thos. Thomas, Little Wind Street, by the Rev. W. James and the registrar.

The Music Festival was held on April 29<sup>th</sup>. The morning meeting in Bethlehem, Mountain Ash, conducted by the Rev. W. James, and led by Mr. Daniel Griffiths. The two o'clock meeting in Libanus, Aberaman, conducted by Dyfed; and the evening meeting in Bethania. An excellent Cymanfa was held with everyone acting decently and with reverence.

May 8<sup>th</sup>, in Bethania, Mr. D. Phillips, leader of the singing in Nazareth, and Miss Lizzie Rosser, niece of the Poet, who had brought her up, were married by the Rev. W. James and the registrar. The wife had died young, leaving her husband to care for the two daughters. The father and the daughters are still alive and are members of Nazareth.

Monday, June 24<sup>th</sup>, in Bethania, the first Cymanfa of the Children of this District was held, the singing being led by Eos Morganwg, Aberaman, with the catechism by the Rev. W. Lewis, Pontypridd. The first meeting was held at 3 o'clock- the singing and reciting of the catechism being held alternatively. At half past four over 400 children had tea in the vestry, and they were very joyful. At six o'clock the second meeting began, which continued in the same order reciting and singing alternatively. Everything went on so orderly and successfully, that it was decided that the Cymanfa of the Children had come to stay, and the testimony of Mr. Daniel Griffiths was that it was all so free of mistakes that it was close to perfection. The whole crowd of children singing and having such fun was something new.

July 10<sup>th</sup>, in Bethania, Mr. Morgan W. Morgan, Clothier, and Miss Martha Moses were married by the Rev. W. James and the Registrar.

October 12<sup>th</sup>, in Cwm Rhondda Fach, between Ferndale and Tylorstown, Mr. Evan Griffiths, Architect, fell down dead whilst he was talking to a person on the street. He was 65 years old. Dr. P. Rhys Griffiths, Cardiff, is a son of the deceased, and the two Miss Griffiths, Poplars are his daughters. Thursday, October 24<sup>th</sup> an entertaining meeting was held under the patronage of Bethania Sunday School, with Mr. James presiding.

Saturday, December 19<sup>th</sup>, Mrs. John Evans, Chapel House, died suddenly in the middle of the night of a stroke of paralysis, aged 55 years old. There is no further information about her. She received a

respectful funeral on the following Thursday, with Mr. James ministering. She was a woman well respected in her community, a tender and careful mother, and a faithful Christian. She left a husband and several children, two of whom are still members in Bethania, namely, Tom Evans, Grocer, and Mrs. Jones, Griffith Street.

In Bethania chapel, December 30<sup>th</sup>, 1888, Mr. John Lloyd and Miss Lizzie Ann Jones, first cousin of Mr. Evan Jones who was living at that time in 6, Nant Row, were married by Mr. James and the registrar. Evan Jones was a native of Llanwrtyd, and he and Lizzie's father came to Aberdare at the end of 1868, or at the beginning of 1869, because the name of Evan Jones and his first payment towards the ministry is mentioned, and it's worth noting that his contributions, whilst not large, were as regular as regular could be, (and did not contribute at the end of the year, but offered a particular sum. This sentence is difficult to translate, as it contains a word not found in any dictionary, and I note that somebody else has also underlined the word before me, as if having the same problem. The word is "copomundio;" which I suspect is a misprint of something else that on its own is meaningless. A.D.)

It appears that he lived in Elizabeth Street until 1886, and from there onward in Nant Row until his death. His cousin, the father of Lizzie Ann Jones, died whilst sinking George pit on the mountain above Mountain Ash, when his little girl was but four years old; but Evan was a good father to her, she having lost her natural father. Elizabeth Ann became a full member in 1883 and changed her name to Mrs. Lloyd at the end of 1888, whilst both she and her husband continued to live in Nant Row with Evan's cousin. Anyway, in 1892, we lost him through his death on February 25<sup>th</sup> aged 48 years old. He had been bedridden for just a fortnight, complaining of a continuous pain in his chest or stomach, and it was feared that it was the effect of a fall he'd sustained some years previously. Many sang at his death bed, and they conversed as if his Sunday school was with him. He very much liked (He was very fond of) singing and was always humming some song or verse or other. It was easy to tell when Evan Jones was going to work in the morning frequently before dawn, for he would be humming a song.

The monthly public collection this year came to the sum of £30 .15s; collection for Good Friday and Easter, £118; income from the houses, £7. 16s; and the seats, £33; also, the sum of £14 was received from the Band of Hope. A £150 loan was borrowed with interest.

Interest of £21 was paid; expenses for the first children's Gymanfa was 28s; the total sum for renovation of the vestry was £357. At the end of last year £100 was paid; leaving £257, which was paid to Mr. John Morgan the contractor.

Expenses for the festival came to £12.10s; £127 towards the ministry during the year; for the ministry during the year £114.

The names of Tom Price and Catherine M. Hughes came onto the children's book this year.

1880



Mr. William Davies (Abernant).

We knew extraordinarily little about Mr. W. Davies, other than that he came to Aberdare as a young man to the Abernant office at the beginning of 1871, so we believe. The next thing we know is that he went back to his home in Ystradgynlais, and married Miss Daniels, and the two became members of Bethania in July or August of 1871, and they lived in Albert Street. We heard many times that he was an Independent before he came to Aberdare, but we think that he became a Methodist before he died. He was a fairly unsociable type of man as a rule, but only with those whom he chose to be and if such he was, it's certain that Mrs. Davies was of the same character she was not very prone to associate much with anyone. They had no children at all, but they kept a young servant girl.

The couple were regular, but quiet members, and Mr. Davies was chosen as an official and a secretary of the church, a task he fulfilled honourably for many years. When Stuart Street was built in 1897, he left Albert Street to live in one of the houses there. Mrs. Davies suffered greatly with rheumatism, and she was bedridden for eight years, without being able to do anything. Mr. Davies died in 1909, and he was buried in Ystradgynlais Church, and Mrs. Davies within a year after him, and she was buried in the same grave.

January 7<sup>th</sup>, in Bethania, Mr. J. Jones, son of the Rev. H. Jones, Cwmbach, and Miss Martha Harris, of No. 8, Tirfounder Row, were married by the Rev. W. James, in the presence of the Registrar.

Thursday, 13<sup>th</sup>, Robert Owen, Marquis of Bute, Aberdare (late of Dolgellau), died aged 26 years old. He was a compositor in the Office of the Shield, and he came to Bethania. He was buried the following Thursday, with the Rev. W. James ministering, with assistance from Twrfab (I think this name may refer to a certain poet called Robert Ellis Williams of Holyhead, who lived from 1848 to 1911, and whose bardic name was Twrfab, literally Son of the Tower. A.D.), the Rev. R. Morgan, and Rev. S. Davies, Abercanaid.

