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The Mormon Mission To Wales 1840-49:
A Reassessment

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PhD, 2018

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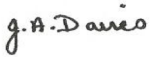
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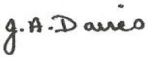
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Abstract

The aim of this research has been to reassess assertions made about the Mormon mission to Wales between 1840 and 1849. It has considered the response to the mission by Nonconformist ministers, and in particular, that of the Baptist minister Revd W. R. Davies, Dowlais, and asked whether the primary explanation for Nonconformist opposition lay in their concern that Latter-day Saints were poaching some of their chapel members. It has also considered the extent to which the Latter-day Saints suffered persecution.

With some notable exceptions, most of the scholarship on this subject has originated from the work of Mormon writers, in particular Ronald D. Dennis, formally of Brigham Young University, who has published a number of books on different aspects of the Mormon mission to Wales covering the period 1840 to 1862. Dennis' interpretation of the story of the Welsh Mormon mission has provided a foundation for other work in this area, with other writers acknowledging indebtedness to his work. This research has investigated Dennis' conclusions in order to ascertain whether or not the available evidence yields alternative conclusions.

In order to understand the Welsh Mormon mission, it was necessary to establish the historiography of the subject. The study involved a reassessment of primary evidence including personal journals, Nonconformist and Mormon periodicals, letters and newspaper reports. The research has concluded that the established view of the early Welsh Mormon mission can be broadened. Evidence reveals that early Mormon missionary activity in Monmouthshire was more significant than previously considered, enabling us to learn more about missionary methods and the opposition encountered at this stage. An analysis of the contribution of W. R. Davies as the chief antagonist of Mormonism has revealed that some assertions may now be challenged, and that his opposition to the Latter-day Saints needs to be understood within a wider context. Newspapers reveal that there was antagonism and opposition to the Latter-day Saints, but this did not include serious violence or organised oppression. The thesis concludes that while the Latter-day Saints experienced opposition, to say that they experienced 'persecution' is to overstate the case.

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Acknowledgements

At the outset, I wish to acknowledge the enormous debt of gratitude I owe to my supervisor, Dr Robert Pope. I have been privileged to benefit from his expertise, experience and professionalism. In particular, I am grateful for his patience, sensitive correction and guidance, and his constant generosity in the giving of his time. I could not have wished for a more committed supervisor.

I also wish to thank Dr Sarah Lewis, as second supervisor, especially for her input at the start of this project.

I would like to thank all the people in my life who have asked regularly about my progress and welfare, and kept me in their thoughts and prayers. Their interest and encouragement has been heart-warming, and their support much appreciated.

A special debt of gratitude is owed to my husband, Wyndham, whose love, care, constant support and encouragement has enabled me not just to take on this project, but to see it though. I am also grateful for his listening ear which has allowed me to make the subject of this thesis a daily topic of conversation during the last few years.

Finally, a big thank-you must go to my American cousin Marla, who made the decision to send me a copy of a little booklet entitled *The Welsh in Utah.*

Dedicated to my husband Wyndham.

In memory of my parents:

Daphne and Ken Evason

1917-2005

Introduction

This thesis sets out to examine the early Mormon mission to Wales and to reassess the claims made in the historiography regarding both the beginning of that mission and the opposition it faced. The study focuses on the conclusions reached by Ronald Dennis, Welsh Mormonism's primary chronicler, and how they might be challenged by evidence gathered from religious periodicals and secular newspapers when that information is set alongside that which is garnered from Mormon periodicals.

My interest in the subject was first aroused when I discovered that a distant relation had been among Mormon émigrés to America in 1865. An American cousin had inherited a cedar chest full of family papers, including two short booklets, one entitled *Mormonism: Its Origin and History*,[1] and the other, more arrestingly, *The Welsh in Utah*.[2] This little booklet proved captivating reading. It recounted the history of some of the Welsh Latter-day Saints who had emigrated from Wales during the nineteenth century. It recorded engaging cameos of the many Welsh emigrants, from masons to musicians, who founded the Welsh Latter-day Saint communities in Malad and Samaria, Idaho, as well as Spanish Fork, Willard, and Wales, Utah. In particular, it recorded the role Welsh women played in the establishment of these communities.

In order to discover more, I turned first to Ronald D. Dennis' book *The Call of Zion*.[3] The book contains a detailed account of the first mass emigration of Welsh Latter-day Saints to Salt Lake City organized and directed by Captain Dan Jones in February 1849. While this is an extraordinary story, it is a relatively unfamiliar one in the history of Wales. The image of 249 Welsh 'Saints', sailing from Swansea for Liverpool in February 1849, is an engaging one. The *Cambrian* recorded details of this momentous departure.[4] Its account was reprinted in newspapers across Britain and in the United States. It contained a colourful description of the arrival of waggons

[1] B. H. Roberts, *Mormonism: Its origin and History,* (Independence, Missouri: Zion's Printing and Publishing Company, 1923).
[2] Kate Carter, *The Welsh in Utah,* (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1949).
[3] Ronald D. Dennis, *The Call of Zion: The Story of the First Welsh Mormon Emigration,* Religious Studies Center: Specialized Monograph Series, Vol.2 (Salt Lake City, Utah: Brigham Young University, 1987).
[4] *Cambrian* (16 February 1849).

from Carmarthenshire, piled high with possessions, some owned by people aged in their seventies and eighties. The *Cambrian* added that many had travelled from Brechfa and Llanybydder, in rural Carmarthenshire. It also described the crowds of people who waved farewell to these resolute travellers as they departed from Swansea aboard the *Troubadour* en route to Liverpool. Captain Dan Jones, who had organized this enterprise, accompanied them on the journey. An additional seventy-seven Welsh converts had planned to join the 249 émigrés as they sailed aboard the *Buena Vista* from Liverpool to New Orleans. However, it was decided that the number of paying passengers exceeded the accommodation space and these passengers were reassigned to another ship. They sailed aboard the *Hartley* just over a week later. While the numbers are not vast, they are certainly noteworthy, which makes it somewhat surprising that historians have paid almost no attention to this event in the story of Welsh emigration, or even in the history of Wales itself

Secondly, I turned to the website *Welsh Mormon History,*[5] which collates information on all things pertaining to the history of the Welsh Mormon mission. This website forms part of a project run by Brigham Young University (BYU) at Salt Lake City, which aims to record the stories of the migrants who left Wales to join the Mormon community in America. Over the course of three decades, Ron Dennis who oversees this project, has amassed an extensive collection of biographies, journals, and photographs of the early Welsh Latter-day Saints, which continue to be digitized and uploaded to the website.[6]

While the economic depression of the 1840s encouraged many in Wales to leave their homeland simply to achieve a better life, and reports of vessels carrying emigrants were common in the press,[7] clearly, the motivation in the case of the Latter-day Saints contained a different element. For the Mormons the culmination of their journey was their arrival at the 'New Jerusalem' in America. The courage and determination of

[5] http://welshmormon.byu.edu accessed 12 September 2017.
[6] The website is a project by Brigham Young University (BYU), Centre For Family History and Genealogy: http://welshmormon.byu.edu accessed 2 September 2017.
[7] E.g. The *Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian* (21 July 1849) reported that there were 'over 200 persons – men, women, and children, passed through Newport on Monday last, from Nantyglo and Tredegar, for a steamer to Bristol, en-route for Pittsburg.' The same paper also reported that 'there are three or four very fine vessels advertising to sail from Newport with passengers to Boston in the USA, in the dock at this present time.'

these Welsh converts can scarcely be questioned. Following their arrival in New Orleans, their journey continued up the Mississippi and Missouri en route to Salt Lake City. At various stages of the journey they were beset with outbreaks of cholera. Hardship, suffering and death accompanied the Welsh 'Saints' on every part of their route. They finally reached journey's end on 26 October 1849, eight months after they had left Liverpool, with only a quarter of the original party of 326, reaching 'the goal of all faithful Welsh Mormons'.[8]

This willingness to endure such hardship led to questions about the motivation of the emigrants who had so longed to leave the land of their birth. As emigration from Wales had increased during the 1840s, there remains the possibility that in addition to the theological imperative and desire to reach the New Jerusalem, for many there was the opportunity of a new beginning in a better land, offering economic opportunities that were unavailable at home.[9] However, *The Call of Zion* made another claim. Dennis asserted that the Welsh left their homeland with a sense of relief and freedom. They had been persecuted, and the originators of that persecution were none other than Nonconformist ministers of religion. He claims emigration provided the opportunity of a safe haven for the Welsh Latter-day Saints, far away from the 'pernicious influences'[10] of enemies who had made their lives difficult.

While the later story of the Welsh emigration and community in Patagonia has excited the interest of many historians, and considerable work has been done on Welsh emigration to America more generally, the history of the first Welsh Mormons and the communities they founded in Utah and Idaho evidently appears to remain largely unknown.

I began the work anticipating that my research would uncover the relatively unknown story of a widespread persecution of a minority group in Wales during the

[8] Dennis, *The Call of Zion*, p. 65.
[9] Bill Jones '"Raising the Wind": Emigrating from Wales to the USA in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries,' *Annual Public Lecture*, Cardiff Centre for Welsh American Studies, Cardiff University, May 2003.
[10] Dennis, *The Call of Zion,* p. 12.

1840s. Although records for the years between 1840-45 are sparse, and little appeared to be known about the early missionary activity in Flintshire, it first appeared that research into these years of the Welsh mission would offer little that was new. However, the discovery that some of the journals and notebooks of the earliest missionaries to Wales were now available to access from the Latter-day Saints' Church History Library, opened up possibilities for the reconstruction of the history of the period. No substantial use had been made previously of the evidence they contain in order to reconstruct the story of the early years of the Mormon mission to Wales. They brought to light more detailed information about the mission to Flintshire, as well as new information about the earliest Mormon activity in Monmouthshire. It became possible to piece together details of the daily lives of the Mormon missionaries, their travels and the homes where they made converts and received the support needed to fulfil their mission. A new picture began to emerge of the activities of Latter-day Saints in Wales prior to the Merthyr – widely acknowledged to be the most successful – mission under the leadership of Captain Dan Jones.

These researches demonstrated that following the arrival of Dan Jones the character of the mission changed while the opposition to it intensified. Jones rose to the defence of Mormonism and approached his antagonists without compromise, especially in the pages of *Prophwyd y Jubili*, the periodical he established and largely composed. As a result, the research identified two distinct but related areas. The first of these concentrated on a reassessment of the early years of the Welsh Mormon mission, between 1840-43. This includes an evaluation of the reception of that mission and what opposition, if any, it faced. The second focused on a re-examination and evaluation of the view that during the period 1844-49 there was relentless opposition and persecution of the Latter-day Saints, most of it coming from Nonconformist ministers, especially the Revd W. R. Davies of Dowlais.

Sources available to assess the charge of persecution, and to reassess the extent of opposition, are not extensive. However, it seemed that if the Latter-day Saints were creating any kind of impression on society in general, then newspapers would report stories that involved them. They might also report on any opposition or persecution.

While it cannot be said that newspaper coverage on the Latter-day Saints during this period is extensive, it does exist and provides evidence that can challenge some of the prevailing claims regarding persecution. As this thesis will show, by attempting to understand the story of the Welsh Latter-day Saints through the evidence of newspaper reports, the Mormon mission to Wales can be contextualized while existing views regarding the claim that they were victims of persecution can be challenged.

Much, of course, depends on how the term 'persecution' is to be understood. This word was regularly used by Captain Dan Jones (*erlidigaeth*) to describe the conduct and assertions of one opponent in particular, namely the Revd W. R. Davies of Dowlais. While what Dan Jones meant by 'persecution' can only be inferred from his extensive use of the term, this study will adopt the following understanding. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary* persecution may be defined as 'hostility and ill-treatment, especially because of race or political or religious beliefs; oppression or persistent annoyance or harassment'. Oppression is defined as 'prolonged cruel or unjust treatment; mental pressure or distress'.

While it must be admitted that there can be a subjective element to what any individual or group perceives as persecution or oppression, the key words here are 'persistent' 'prolonged' 'cruel' 'unjust' 'harassment' and 'pressure'. In examining the assertion that the Latter-day Saints were subject to persistent hostility and ill-treatment that was cruel and unjust, this thesis will seek to determine whether persecution existed and whether it is more accurate to conclude that while there were examples of unjust, hostile and cruel treatment, for most of the time the Latter-day Saints experienced what is better termed as opposition from those who opposed their teaching, claims and practices.

Two further terms require some attention, namely 'Mormon' and 'Mormonism.' This study acknowledges that while Latter-day Saints allow that these terms are used to describe their religion and its followers, they do not choose to use these terms

themselves.[11] However, as Latter-day Saint writers, such as Ron Dennis, use these terms liberally when chronicling this period of history, this would seem to imply an acceptance of their usage for the wider audience. Use of these terms in this thesis is done for reasons of simplicity, variety and clarity, and always with complete respect. They are used synonymously and interchangeably here with the more accustomed term of Latter-day Saint.

Literature Review

The pursuit for information regarding the Latter-day Saints' mission to Wales began with a search through the existing histories of the period. This literature can be divided into a number of sub-categories: general histories of the period; nineteenth-century histories; local histories; studies specifically on the Mormon mission by non-Mormon writers and studies of the mission by Mormon writers, most notably by Ronald D. Dennis; various primary sources.

This research began with a study of the work of historians who have produced general histories on the story of Wales. This approach had two key aims. First, to ascertain the current knowledge on the Mormon mission and define gaps in that knowledge. Secondly, to determine the place historians have afforded to the activity of the Latter-day Saints in the story of the history of Wales.

A review of general histories proved to be fairly unfruitful. Historians appear to have afforded the Latter-day Saints little space in the story of the history of Wales. It is difficult to find any reference to the Latter-day Saints' activities in Wales during the 1840s, and those histories that do include this subject, make only a passing reference to them. Admittedly, in any reconstruction of the history of Wales, editorial constraints would inevitably make accounts highly selective. However, even if we concede this point, it is also possible to suggest that knowledge and interest in the Latter-day Saints' mission in Wales during the 1840s is lacking among non-Mormon

[11] Douglas J. Davies, *An Introduction to Mormonism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 1.

historians. Among the general histories of Wales, Geraint H. Jenkins' book *A Concise History of Wales*[12] tells the story of Wales from its earliest inhabitants up to the present century. Primarily a work of social history, it acknowledges the religious influences in Wales, but makes no mention of the mission of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Likewise, the 2012 publication *The Story of Wales* by Jon Gower[13] (produced in conjunction with the BBC programme of the same name presented by Huw Edwards) makes no reference to Mormonism. Philip Jenkins' *A History of Modern Wales: 1536- 1990*, allows just six lines to the Latter-day Saints, chiefly noting that at Merthyr they published the periodicals, *Prophwyd y Jubili* and *Udgorn Seion.*[14] One of the best-known accounts of the history of Wales is that by the historian John Davies, entitled simply *A History of Wales.* This extensive volume recounts the political, social and cultural history of Wales from the Ice Ages to the era of the Welsh Assembly. Davies considered Mormonism of sufficient significance to include a brief reference to its place in Wales in the mid-nineteenth century. Devoting just less than one page to the subject in his 700-page work, Davies provides brief information about the Welsh Mormon emigration and the Welsh cultural legacy of the Mormon Tabernacle choir. Captain Dan Jones is awarded a passing reference. Davies notes that he 'gained at least five thousand converts to his faith.'[15] In his history of Wales, *When was Wales?*[16] Marxist historian Gwyn A. Williams attempts to establish the historical events in Wales that carved out its national identity. Williams, in typical Marxist style, presents the story of Wales and its people as the struggle of the proletariat versus the powerful ruling class. He makes only one brief reference to Mormonism. It is his contention that 'Welsh Dissent had been singularly free from breakaway movements like the Primitive Methodists. Perhaps the closest parallel had been the Mormons who scored major successes in industrial Wales in mid-century and led a remarkable migration across the Atlantic.'[17] For Williams, the Mormon mission was not worthy of further analysis, despite the fact that his comments raise the question why this particular breakaway movement did score 'major successes', and why these successes occurred in industrial Wales. What is

[12] Geraint H. Jenkins, *A Concise History of Wales* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).
[13] Jon Gower, *The Story of Wales* (St. Ives: BBC Books, Edbury Publishing, Random House Group, 2012)
[14] Philip Jenkins, *A History of Modern Wales, 1536-1990,* (London: Longman, 1992), p. 184.
[15] Davies, *History of Wales,* pp. 400-401. To place Davies' references in context, it may be noted that he gives the Latter-day Saints far less space in his book than, for example, the Baptists (twelve pages) or Unitarians (seven pages).
[16] Gwyn A. Williams, *When was Wales?* (Harmondsworth: Black Raven Press, 1985; Penguin Books, repr. 1991).
[17] Williams, *When was Wales?* p. 240.

significant is that he considered the Mormon migration to be 'remarkable' despite the fact that no further attention was given to it.