Thursday, February 20<sup>th</sup>, a concert was held in Bethania vestry by the Band of Hope under the capable leadership of Mr. David Griffiths, presided over by W. Thomas, Esq. Y.H. Brynawel. Mrs. Thomas was present as well. The first part was a variety of tunes, then the second part of the meeting continued with a rendering of "Seasons of the Year," a cantata of the work of Rev. George Wooller. Mr. Griffiths had added other parts which were suited to the nature of the book. The lead parts were taken by Misses S.A. Edwards, Carrie Walters, Winnie Morgan, Katie Griffiths, and Hannah Thomas; Masters Eben M. Powell, Joseph Davies, and Cledwyn Davies. The part of the Herald was taken by Mr. Samuel Davies that entailed reciting the explanatory parts between the singing parts of the children. The children sang the anthem, "Teach me your laws," (D. W. Lewis) to bring the concert to a close.

Thursday night, March 20<sup>th</sup>, an excellent, entertaining meeting was held in the vestry under the patronage of the young people and presided over by Rev. W. James. Accompaniment was by Miss Wyndham Lewis. It was a long programme, with those taking part being Miss Lewis, Miss Mariah Roberts, John Christmas, Pollie Evans, David Rees, Misses M. A. Price, Ruth Jones, Harriet Davies, and Llewellyn Jones. The singing was conducted, by J. M. Evans, etc. Several were taking part for the first time.

Thursday, April 24<sup>th</sup>, James Mills, David Price Street, met his death in Graig Pit, Gadlys due to a lump of coal falling upon him, and killing him instantly. The deceased was a brother of David, George, and John Mills, all natives of Pembrokeshire. He had spent 35 years in the place. He was buried the following Monday, with the Rev. W. James presiding.

The district Gymanfa Ganu was held on Monday, April 28<sup>th</sup> the first meeting in Mountain Ash, presided over by Rev. W. D. James, with Mr. John Thomas, Llanwrtyd, conducting. The conductor stated that apart from conducting he would have loved to have been listening, for as the sopranos continued to sing, and though it was known that they could sing excellently, the singing surprised

everybody who was present. The second meeting was held in Aberaman, presided over by Mr. Morgan Edwards, with a meeting at 6 o'clock in Bethania, with Mr. James presiding; but the editor can testify that the evening singing was not as good as the first two meetings.

May 1<sup>st</sup>, Rees Jones, cooper, of Whitcombe Street died at home, aged 39 years. He had had only a short illness. He was born in Trefin, Pembrokeshire. He was born to a reputable family, and was a full member of the Methodists there, and a respected member here in Bethania. Saturday, his body was taken by train to be buried at Llanelli, where the service was, conducted by Rev. W. James. He left a widow and one child to grieve after him.

Thursday, June 28<sup>th</sup>, a large party from Bethania went in coaches on a pleasure trip to Caerphilly. The weather was fine, and the drivers were the best, and Mr. Caunt had prepared supplies for the crowd. The company enjoyed games for part of the day, before going around the ruins of the old castle; finally, a concert was held, in which Messrs. Walter Morgan, Joseph Evans, D. Rees, D. M. Powell, E. T. Powell, John Christmas, and three young girls from Mountain Ash took part.

Thursday, July 17<sup>th</sup>, Bethania Sunday School went on a pleasure trip to Briton Ferry Road, some three miles from Glynneath. There are miles of excellent beaches there, and a wide room belonging to the hotel, where about 140 people can sit at the same time to eat. Everyone enjoyed themselves very much, except for the ones who had to serve the whole time.

Thursday, December 4<sup>th</sup>, John Mills, 400, Cardiff Road, died aged 45 years old and was buried on the following Monday in the public cemetery, near to where his brother James had been buried the previous April. A large crowd was gathered to show their respect for him. He left a widow and three children to grieve over him. Rev. W. James of Bethania was the minister for the occasion, and in the same chapel in which the departed had been a member for many years. His widow and one of his sons are still members today.

The total monthly public collections for the year amounted to £28; Good Friday and Easter, £118; income from the seats, £28; and the houses, £6 .10s. Production of the Dyfed lecture, £21; and a collection of £7. 8s was made for the family of the late Rev. W. Morgan, of Treharris.

Present debt for the chapel and vestry, £550; interest of £21 was paid; £100 was paid on the debt of the chapel.

Expenses for Good Friday and Easter: Rev. Evan Phillips, Newcastle Emlyn, £5; Joseph Evans, Swansea, £4. 10s; Edwin Williams, Trefecha, £2 10s, - total £12.

The names of Edith and Katie Hughes, Mary Ann Mills, Martha Jane Rees, May Samuel came onto the children's book this year.

Newly listed on the book of members are Mrs. Roderick Evans, accepted from February; Richard D. Griffiths by a letter; David Hughes, Cefn, Mrs. Hughes and Jennie; Thomas Samuel, Little Wind Street, but had joined by April of the year before, and Mrs. Samuel; and W. Williams, Arthog (more than likely a place of residence, though the word is actually related to a bear, and can also mean surly! A.D.), via a letter.

1891

Tuesday, April 7<sup>th</sup>, Mr. David Morgan died at his home in Oak Street after a long illness. His funeral was, administered by Rev. W. James. Mr. Morgan was born in Defynog, Breconshire, and he left an elderly widow and several children to mourn after him. On April 3, 1898, seven years to the same month, Mrs. Agnes Morgan, his wife, died in the same house. I know nothing in particular about the departed, Mr. David Morgan, but am well informed about Mrs. Morgan, that she was like a diligent

little bee, always working to her utmost. I also know very-little about her three children, other than that they were a credit to her. The first is Mr. John Morgan, at present in 8, Tanybryn Street, and he takes great interest in everything to do with Bethania church, and he's been Treasurer of the Sunday school for years. The second is Mr. Walter Morgan, Jenkin Street, a diligent man of independent mind, who is a member of our church, as well as his wife and son. We also knew Agnes his sister when she was in Aberdare, but since she moved to the Treherbert area, our knowledge of her has ended, though we understand that she is of a flawless character.

### Successful Pastorage.

William James was one of the sons of Pembrokeshire, and he was born in Mathry, where his parents used to live, and a family of five children were raised three girls and two boys, and William was the second boy. It was told to me by an old carpenter who had worked with him in his youth, that he had been born in 1832, and that he was older than him. The parents were of ordinary circumstances, but of blameless conduct, and they regularly attended a small Methodist chapel in Trefin, even though it was three miles distance from them. As everyone who knew him was aware, he was slow of movement in both body and mind, but even though he was slow, he was sure all the same. His eldest sister, Pegi, and his eldest brother, John, were more-lively than the other three. Doubtless, he received little education, apart from a village or country town education, as the majority of us received at that time, but he became a devout member when he was 12 years old.

It's likely that he learned his craft in Fishguard. In 1855 he came to Glamorganshire, to Cardiff at first, and then to Aberdare, where he remained for the rest of his life. It was in Bethania when Rev. D. Saunders was pastor of the church, that his mind revived, and it was soon realised that there was more than the ordinary about him for his age, and thus it was. He was urged by many of his friends to think about the pulpit, but he took a long time to make his decision. After he had decided to become a candidate, he received a cold reception, and that was mainly because his tradition was not popular, even though his preaching was good.

As Trefecha was not open to him, Mr. James went to a grammar school in Merthyr. In August 1866, he passed to go to Trefecha; at the end of the year, as a result of the examination in which all the main prizes were won by him and Cynddylan Jones, he began to win the position that he held to his grave. At the beginning of 1870, he was called upon to take charge of Bethania twenty-one years ago.

Thursday, February 26<sup>th</sup>, a very, interesting meeting was held in Bethania church to welcome Rev. W. James at the end of his 21 years among us as pastor. As well as the church itself, the Sunday school and the congregation, several friends had been invited to attend, in order to celebrate the occasion. In the afternoon, over 300 people gathered to partake of tea and all sorts of cakes and sweets that had been prepared by the ladies of the cause, and in the evening a meeting was held to congratulate the pastor on this special occasion. Amongst those who came from outside were Dr. Saunders, Swansea, Revs. J. M. Jones, Cardiff; T. Rees, Cefn Coed, Merthyr; H. J. Hughes, Cefn coed, Merthyr; W. J. Williams, Hirwaun; R. Morgan, Aberdare; T. J. Edwards and D. Lloyd, Penrhiwceiber; M. D. Jones and M. J. Mills, Mountain Ash; W. O. Powell and T. Rowlands, Aberdare; W. Davies, Ynysybwl; D. M. Jones, Carmel; T. Williams, Penrhiwceiber; J. Davies (A); T. Jones (B.S.); R. E. Williams (B); Mr. Roberts (Pres.); T. Kench (Primitive); and W. Thomas (A), Aberdare, as well as others.

The Chair for the evening meeting was held by Rev. R. Morgan, who called upon the deacons of the church to say some words for the occasion, also Mr. Evan Rees, Ferndale; Mr. J. Davies, Ironmonger, Aberdare; and Mr. Daniel Griffiths, Aberdare. Then on behalf of the gentlemen of the church, a silver inkstand was presented to Mr. James as a small token in memory of this special occasion, after which Mr. James gave a short but concise history of his association with the church. The meeting was then addressed by Dr. Saunders, the Revs. T. Rees, Cefn; Williams, Hirwaun; J. M. Jones, J. Davies, Soar, and Mr. T. Rowlands; and this incredibly special meeting was brought to, a close with a prayer by Mr. D. M. Jones. Here is what was sung by Rev. T. Rowlands for the occasion:

The church of Bethania is united in joy,  
To give respect to the minister who is its pastor,  
He too in joy accepts their crown,  
Knowing that the source of it all is from their hearts.

There is but one fault, said the girls, that is in him of his own free will,  
He would not marry any one in particular,  
But if he were to do so, the rest of them,  
Would weep, with their hearts broken.

There is a book that contains some deep thoughts,  
That would be his love, and that he would marry,  
He would embrace the book; he would kiss each page,  
And James would turn his back on the girls of creation.

Like Paul he is gifted with the work of preaching,  
Shepherding the sheep, and also of feeding them.  
This here is the heaven of our talented shepherd,  
He will have a free way, proceeding with hope.

He was born a judge, if not a philosopher,  
Judging a mound as good as a mountain,  
He reads and writes as would a judge,  
Speaking critically when he preached.

May success, follow all his efforts,  
When answering the call to save souls.  
And Bethania church shall increase,  
In grace and sanctity, as did Jesus.

Last Thursday night of the year, J. Mills gave the story of his trip from Aberdare to Palestine in the chapel, with illustrations by the lantern. The Children's Book- Only the names of John Oliver Davies and Mabel Morgan come onto it for the first time. The number on the book is now 42.

On April 1<sup>st</sup> Mrs. Evan Davies (the butcher), Cardiff Street, became a member of Bethania, but when making a note of the date, I don't know exactly what to say about her. For the past fortnight she has been so unwell that the doctor does not know how it is that she is still alive. If she were to die, for nobody seems to think any differently, the church will lose one of the best women that it has, not just for her contributions, but for everything else that is good in her. Also, Ellen Evans, Griffith Street, one of the daughters of Mr. Thomas Evans, a grocer. Miss Mary Ann Jones, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Evan Jones, is changing her name to Mrs. Penry. John E. Jones of Llanidloes is being accepted via a letter, though he moved to Cardiff Post Office, where he is to this day, but he left the church in Pembroke Terrace because nobody would say a word to him whilst he was there. Mrs. Benjamin Mills has died, and Miss Ann Powell, Albert Street, has come onto the book with her mother.

Monthly collections £31, Good Friday and Easter £34, the seats £27, and the houses £6. 10s. Besides the annual collection for the Foreign Mission, which brought in £16, this year was the Jubilee of the Mission, and a sum of £330 was collected in this church. Interest on the loan of £19 5s was paid, and £50 was paid off the debt. Good Friday and Easter of this year was on March 27<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup>, and was ministered by Rev. D. C. Davies, Cynddylan Jones, and W. John of Bridgend, and their fees were £14.

The Aberdare District Methodist Gymanfa Ganu was held on Monday, May 1<sup>st</sup>, and the town was full to capacity, because two other Gymanfa's were being held here on the same day.

May 28<sup>th</sup>, the Lord Mayor of London, the Welshman David Evans, called hundreds of representatives of the Principality to a great feast at the Mansion House. One of the boys from Llantrisant was the mayor, who was related to the old minister, William Evans, Tonyrefail, and several members of the family were present. It was a lifeless gathering, with neither joy nor enthusiasm, other than by the mayor himself. An illustration of the congregation is as follows, amongst those we see now is: Headmaster Prys, Trefecha; Rev. William Evans, Pembroke Dock, and his father David Evans, Docks, Cardiff (relatives of the Mayor); Mr. Thomas Gee, Denbigh; Sir Marchant Williams; Dr. Owen Evans, London; Dr. Parry, Penarth; John Thomas (Chief Musician, Gwalia), Royal Harpist; Rev. Richard Roberts, etc. One member of Bethania was there amongst those who had been invited to the Welsh congregation the only time he had been in the Mansion House. Here is a verse by Tiberog on the occasion:

Hail! Protector of the land of hills,  
Honourably he climbed the steps,  
With distinction to the chair of chairs—  
Lord Mayor of our land,  
The national feeling, Like living electricity, thrilling,  
Reviving the seal of patriotism  
Today in satisfaction,  
The old nation again  
Is shining as it once was,  
It is the name of the Mayor that is honoured,  
In the pure spirit of the Welshman  
It is as if the little district of Llantrisant.  
Is treading with vigour upon the balls of its feet,  
And is crying out, "A life of success,  
To the Mayor of our country

Saturday, June 18<sup>th</sup> in Bethania, Miss Jennie Mason and Mr. David Williams, Cardiff, in the presence of the Registrar, were joined in holy matrimony by Rev. W. James. Mrs Williams died, but Mr. Williams continues as a member of Nazareth, and lives in Blaengwawr.