The passing reference to the Latter-day Saints in these general histories of Wales, might lead to the expectation that historians that centred their attention on nineteenth century alone would devote more space to, or at least offer, further information concerning the Welsh Mormon mission. However, this is not the case. Even in histories that are concerned with the Victorian period, there is little reference to the subject of the Latter-day Saints. Works such as D. Gareth Evans' *A History of Wales 1815-1906*,[18] make no reference to Mormonism or to the part played by Latter-day Saints in the emigration of Welsh people to the United States, despite devoting two pages to that particular subject, and including a chapter entitled 'Religion and Society 1815-1851'. Evans briefly discusses the economic reasons for leaving Wales and refers to official numbers of people emigrating. He also includes one paragraph on the cultural influence of the Welsh and the organizational activities of the Calvinistic Methodists, Congregationalists and Baptists in the United States. Evans devotes almost three pages to Michael D. Jones and the emigration to Patagonia. He gives particular attention to the hardships that occurred establishing the Welsh community there. His inclusion of the story of the Patagonian settlement, with no reference to Mormon emigration suggests once again that non-Mormon historians have overlooked the story of the Latter-day Saints, possibly because it has less relevance to a specifically Welsh cultural identity. Therefore, it is possible to suggest that the Mormon emigration is a small but noteworthy part of Welsh history, if only for the numbers involved and the part played by Captain Dan Jones in its organisation. It is the story of a Welsh endeavour that resulted in the establishment of Welsh Communities in Utah and Idaho. It is surprising, then, that there is no mention of this episode in Welsh history in Evans' work which specifically includes reference to emigration to the USA.

The histories mentioned above give ample evidence of a changing social scene in Wales, and a Wales marked by increasing popular protest. One work that has attempted to evaluate the social upheaval that was taking place is *Social Disorder in*

[18] D. Gareth Evans, *A History of Wales 1815-1906,* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1989; repr. 2011).

Britain, 1750-1850 by J. E. Evans.[19] This study tends to focus on south-west Wales, and explores the effects of the desperate poverty of the rural peasantry, and the oppressive influence of the powerful gentry upon their lives. A whole chapter is given over to the influences and forces that created a 'theocratic Wales', and in particular the powerful influence of Nonconformity over the lives of working people. Although, the Latter-day Saints drew their members from the rural areas of south-west Wales as well as the industrial areas of the south-east, Evans makes no mention of their work or influence. His book is useful in providing a social and economic context for the Mormon mission in this area of Wales, but offers no direct evidence regarding the Mormons.

Russell Davies has compiled an engaging and scholarly account of the social history of Wales and the Welsh during the years 1776-1871, under the title *Hope and Heartbreak.*[20] However, he only makes some brief comments about the Mormons, namely that their emigration was led by Captain Dan Jones, and the Religious Census of 1851 stated that they had thirty-two congregations in Wales.[21] Thus, even when the Mormon emigration is referenced it is often dealt with fairly fleetingly, despite the fact that it was central to the Mormon message.[22] It appears that when the Latter-day Saints are mentioned it is most frequently in connection with emigration. In his work *The Victorian Church,* Owen Chadwick emphasised the appeal of the economic benefits of leaving Britain in the 'hungry forties', and in this context introduced a brief comment on the Mormons and their call to emigrate. He asserted that they presented to their converts an idealised image of the new life that awaited the emigrants where 'Nauvoo towered dreamlike amid meadows flowing with milk and honey'.[23] Again in this history of the religion of Victorian Britain, there is no analysis of the motivation of Mormons to emigrate other than the quest for a better life, neither is there any discussion of the reaction to the movement in society. Furthermore, he makes no specific reference to Wales.

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[19] J. E. Evans, *Social Disorder in Britain, 1750-1850* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011).
[20] Russell Davies, *Hope and Heartbreak,* (Cardiff: University of Wales, 2005).
[21] Russell Davies, *Hope and Heartbreak*, p. 340.
[22] From its first publication in 1840 the *Millennial Star* characterized the call to emigrate to the United States 'as an intrinsic part of response to the Mormon message on the part of British converts.' Douglas J. Davies, *Mormon Spirituality: Latter Day Saints in Wales and Zion*, (Nottingham: University of Nottingham, 1987), p. 4.
[23] Owen Chadwick, *The Victorian Church* (London: Adam and Charles Black, third edition, 1971), Vol.1, p.437.

Despite the fact that the Latter-day Saints produced their own publication, applied for preaching licences that allowed them to meet in various inns, baptized publically and sometimes received press coverage for their activities, no non-Mormon historian of Welsh history appears to have attempted a detailed analysis either of their place in Welsh social or religious history or of reactions to the movement in a Wales that was deeply Nonconformist.

The main contribution of the published histories for this research was a provision of context and historical background for the Mormon mission. It became evident that little could be learned about the Welsh Latter-day Saints or their place in society from standard works of history on the period. Thus, attention turned to local history, looking for evidence regarding the activities of the movement and reaction to it.

As Merthyr Tydfil became the headquarters of the Welsh Mormon mission from 1846, it was clearly important to look at the work of those who had written on the history of the town, which, by 1851 was the largest town in Wales. Using this criterion, the work of Keith Strange emerged as the most significant. Strange has written two important histories of Merthyr. In his book *Merthyr Tydfil: Iron Metropolis*,[24] in a chapter on religion, he devotes two pages to the activities of the Latter-day Saints, and a further two pages providing a description of the emigration of Mormons to the USA. He draws attention to evidence that this was a working-class phenomenon, attracting its devotees mainly from the ranks of colliers, although he offers no references in support of such a claim. Nevertheless, it remains an interesting observation, as at Merthyr, with its predominant iron industry, it might have been expected that most converts would have come from the ranks of the iron-workers. However, he does not deal with the controversial nature of the movement or any opposition it experienced locally. Unfortunately, Strange includes minimal referencing in his work making it difficult to evaluate his sources. In his doctoral thesis *The Condition of the Working Classes in Merthyr Tydfil, circa 1840-1850*[25] he constructs an argument that during the cholera outbreak of 1849, not just Mormon, but all other chapel membership increased along with religious fervour which identified the outbreak with the judgement of God. This is not an insignificant point.

[24] Keith Strange, *Merthyr Tydfil: Iron Metropolis* (Stroud: Tempus, 2005)
[25] Keith Strange, 'The Condition of the Working Classes in Merthyr Tydfil, circa 1840-1850', unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Wales, Swansea, 1982.

It indicates that there were many and varied reasons for conversion to Mormonism, and that religious observance in general increased at these times. There appears to be strong evidence that revival and increasing chapel membership was linked to the outbreak of deadly diseases.[26] The link between fear of the disease and outpourings of religious interest and fervour was reported in the *Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian* in 1849.[27]

An analysis of the main published histories of the period reveals therefore, that many make no reference to the Latter-day Saints in any context, that those who do refer to the Welsh Mormon mission are few, and that their discussions of the movement brief. This suggests however, that those who have attempted to reconstruct the story of the early Welsh Latter-day Saints are mainly, although not exclusively, Latter-day Saints themselves.

Obviously the main source of information about the activities of the Latter-day Saints would be found in literature specifically dealing with the movement. The Latter-day Saint Elder Richard L. Evans published one of the first significant accounts of the story of the Mormon mission in 1937, in part marking the centenary of the arrival of the first Mormon missionaries in Britain, and aptly entitled *A Century of 'Mormonism' in Great Britain*.[28] This work contains two chapters on the mission in Wales entitled 'The Restoration Proclaimed in Wales' and 'Captain Dan Jones in Wales'. It is noteworthy that the first of these chapters makes no mention of the opposition to the mission. While the chapter on Captain Dan Jones includes some of his writings to the British Mormon periodical the *Millennial Star* regarding the ill-treatment he was experiencing, it makes no reference to the opposition from the Revd W. R. Davies of Caersalem, Dowlais, who has been identified as Captain Dan Jones' most vociferous opponent.[29] It is essentially an overview of the British Mormon mission, from a Mormon perspective, and only provides a rudimentary account of their activities in

[26] C. B. Turner, 'Religion and Popular Revivals in Victorian and Edwardian Wales', Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Wales, Aberystwyth, 1973.
[27] *Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian* (24 November 1849).
[28] R. L. Evans, *A Century of Mormonism in Great Britain*, (Salt Lake City: Publishers Press, 1937; repr.1984).
[29] Ronald D. Dennis, *Welsh Mormon Writings From 1844 to 1862: A Historical Bibliography* (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, BYU, 1988).

Wales, offering little in the way of evidence for Latter-day Saint activity prior to the arrival of Captain Dan Jones, and including just one sentence on the earliest missionary activity in south-east Wales.

The first significant account of the place of Mormonism in the history of Wales, by a non-Mormon writer came in a five-page article by the historian David Williams in 1927.[30] This Welsh language article was the first attempt to reconstruct the events of the Welsh Mormon mission by an acknowledged scholar of Welsh history. However, this work is relatively brief and provides only a general overview of the story of the Welsh Mormon mission. The writer makes the point that historians had not researched this subject previously. He makes no reference to any activity in south-east Wales, neither does it describe any form of persecution. It deals only with the basic facts, including some information about the emigration and events that followed in the community in America. Williams published an English language article on 'The Welsh Mormons' in 1948.[31] This is fundamentally a re-working of the 1927 article, with very little additional information added. However, Williams makes some interesting observations. He asserts that the Mormon desire to emigrate was the result of poverty and deprivation and the 'intoxicating' emotions of an 'evangelical religion'.[32] Once again, there is no information about Mormon activity in south-east Wales, nor about any opposition experienced during the period of this thesis. Yet, Williams was the first historian to write about the subject of the Welsh Latter-day Saints, and his reconstruction of the key facts remains the starting point in providing an outline of the mission.

The first book-length account of the Welsh Mormon mission was that by T. H. Lewis, *Y Mormoniad Yng Nghymru*, published in 1956.[33] At the time Lewis was best known for his literary contributions for the National Eisteddfod, and his work on the history of education in Wales. There is no indication of any personal connection to the Mormon faith in this work. This book provided a study of the history of the Mormon

[30] David Williams, 'Y Cymry a'r Eglwys Formonaidd', *Y Llenor*, Cyf. V1, Rhif. 1, (Gwanwyn, 1927), pp. 247-252.
[31] David Williams 'The Welsh Mormons', *Welsh History Review*, No. 7 (1948,), pp. 113-118.
[32] Williams, 'The Welsh Mormons', p.115.
[33] T. H. Lewis, *Y Mormoniad Yng Nghymru*, (Cardiff: University of Wales, 1956).

movement in Wales, describing its beginnings in the USA, and the contribution of Captain Dan Jones. This is a small work (133 pages) giving a general overview of its subject matter, but it provides a summary of the issues up to 1899. Lewis' work appears to be dependent on the aforementioned works of David Williams and Richard L. Evans and he brought nothing new to the study of the subject, but rather attempted to bring together the story of the Welsh Mormon mission in one volume. It is not a critical analysis of the mission, and once again this writer does not discuss the opposition experienced by the Latter-day Saints in Wales, neither does he investigate local reactions to the movement. Huw Walters, in his foreword to Ronald D. Dennis book on Welsh Mormon writings, describes T. H. Lewis' book as 'a general history that remains the only reliable and serious study of the Welsh Mormon mission.'[34] This still holds true, as no one has sought to write a chronological account of the Welsh Mormon mission in a book in the English language, although the compactness of Lewis' book makes it little more than a brief summary of events. Lewis also produced two articles on the Mormon Church in Brechfa,[35] which for a small Carmarthenshire village contributed significantly to the story of Welsh Mormonism. Still indicating a dependency on Lewis' book, a slightly more recent work is by Geraint Bowen, one-time Archdruid of Wales, poet and committed atheist. In *Ar Drywydd Y Mormoniaid*[36] Bowen provides little that adds to the story of the Welsh Latter-day Saints for this period of study. In the case of Bowen's narrative, as with other commentators, there is no discussion of the opposition the Mormons encountered or of the years prior to the arrival of Captain Dan Jones, issues that will be dealt with in this thesis.

Undoubtedly, the most important non-Mormon commentator on Mormonism in Britain is Douglas Davies, Professor at the Department of Theology and Religion at Durham University. In 1972, Davies produced an unpublished B.Litt. thesis for the Oxford Institute of Social Anthropology entitled *The Mormons at Merthyr-Tydfil.*[37] Its emphasis is on understanding the church structure and millennialism of the movement, and covers the period from its founding in 1830-1972. The character and

[34] Ronald D. Dennis, *Welsh Mormon Writings,* p. xiii.
[35] T. H. Lewis, 'Three Carmarthenshire Mormons', *Carmarthenshire Antiquary*, 1V, 1962, pp. 49-51; 'The Mormons and Brechfa', *Carmarthenshire Antiquary*, 111, 1959, pp. 27-29.
[36] Geraint Bowen, *Ar Drywydd Y Mormoniaid* (Llandysul: Gomer Press, 1999).
[37] Douglas J. Davies, unpublished B.Litt. thesis, University of Oxford (1972).

confines of this study means that while it enables a better understanding of the Latter-day Saints in Merthyr, and while a brief mention is made of the opposition from Nonconformist ministers, it does not offer information that is directly relevant to this study. The same author has also written a definitive work on the religion of Mormonism.[38] This work provides a detailed analysis of the theology of Mormonism and its origins. As this thesis is not concerned with the complex theology of the movement, this work simply provides an essential reference tool. Michael Radcliffe also produced his M.Litt. thesis under the auspices of the Oxford Faculty of Anthropology. This work deals with 'The growth and distribution of the Latter-day Saint Church in Wales 1840-1860'.[39] While the title initially appeared to offer additional evidence for the spread and growth of the Mormon movement, its emphasis is primarily sociological. It examines Mormonism in Wales as part of a radical Christian movement that arose among the working class of Britain. It is not directly relevant to the study of the years prior to the arrival of Dan Jones or to the opposition experienced by the Latter-day Saints. In the brief references to the latter, Radcliffe relies on the evidence found in the *Millennial Star* and *Prophwyd y Jubili*. His work still left untouched the origins of the mission to Wales and the nature of its reception as analysed in this thesis.