At the beginning of August, the grief of loss came to Bethania through the death of Mr. John Lewis, Blaengwawr. The name of John Lewis was almost as well-known as his master: D. Davies, Esq. Blaengwawr—for he had been the main servant of the family for years. He had been one of, the faithful, in Bethania whilst he was in Aberdare, but he was buried on the 1<sup>st</sup> of August in the neighbourhood of Llandeusant, Carmarthenshire.

The last Wednesday night of November in Bethania, the Rev. John Evans (Eglwysbach) delivered his lecture on the Four Denominations in Wales. The president of the meeting was D.P. Davies, Esq. of Ynyslwyd. Even though it was after ten o'clock when the meeting ended, nobody complained.

Wednesday morning the 7<sup>th</sup> of December, in Treorchy, the Rev. Ebenezer Pugh died aged 68 years old. He was a native of Aberdare and had been in the Ynyscynon office with the Poet for some years. He was born to the Pugh's who came here at the start of the Methodists in the Cwm (valley).

The monthly public collections came to a sum of £37.12s; Good Friday and Easter, £36.12s; the seats, £28; and the houses, £6.10s. £17. 14s was also collected towards the Blaenrhondda chapel.

The preachers for Good Friday and Easter were Revs. W. Prydderch, Thomas James, and S.T. Jones, and the costs were £14. The mission for the year cost £93, apart from Easter; the funeral of Dr.

Saunders, £4; the Monthly Meeting, £7, lodgings for the preachers, £6.

The children of Mr. and Mrs. Davies, 8, Cardiff Street, come onto the books, including Annie, Thomas, May, David, Katie, and Margaret, Annie and David are pending. The name of Polly Evans also comes onto the children's book.

Onto the book of full members comes David Christmas, brother of our present deacon, but the young man dies in the same year. Evan Jones, Nant Row (deacon) and John Lewis, Blaengwawr, have died. The Rev. R. Morgan, Commercial Place, has joined our church. Mrs. Thomas Rees of Ynyslwyd Street has died. Two daughters of Mrs. Thomas of Mary Street have left, one via a letter, the other without a letter. Mrs. Thomas remains with us, and also her daughter, Mrs. Davies, and her children. Also in September, Mrs. Williams, Oak Street, died, she being the wife of the faithful Thomas Williams, who was known as the baker. Mrs. Williams and her husband were always present, and their contributions, like themselves, were as regular as the morning. Ten people of this church were lost through death this year.

### 1893

Wednesday, January 11<sup>th</sup>, Rev. Lewis Jones, Nazareth, Pentre, died aged 55 years old. He was a native of Ystradgynlais and had been an apprentice fitter at Abernant. He was ordained in 1870 at the age of 27 when he took over as pastor at Ebenezer in Cwmbach. From Cwmbach he went to Maesteg, where he remained for seven years; and from there to Nazareth, Pentre, where he remained for eleven years. He was at Bethania over Christmas and preached there in the morning and in the evening; but the following Saturday, whilst on his way to the railway station, being on his way to an engagement at Treforest, he suffered a stroke and died the following Wednesday. He was buried in Aberdare on the following Monday, where he had buried two children. Lewis Jones was a good and upright man.

Thursday, February 16<sup>th</sup>, a class from Bethania Sunday School went down near to Tydraw, at the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Davies, (Draper) in order to sit to have their picture taken to present to Mrs. Thomas, Carmarthen, namely Miss Gwladys Jones, Aberdare, who was married to a respectable deacon in Heol Y Dwr, Carmarthen. The class consisted of 24 women, and in their midst was the Rev. W. James, pastor of Bethania. Having taken a satisfactory picture, the gathering sat at a table full of delicious snacks, with cups of tea prepared by Mrs. Davies and her kind family, and Mrs. Thomas also came to the feast and had a happy afternoon. Everyone hoped that Mrs. Thomas would be blessed in her new home and would serve the faith as well in Carmarthen as she had done in Bethania, Aberdare.

Monday, March 6<sup>th</sup>, Mrs. Davies, wife of the late Rev. John Davies, Aberdare, died aged 77 years old. Mrs. Davies was one of the oldest merchants of the town, having kept a shoe shop for years where the Chew shop now stands, and where the Free Library will be, and after that she kept a book shop in Commercial Street. Mrs. Davies, Tydraw, was a daughter of hers, as was mentioned in the last story. The service for the occasion was by Rev. R. Morgan, assisted by Rev. R. Roberts, Trinity, and Rev. R. E. Williams (Twrffab). This family was one of the special families of Bethania.

The Bethania festival was held, as usual, on the last Friday and Sunday of March, and the service was conducted by the Revs. H. Barrow Williams, Llandudno; John Owen, Mold; and Moses Thomas, Resolven. Excellent, crowded meetings were held, and the collection came to almost £100, thanks to Mr. T. Roderick for donating £20 towards it.



Daniel Griffiths

A district Gymanfa Ganu was held, being the twenty first, on Monday, April 24, conducted by Mr. Tom Price, Merthyr, with Miss Morgan of Taffs Well, and Mr. Thos Thomas the school master as accompanists. Price, like all other conductors, gave endless praise to Mr. Daniel Griffiths, saying that Wales is indebted to him for his congregational singing, and also praising the singers for listening to their teacher, and adopting his good ideas. We believe that here is the best place to place a picture of Mr. Griffiths, and a little of his history: Mr. Daniel Griffiths was born in April 1828, one of seven children of Evan and Ann Griffiths, who kept the biggest shop in Aberdare at the time, where they sold all kinds of foodstuffs, clothes, ironmongery, saddlery etc., in High Street, almost next to the Old Church, Aberdare.

After that, the old shop was converted into a dwelling where Dr. Evan Jones lived for years. As a boy, Daniel went with his parents to Carmel chapel, and as he loved music and singing, he became a faithful pupil of the famous old singing conductor, Mr. Benjamin James, and it wasn't long before he became a valuable assistant to his teacher, and travelled around the area teaching choirs etc. When a number of Carmel's members decided to start a new cause in the town, and to build Bethania, Daniel moved with other members of his family, and from then until his death, he was diligent and famous for congregational and choral singing.

In September 1858, Ieuan Gwyllt came from Liverpool to Aberdare, and joined Bethania, for we see him paying his first contribution on the church book in October of that year. There were several famous musicians belonging to the church then, like Messrs Silas Evans, Joseph Hughes (Carpenter), Alaw Du, David Rosser, and others. It was also Daniel who started the Gymanfa Ganu, though there was mention of such assemblies having been formed before. The first took place in the Temperance Hall, Aberdare on January 10th, 1859, with Ieuan Gwyllt conducting, and the choirs prepared by Daniel. But the Gymanfa did not become an established annual event until 1872, and great is the change that has taken place since then in the congregational singing of the Principality.

It's true that Daniel did not take any obvious public part in this, but again, he was always diligent and forthright in preparing the choirs and the vocalists in Aberdare for fifty years. His judgement in unifying words and tunes was second to none. Gymanfa conductors, older and later, are of one opinion of his ability and talent as a musician and musical teacher. The main task of Mr. Griffiths was to improve the singing, especially sacred singing. It's true that on several occasions he competed in eisteddfods, and having won as well, he did not want to be seen by anybody, but his aim was to work out of sight; and there was hardly any choral or religious Gymanfa competition taking place, where his service was not sought after by one denomination or another. The strange thing in his story was that he had never been a full member of our church, even though as much as anyone, he had preached the faith in schools and Gymanfa Ganu gatherings in a devotional and earnest spirit.

The District Children's Gymanfa was held on Monday, May 1<sup>st</sup> in Bethania, when some six hundred had gathered. It was conducted by Eos Morganwg, who had worked hard with the children throughout

the year. The children were asked about the life of Jesus Christ by the Rev. W. D. Morris of Cwmaman. The only complaint was from those who had been called upon to address such stubborn children, when every religious leader should be ready for such work on every occasion.

Sunday, May 13<sup>th</sup>, Trinity church held a meeting to mark its reopening, having been renovated, and an organ worth £250 installed. The first work to be played upon it was by Mr. James A. Phillips, Canon Street. Mr. Roberts, the pastor, and Mr. W. James, Bethania were the preachers.

Wednesday, July 5<sup>th</sup>, the trusted and well-known Isaac Thomas, undertaker, died at home aged 57 years old. He was the son of carpenter Nathaniel Thomas, Cwmdu, Carmarthenshire. Having learnt his trade with his father, he moved to Llangattock, where he worked for some time, and married his first wife. From there he came to Cwmdare, working as a carpenter in the pits, and whilst he was there, he buried his first wife and two of his children. After that he went to work in Abernant on a salary of 14s. per week. Whilst thinking about some plan to earn more of a salary, he decided to become a coffin maker himself, and was fortunate to have an order for a coffin at once, but when he went to buy the wood, he found that he was sixpence short of the price to pay for it, so had to borrow it. Having honestly paid for the first, he purchased the wood for the second, and his business grew, such that in his older days he was able to live comfortably, having sold his business to Messrs George and Jones of Hirwaun.

Though we understand that it was to the Church that Isaac went at the start of his life, he was an old fashion Methodist in Aberdare, and he and his wives were members of Bethania. He was of great benefit to the district working environment, through lowering the price of coffins; he wrote a lot, and sang a lot too, and almost all of it with one aim, and everyone knew what that was, because it belonged to everyone that we know, that being without exception in the circles of the most sacred. His funeral took place on Saturday afternoon, July 8<sup>th</sup>, and his mortal remains were interred in the Public Cemetery. The Revs. Silwyn Evans, W. James, and Henry Jones took part in the service.

Monday, December 8<sup>th</sup>, was the day of the inauguration of Rev. J. T. Job as pastor in Nazareth church, Aberdare.

Monthly public collection was £25.12s; Good Friday and Easter, £75; the seats, £29; and the houses, £6.10s. A bequest of £18 was received from J. Lewis, Blaengwawr, and £12.10s was collected for the family of the late Rev. Lewis Jones, Ystrad. According to a decision of the Monthly Meeting, £30 was paid towards the Blaenrhondda chapel. At the end of the year £96 was in the treasurer's hands, with debts of £500.

From the children's book, G. Howell Evans, Sunnybank, had his name added for the first time, along with Thomas and Maggie Edmunds.

The Revs. Barrow Williams; J. Owen, Mold; and Moses Thomas, Resolven; ministered in the annual meetings, and the sum of £16.10s was paid to them. Money in the hands of the Treasurer at the end of the year was £10.

The book of membership shows that Mrs. Davies, Bookseller, Commercial Street, died in March; Henry Thomas, Dean Street, in November; Isaac Thomas, Seymour Street, July; Edward Williams, Cross Street, in March; and Thomas Williams, Morgan Street, in September. Margaret Griffiths, Wind Street; and Winnie Morgan, Commercial Place, came to the church.

1894

In the first month of this year, public meetings were held to celebrate the third Jubilee of the Body of the Church in Wales. In this district, four meetings were held: namely, in Bethlehem, Mountain Ash, Cwmaman, and Bethania, and Aberaman. Bethania's meeting was presided over by Mr. James, with the

Revs. Thomas Rees, Merthyr; J. H. Hughes, Cefn; and H. Jones, Cwmbach, taking part. The meetings were, enjoyed very much by the listeners, for so much was mentioned about the Methodist Fathers and their sufferings.

Those ministering in the festival this year were the Revs. Evan Jones, Caernarvon; Griffith Roberts, Carneddi; and D. C. Edwards, Merthyr. It was a powerful ministry, with full audiences, and the collections came to over a hundred pounds. Rev. Evan Jones gave a speech on temperance in Carmel Hall on the previous Saturday evening, he, and Dr. Williams, Porthcawl, had a feast of temperance. There was an excellent gathering all together, and an enthusiastic meeting.

Monday, April 30<sup>th</sup>, the twenty third Musical Gymanfa was held in Bethania chapel, presided over by Mr. Morgan Edwards, Aberaman, and led by Mr. Tom Price, Merthyr. Addresses were given in the morning by Revs. W. James and D. G. Jones, Tonna, Aberdulais. The second was presided over by Rev. D. G. Jones, Mountain Ash, and the meeting was also addressed by the leader. The evening was presided over by Rev. H. Jones, Cwmbach, and the meeting was, addressed by Rev. T. J. Edwards, Penrhiwceiber. The leader was, assisted by Mr. Daniel Griffiths. An address was also given by Rev. J. M. Jones, Cardiff. Behold a fragment of stone of Rev. W.O. Powell.

Behold a fragment of stone of Rev. W. O. Powell in the Darian (Shield) on the occasion: As was the case every time, the work of conducting was shared between Mr. Price and the old, local, able conductor, Mr. Daniel Griffiths, Clifton Cottage. And it was a great joy to see our old friend Mr. Griffiths at his best, with not the least sign that he had lost any of his mental faculties, nor the fervour of his spirit. His sharp eyes were alive with feeling and thoughtfulness. Still, I was sorry to see that the inclination of the sun upon his life was towards the west, and the shadows of evening of his days were casting shadows upon his path. All of the singing in the meetings was truly-good; but in our opinion and our personal feeling, it was the meeting in the afternoon that was the best by far. It was in this that the singing was most effectual, and the most inspirational; and it was in the singing of "Gorffwysa" (Resting Place), by Mr. Rees Williams, Aberdare, that this meeting reached its highest point.