However, the publication of Douglas James Davies' work *Mormon Spirituality: Latter Day Saints in Wales and Zion*[40] was an important step forward in the field of Mormon studies by a non-Mormon writer. In his introduction Davies describes himself as 'a clergyman of the Church of England who has studied Mormonism as an anthropologist.'[41] This particular work is an attempt to explain Mormon theology (with specific reference to Wales) as the religion progressed from its earliest beginnings into the second half of the nineteenth century. In particular Davies analyses the theology of the emigration to Utah (or as it was advocated, 'Zion'). He argues that one of the reasons for its initial success was the radical nature of the movement, and it was this that took people away from Nonconformity. He states 'Mormon success lay to a certain extent in its capacity to unite familiar items of

[38] Douglas J. Davies, *Mormonism.*
[39] Michael Radcliffe, 'The growth and Distribution of the Latter Saint Church in Wales, 1840-49', unpublished M.Litt thesis, University of Oxford, (1989).
[40] Douglas J. Davies, *Mormon Spirituality.*
[41] Davies, *Mormon Spirituality,* p. i.

Christian history and doctrine with quite new disclosures of the restored message.'[42] The belief system of Mormonism was certainly a radical departure for the Nonconformist converts to this new faith, perhaps notably in the teaching equating 'Zion' with, at first Nauvoo, and later Utah, and the call to emigration. Davies' work is largely dependent on English language sources, in particular the Mormon periodical the *Millennial* Star, first published in Manchester in May 1840. He deals briefly with some of the opposition faced by Mormons and refers to the activities of Captain Dan Jones in defending the faith. He also notes that there was opposition from some local ministers (although he does not name those involved). He draws attention to the intensity of the opposition[43] but does not provide references. Despite its importance as a resource for the study of this period, Davies' book only has one chapter on the period 1830-1855, entitled 'A Vision Born', and thus it provides a general summary, rather than detailed analysis, of the key events during the Mormon mission to Wales during the years studied in this thesis. The book extends its discussion of the activities and theology of the Latter-day Saints into the 1980s, so its account of the period under discussion in this thesis is necessarily brief. However, this work is one of a small number in which the Mormon mission to Wales is discussed by a non-Mormon writer, and was an innovative study at the time of its publication.

Undoubtedly, the principal contribution to the story of Welsh Mormon history has been made by Ronald D. Dennis, formerly a Professor of Portuguese at Brigham Young University (BYU), and a direct descendant of Captain Dan Jones, who has published a number of books and articles on different aspects of the Mormon mission to Wales. As previously noted, as part of a family history project at BYU, Ron Dennis has also amassed an extensive collection of biographies, journals, and photographs of the early Welsh Latter-day Saints, which continue to be digitized and uploaded to the Internet. In an article written for *BYU Magazine* (Fall 2002) Lisa Ann Jackson describes Dennis as 'the foremost historian of 19th –century Welsh Latter-day Saints.'[44] In the 1970s Dennis moved to Wales for six months with his family in order to learn the Welsh language. After returning a number of times over subsequent

[42] Davies, *Mormon Spirituality,* p. 17.
[43] Davies, *Mormon Spirituality,* p. 7.
[44] Lisa Ann Jackson, 'A Mission to Wales', *BYU Magazine*, Fall 2002, http://magazine.byu.edu/article/a-mission-to-wales/ accessed 23 April 2016. Jackson is described as an editor for the Latter-day Saint publication *Liahona Magazine.*

years, Dennis finally achieved the proficiency to enable him to translate the original writings linked to the Mormon mission to Wales of the 1840s and 1850s, thus accessing a wealth of new information about the subject.

As we have seen, Dennis was not the first writer to comment on the Latter-day Saints' mission to Wales, but he was the first to emphasise the hostility they encountered and to speak in terms of persecution. The main emphasis of his work has been to translate into English the apologetic literature of the Welsh Latter-day Saints' mission of the 1840s, namely, the pamphlets produced by Captain Dan Jones in defence of Mormonism and the periodical *Prophwyd y Jubili* and its successor *Udgorn Seion.* It is this work of translation that has increased knowledge and understanding of the Welsh Mormon mission, albeit from the Mormon perspective. It is the study of the Welsh Mormon periodicals that has provided Ron Dennis with evidence that the Latter-day Saints suffered persecution at the hands of Nonconformist ministers. While Dennis refers to the original sources of opposition in the religious periodicals, and in particular the writings of Revd W. R. Davies, he has not commented on these in their entirety and his assessment remains reliant on the evidence of Captain Dan Jones. Neither has he ventured into independent scrutiny of W. R. Davies and the claims made about him. It is this that prevents a full analysis of the situation, and since no writer has attempted a critical look at Dennis' claims and the claims of Dan Jones, this research has identified these assertions as an area that requires further investigation and a new analysis.

Dennis has recounted the chronology and key events of the Mormon mission to Wales in two publications. First in 1987, in his chapter on 'The Welsh and the Gospel',[45] writing from the perspective of a Mormon and descendant of Captain Dan Jones, 'the Gospel' in this instance refers to the 'restored Gospel' of Mormon belief. This chapter was published as part of a series of essays covering the first 150 years of the mission. It is an excellent starting point for a study of the Welsh mission, but its scope clearly indicates that it was not intended to be a comprehensive account. It follows the story

[45] Ronald D. Dennis, 'The Welsh and the Gospel', in V. Ben Bloxham, James R. Moss and Larry C Porter (eds), *Truth Will Prevail: The Rise of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the British Isles, 1837-1987* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1987), pp. 242-259.

of the Welsh Latter-day Saints from 1840 to the mid 1860s over the space of thirty-one pages. Thus, Dennis' chapter 'The Welsh and the Gospel' was understandably brief, as a single chapter on these years of activity must inevitably be succinct. Taking into account this limitation, this thesis, will reveal new and previously unpublished evidence about the Mormon mission to Wales which suggests there was far more missionary activity in Wales in the early 1840s than has formerly been considered.

Furthermore, Dennis' chapter suggests opportunity for research into the claims made about the early Mormon mission in Flintshire and Monmouthshire, as well as claims regarding W. R. Davies and Nonconformist opposition. The period 1840-43 is dealt with rather summarily with brief references made to possible activity in Monmouthshire, and gives only a short account of the initial success of the mission following the arrival of the missionaries in Flintshire. While we can acknowledge that a single chapter is insufficient space to deal with this study in depth, no other writer has attempted to provide a more detailed history of the early period. Dennis has more recently published another chapter on the Welsh Mormon mission in *Religious History of Wales: Religious Life and Practice in Wales from the 17th Century to the Present Day*.[46] Written almost thirty years after the 'Welsh and the Gospel', this latest chapter adds little new to the narrative, and steadfastly maintains that Revd W. R. Davies maliciously attempted to 'turn public opinion' against the Mormons by spreading falsehoods, an assertion that this thesis will challenge. Its inclusion in a book about the religion of Wales from the seventeenth century to the present day is perhaps an editorial acknowledgement that the story of the Welsh Latter-day Saints has a part to play in a compilation history of the religious life of Wales.

Ron Dennis has also translated a collection of published Mormon books and pamphlets, originally published in Welsh. In *Welsh Mormon Writings: From 1844-1862: A Historical Bibliography*,[47] Dennis explains how each of the texts came to be written and published and explains their context. He also discusses the monthly

[46] Ronald D. Dennis, 'The Church of Jesus Christ of the [sic] Latter-day Saints (Mormons)', Richard C. Allen, David Ceri Jones, Trystan Owain Hughes (eds), *Religious History of Wales: Religious Life and Practice in Wales from the 17th Century to the Present Day*, (Cardiff, Welsh Academic Press 2014), p. 167.
[47] Dennis, *Welsh Mormon Writings.*

Mormon journal *Prophwyd Y Jubili* printed between 1846-48, which was succeeded by *Udgorn Seion* as the official Welsh language periodical of the church until 1862. Dennis has translated *Prophwyd y Jubili*,[48] and most editions of *Udgorn Seion* (a task on which he is still working, at the time of writing). He has written works such as a biography of Abel Evans entitled *Indefatigable Veteran: History and Biography of a Welsh Mormon Elder*,[49] which describes the work of one leading Welsh Mormon, giving insight into the conflicts of the time, and relationships with the Welsh Independents and Baptists. However, this work is an expansion of the description of events in the chapter 'The Welsh and the Gospel' and the assertions regarding opposition and persecution of the Latter-day Saints are the same. Dennis produced a further publication in 2003, entitled *Defending the Faith: Early Welsh Missionary Publications*.[50] In this publication he translated into English each of the Mormon pamphlets dealt with in his previous work. This important work by Dennis enables the reader to establish the arguments used to defend Mormonism, and to discover the key issues on which the Mormons were being challenged. However, he does not translate or analyse in detail the responses of the opponents of Mormonism. Dennis' work only deals with the debates and pamphlets that appeared in Welsh and does not make any reference to the tracts and pamphlets that had been printed in England since the arrival of Mormonism in 1837, and therefore ignores any influence these may have had in Wales. While Dennis refers to articles in the Welsh denominational press (e.g. in *Y Bedyddiwr* by the Revd W. R. Davies), he does not undertake to analyse these articles in their entirety nor does he make any comparison made with other writers who were saying the same things as Davies. This is an imbalance that will be corrected in this thesis.

Although not specifically covering Wales, *Mormons in Early Victorian Britain*[51] is a useful study that covers different ground to *Truth Will Prevail*, providing a sociological reflection on the mission as well as chapters on the 'Religious Milieu of

[48] Ronald D. Dennis*, Prophet of the Jubilee,* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Brigham Young University, 1997. Religious Studies Center: Specialized Monograph Series, Vol.10).
[49] Ronald D. Dennis, *Indefatigable Veteran: History and Biography of a Welsh Mormon Elder*, (Provo Utah: Rhydybont Press, 1994).
[50] Ronald D. Dennis*, Defending the Faith* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Brigham Young University, 2003. Religious Studies Center: Specialized Monograph Series, Vol.17).
[51] Richard L. Jensen and Malcolm R. Thorp (eds)*, Mormons in Early Victorian Britain* (Utah: University of Utah Press, 1989).

English Mormonism' and 'Early Mormon Confrontations with Sectarianism'. Virtually every article in the book was delivered at the Mormon History Association conference held at Oxford in 1987, and thus it is a composite work covering a variety of aspects of the British Mormon mission. The book combines biographical, local, and general articles on Mormonism in the British Isles during the Victorian period, beginning with the commencement of the mission in 1837. Once again, most of the contributors to this account are from within the community of Mormon historians, but it provides background information for the study of the subject.

Inevitably, a number of research projects have been completed on the Welsh Latter-day Saints, although none have dealt with the early Welsh Mormon mission or attempted to re-evaluate the assertions regarding persecution and Revd W. R. Davies. In 2010, Aled Betts submitted an M.A. dissertation that attempted to describe and evidence persecution. It was entitled *The Price of Faith: the Mormons and South West Wales Society, 1844-1863.*[52] This work was produced as part of programme of study in local history, and thus is primarily concerned with the presentation of the story from a historical perspective. It focuses on the social status of converts, their denominational affiliation and concludes that the motivation for their conversion was religious. There is no detailed exploration of the theological issues raised by the message proclaimed by Mormon missionaries, and Betts' work focuses on south-west Wales alone. It tends to accept the standard Mormon view of the Latter-day Saints as an unjustly persecuted sect, and accepts the assertions of Dan Jones' periodical *Prophwyd y Jubili* and the conclusions of Ron Dennis without question or critical assessment.

In 2002, Craig L. Foster produced a book based on his Master's thesis entitled *Penny Tracts and Polemics: A Critical Analysis of Anti-Mormon Pamphleteering in Great Britain (1837-1860).*[53] This contains a collection of anti-Mormon tracts and information about each one and its influence. These tracts were published and disseminated as the Mormon mission began to spread throughout Britain. While this work supplies ample evidence of the anti-Mormon pamphleteering that was taking

[52] Unpublished MA Dissertation, University of Wales (Trinity College, Carmarthen), 2010.
[53] Craig L. Foster, *Penny Tracts and Polemics: A Critical Analysis of Anti-Mormon Pamphleteering in Great Britain (1837-1860)* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2002).

place between 1837-1860, there is no reference to Wales or any Welsh anti-Mormon pamphlets in this book, despite the fact that the first anti-Mormon pamphlet was published in Wales in 1845,[54] and the practice of anti-Mormon pamphleteering was as prevalent in the Welsh language as it had been in the English tongue.[55]

An analysis of the available literature and current narrative on the subject of the Welsh Mormon mission 1840-49 has revealed that little has been added to knowledge about the chronology and key events of the mission since 1987, and that little has changed in the research on this topic since historian David Williams first published his summary in 1927. Ron Dennis, the primary scholar in this field, has focused his attention on creating an online database dedicated to the Welsh Mormon mission. He has also concentrated on his translations of Mormon apologetic literature, including the periodicals, and therefore has not offered any evaluation or reassessment of his claims regarding the early years 1840-43 or of the antagonism he asserts came from Nonconformist ministers and W. R. Davies in particular. This thesis will investigate what is known about the early Mormon mission. Personal journals and newspapers will be used to analyse and evaluate current knowledge about the early years, and these will also be utilised in order to evaluate Captain Dan Jones' claims about persecution.

Methodology

The starting point for this research was, as evidenced in the section above, the careful scrutiny of published works on the topic of the Latter-day Saints' mission to Wales between the years 1840-1849. An analysis of existing literature was necessary to establish the prevailing narrative and also to discover areas where there was a deficiency in knowledge that would lead to new avenues for research. The result was that little had been published on the early years of the Welsh mission between 1840-43, and that the view that the Latter-day Saints had been destructively and unjustly

[54] David Williams, *'Twyll y Seintiau Diweddaf yn cael ei ddynoethi mewn nodiadau byr ar draethawd a ysgrifenwyd yn diweddar gan Capt. D. Jones, dan yr enw, "Traethawd ar anghyfnewidioldeb teyrnes Duw."'* (Merthyr, D. Jones, 1845).
[55] E.g. Parch. E. Roberts, *'Twyll Mormoniaeth; Darlith a Draddodwyd Gan y Parch. E. Roberts, Gweinidog y Bedyddwyr, Rumney'* (Merthyr Tydfil: David Jones, 1848).

persecuted by Revd W. R. Davies and other Nonconformist ministers had not received any challenge, but had become the accepted narrative.

After initially investigating the available literature, it became apparent that the next step would be to investigate the newspapers of the period. Of course, it must be recognised that newspaper reports can also be sensationalised or contain political or religious bias, and thus may not always present an entirely accurate picture. While recognising this weakness, they can be used to substantiate an event or suggest an alternative point of view. Newspapers can serve as useful primary sources for historical research as they reflect the time period in which they were created, and provide a glimpse of the interests of any given society.

As a result, an extensive study was made of newspaper reports that reported on the Latter-day Saints. Newspapers from across Britain were accessed, not simply the Welsh press. The reason for this broader search was to investigate the ways in which the Latter-day Saints' mission was received throughout Britain, and to discover whether similar incidents and accounts were being reported across a diverse area. Findings were collated and written up in a preliminary format for use as the thesis progressed. As a result, this thesis draws on previously untapped material from newspaper sources, which will provide a wider context for the mission as it unfolded in Wales. Local and national newspapers play an important part in supplying information about the Latter-day Saints in this period, and enable us to view the impact of the Mormon mission in a wider context, and from a non-Mormon standpoint. Those who have constructed a history of the Welsh Mormon mission between 1840 and 1849 have tended not to look to the national and local newspapers as sources of information. Nevertheless, these sources throw further light on some of the claims and conclusions of the historians of the Latter-day Saints' mission to Wales. Research into the newspapers has provided new information and insights that have enabled this thesis to provide an alternative argument about the Latter-day Saints and their mission in the years between 1840-49, including the earlier part of the mission between 1840-43. Furthermore, it is newspaper evidence that has provided evidence to challenge prevailing views about W. R. Davies. Thus evidence from newspapers is one of the key elements of this research. We may, of course, also

draw conclusions from what sources such as newspapers do not report. An event, incident or person may well be given a significance by those directly involved far above what would be considered as relevant in the wider society.

In addition to newspapers, other primary evidence is available for scrutiny. The first point of access to the subject of the Latter-day Saints in Britain during the 1840s is the British Mormon periodical the *Millennial Star,* first published in Manchester in May 1840. During its 130-year history, the *Millennial Star* varied from being published monthly, semi-monthly and even weekly, and was primarily aimed at British Latter-day Saints. While presenting its reports firmly from the perspective of the Latter-day Saints, it is an invaluable source of information on their work and progress. Although based in England and produced there, it contained frequent updates on activities in Wales. Ease of access, as a result of digitalisation, has enabled research into every issue of the *Millennial Star* for the period, in addition to other Mormon publications.

Ron Dennis makes a number of claims about W. R. Davies that are based on Davies' writings to the religious periodicals of this period, and on his pamphlet on the Latter-day Saints and the issue of miracles. Again at the outset it was necessary to seek out the periodicals at Cardiff University Library, and at the National Library of Wales Aberystwyth. However, the latter institution has digitized the Welsh journals as an online resource and it is now possible to access these easily. The range of journals available means that research into this resource can be broadened. Pamphlets on the topic of the Latter-day Saints, written by the main antagonists are available at the National Library of Wales. Captain Dan Jones' pamphlets and copies of *Prophwyd y Jubili,* as well as being translated into English and published by Ron Dennis, are also available to read in the original online.

Advances in technology have made a significant difference to studies into the Latter-day Saints for the period, especially as many resources are held in Utah. While this includes copies of Latter-day Saints' magazines, it also contains original documents such as the personal journals and notebooks of the first missionaries to Wales are

now available through the Internet. Perhaps because of their previous inaccessibility, no substantial use had been made of these sources when reconstructing the period of the early years of the Welsh mission. No journals appear to exist for the years of Dan Jones' leadership, and he did not keep a journal himself. Historians reconstructing the events of this period have given little attention to the personal journals kept by some of the Mormon missionaries. Although the information they contain is sometimes brief and limited, the journals provide information that makes possible a more detailed reconstruction of the Latter-day Saints' missionary activities in Wales at this time

It should be noted that the term 'journal' in this study is used to denote the records of Mormon missionaries as they travelled in Wales. It should be noted that the notebooks cited are available online at the Church History Library (BYU), and that these are digital copies of the original items. However, James Palmer's 'Travels and Ministry',[56] while recounting his experiences travelling in south-east Wales, were not written down until 1858.

While internet sources have to be treated critically and with some caution, the availability of primary sources such as newspapers, periodicals, pamphlets, and journals through the Internet has enabled this research to build a fuller picture of the Welsh Mormon mission during the years 1840-43, and find evidence that challenges some of the assertions about the opposition Latter-day Saints experienced between 1844-49.

Summary of Findings

The following thesis is separated into two distinct but related sections, Part 1 evaluates the beginning of the Mormon mission to Wales. Chapter 1 offers a brief introduction to Mormonism. It examines its origins and the role of its founder, Joseph Smith. It also outlines the movement's core beliefs and sacred texts, with particular emphasis on the teachings and doctrines that were at the heart of the controversies that arose with opponents in Wales.

[56] James Palmer, *Travels and Ministry in the Gospel* (Reminiscences), Church History Library, Call Number MS 1752.

In chapter 2, a narrative of the early years of the Mormon mission is provided. While beginning with the established framework of events, it re-evaluates the current view regarding the start of the mission. The chapter investigates evidence that there was missionary activity in Monmouthshire prior to Henry Royle being sent to Cloy, Overton in October 1840. It will further suggest that James Palmer and John Needham's missionary activity in south-east Wales was more significant than previously considered, and that their journals provide new evidence and a unique insight into Latter-day Saint activity in that area between 1840-43. Despite the lack of Latter-day Saint church records, evidence from these journals provides new information concerning the daily lives of the missionaries, the opposition they encountered, the people who supported them and the earliest Mormon meeting places in Wales. It also provides information about one of the earliest emigrations from Wales and those who took part in it, confirming the hitherto unrecognised significance of Llanfoist and Abergavenny in the pre-Merthyr and pre-Dan Jones years of the mission.

The chapter also re-assesses the mission to Cloy, Overton in the light of further evidence from the journal of James Burgess, and presents the view that while Royle and Cooke had success in making converts in Cloy, their mission was not specifically directed to Wales at this date and included Shropshire. Evidence will be discussed that will suggest that this stage of the mission was contemporaneous with the mission in Monmouthshire. Burgess' journal will also be used to present new information about the places visited, strategies used and the opposition experienced. The section will also provide information about how the Mormon mission was received in order to construct a background to the claim that the Latter-day Saints were met with opposition which amounted to persecution.

Part 2 of the thesis turns to the specific allegations made against the Revd W. R. Davies and the claim that the Latter-day Saints encountered persecution instigated by Nonconformist ministers. Chapter 3 outlines the leadership of William Henshaw and Captain Dan Jones and provides a background narrative for the opposition that emerged to their efforts. It also re-assesses the significance of Henshaw's contribution, prior to the arrival of Captain Dan Jones. The successful nature of the mission, culminating in the mass organized emigration of Latter-day Saints under

Jones' Presidency in 1849, will be examined. The growing opposition to the Latter-day Saints will be considered as will the evidence that the arrival of Dan Jones was a pivotal point in the history of the Welsh Latter-day Saints. It will be suggested that the opposition to the Mormons intensified from this point onward as the character of the mission changed.

Chapter 4 begins by evaluating the claims that the Nonconformist periodicals published anti-Mormon articles from 1841. This chapter examines the role of the Nonconformist press as a channel of opposition for the Latter-day Saints. It will investigate in detail the issues raised by Davies in the articles and letters with which he has been identified.

In chapter 5, the evidence that W. R. Davies was a persecutor of the Mormons is re-assessed and an alternative view proposed. New evidence from newspapers and other sources that suggest a different interpretation of his character and writings are discussed. Davies' use of pseudonyms is examined and questioned. A detailed examination of his arguments is presented, and these are followed by a comparison with others who wrote to the religious periodicals in opposition to the Latter-day Saints. This chapter discusses whether Davies was guilty of persecution, or whether he, like Dan Jones was simply a man of conviction. It will raise the question whether W. R. Davies deserves the reputation awarded him as the most vociferous and relentless enemy of Mormonism, or whether he was one commentator among many who expressed concerns about Mormon claims and teachings.

Chapter 6 reviews accounts concerning the Latter-day Saints that were published in secular newspapers in order to assess the general reaction to the Mormon mission and to discover whether or not Davies' involvement presented a distinctive and unique response to the Latter-day Saints or belonged to a more general reaction to it. It is argued that newspapers potentially offer a wider view of the movement rather than what might be interpreted as the more narrow view provided by the Nonconformist or Mormon periodicals. As it is the evidence of these periodicals that has been used to establish W. R. Davies as the leading opponent and persecutor of the

Latter-day Saints, and secular newspapers have not been investigated, conclusions will be drawn to enable a more balanced view of the opposition Mormons experienced and the role of Davies in that opposition.

This thesis reviews the claims of the established historiography regarding the Mormon mission to Wales in its earliest period, namely 1840 to 1849. It suggests that there is evidence for Mormon activity in Wales at an earlier period than hitherto thought, and it reviews the claim that the Latter-day Saints suffered 'persecution' which was instigated and sustained by Nonconformist ministers. It offers an account which differs from the existing historiography and expands our knowledge about the early Mormon mission to Wales and its reception.

Part 1

Mormonism and its Mission to Wales 1840-43

A study of the Mormon mission to Wales during the 1840s is aided by dividing the investigation into two distinct periods of time, namely the early years 1840-43, and the later years 1844-49.

As this research will show, these two phases of the Mormon mission are very different in character.

This section will re-examine the traditionally held view that the Latter-day Saints' mission to Wales began in Cloy, Overton, when Henry Royle and Frederick Cooke began their labours there. It will examine evidence for the earliest Mormon activity in south-east Wales, and introduce hitherto unexplored evidence from missionary journals that will broaden the view of the activities of the earliest Mormon missionaries in both north and south Wales. It will also examine the nature of the opposition experienced by Latter-day Saints at this time.

Chapter 1

Mormon Beginnings and Characteristics

By the time the first Mormon missionaries entered Wales in 1840, the fundamental doctrines and beliefs of Mormonism had been established.[1] This chapter will not offer a detailed discussion of the highly complex theology of Mormonism,[2] because (as will become clear) it is not directly relevant to this thesis. Instead, it will outline the movement's origins and characteristic beliefs as a background for later discussion of the opposition the Latter-day Saints experienced in Wales during the 1840s.

Mormon origins

Any understanding of Mormonism begins of necessity with Joseph Smith (1805-44). Smith grew up in Palmyra, New York, an area that had undergone considerable revivalist evangelism in the early nineteenth century.[3] This area experienced the 'Second Great Awakening', which began in 1799-1800 and reached its peak in the mid-1820s. It was one of the most intense religious revivals to occur in western New York State and led to the area being called the 'Burned-over district'.[4] The Roman Catholic sociologist Thomas O'Dea has noted that at that time the inhabitants of western New York State had an established tradition of dissent, to the extent that it was 'the peculiar genius of the people of the area that everything they touched went to extremes.'[5] Religious diversity flourished, and several Shaker communities as well as the Community of the Publick Universal Friend (the followers of Jemima Wilkinson)[6] emerged there. Further afield in north Ohio there were groups such as

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[1] Although the authority of Joseph Smith had been recognized, the principle of 'continuing revelation' meant that Mormon teaching continued to develop. See James E. Faust, 'Continuing Revelation', *Ensign*, August 1996, https://www.lds.org/ensign/1996/08/continuing-revelation?lang=eng accessed 29 February, 2016. Since Smith claimed a divine revelation that was additional to that revealed in the Bible, the concept of 'continuing revelation' was fundamental to the movement from its inception. The principle is enshrined in the 9th of the 13 articles of faith. See https://www.mormon.org.uk/beliefs/articles-of-faith accessed 29 February 2016.

[2] For a comprehensive analysis of the theology of Mormonism see Douglas J. Davies, *An Introduction to Mormonism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

[3] David V. Barrett, *The New Believers: A Survey of Sects, Cults and Alternative Religions* (London: Cassell & Co., 2001), p. 152.

[4] L. J. Arrington and D. Bitton, *The Mormon Experience*, (London: Allen & Unwin, 1979), p. 3.

[5] T.F. O'Dea, *The Mormons*, (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1957), p. 11

[6] Wilkinson (1752-1819), was raised in a Quaker household in Rhode Island and began her ministry in 1776 when, in the midst of an illness, she announced her own death and reincarnation as the Public Universal Friend, a prophet who was neither female nor male. She founded the Society of Universal Friends that preached that humanity was on the brink of the Apocalypse but salvation was possible for

the Disciples of Christ, which had arisen from the exertions of Alexander Campbell who travelled throughout the Midwest and South, preaching a simple gospel stripped of 'dogma' and 'creeds'. Campbell joined forces with Barton Stone who had left the Baptists and was also championing a 'restoration' of primitive Christianity.[7] Therefore, Smith grew up in an atmosphere of intense religious activity, a wide variety of religious expression, and where many sought an authentic religious experience.

According to Mormon belief, as a teenager Smith spent much time in prayer seeking to discover which Christian group he should join. Indeed, as Joseph T. Antley states:

> Joseph Smith's social, cultural, and spiritual environment were imperative in preparing the Prophet to seek for truth and receive his visions. Joseph was raised in rural America, where radical sects and visionary claims were somewhat common … Frequent revivals urged Joseph at a young age to consider his salvation and join a church.[8]

At the age of twelve he 'began a religious quest for certainty, forgiveness and salvation amidst the Christianly informed culture of New York State.'[9] In 1820, aged fourteen, he claimed that he received his first vision when God and Jesus appeared to him in a grove at Palmyra, telling him not to join any of the existing Christian churches, but to wait for guidance. In 1823, Smith claimed that he received another vision in which he was visited by the angel Moroni, who told him of the existence of some golden plates in the nearby mountainside. Four years later, in 1827, he was directed to Cumorah hill and told to dig up the plates. He was then instructed to translate them using special eyeglasses known as Urim and Thummim, names that echo Biblical vocabulary,[10] which enabled him to translate what he referred to as

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all who accepted God's grace and her authority as the 'Publick Universal friend.' Paul B. Moyer, *The Public Universal Friend: Jemima Wilkinson and Religious Enthusiasm in Revolutionary America* (New York, Cornell University Press, 2015). They established a religious community near present-day Penn Yan, New York.

[7] The Disciples of Christ were generally orthodox in teaching, without any sense of 'extra-Biblical' revelation. Their background was strictly within Presbyterianism. Sidney Rigdon, who was to play a significant role in the emerging Mormon Church, had been a key revivalist preacher with this group. The Campbellites believed that the divisions that led to denominationalism had damaged unity among Christians. From its inception comparisons were regularly made between Mormonism and the Campbellites, e.g. *Christian Register and Boston Observer* (25 December, 1841); *Hereford Times* (7 August 1841).

[8] Joseph T. Antley, 'The Cultural and Religious Environment of Joseph Smith's Youth', in *BYU Religious Education 2010 Student Symposium* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2010), pp. 3-4.

[9] D.J. Davies, *An Introduction to Mormonism,* p. 2.

[10] E.g. Ex. 28:30; Lev. 8:8; Num. 27:21; Deut. 33:8; 1 Sam. 28:6; Ezra 2:63; Neh. 7:65.

'reformed Egyptian hieroglyphs'.[11] His companions at this time were his wife Emma, his neighbour Martin Harris (who was later to mortgage his farm in order to pay for the publication of the *Book of Mormon*),[12] and his chief supporter and amanuensis, a schoolteacher named Oliver Cowdery.[13] Following the completion of the translation, Smith claimed that the angel retrieved the golden plates.[14] The first edition of the *Book of Mormon* was published in 1830.