The tune was enchantingly charming, the hymn being full of the most tender and beautiful thoughts, and there, was tenderness and charm with whoever sang the hymn, and the style and the quality of the spirit of Mr. Griffiths in his task of conducting, made this part of the meeting extremely effectual. The melodic notes of the tune "Gorffwysa" bring to our memory the beautiful hymn of Islwyn, on heaven:

See above the clouds of Time,  
O, my soul, behold the land,  
Where the breeze is ever tender,  
Where the sky is always clear,  
Happy is the throng,  
That swims in its peace.

The sixth festival of the Children of the District Gymanfa was held on May 6. This Gymanfa excelled all of the ones before. Two meetings were held, and Bethania was full to capacity, even outside of the doors. The 2 o'clock Gymanfa was presided over by Mr. David Davies of Mountain Ash, and the conductor of singing was Mr. W. James of Aberaman. When the children were singing, one of them broke out in rejoicing, whilst many expressed their feelings in tears. The children were questioned on the first chapter of the Book of Acts. The six o'clock meeting was presided over by Rev. M. D. Jones, Ynysybwll. Some tunes in this meeting were compelled to be sung over and over. Mr. James was well suited to conduct the singing, especially that of the children, and we never heard a better children's examiner than the Rev. M. D. Jones. Mr. Thos. Thomas of Aberdare and Miss Morgan of Taffs Well did excellent work as musical accompanists.

Friday, June 29<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Watkin Powell, brother of Rev. W. O. Powell of Aberdare, died in Cardiff. He was brought up in Bethania, but he began his preaching in Newbridge, and from there went on to Crumlin Bridge, where he remained for some time. From there he went to a Solicitor's Office in Cardiff,

where he remained until he died. We understand that he was ordained in the work of the ministry in a Gymanfa that was held in Dinas, Pembrokeshire. He was buried in Aberdare on the Tuesday following his death, which was ministered by the Revs. W. James, R. Morgan, H. Jones, and Dyfed.

The monthly collections came to £26. 10s; Good Friday and Easter £100 16s; the seats, £25; and the houses £6 10s The sum of £21 was collected for the widows of the explosion at Cilfynydd (This refers to an explosion in 1894 at the Albion Colliery, Cilfynydd, in which 281 men lost their lives. A.D.) £150 was paid on the debt of the chapel, £17. 10s interest, and £12 for the Pastorship. Expenses for the festival, £14 10s. For the Ministry, £121. 14s, leaving £6 in the hands of the treasurer.

On the children's book are entered the names of Gwladus Christmas, May Samuel, and John Heseiah Williams comes on there too; and Cledwyn Davies, Benjamin Davies, Morgan Street, Anne Davies, Unity House; Gwladys Evans, David Price Street; Polly Evans, Wind Street are removed from it.

This year we lost seven members through deaths. The first, Miss Edwards, daughter of Mr. Edward J. Edwards, Bute Street, who had been living with her father. In May, we lost Mrs. Moses, Elizabeth Street, wife of W. Moses, one of the deacons at the time, and mother of Miss Moses, who continues to be a member of our church. In April we lost the old faithful member, Mrs. Charlotte Powell, Albert Street, who had been a faithful member since the year of 1853, when she paid her first contribution on the church book in January. Mrs. Powell raised two or three daughters in the church, one of whom is still with us today, but has changed her name to Mrs. Davies, Albert Street. In August again, we lost Samuel Powell, husband of Mrs. Powell, Gadlys; she continues to be active. Five of the family were members at that time, though now it's only Mrs. Powell who continues to belong to Bethania. Next was Thomas Samuel, Little Wind Street.

After that, Miss Elizabeth Thomas of Little Wind Street, died, she being the sister of Thos. Thomas, secretary of our church, and also sister of Mrs. Ogwen Williams. Also, this year, Morgan Thomas, Ynysllwyd Street, died, he being the father of William and Brychan Thomas who are still members of our church.

This year, Mrs. Jones, widow of Rev. Lewis Jones, came to our church with two of her daughters. Also, Edith and Katie Hughes, Pembroke Street; T. E. Powell, Gadlys; John Morgan, Mary Street; W. Powell, Albert Street; D. R. Davies, Wind Street, having married Mary Anne Jones. Via letters, we lost 13, without letters 16, and through deaths 7.



Rev. W. James

Sunday night November 18<sup>th</sup>, Rev. W. James delivered a funeral sermon on behalf of our friend Mr. Thomas Samuels, Little Wind Street, who after months of weakness and pain, crossed over to the land where none say, "I am sick," on the 28<sup>th</sup> of December, aged 33 years old. On the following Thursday,

his remains were laid to rest with much respect in the public cemetery. A service was conducted in Bethania chapel by the Revs. Mr. Williams, Cruglas, Swansea, and Mr. James of Bethania; and at the graveside by Rev. W. O. Powell and Mr. R. Morgans, Bethania, and W. D. Morris, Cwmaman. Mr. Samuels was born in the neighbourhood of Aberystwyth and was brought up in his youth by the Methodists. He resided for a while in Cardiff, where he began to preach. He moved from there to Aberdare, to become a clerk in the Estate Office of Powell Duffryn, Aberaman.

He married Miss M. Davies, daughter of our good and departed deacon, Mr. Daniel Davies, Cruglas, Swansea, and sister of one of the deacons of Bethania, Mr. John Davies, Ironmonger. Mr. Samuels used to speak on many features that were worthy of note, and that were worthy of every attempt to possess. He was a thoughtful and well-read young man and worked hard as a teacher in the Sunday School and on behalf of the Good Temple and was of great service in other useful circles. Although he was just a young man when he died, he nevertheless lived long enough to secure the most valuable thing, namely, to have "God in part," and as Islwyn once noted, Mr. Samuels could carry this great treasure with him through the valley to heaven, to live on its great richness.

## 1895

The monthly collection came to £23, Good Friday and Easter was £108, income from the seats £26. 13s, the houses £6 10s, and several other collections came to £51. The debt of the chapel of £51 was paid, interest £12 5s, with £13 to complete the pastorate.

As usual, the meetings for Good Friday and Easter were held, and were ministered by Revs. T. Levi, Aberystwyth; R. J. Rees, Cardiff, and David Jones, during which £12 was received between them.

Collections of the church for the year, including a collection of the children, was £114, and £114 was paid towards the ministry.

On the children's book the names of David John Davies, Seymour Street, and Olwen Christmas, Commercial Place, were added.