Between the first appearance of the *Book of Mormon* in 1830 and the arrival of Mormonism in Wales a decade later, specific objections to Smith's claims became well-established. Among these, two issues emerged as being particularly significant. First, the character of Joseph Smith was brought into question.[15] Mormons themselves accept that in 1826 he had been arrested as 'a glass looker', the practice of using a 'peep stone' to determine (for a fee) the whereabouts of buried treasure, which was illegal under New York state law.[16] Since the crime was classed as a misdemeanour, Smith always defended his actions as a youthful indiscretion.[17] However, the suspicion that Mormonism was in some way a money-making scheme was to linger and found expression not only in newspaper reports, but also among those who opposed the Latter-day Saints in the denominational press in Wales.[18]

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[11] The *Book of Mormon* refers to its language as 'reformed Egyptian' in 1 Nephi 1:2 and Mormon 9:32. It was a unique language. See Michael R. Ash 'Challenging Issues, Keeping the Faith: 'Reformed Egyptian' an evidence for the book of Mormon', *Deseret News* (26 October, 2009): Also, Douglas J. Davies, *An Introduction to Mormonism*, pp. 21-22; Samuel Morris Brown, *In Heaven as it is on Earth: Joseph Smith and the Early Mormon Conquest of Death*, (Oxford University Press, New York, 2012), pp. 129-141.
[12] Martin Harris (1783-1875), a New York farmer, was one of the Three Witnesses to the origin *Book of Mormon*. From April 12 to June 14, 1828, Martin Harris served as Joseph Smith's scribe. *Encylopedia of Mormonism* http://eom.byu.edu/index.php/Harris,_Martin accessed 11 May 2017.
[13] Oliver Cowdery (1806-1850) was 'next in authority to Joseph Smith in 1830 (*Doctrine and Covenants* 21:10-12). As one of the three Book of Mormon Witnesses, Cowdery testified that an angel displayed the gold plates and that the voice of God proclaimed them correctly translated. He was with Joseph Smith when John the Baptist restored to them the Aaronic Priesthood and when Peter, James, and John ordained them to the Melchizedek Priesthood and the apostleship, and again during the momentous Kirtland Temple visions (*Doctrine and Covenants* 110).' *Encylopedia of Mormonism* http://eom.byu.edu/index.php/Cowdery,_Oliver accessed 11 May 2017.
[14] Smith's supporters Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris claimed to have seen the golden plates, as did eight other witnesses. Reference to this can be found in the introductory section of the *Book of Mormon* in the sections entitled 'The testimony of Three Witnesses' and 'The Testimony of Eight Witnesses.'
[15] Smith's contemporaries described him as 'a notorious liar… utterly destitute of conscience', who was vulgar and lewd, Barrett, *The New Believers,* p. 152.
[16] Wesley P. Walters, 'Joseph Smith's Bainbridge, N. Y., Court Trials', *Westminster Theological Journal*. 36:2. Winter, 1974, pp. 123-155.
[17] *Joseph Smith History* 1:28 (*Pearl of Great Price)*; See also, James B. Allen, 'Joseph Smith as a Young Man', *New Era,* January 1971, https://www.lds.org/new-era/1971/01/joseph-smith-as-a-young-man?lang=eng accessed 29 January 2016.
[18] E.g. *North Wales Chronicle* (20 October 1840); *Hereford Journal* (2 December 1840); *Preston Chronicle* (29 May 1841); *Cambrian* (28 August 1841); *Pembrokeshire Herald and General Advertiser*

Secondly, the publication of the *Book of Mormon* in 1830 soon resulted in a challenge to its authenticity. The most noteworthy and persistent claim originally appeared with the publication of the first book-length refutation of Mormonism, E. D. Howe's *Mormonism Unvailed* [sic] in 1834.[19] In it Howe alleged that Smith's account of the origins of Mormonism could be traced to a piece of fiction written by Solomon Spaulding (1761-1816), a Presbyterian minister from Conneaut, Ohio, entitled *Manuscript Found.* This claim subsequently dogged Mormonism, with numerous opponents repeating it and Mormon publications refuting it. Spaulding's story had virtually no religious content, but it is easy to see why comparisons might be made, especially when one of Spaulding's characters used a 'seer-stone' to interpret the writing. The Mormon Church has always denied the similarity, claiming that when a Spaulding manuscript was found in 1884[20] it bore no resemblance to the account in the Book of Mormon. The *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* states 'Since 1946, no serious student of Mormonism has given the Spaulding Manuscript theory much credibility.'[21] Nevertheless, the 'Spaulding theory' became one of the key accusations of the opponents of Mormonism and it was repeatedly referenced in newspapers and pamphlets in Britain throughout the 1840s.

Virtually from the moment it was established, opponents of Mormonism questioned the authenticity of the *Book of Mormon*, and the character of Joseph Smith. Criticism and scepticism regarding the origins of Mormonism remained at the heart of

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(18 July 1845); *Chester Chronicle* (6 October 1843); *Seren Gomer* Cyf. XXIV, Rhif. 315 (Rhagfyr, 1841), pp. 373-74; *Seren Gomer*, Cyf. XXXI ,Rhif. 397 (Hydref, 1848), p.305.

[19] E. D. Howe, *Manuscript Found,* (printed and published by the author, Painesville, 1834). Smith claimed that the language of the original text was 'reformed Egyptian hieroglyphics', a language unheard of among Middle Eastern scholars. In the Mormon scripture th*e Pearl of Great Price* the section entitled 'Extracts from the History of Joseph Smith' claims that Martin Harris took a copy of some of the characters and Smith's translation to Professor Charles Anton in New York, who verified the translation. However, in 1834 Anton, while acknowledging that he was indeed visited by Harris, vehemently denied that he had ever validated the translation. Although Howe was the first to publish an anti-Mormon work, Philastus Hurlbut who was excommunicated from the Church in June 1833 had originally proposed the Spaulding theory. Desiring to discredit his former co-religionists, Hurlbut interviewed members of Spaulding's family, who swore that there were precise similarities between Spaulding's work and the Book of Mormon. *Encyclopedia of Mormonism,* http://eom.byu.edu/index.php/Spaulding_Manuscript accessed 10 May 2017.

[20] The only known manuscript was lost from 1839 until its discovery in Honolulu, Hawaii, in 1884. Both the Latter-day Saints and Reorganized Latter Day Saint churches published it in an attempt to refute the persistent claim of anti-Mormon writers that it was the original source document for the *Book of Mormon*, supposedly given to Joseph Smith by Sidney Rigdon.

[21] Chase, 'Spaulding Manuscript', *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* p. 1403. http://eom.byu.edu/index.php/Spaulding_Manuscript accessed 17 July 2013. In 1945, Fawn Brodie published *No Man Knows My History* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1945) This biography of Joseph Smith, hostile to his prophetic claims, dismissed the idea of any connection between the writings of Spaulding and Smith.

opposition wherever Mormonism appeared. This was as true in Wales as it was elsewhere.

Book of Mormon

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints teaches that the *Book of Mormon* has equal status with the Bible. Its *Articles of Faith* state 'We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God.'[22] Clearly this is a distinctive claim, and one that would have distinguished Mormonism from Protestant denominations that claimed the Bible to be the sole authority in matters of faith.

The *Book of Mormon* comprises fifteen main parts or divisions, known, with one exception, as books, usually designated by the name of their principal author. The narrative begins around 2250 B.C.E. just after the Old Testament incident of the Tower of Babel, and concludes around 310-385 C.E. when Mormon, the Nephite military leader and historian, who had collected a set of metal plates that had recorded American history, hid them in Cumorah hill. According to Mormonism, this forgotten history of the American people was revealed to Joseph Smith, and thus Mormonism claims that its roots are in an older and purer Church system than that in existence during New Testament times.

The *Book of Mormon* was first published in England in 1841, some four years after the first missionaries arrived, and translated into Welsh in 1852, the date of publication falling outside the period studied in this thesis. However, the Welsh Mormon periodical, *Prophwyd y Jubili,* frequently published articles on its content, thus ensuring the Welsh Latter-day Saints were apprised of much of its distinctive message.

One aspect of its content appears to have greatly influenced the Latter-day Saints in Wales, namely Mormon teaching regarding healing and spiritual gifts. The *Book of Mormon* 9: 7-8 states:

> You who deny the revelations of God, and say that they are done away, that there are no revelations, nor prophecies, nor gifts, nor healing, nor speaking with tongues, and interpretation of tongues; … he that denieth these things

[22] Article 8.

> knoweth not the gospel of Christ; yea, he has not read the scriptures; if so he does not understand them.

It was this teaching, more than any other aspect of Mormonism, that became the subject of controversy when the Mormons established their Welsh headquarters at Merthyr Tydfil.

Doctrine and Covenants

In company with the *Bible* and the *Book of Mormon* the books of *Doctrine and Covenants* and the *Pearl of Great Price* also form part of the canon of scripture for Latter-day Saints.

By the time of the British mission in 1837, the *Book of Mormon* and *Doctrine and Covenants* provided the key teachings that formed the basis of the Latter-day Saints' understanding of history and theology. It was referenced in a pamphlet produced by Revd W. R. Morrish at Ledbury in 1840,[23] revealing that opponents were aware of its content, despite the fact that the first British edition of *Doctrine and Covenants* did not appear until 1845. Although it was not published in the Welsh language until 1851, in 1847, *Prophwyd y Jubili,* offered its readers English copies for sale at the somewhat expensive price of 2s 6d.[24]

For Mormons, *Doctrine and Covenants* is a collection of divine revelations and inspired declarations given for the establishment and regulation of the kingdom of God on earth. Most of the revelations in this compilation were received through Joseph Smith. Successive editions of *Doctrine and Covenants* include additional revelations, received and accepted by authoritative assemblies or conferences of the Church, and by some of Smith's successors in the Presidency.[25]

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[23] W. J. Morrish *A Second Warning from a Minister To his Flock* (Ledbury: Printed by J. Gibbs, 1840). This was his second pamphlet on Mormonism. His first pamphlet was entitled *The Latter-Day Saints and the Book of Mormon, a Warning from a Minister to his Flock* (Ledbury: Printed by J. Gibbs, 1840). This was translated into Welsh in 1849: W. J. Morrish, *Cyfeiliornadau a Dichellion Saint Y Dyddiau Diweddaf Y Llyfr Mormon Yn Cael Eu Dynoethi*, translated by David Roberts (Caernarvon: H. Humphreys, 1849).

[24] *Prophwyd y Jubili*, Rhif. 10, (Ebrill, 1847), p. 67. The *Book of Mormon* was priced at 3s, while the monthly edition of *Prophwyd y Jubili* sold for 2d. The weekly wage for a labourer in the Carmarthen area in 1847 was 10 shillings a week: See the *Welshman* (28 May 1847).

[25] *Doctrine and Covenants 135, 136, and 138,* and *Official Declarations 1 and 2* are the only sections that did not emanate from Smith himself. By far, most of the revelations included in *Doctrine and Covenants* are those received by Smith during the first five years of the Church's existence. E.g. although Brigham Young ruled the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as President for more than twice as long as

Doctrine and Covenants includes explanatory stories not found in the *Book of Mormon.*[26] Following the translation of the *Book of Mormon,* Smith and Cowdery claimed they were ordained to the Aaronic Priesthood by John the Baptist, who appeared to them in the form of an angel on 15 May 1829.[27] Soon after, Peter, James and John appeared to them in another vision and they were ordained into the higher Melchizedek Priesthood.[28] Other ordinations followed later in which priesthood keys[29] were conferred in a vision of Jesus, Moses, Elijah, Elias,[30] and many ancient prophets.[31] Thus *Doctrine and Covenants* reveals the gradual development of the administrative structure of the Church.[32] These ordinations were understood as the restoration of divine authority to man on earth and on 6 April 1830, Joseph Smith organized the 'true' Church of Jesus Christ, with authority to teach the gospel and administer the ordinances of salvation.[33] While teaching on the Melchizedek and Aaronic priesthood does not appear to have been the basis for any controversy in Wales, some religious periodicals felt compelled to explain this doctrine of Mormonism to their readers.[34]

Doctrine and Covenants also includes distinctive Mormon doctrines regarding the nature of the Godhead, the work of the Holy Spirit, origin of human beings, Satan, obedience, repentance, salvation, eschatology, the eternal nature of marriage, and the family. Many of these are uniquely Mormon and have no parallel in Christian theology.[35]

Smith (1847-1877), he contributed only one short revelation to the Mormon scriptures, basically giving the Latter-day Saints instructions for their westward trek (*Doctrine and Covenants*: 136).

[26] Several of the earlier sections of *Doctrine and Covenants* provide details concerning the translation and publication of the *Book of Mormon* (see sections 3, 5, 10, 17, and 19). Some later sections reflect the work of Joseph Smith in his 'translation' of the Bible, during which many of the great doctrinal sections were received (see, for example, sections 37, 45, 73, 76, 77, 86, 91, and 132).

[27] *Doctrine and Covenants*: 13.

[28] *Doctrine and Covenants*: 27:12.

[29] Priesthood keys are the authority God has given to priesthood leaders to direct the use of his priesthood on earth. Jesus Christ holds all priesthood keys. 'The keys of this dispensation,' needed to lead the Church, were conferred on the Prophet Joseph Smith (*Doctrine and Covenants* 110:16).

[30] Mormons believe Elias was a man, presumably of Abraham's time, who 'committed the dispensation of Abraham'(which included the blessings of God's covenant with Abraham) to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery on April 3, 1836, in the Kirtland Temple (*Doctrine and Covenants*: 110:12).

[31] *Doctrine and Covenants* 110, 128:18, 21

32 It deals with the calling of bishops, the First Presidency, the Council of the Twelve, and the Seventy and the establishment of other presiding offices and quorums.

[33] *Doctrine and Covenants*: 20. See also: *Pearl of Great Price* and *Joseph Smith*'s—*History of the Church*: 1

[34] *Y Dysgedydd Crefyddol,* (Mawrth, 1846), pp. 79- 80; *Y Diwygiwr,* (Awst, 1846), pp. 189-90.

[35] For example, the LDS Church teaches that God the Father was once a man like any other who progressed to become a God and has a body of flesh and bone (*Doctrine and Covenants* 130:22); Christ and Lucifer (Satan) were two spirit brothers; Christ supported Heavenly Father's plan while Lucifer did not (*Doctrine and Covenants* 93:21-33); Christ's atonement assures resurrection and

It is impossible to ascertain how much of the distinctive Mormon theology was known and understood in Wales in the 1840s, as the controversies that ensued did not focus on Christological or soteriological differences. This appears also to have been true of the opposition experienced by Mormon missionaries in England. Craig L. Foster, in his study of anti-Mormon pamphleteering in Britain has observed that between 1842-52:

> Most of the pamphlets tend to highlight the more sensational aspects of Mormons, their history and doctrine. Usually, the deeper doctrines of the religion are either avoided or are lightly touched upon.[36]

He adds that there was one important exception,[37] namely a pamphlet by T. W. P. Taylder that challenged the Mormon understanding of the person of God.[38] However, this account was not published until 1849 and any influence it might have had on Welsh opponents of Mormonism would have come after the period studied in this thesis.

As far as the Welsh Mormon mission of the 1840s is concerned, the greatest influence of *Doctrine and Covenants* arose from its teaching on healing and spiritual gifts. *Doctrine and Covenants* 42:44, 48 states that elders should 'pray for and lay their hands upon the sick', an injunction echoing instruction found in the New Testament (James: 5:14-15). However, while some are given the gift of 'faith to heal' (*Doctrine and Covenants* 46:20), others possess the gift of 'faith to be healed', (46:19). These are described as spiritual gifts, along with speaking and interpreting tongues (46:24-25) and prophecy (46:22). These teachings taken in conjunction with the *Book of Mormon* verse 'For if there be no faith among the children of men God can do no miracle among them', (Ether 12:12), informed the conduct and approach of Latter-day Saints. The resultant claims of healing were a significant cause of opposition on many occasions in Wales in the 1840s.

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immortality to all people, but only faithful Mormons and those who accept the Mormon gospel in the afterlife can live in God the Father's presence (*Doctrine and Covenants*: 76; 88:16-33).

[36] Craig L. Foster, *Penny Tracts and Polemics: A Critical Analysis of Anti-Mormon Pamphleteering in Great Britain, 1837-1860*, (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2002), p. 119.

[37] Foster, *Penny Tracts and Polemics*, p. 119

[38] T. W. P. Taylder, *The Materialism of the Mormons, or Latter-day Saints, Examined and Exposed*, (Woolwich: E. Jones, 1849).

Pearl of Great Price

The *Pearl of Great Price* is an assortment of short Latter-day Saint scriptures, all of them produced by Joseph Smith between 1830 and 1843.[39] Most appeared in the Church periodicals of his day. It was first published in Britain in 1851, and translated and published in Welsh in 1852. The First Presidency and the General Conference in Salt Lake City declared the *Pearl of Great Price* part of the Mormon canon of scripture on 10 October 1880. Consequently, any influence or reference to this particular Mormon text is beyond the scope of this thesis.

Despite Mormonism's unique theology and doctrine expressed in its sacred texts, the attention of its opponents focused on three key issues, namely the origins of the *Book of Mormon* and questions regarding the character of Joseph Smith, and the exercising of spiritual gifts, especially Latter-day Saint claims regarding the healing of the sick.

Articles of Faith

At the request of John Wentworth, editor of the *Chicago Democrat,* Joseph Smith expressed the key beliefs of Mormonism in March 1842.[40] The *Articles of Faith* consist of thirteen statements clarifying the central beliefs of the Latter-day Saints. These confirmed the Mormon view that they had initiated a unique tradition—neither Catholic nor Protestant but uniquely Latter-day Saint.

Many of the *Articles of Faith* appear to contain similar beliefs to those found in mainstream Christian denominations, with reference to the eternal nature of God the Father, His Son, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit,[41] atonement,[42] repentance and belief in

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[39] It includes extracts from *Doctrine and Covenants* and the *Articles of Faith,* Smith's translation and revision of the Bible with the additions of the *Book of Moses* and the *Book of Abraham* that he claimed to have translated from Egyptian papyri. It also includes his translation of Matthew 24, and excerpts from Joseph Smith's official testimony and history, which was published serially in the periodical *Times and Seasons* in Nauvoo, Illinois, beginning in March 1842.

[40] https://www.lds.org/ensign/2002/07?lang=eng (accessed 3 July 2013). This source in the Mormon *Ensign* magazine (published July 2002) contains a copy of the original *Wentworth letter* by Joseph Smith.

[41] Although Article 1 appears to accept the centrality of the Trinity, Mormon ideas about God and Jesus are complex. Simply put they teach that the Godhead is made up of three distinct and separate persons, with God and Christ having flesh and bones, while the Holy Ghost is spirit. Jesus is regarded as the child of a physical union between God the Father and Mary, with Lucifer as his brother. The souls of all human beings existed in a pre-existent state on the planet Kolob before birth on earth (*Pearl of Great Price: Book of Abraham 3*).

punishment for sin. However, the theological explanation of these statements found in *Doctrine and Covenants* reveals that Mormon teaching diverges significantly from traditional Christian teaching.

The *Articles of Faith* also affirm the importance of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins,[43] the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Spirit, and the establishment of roles that existed in the Primitive Church, namely, apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, evangelists, and so forth.[44]

Article 9 states 'We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God'. Thus, one of the central principles of Mormon theology is the acceptance of 'continuing revelation', something rejected by the mainstream Christian tradition following the closing of the canon at Nicaea in 325.

During the Latter-day Saints' mission in Wales in the 1840s two of the *Articles of Faith* gained most attention. Article 7 affirms the Mormon belief in the gifts of the spirit, namely, the gift of tongues, prophecy, revelation, visions, healing, and the interpretation of tongues. This belief in the practice of spiritual gifts was, more than any other issue, the greatest source of conflict with their opponents in Wales, and the topic that resulted in the weightiest response in print from adversaries in the denominational press. By the end of the decade, issues surrounding the gift of healing had also resulted in a considerable amount of controversy that resulted in extensive newspaper coverage.

Furthermore, Article 10, states 'We believe in the literal gathering of Israel and in the restoration of the Ten Tribes; that Zion (the New Jerusalem) will be built upon the American continent'. In a revelation received at Fayette, New York, on 30 September 1830, Joseph Smith and others learned of their responsibility to bring together the

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[42] While Jesus' death is considered as atonement for sin, salvation can only be achieved through a combination of faith and works. Salvation depends on belief in Christ, repentance, baptism, receiving the Holy Ghost and remaining faithful until the end.

[43] *Doctrine and Covenants:* 20:73-74. This is regarded as essential for eternal salvation, a belief that led to the Mormon practice of baptising the dead by proxy.

[44] Article 6. This revival of the institutions described in the Bible applies not only to the New Testament roles of elder, deacon and overseer, but to Jewish temple worship and a lineage of priests (after the order of Aaron and Melchizedek). Latter-day Saints believe that since God commanded people to build temples from the earliest days of the Tabernacle in the wilderness when the 'restored gospel' revealed to Joseph Smith was preached on earth, God once more required his people to build temples: Exodus 26-27; 40:35; 2 Chronicles 5:1-14; 7: 1-2; Ezra 3:1-13; *Doctrine and Covenants*: 88:119.

Lord's 'elect 'at one location in America, in preparation for the Second Advent of Christ. This doctrine became known as 'the gathering of Israel' or simply 'the Gathering'.[45] The precise location of the 'New Jerusalem' changed over time, but the Latter-day Saints' emphasis on the importance of emigration to the 'New Jerusalem' was a doctrine that clearly impacted upon the lives of many Welsh converts and their families.

Two Church Centres: Ohio and Missouri

Joseph Smith founded this new religion in Fayette, New York State, on 6 April 1830. However, it soon faced local opposition. Between December 1830 and January 1831 the new believers were commanded to gather in Kirtland, Ohio,[46] which became the seat of Church government for the next seven years. In July 1831 the site for the city of Zion (the New Jerusalem) was revealed to Joseph Smith as Independence, Jackson County, Missouri.[47] At Independence, the Latter-day Saints built homes, schools, churches and shops, and published their first newspapers. Joseph Smith planned to build a temple in 'Zion'.[48] After just one year of living peacefully in Independence, opposition to the Latter-day Saints escalated. Their non-Mormon neighbours, who feared Mormon economic domination and loss of political control, drove the missionaries out of Jackson County in 1833.[49] Most fled north to Clay County from where they petitioned for a peaceful settlement so that they could return to their homes. This settlement never came, and the prophetic hopes for Independence,

[45] Richard L. Jensen, 'The Gathering to Zion', in V. Ben Bloxham, James R. Moss and Larry C. Porter, eds, *Truth Will Prevail: The Rise of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the British Isles, 1837-1987* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1987), p. 173.
[46] *Doctrine and Covenants* 37; 38: 31-32.
[47] *Doctrine and Covenants* 57. He claimed at this point that he had also received revelation that Jackson County was the location of the Garden of Eden. To establish Smith's vision of an earthly paradise, the church purchased more land and other Mormons soon arrived in Independence.
[48] 'Independence is the center place, and a spot for the temple is lying westward, upon a lot which is not far from the courthouse' (*Doctrine and Covenants* 57:1-3;45:64-66;48:4-6;52:1-5, 42-43).
[49] A full discussion of events in Independence in 1833 may be found in Richard L. Bushman, 'Mormon Persecution in Missouri, 1833,' *BYU Studies*, III (Autumn, 1960), pp. 11-20. The Mormon war in Missouri began in 1833 when some of the non-Mormon residents of Jackson County drove out the Mormons at gunpoint. Mobs broke into the Latter-day Saints' homes, whipped the men and threatened the women. They destroyed the Mormon press, and attacked Latter-day Saint leaders. The Mormons fled the area, most of them crossing the Missouri River into Clay County.

Missouri, remained unfulfilled, although Latter-day Saints continue to look forward to a time when the city of Zion, the New Jerusalem, would be built in that city.[50]

During the 1830s Smith (and his closest associates) professed to have experienced visions that led to the development of the foundational beliefs and offices of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The offices of bishop, high priest, prophet, evangelist and apostles were defined during these years, as well as the unique Mormon doctrine of the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthoods. The first Temple was opened in Kirtland, Ohio, in 1836. A series of visions were associated with the Kirtland Temple and these visions also played an important role in the development of distinctively Mormon doctrine on family[51] and the priesthood.[52] The First Presidency is the highest governing body of the Church, and consists of the First President and two counsellors. The Quorum of the Twelve, the second-highest governing body of the Church was established in 1835. Together, the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve oversee the entire Church.[53] Leaders called seventies assist the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles and serve in various locations throughout the world. The Mormon principle of sending out missionaries to foreign lands began with the first mission to Canada in the autumn of 1833.

By the late 1830s the situation in Missouri and Ohio had begun to deteriorate. In 1836, in an attempt to maintain peace with the growing Mormon population, the Missouri state legislature created a new county, named 'Caldwell,' as a Mormon enclave. However, the increasing Mormon population meant that they began to spread beyond the borders of Caldwell County and, during an election in 1838, violence broke out. Mormon paramilitary units, calling themselves the Danites, decided to fight back to protect their families. When these Mormons attacked a legal militia believing it was an anti-Mormon mob, the governor of Missouri, Lilburn Boggs, expelled the Saints from the state. The notorious 'extermination order' was issued by Governor Boggs who declared 'The Mormons must be treated as enemies and must be exterminated or driven from the state, if necessary for the public good. Their

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[50] *Encyclopaedia of Mormonism*, http://eom.byu.edu/index.php/Independence,_Missouri accessed 16 June 2017.
[51] Reed H. Bradford, 'Family', *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* (New York: Macmillan, 1992), pp. 486-488.
[52] *Doctrine and Covenants* 110.
[53] The 'Quorum of the Twelve Apostles', are ordained into the Melchizedek priesthood office of Apostle and are the second-highest presiding quorum of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. They serve under the direction of the First Presidency. The first members of the Quorum of the Twelve were ordained on 14 February, 1835.

outrages are beyond all description.'[54] The conflict escalated when, on 30 October 1838, an organized mob launched a surprise attack on the small Mormon community of Haun's Mill, killing eighteen unsuspecting men and boys. Over the next year, around eight thousand church members, many destitute and deprived of their property, left Missouri for Illinois. This conflict is sometimes referred to as the Mormon war of 1838.

Although life for the Mormon community was deteriorating in Missouri, the situation in Kirtland, Ohio was also worsening for the Latter-day Saints. In early 1830, Kirtland was a small rural trading outpost of approximately 1,000 people, but six years later, it was a bustling community of 3,000, with commercial, mercantile, and small manufacturing firms, and a temple serving the 2,000 Latter-day Saints in the town.[55] The small number of Mormons who had moved from Jackson County, Missouri, to Kirtland, suffered economic difficulties, as their homes had been burned and their property stolen or left behind [56] and they could not afford to buy sufficient land to support their families.[57] It was this economic situation that led Joseph Smith and some of his closest associates, including Sidney Rigdon (1793-1876), to open the Kirtland Safety Society bank on 2 January 1837.[58] Serious problems soon arose as some other banks refused to accept the Safety Society's notes as legal tender, and some newspapers had declared the currency as worthless.[59] A run on the bank resulted in the suspension of payments and Smith and Rigdon were brought to trial. The Safety Society's problems coincided with the 'Panic of 1837' that spread west from New York into other parts of the nation. The Kirtland Safety Society finally closed in November 1837, and, again, many investors lost everything and Smith declared himself bankrupt. Violence against the Latter-day Saints and their leaders

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[54] In Joseph Smith: *History of the Church*, 3:175. See also John P. Green, *Facts relative to the expulsion of the Mormons or Latter Day Saints, from the state of Missouri under the "exterminating order."* (Cincinnati: R.P. Brooks, 1839.) These are Mormon sources but reference to this can be found at the Missouri digital archive: http://www.sos.mo.gov/archives/history/timeline/timeline4.asp accessed 5 July 2013.

[55] Larry T. Wimmer, 'Kirtland Economy', *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* (New York: Macmillan, 1992), pp. 792-793.

[56] Milton V. Backman, Jr. 'Kirtland, Ohio', *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* (New York: Macmillan, 1992), p. 795.

[57] Backman, 'Kirtland, Ohio', p. 795.

[58] After ordination as a Baptist minister, Rigdon became pastor of the First Baptist Church in Pittsburgh in 1821, and came under the influence of Alexander Campbell, prior to his conversion to Mormonism. Following Joseph Smith's death, Rigdon became one of the Church's best-known apostates.

[59] The society's capital was primarily in the form of land rather than hard currency, such as gold and silver.

increased and Smith fled Kirtland for Missouri in January 1838 and that year most of the remaining Mormons left the area. Hostility to the Latter-day Saints increased and during October 1838 Smith was captured and confined in prison for five months. Following his release in 1839 Smith decided to establish a Mormon community in Commerce, Illinois, which he renamed Nauvoo (from the Hebrew word for 'beautiful', cf. Is. 52:7). It was to Nauvoo that the first Welsh converts emigrated.