Six members died during this year, namely William Thomas, Albert Street; John Rees, Seymour Street, one of the best men in our church due to his scriptural knowledge; but he was in great pain and distress from one of his joints. He was a tiler by calling, but was a noble, though unfortunate creature. We lost one Mrs. Morgan, Iron Bridge, in March. Again, E. J. Edwards, Bute Street, who was a father of the girl who died the previous year, and was the son of the old lady, Mrs. Edwards, who burned to death in the same house a short time before that. Mrs. Martha Edwards, Dean Street, although we well remember her name, we cannot recall the person herself; and we can only name Margaret Davies, Trap Toad.

From the seed of the church was received the names of Rees Evan Price and John Price; Thomas J. Williams, Wind Street; and Annie Davies, Cardiff Street; via letters, Cledwyn Davies, Cardiff Street; Tom Evans, Ty'r capel; Edwin Thomas, Harlech Place, and John Thomas.

The District Gymanfa Ganu was held in Bethania, at 10, 2 and 6 o'clock, Monday, April 29<sup>th</sup> and in Robertstown, Ynysybwl, Monday June 1<sup>st</sup> at 2 and 6 o'clock, conducted by Mr. Daniel Griffiths. Presiding over the Aberdare meetings were Revs. Idris Thomas, Llanwonno; W. L. Powell, Mountain Ash; and R. Morgan, Aberdare.

## 1896

Monthly public collection, £22 6s.; Good Friday and Easter, £95; the seats, £25. 14s; the houses, £6 10s. Other collections, including £3. 13s. towards the Tylorstown explosion, (This refers to the explosion of that year in which 57 men lost their lives. A.D.) £52 10s. From the debt on the chapel

£100 was paid, and interest of £11. 7s.

The Revs. Moelwyn Hughes; John Owen, Mold; T. Ch. Williams, Gwalchmai (in Anglesey), ministered in the meetings for Good Friday and Easter, with expenses of £16.

The ecclesiastic collections for the year came to £ £127.10s, with expenses of £114. 8s.

Of the members of the church who have died this year are the names of: Mrs. Daniel, Seymour Street, a widow who had lost her fervent and faithful family; Mrs. John Davies, Monk St. namely the first wife of Davies, and mother of the eldest children; his second wife being the sister of the first. Also Samuel Jones, Unity Street; Mrs. Llewellyn, Nith Street; Mr. John Morgan, a builder, Monk Street, husband of Mrs Morgan at present in Clifton Street, who established the company of J. Morgan and Sons, and who had been a faithful and generous member of the church for many years, and was a man respected in the town and country as a builder to be trusted. Also, Mrs. Thomas, Little Wind Street, namely the mother of Thos. Thomas, Secretary, and Mrs. Ogwen Williams.

Those received from the seed of the church were Vincent Morgan, Commercial Place; Gladys Jones, Cardiff Street; and Annie Thomas, Harlech Place. Again, via letters, Lizzie Edwards, Albert Street; Annie Davies, Cardiff Street; Gwen Jones, Cardiff Street; Thomas J. Thomas, Maesyffynon; and Daniel Jones and his wife.

This is the year that the United Methodists of Gwent and Glamorgan held a Gymanfa Ganu in the Pavilion, Mountain Ash, conducted by David Jenkins of Aberystwyth.

## 1897

The sum of the collections for the events £27; Good Friday and Easter, £91; the seats, £25; and the houses, £6 10s; whilst the sum of £41. 7s was collected for the earthquake in Cassia.

The sum of £96 was paid towards the Forward Movement, the Bible Society, and the Missions. The money in hand was £104. 8s.

The festival was held as usual on April 18<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> and was ministered by the Revs. H. Barrow Williams, Robert Richards, and R. T. Williams, with expenses of £15 10s. Collection for the Ministry, £109 12s. 6d, and total expenses of £121 13s 3d.

The District Gymanfa Ganu was held on May 3<sup>d</sup>. The first meeting was in Cwmaman, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> being held at Bethania, under the leadership of Mr. Daniel Griffith. The first meeting was presided over by Rev. E. M. Evans, Aberaman; the second meeting, Rev. J. T. Job, Nazareth; and the evening, Rev. W. James, Bethania. As usual there were large congregations with excellent singing.



John Jones the 1<sup>st</sup>

We should not forget one of the old deacons of our church, namely, John Jones the 1st, who died in 1882. He was a native of the neighbourhood of Llangyndeyrn, Carmarthenshire. He came here early on, for his name appears on the great seat in 1857, and he paid his first contribution in April. It's certain that he came to Aberdare as a single man, and that he worked at his trade as a tiler, before starting his own tiling business in Cardiff Street. Soon after arriving in Aberdare, his eye fell upon one of the three daughters of Mrs. Walters, Ynyslwyd Street, and it wasn't long before he married her, and in her was a kindred spirit that was the concern of his life. Following his marriage, he opened a premises in Cardiff Street, and it was there that he remained until he left the business and went to live in Clifton Street

We don't know at what date he was appointed as a deacon, as we have not come across any such record, but we know that he was one of the first to be appointed in Bethania, and he was a Methodist deacon of the old "type", slow in his thought and speech, but as a rule, sure of his opinion and of his subject. It appears that he was the half-brother of Rev. Samuel Jones, and through the name of Jones, it's likely that they had the same father. He was a good and devout deacon, and an excellent Sunday School teacher. The late Rev. John Lewis (Homo Ddu), Carmarthen, was working for him, and it was in Aberdare that he began to preach, and from here he went to college. Messérs William and Lewis Griffiths, and the Poet, and J. Jones got on well, and they were together for years. Mrs. Jones was the sister of Mrs. Thomas, Glannant Street.

This year Mrs. John Thomas, Mary Street, sister of David Griffiths, presently of Wind Street, and wife of John Thomas, Engineer, died. Not many will remember Mrs. Thomas as the best female singer in our Gymanfa's and our united choirs. Miss Edwards was the best for the twenty years that have passed, of which Mrs. Thomas had been for thirty years before that. David Davies, Ynyslwyd Street, who had been taken from the world into the church in May, also died. Evan Davies and his wife came back to Aberdare from Treorchy at the beginning of this year, and went to live in 8, Tanybryn Street. Also, Myfanwy Hughes, Wind Street, came to the church for the first time round about September, and Jennie Hughes came via a letter in November. It was also in this year that Mr. W. Williams, Insurance Agent, came here, but he died the following year, leaving his widow, Mrs. Williams, Tanybryn Street, and after that Stuart Street; but she has since left Aberdare a year ago.

From the children's book, we have three names added this year, namely, Mary Thomas, Whitcombe Street; Maggie Walters, Albert Street; and Hilda Christmas, Commercial Street.