Nauvoo

During the years at Nauvoo, some of the central teachings of Mormonism were developed and established. One of the first of these doctrines concerned the practice of baptism by proxy on behalf of the dead, which was initiated following a revelation to Smith.[60] In 1842, Smith wrote two general epistles to the Latter-day Saints on the doctrine of baptism for the dead and established the Mormon principle of scrupulous record keeping, particularly regarding this rite.[61] Work on a new Temple began.[62] Progress of the temple and its lavish detail was printed in the Welsh press, even after Smith's death.[63]

During this period at Nauvoo, the church's doctrine of God was refined. Despite its clear departure from Christian teaching, this distinctive message never received any attention from the opponents of Mormonism in Wales in the 1840s, possibly because they were unaware of the full complexity of Mormon teaching at that stage. The 'King Follett discourse', was an address delivered in Nauvoo by Joseph Smith, on 7 April 1844.[64] The sermon was important for its claim that God was once a mortal man, and that mortal men and women can become gods through salvation and exaltation, a

[60] On 15 August 1840, in a funeral for one of the first settlers at Nauvoo, Smith read from 1 Corinthians: 15. In reference to verse 29, which mentions baptism for the dead, Smith declared that the Lord would permit the Saints to be baptized in behalf of their friends and relatives who had died. On 19 January 1841, an additional revelation commanded the Saints to build a temple with a baptismal font for proxy baptisms: *Doctrine and Covenants* 124:30.
[61] *Doctrine and Covenants* 127:9;128:15.
[62] A new Temple was needed for the Lord to restore the 'fullness of the priesthood': *Doctrine and Covenants* 124:28. As work progressed on this Temple, Smith received instructions from the Lord regarding the sacred 'endowment'. Endowment refers to the gift of power from God. Worthy Latter-day Saints receive this power through ordinances in the temple. *Doctrine and Covenants* 38:32, 38; 95:8; 95:8; 105: 12, 18, 33; 110:9; 124:39; 132: 59; Joseph Smith, *History of the Church,* 5:1–2.
[63] E.g. *Pembrokeshire Herald and General Advertiser,* (30 August 1844).
[64] The discourse was presented to a very large congregation (possibly more than twenty thousand Latter-day Saints) at a general conference held shortly after the funeral service of an Elder named King Follett.

doctrine that clearly characterized Mormonism as different from mainstream Christianity.[65]

It was also at Nauvoo in 1843 that Smith disclosed new revelations pertaining to eternal marriage and more controversially, plural marriage or polygamy.[66] According to Mormon belief, marriages conducted on earth are a temporary contract, lasting only while the participants are alive. However, if the couple undertake to be married in a special ceremony before God in the temple, their marriage becomes an eternal contract in which they are 'sealed' or bound in a relationship with God.[67] Latter-day Saint teaching about the importance of marriage and family life became central to the Mormon way of life.[68] And yet, there appears to have been no reference to this special understanding of marriage in the writings of Mormonism's opponents in Wales in the 1840s.

Arguably the distinctive Mormon teaching on polygamy[69] or 'plural marriage' was the most controversial of all Mormon doctrines, and it was not until 1890 that Church President Wilford Woodruff was 'inspired' to issue a statement that led to the end of the practice of plural marriage.[70] There is evidence that the practice was known at the start of the British mission, as a formal denial of the practice appeared in the British Mormon periodical the *Millennial Star* as early as 1840.[71] However, it continued to receive occasional and brief mention in the press throughout the decade. These references to Mormon polygamy were published in newspapers across the

[65] 'The Doctrinal Impact of the King Follett Discourse,' *BYU Studies*, 18, no. 2 (1978), pp. 209–23. The sermon was published after Smith's death in the 15 August 1844 edition of the Latter-day Saints Nauvoo newspaper *Times and Seasons*. *Times and Seasons* was published at Nauvoo. It was printed monthly or twice monthly from November 1839 to February 1846.

[66] These doctrines were recorded in July 1843 in *Doctrine and Covenants* 132. However, since receiving the sealing key from Elijah in the Kirtland Temple (*Doctrine and Covenants 110:13-16*) in April 1836, Smith had prepared his followers for additional teachings and ordinances, including plural marriage. The revelation on plural marriage was not written down until 1843, but its early verses suggest that part of it emerged from Joseph Smith's study of the Old Testament in 1831. See https://www.lds.org/topics/plural-marriage-in-kirtland-and-nauvoo?lang=eng accessed 25 May 2017.

[67] *Doctrine and Covenants* 132:20. Furthermore, this sealing means that 'Then shall they be gods, because they have no end.' Eternal or celestial marriage is reliant on faithfulness to God and to each other, but once the sealing ceremony has taken place its benefits are also extended to the children of the married couple.

[68] Plural marriage was eventually renounced following a revelation given by Wilford Woodruff, President of the church in 1890, *Official Declaration 1*.

[69] Often referred to as polygamy, Mormons prefer the term 'plural marriage'. Polygyny would be a more accurate term.

[70] *Official Declaration 1*. In this statement, known as the Manifesto, President Woodruff declared his intention to abide by U.S. law forbidding plural marriage and to use his influence to convince members of the Church to do likewise.

[71] *Millennial Star*, vol.1, no. 7 (November, 1840), p. 187. First published in May 1840, the *Millennial Star* became the longest continuously published periodical of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It was printed from 1840 until 1970, sometimes weekly, monthly or semi-monthly.

length and breadth of Britain, including Wales, making it possible that this practice was becoming increasingly associated with the Latter-day Saints by the end of the decade.[72] Although Joseph Smith instituted the private practice of polygamy in the 1830s, the public practice of plural marriage by the church was not announced by the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles until 1852 at the request of President Brigham Young. This may explain why, somewhat surprisingly, the contentious issue of plural marriage did not feature in the Welsh Nonconformists' opposition to the Latter-day Saints in the 1840s. Again we may conclude that had the key Nonconformist opponents of the Latter-day Saints in Wales known of it, they would most certainly have written about it, and there is no evidence that they ever did so.

Increasing Opposition at Nauvoo

Hostility and opposition to Mormonism continued in Nauvoo. However, one incident in particular was to prove particularly devastating to the Mormon cause. Some disaffected Mormons attempted to print a newspaper named the *Nauvoo Expositor* that contained scathing criticism of Joseph Smith and his followers, and particularly the doctrine of plural marriage. As Mayor of Nauvoo, Joseph Smith summoned the city council and on 10 June 1844, Smith ordered the city marshal to destroy the press and burn all copies of the paper.[73] This decision inevitably provoked anti-Mormon feeling and provided substance for the charges brought by the opposition. The increasing tension at Nauvoo was reported in Britain,[74] including warnings in the Welsh press that 'All European Emigrants should stay away from Nauvoo.'[75] The Governor of Illinois was concerned about this attack on what he deemed should be a free press, and consequently Smith and others, including his brother Hyrum, were arrested and sent to Carthage gaol partly 'for their own protection', but their safety

[72] E.g. *The Times* (28 February, 1844); *Hereford Times* (9 March, 1844); *Ipswich Journal* (28 February, 1844); *Liverpool Mercury* (25 January 1848); *Bolton Chronicle* (29 January 1848); *Liverpool Mercury* (27 February, 1849); *Westmorland Gazette* (15 December, 1849); *Reading Mercury* (22 December, 1849); *Monmouthshire Merlin* (15 December, 1849); *Monmouthshire Beacon* (22 December, 1849). The latter two articles reported that at the Salt Lake the Mormons 'indulge in polygamy' and that 'a man may have as many wives as he can support', resulting in the fact that 'some old men there have 20 wives, but that few of the young men have more than five.'
[73] Joseph Smith, *History of the Church,* 6:432-49.
[74] *The Morning Chronicle* (15 July, 1844).
[75] *Welshman,* (26 July 1844). See also *Pembrokeshire Herald and General Advertiser*, (26 July, 1844).

was guaranteed only by a small guard.[76] On 27 June 1844, a mob stormed the jail, killing Joseph and Hyrum.

One of Smith's companions was Captain Dan Jones. As far as the Welsh Mormon mission is concerned, Jones' absence from the gaol at this crucial moment is significant. According to Jones, during his last night in Carthage gaol, Joseph Smith prophesied that Jones would return to Wales and fulfil his mission there.[77] The following day Smith asked Captain Jones to deliver a letter to Orvil H. Browning of Quincy, Illinois, requesting that Browning represent Joseph and Hyrum in their forthcoming trial. Jones was threatened when leaving the gaol, and as he rode away on horseback was shot at, although no bullets hit him. In his haste to get away, he lost his bearings and thereby avoided a mob that might have killed him. Only when he finally reached Quincy did he discover the events that had transpired in Carthage gaol after his departure.

The presence of Captain Dan Jones with Joseph Smith during the final hours before Smith's death would prove to be significant when he returned to Wales in 1845. Not only had he known Smith personally and shared the danger with him, he had been in receipt of Smith's final prophecy regarding his return to Wales.[78] He began his mission to Wales, commissioned by the highest authority in the church. It is unsurprising that he was appointed President of the entire Welsh mission by the end of 1845.[79]

Smith's death resulted in the question of succession.[80] In a conference on 8 August 1844 a majority elected Brigham Young. Some issues, which had caused concern to some church members, such as plural marriage and ideas relating to the Temple,

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[76] *The Times,* (30 July, 1844).
[77] Letter from Dan Jones to Thomas Bullock, 20 January 1855, p.10, Historical Department, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; see also *BYU Studies*, Winter, 1984, pp. 95-109.
[78] Ron Dennis, 'Dan Jones, Welshman: Taking the Gospel Home', *Ensign* (April, 1987), https://www.lds.org/ensign/1987/04/dan-jones-welshman-taking-the-gospel-home?lang=eng accessed 11 December 2015; See also: Douglas J. Davies, *Mormon Spirituality: Latter Day Saints in Wales and Zion* (Nottingham: University of Nottingham 1987), p. 5.
[79] *Millennial Star*, vol. 7, no.1 (January, 1846), pp. 7-8.
[80] His brother Hyrum, had he survived, would have had the strongest claim followed by Joseph's brother Samuel, but he died a month after his brothers. Another brother, William, was unable to gain enough support. Smith's son Joseph Smith III also had a claim, but was too young, aged only eleven at this time. Some of Smith's closest supporters and original witnesses to the golden plates, such as Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer, would have been candidates but at this point had left the church. Thus, the two strongest succession candidates were Brigham Young, senior member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and Sidney Rigdon, the senior member of the First Presidency.

were to have greater emphasis under Young. Splinter groups emerged[81] but the publication *Millennial Star* in Britain remained under the control of Brigham Young's supporters.

The Valley of the Great Salt Lake

Following the death of Joseph Smith, the authorities feared Mormon retaliation, but this did not transpire. However, the Anti-Mormon Party organized a series of raids against outlying Mormon settlements and by the summer of 1845 hostilities had progressed to shooting on both sides, and armed groups were again roaming Hancock County. Governor Ford called out the State Militia to quell the hostilities. The Mormons, now under the leadership of Brigham Young, agreed to leave the state and abandon Nauvoo.

By February of 1846 word came to Brigham Young from Governor Ford that the United States Army might try to prevent the Mormon exodus from Nauvoo into Indian, British or Mexican territory. Fearing his people would be trapped, Young ordered many of the community's leaders to evacuate the city immediately, with the rest to follow when the weather was better. Thus, the Mormons left Nauvoo on their long journey to Utah. Throughout the spring and summer of 1846, there was a continual procession of wagons heading for Utah.[82] However, in September 1846, impatient to remove the remaining Mormons from Nauvoo, the Anti-Mormon Party again attacked the city. A full-scale battle ensued, but after two days a peace delegation from Quincy arranged the terms of surrender for Nauvoo. Given an hour to pack their belongings, the remaining Mormons were forced to leave. Following a long and arduous journey across the western landscape, Young and his followers arrived at a broad valley. With his first glimpse of this Valley of the Great Salt Lake, Young reportedly realized that this was the right place for them to settle. Salt Lake City was founded on 24 July 1847. In spring 1848, the *Millennial Star* printed Brigham Young's own account of the great trek from Nauvoo to the Great Salt Lake, a

[81] These followed Sidney Rigdon, James J. Strang, Lyman Wight and Alpheus Cutler.
[82] Brigham Young and 3,000 Mormons set out for Utah on 4 February 1846. Expedition leaders expected to reach their goal by the coming winter, but unforeseen difficulties forced the Mormons to abandon their original schedule. The journey was split into two sections: Nauvoo to Omaha, Nebraska in 1846; and, Omaha to the Salt Lake Valley of Utah in 1847.

journey of 1,300 miles.[83] The first Mormons began building a new community in the valley, based on plans originally designed by Joseph Smith. The following year, 1848, 2,500 more made the passage. By the time Brigham Young died in 1877, there were more than 100,000 people living in the surrounding Great Basin, and most of these were Latter-day Saints.

The Mormon pioneers, led by Young, were the first non-Indians to settle permanently in the Salt Lake Valley. These Latter-day Saints arrived there in search of a place where they could practice their religion, free from hostile mobs and persecution. At that time, this area was part of Mexico. A treaty signed in 1848 ceded it to the United States. After years of persecution and opposition that had caused them to leave Kirtland, Missouri and Nauvoo, the valley of the Great Salt Lake, Utah became the place that would thereafter be associated with the Latter-day Saints.

This brief outline of the experiences of the first Latter-day Saints in America reveals that from the outset they suffered hardship, opposition and persecution. Such hostility accompanied them wherever they settled and ultimately resulted in the murder of their founder. As the message travelled to the British Isles, opposition and confrontation again became part of the Mormon existence. There was certainly opposition to Mormonism in Wales, and whether or not this bears any comparison to the experiences of Latter-day Saints in America will be discussed in this thesis.

Emigration

Revealed to Joseph Smith in 1830, the doctrine of 'the Gathering'[84] became one of the most important principles taught by adherents of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In Britain, the *Millennial Star* supported Mormon emigration from its inception and (clearly from its title) the movement's millennialism. In April 1843 in an article entitled 'The Gathering', the *Millennial Star* proclaimed the duty of the 'Saints' to set themselves apart from the unbelievers who were part of the sinful world (referred to as Babylon), and called them to join with the people of God, as they

[83] *Millennial Star,* vol.10, no.6 (15 March, 1848), pp. 81-88.
[84] *Doctrine and Covenants* 45:24-5, 64-71. It is further claimed that in April 1836 Moses appeared to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in the Kirtland Temple, restoring the keys of the gathering of Israel – a message which confirmed the Church's responsibility for gathering God's people on a world-wide scale, *Doctrine and Covenants* 110:11.

gathered together in America. [85] This teaching was central to the Latter-day Saints mission in Britain.

Wilbur S. Shepperson has observed that:

> By the summer of 1840, the *Millennial Star* was reporting Mormon departures, and the American missionaries, who had first arrived in Britain in July, 1837, laid the groundwork for a plan which matured into one of the largest systemized religious migrations in the history of the British Isles.[86]

Richard L. Jensen has also drawn attention to the importance of the doctrine as an integral aspect of the British mission:

> The emigration of approximately 65,000 saints from the British Isles provided great strength to the establishment of the Church in Nauvoo, and later in Salt Lake City and the American West. Until the practice of gathering was modified, the Church in The British Isles had little sense of permanence, for hearts were set on a home across the ocean.[87]

Many reasons may have contributed to the decision made by British Latter-day Saints to emigrate. In Britain the enormous change brought about by the Industrial Revolution led to economic uncertainty for many people who were no longer able to sustain themselves. Such factors coupled with the Irish potato famine had brought emigration in the 1840s and 1850s to an all-time high. According to Jensen, Joseph Smith instructed the first overseas missionaries not to preach the doctrine of 'the gathering' until the Church was well-established, and until the Spirit directed them to introduce the topic.[88] Therefore, the leader of the first British mission, Heber C. Kimball, and his companions did not preach the doctrine of 'the gathering' at the start of their missionary activities in 1837.[89] However, in April 1840, soon after the arrival of Brigham Young in Britain, it was decided that the time was right to begin to encourage the new British converts to emigrate. By the time the Mormon mission entered Wales in 1840, this doctrine had become a major part of Mormon preaching and had found its way into secular press reports.[90] Jensen, notes that 'theological

[85] *Millennial Star*, vol.3, no.12 (April, 1843), p.193.
[86] Wilbur S. Shepperson, 'The Place of the Mormons in the Religious Emigration of Britain, 1840-1860', *Utah Historical Quarterly,* 20 (1952), p.212-13. See also: *Millennial Star*, vol. 1, no.5 (September, 1840), p. 136.
[87] Richard L. Jensen, 'The British Gathering to Zion', in *Truth Will Prevail*, ed.by V. Ben Bloxham, James R. Moss, Larry C. Porter (Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp.165-198 (p. 165).
[88] Joseph Smith, *History of the Church,* 2: 492.
[89] Jensen, 'The British Gathering to Zion', p. 167
[90] E.g. *Hereford Times* (24 October 1840); *Welshman* (1 January 1841); *Cambrian* (15 May 1841).

reasons then combined with economic and social motives'[91] to effect a steady flow of emigrants to the 'New Jerusalem on the American continent'.