## 1898

The monthly public collection came to £17; Good Friday and Easter-by the members, £126. 11s; the free collection £9; revenue from the houses £6. 10s, for the Missions, the Forward Movement, the Bible Society etc., £43 .14s. £12 was paid to the Treasury of the Ministry, and to the Pastorage £8; whilst to Trefecha College the sum of £126. 11s was paid, being what was collected by the church during the festival.

The April Festival was held on the 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>, being ministered by the Revs. Cynddylan Jones, Thomas Williams, Gwalchmai, and M. D. Jones, Mountain Ash.

This was a remarkable year for deaths of members and deacons in Bethania. Mrs. Davies, Glannant Street died, and a fervent family lost its leader as both wife and mother.

At the start of this year David Harris, a cobbler, died, he being a faithful Christian, and a true Israelite. He came to Aberdare before the first list of Bethania's members was set down in a book, which took place on May 1<sup>th</sup>, 1864, and D. Harris was number 64 on the list, and his monthly contributions in the book were as regular as his presence in the meetings of the church. He worked and lived for some years with Rev. John Davies, a cobbler, and his family in High Street: but towards June 1864, he married his wife Jane, and there have never been people so well matched as these two since the

time of Adam and Eve. He was a sullen and single-minded creature but extremely determined in his opinion. He would not sell nor purchase a ticket for any religious cause on the Sabbath, and he would not want a preacher to walk one step on the Sabbath in order to attend to his bidding. He was a deacon for years in Bethania, and one could say much about his characteristics if time and space allowed. Harris was a native of Carmarthen. No picture was ever taken of him, for it would have been good for us to have included it here.



John Evans

John Evans came to Aberdare in 1865, and was listed in the church book as John Evans, Tiler, and as John Evans, Newcastle Emlyn. We lost him for a short time in 1871, but had him back for a second time, and Mrs. Evans was joined with him. He lived for a while in John Street, but for years after that he was known as John Evans, Chapel House, and he acted as caretaker of Bethania chapel, both inside and out. Mrs. Evans died in 1881, and as a result he married Mrs. Thomas, widow of Isaac Thomas, and moved to Seymour Street, but died suddenly in 1898. He began work in his trade in Aberdare with John Jones, Cardiff Street, but he succeeded in becoming an Inspector of Nuisance under the town authorities, a task he fulfilled to the towns and his own satisfaction.

Mr. Evans was an excellent musician and reciter, and an excellent Sunday School teacher too. Indeed, he was so active and competent with everything related to religion and the chapel, that he was elected as one of the deacons of the church; but so many had been elected at the same time that John Evans decided that he would not take on such a role after all. And he stuck to his decision; but because he had been thus elected, we are including him as one of the officials of the church.

In this year Rees Lewis, Cardiff Street, lost his wife, who had been suffering for a long time, though he had a daughter who had looked after him for some years, but he buried her too. In April, Mrs. Agnes Morgan of Oak Street was lost, she being the mother of Messrs. John and Walter Morgan, who continue to honour their good and diligent mother. Another we lost this year was Mrs. Thomas, Nant Row, wife of William Thomas, an old deacon of Bethania, who died in March 1887, eleven years ago. The only ones left of the family now are Mr. Richard Thomas, who was in the Ferndale office for a long time, but is now one of the colliery officials of the Treallaw district, and the only daughter, now in Llwydcoed, but has lost her second husband. Also, M. Roderick, Mrs. Williams, Elizabeth Street, Phoebe Llewellyn, Nith Street; and Mrs. Jones, Wind Street, have all died.



David Hughes

Mr. David Hughes died in June. He came to Aberdare from Cefn Coed y Cymer, having married the schoolmistress, Miss Sims, and he and his family were here for years, being devout and useful. Hughes was an imitator second to none, especially of old preachers of the Church Body, preaching the sermons he could remember, which he imitated in voices and gestures to perfection, and would entertain an audience of friends for hours with his humour. He was also a very, useful person here in matters of religion, even before coming here, and he was elected with nine others to be deacons in this church in March 1894.

Amongst those accepted into the church this year were the Rev. Henry Jones and his wife; Mr. E. Ogwen Williams in December; Idris Davies, Seymour Street; Aubrey Davies, Cardiff Street, and his brother Cledwyn via a letter; John Davies, Monk Street, and his wife; Maggie Walters, Edith Evans, and Mary Davies, etc.

## 1899

The monthly collection for this year is £17; Good Friday and Easter, £81. 12s; the seats, £26; and the houses, £6. 10s, to the Missions and the Bible Society, £51. 9s. This year the steps in front of the chapel were renovated at a cost of £126. 13s.

Good Friday and Easter, March 30<sup>th</sup> and April 10<sup>th</sup> were ministered by the Revs. John Owen, Mold, T. Charles Williams, Menai Bridge, at a cost of £19. Church collections for the year were £118. 10s. Payment to the ministry came to £93. Dyfed gave a lecture this year, and part of the profit went to the Pastorage, and part to the Ministry.

We lost six through deaths this year, namely, Mrs. Evans, Wind Street, mother of the Evans family, at least two remain as members, and one who has only just died, namely, Mrs. W. Evans, David Price Street. The second was Mrs. Griffiths, Ynysllwyd Street, who was a good wife and mother and was worthy of her profession. Her husband, Thomas Griffith, and her daughters were members of Bethania when she died.

Also, Mr. Thos. Thomas: Thos. Thomas was a native of Carmarthenshire. He was born in 1825 in Penline, a blacksmith, being not far from Pantdwn, the home of Charles of Bala. He joined in Bancyfelin, a favoured place in the history of the Methodists. In 1864 he moved with his family to Llwydcoed, where he was a deacon and a novice singer for some years. In 1887 the family moved down from Llwydcoed to live in the town, joining the church of Bethania.



Thos. Thomas

He was made a deacon here in 1894, when ten were elected, but of those only three are still alive Steven Davies, J. Christmas, and J. Mills. The brother of Mr. Thomas, namely, Joseph Thomas, Penline, was one of the most public of deacons in the Carmarthenshire Monthly Meeting, but Thos. Thomas was of a quieter disposition, preferring sacred retreats, and studying his Bible daily. He was noted for his fervour of spirit, and his prayers in pure Welsh were like a comforting scent, steeped in the Scriptures. He raised sons and daughters to an age to fill the public circles in the church of Jesus Christ.

Mr. Thos. Thomas, his son, was a secretary of this church for some time, and one of four new deacons; and his daughter, Mrs. Ogwen Williams, was known as one of our most faithful members, though living far away from Bethania.

This year too James Voyle, Pendarren Street; Owen Thomas, Seymour Street; and Mrs. Samuel, Dumfries Street, died.

Those received into the church this year were Miss Davies, Dean Street; Martha James; Miss Jones, the Beehive at that time; Tom Evans and Mrs. Evans, Whitcombe Street; Miss S. M. Morgan, High Street; J. Howard Morgan, etc.