The first company of forty Mormons emigrants left Liverpool on the *Britannia* for New York on 6 June 1840.[92] They arrived in New York on 20 July 1840. An account of one of these first émigrés named Francis Moon was published in the *Millennial Star.*[93] Moon's letter attempted to give a description of life at Nauvoo, telling of a relatively undeveloped land that possessed great potential.[94] It is impossible to tell whether any Welsh converts were part of this group,[95] but there is evidence to suggest that the first Welsh emigrants had left Wales by February 1842.[96]

In this period of Latter-day Saint history the teaching about the 'gathering' to Zion seems to have followed a set pattern that was adhered to for the next several decades.[97] Within a year of the first British emigration nearly one thousand more Mormon converts left Britain. Before he returned to America in April 1841, Brigham Young had supervised the chartering of several ships for Mormon emigrants. A British Mission office existed in Liverpool between 1842 and 1933 to organize all aspects of the journey for those Mormons wishing to emigrate. The emigration of British Latter-day Saints reached its peak between1853-56.

The concept of the 'gathering' and the establishment of 'Zion' in preparation for the imminent return of Christ was a prominent message as Mormonism spread throughout Wales. Teaching which contained a spiritual dimension coupled with the promise of a better life clearly had its appeal to those willing to take the life-changing step of emigration. It was an appeal that resulted in 326 Welsh Mormons leaving for America under the direction of Captain Dan Jones in February 1849.[98] There had, of

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[91] Jensen, 'The British Gathering to Zion', p. 167
[92] R.L. Evans, *A Century of Mormonism in Great Britain*, (Salt Lake City: Publishers Press, 1837; repr.1984), pp. 227-28.
[93] *Millennial Star*, vol.1, no.10 (February, 1841), p. 252.
[94] *Millennial Star*, vol. 1, no.5 (September, 1840), p. 136.
https://mormonmigration.lib.byu.edu/search/?query=Moon&dateFrom=&dateTo=&passenger=on&account=on&voyage=on&mii=on&europe=on accessed 26 May 2017.
[95] Although the passenger list includes people with typically Welsh surnames such as Griffiths and Owens, it is not possible to tell which passengers were Latter-day Saints simply from the passenger list. As this emigration was prior to the first full British census of 1841, it is not possible to trace those travelling.
[96] James Burnham, who laboured in the Overton area of north Wales, led a party of emigrants that sailed from Liverpool to New Orleans aboard the 'Hope' on 5 February 1842.
[97] Jensen, 'The British Gathering to Zion', p. 168.
[98] On 26 February 1849, 249 converts set sail from Liverpool with Captain Dan Jones aboard the *Buena Vista.* An additional thirty-three Welsh Mormon émigrés had paid for passage aboard the same vessel,

course, been a tradition of Welsh emigration to America, a land perceived to offer religious freedom and toleration. Bill Jones has noted that:

> The world's first permanent overseas Welsh communities were established as a result of the settlement of Welsh religious dissenters in New England and Pennsylvania between *c.* 1660 and *c.* 1720.[99]

Douglas Davies has assessed the appeal of Zion for those among the Welsh who converted to Mormonism:

> Many converts would have been well-prepared to accept religious ideas of a promised land through their prior religious membership to other groups. With the Mormon message there suddenly appeared a material possibility, a real opportunity of experiencing a physical and geographical promised land.[100]

Clearly, the desire for a better life was a powerful driving force among those who made the decision to emigrate during the nineteenth century, and it would probably be reasonable to suppose that this influenced many among the Mormon community, however spiritually inclined they might have been. Nevertheless, Davies injects a word of caution into this view:

> The critical scholar can find it too easy to reduce the wish to be in Zion to nothing more than an economic desire. That kind of reductionism strips away too quickly the very human yearning for a quality of experience and fulfilment which is best described as spiritual.[101]

Ultimately, as Dudley Baines has commented 'We cannot know what actually passed through the minds of potential emigrants'[102] and for many people their motives were probably mixed. Whether persecution played a part in the desire of Latter-day Saints to leave Wales will be considered later when the opposition to the Mormon movement is evaluated. However, even without any threat of persecution, the 'gathering' to Zion in America was the expected goal of the devout Latter-day Saint.

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making a total of 326. However, this group had to wait another week before they sailed aboard the *Hartley.* Ronald D. Dennis, *The Call of Zion: The Story of the First Welsh Mormon Emigration,* Religious Studies Center: Specialized Monograph Series, Vol.2 (Salt Lake City, Utah: Brigham Young University, 1987), p. xi.

[99] Bill Jones '"Raising the Wind": Emigrating from Wales to the USA in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries,' *Annual Public Lecture*, Cardiff Centre for Welsh American Studies, Cardiff University. May 2003, p. 6.
http://orca.cf.ac.uk/48163/1/RaisingTheWind.pdf accessed 1 April 2016.

[100] Davies, *Mormon Spirituality*, p. 17.

[101] Davies, *Mormon Spirituality*, p. 18.

[102] Dudley Baines, *Emigration from Europe, 1815-1930,* (2nd ed., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 9

Conclusions

In conclusion, this chapter has shown that the distinctive and foundational teachings of the Latter-day Saints had been formulated by the time of Joseph Smith's demise in 1844. We may conclude, therefore, that these unique theological ideas, including acceptance of the *Book of Mormon,* the principle of emigration to Zion, and the emphasis on the return to practices found in the New Testament concerning spiritual gifts, were part of the Mormon message as it entered Wales in 1840.

As we have seen, Mormonism presented a series of extraordinary claims about its origins and founder, claims that were challenged and opposed from the beginning of this new religion. The experience of the first Latter-day Saints in America indicates that from the outset they suffered hardship, opposition and persecution. This hostility to Smith and his message accompanied them wherever they settled and culminated in Smith's murder. As the message travelled to the British Isles, opposition and confrontation again became part of the Mormon existence. There was certainly opposition to Mormonism in Wales, and whether or not this can be compared to the experiences of Latter-day Saints in America will be discussed in this thesis.

Clearly, therefore, the doctrines and distinctive new teachings of Mormonism were based on a series of revelations that created a religion that diverged significantly from the teaching of any existing Christian denomination. While it remains difficult to ascertain how much doctrinal detail the Latter-day Saint missionaries presented to the people of Wales in the public preaching of its message, it was a church reliant from the beginning on the publication of literature expounding its doctrinal standpoint. The *Millennial Star,* first published in 1840, was an important literary means for disseminating the message and reporting on the activities of the Latter-day Saints. As far as Welsh-speaking converts were concerned, the publications of Captain Dan Jones served the same purpose. *Prophwyd y Jubili* (1846-48) included a substantial amount of material taken from the *Millennial Star,* thus the Welsh-speaking 'Saints' also had access to distinctively Mormon ideas.

This chapter has also drawn attention to the emphasis in Mormonism's sacred texts regarding spiritual gifts and healing miracles, teaching that was to play a significant

part in issues that arose in relation to the Welsh mission. These themes will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

The following chapter turns to an assessment of the Mormon mission to Wales in the period 1840-1843.

Chapter 2

The Early Latter-day Saints Mission to Wales, 1840-1843

Virtually from its inception, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was committed to sending out missionaries. Initially, its organization focused on its founder and first President Joseph Smith, supported by a 'Quorum of the Twelve'[1] that included in its number Heber C. Kimball.[2] On 20 July 1837, Elder Kimball and six companions arrived in Liverpool.[3] They subsequently travelled to Preston, Lancashire, where one member of this group, Joseph Fielding, had a brother who was the minister at the Vauxhall chapel.[4]

During a service on 29 July 1837, Revd James Fielding invited the Latter-day Saints to preach at the chapel. Within a few days, their preaching had resulted in a number of the congregation seeking Mormon baptism.[5] At this point, Fielding changed his stance towards the missionaries and 'Fearing he would loose [sic] his entire flock, the Rev. Fielding closed the doors of his chapel against the elders and from that time opposed the work with all his power.'[6] From the very beginning of the Latter-day Saints' mission in England, opposition by local ministers was explained as a reaction to the loss of members. It became a frequently repeated explanation for the opposition the missionaries faced. As will be seen, there is no acknowledgement in Latter-day Saint sources that opposition might have emerged for any other reason, despite the real possibility that evidence for alternative explanations exists.

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[1] Lawrence R. Flake, *Prophets and Apostles of the Last Dispensation* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2001), pp. 317–19.
[2] Kimball (1801-1868) was from Vermont, New England. He was converted and baptized into the Mormon faith in 1832.
[3] The group included two other member of the 'Quorum of the Twelve Apostles', namely Orson Hyde (1805-1878) from Connecticut, and Willard Richards (1804-1854) from Massachusetts. Three members of this initial mission were Canadian converts - Isaac Russell (1807-1844), John Goodson (1808-1892), and John Snyder (1800-1875). Joseph Fielding (1797-1863), had been born in Honeydon Bedfordshire, and had immigrated to Canada in the 1830s where he converted to Mormonism in 1836.
[4] The chapel had originally belonged to the General Baptists and then the Particular Baptists. However, prior to the arrival of James Fielding, it had been the domain of the Episcopalians. 'Atticus' (A. Hewitson), *Our Churches and Chapels* (Preston; reprinted by the *Preston Chronicle*, 1869).
[5] R. L. Evans*, A Century of 'Mormonism' in Great Britain*, (Salt Lake City: Publishers Press, 1937; repr.1984), p. 28. Nine people were baptized in the river Ribble on 30 July 1837, all of whom had been members of James Fielding's congregation: *Millennial Star*, vol.1, no.12, (April, 1841), p. 291.
[6]Joseph Fielding Smith, *Essentials in Church History: A history of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints from the birth of Joseph Smith to the present time (1922), with introductory chapters on the antiquity and the 'falling away'* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1922), pp. 202-203.

The work that began at Preston spread throughout the country.[7] In a general Conference of all the Saints in the British Isles held in Preston, 15 April 1840, it was decided to publish a monthly journal, namely the *Millennial Star*. By 1841, according to Brigham Young,[8] the movement had experienced notable success, having,

> established churches in almost every noted town and city in the kingdom of Great Britain, baptized between seven and eight thousand, printed 5,000 Books of Mormon, 3,000 Hymn Books, 2,500 volumes of the Millennial Star, and 50,000 tracts, and emigrated to Zion 1,000 souls …[9]

Although they experienced opposition, the work progressed throughout England and ventured into Scotland in December 1839.[10] By 1840 it was decided to take the mission into Wales.

Much of what has been reconstructed regarding the Mormon mission to Wales has focused attention on the activities of William Henshaw in Merthyr Tydfil from 1843-45, and then to a greater extent on the contribution of his successor Captain Dan Jones.[11] Admittedly, information is sparse and records few, particularly in relation to the beginning of the mission and its early progress. Most documentary evidence exists for the period 1846-49, much of it rising from the pen of Jones himself. By the end of 1845, Jones had become President of the entire Mormon mission in Wales and he would lead the first organized mass emigration of Welsh 'Saints' to America in 1849. The existing historiography has identified Captain Dan Jones as the most notable figure of the mission of the Latter-day Saints in Wales in the 1840s, often to the exclusion of any other information. This chapter will review the existing evidence regarding the initial Latter-day Saint mission to Wales, and reassess its conclusions.

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[7] Joseph Fielding Smith, *Essentials in Church History*, p. 203

[8] Brigham Young (1801-1877) was born in Vermont, USA and converted to Mormonism in 1832. In 1835, he was called to the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. As successor to Joseph Smith, he led the migration west in 1846–47 to the Rocky Mountains and founded Salt Lake City. He was President of the Church from1847 until his death, and served as part of the British mission 1840-41

[9] *Millennial Star,* vol. 26, no. 1, (2 January, 1864), p. 7.

[10] For a full discussion of the Latter-day Saints' mission to Scotland during this period see Bernard Aspinwall's chapter 'A Fertile Field: Scotland in the Days of the Early Missions', *Mormons in Early Victorian Britain,* eds Richard L. Jensen and Malcolm R. Thorp (Utah: University of Utah Press, 1989), pp.104-117. Also, Frederick S. Buchanan, 'The Ebb and Flow of the Church in Scotland', in V. Ben Bloxham, James R. Moss and Larry C Porter (eds), *Truth Will Prevail: The Rise of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the British Isles, 1837-1987* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1987), pp. 268-298.

[11] Dan Jones had been born in Halkyn, Flintshire, in 1810. He obtained the epithet 'Captain' because he owned a steamboat named the 'Maid of Iowa' on the Mississippi river. Jones was baptized in the Mississippi river in January 1843. He returned to Wales in 1845.

When and where did the Welsh Mormon Mission begin?

It is difficult to ascertain precisely when Mormon missionaries entered Wales or made their first conversions. At the General Conference in Manchester in October 1840, an appeal was made for those who were 'willing to volunteer their services in the vineyard of the Lord'. The minutes of the General Conference held on 6 October 1840 in Manchester, recorded the decision that:

> Elder Henry Royle go to Cly [Cloy] in Flintshire … Frederick Cooke, Priest, labour with Henry Royle in Flintshire.[12]

From this statement Mormon and non-Mormon historians[13] of the Welsh Latter-day Saint mission have drawn the conclusion that this decision signalled the official start of the Latter-day Saints' mission to Wales. While it provides very little information, it is the first reference to a Welsh location as the target for missionary activity.

However, this is a narrow interpretation of this instruction and it is possible to argue that this directive was not intended to inaugurate a specific 'Welsh mission'. Instead, it may be suggested that at this stage that Cloy in Flintshire was chosen because it provided a convenient base from which the missionaries could instigate a border-land mission that straddled areas of both England and Wales.

There are a number of reasons to support a broader view of the beginning of the Welsh Mormon mission. First, the relative obscurity of Cloy, which was merely a village some two miles from Overton, has puzzled historians of the Welsh Mormon mission, especially as no reason was given for choosing this place. Ron Dennis has suggested that a recent convert from the area may have invited the missionaries to preach there, or that Royle and Cooke may have had some connection with the place.[14] He has subsequently suggested that Elder Brigham Young may have visited this location prior to the sending of Royle and Cooke there. Evidence for Young's visit with fellow elder Heber C. Kimball can be found in a letter written to Young's wife and dated 12 November 1840. However, the letter simply mentions a visit to Wales and

[12] *Millennial Star*, vol.1, no.6 (October, 1840), p.165. Cooke's name is sometimes spelled with a final 'e' and sometimes without, depending on the source. In this thesis, 'Cooke' is used except when directly quoting a source that uses the alternative spelling.
[13] E.g. David Williams, 'The Welsh Mormons', *Welsh History Review*, 7, 1948, pp. 113-118.
[14] Ronald D. Dennis, 'The Welsh and the Gospel', in *Truth Will Prevail,* p. 238. Dennis suggests Cooke's wife may have had relatives there, as her maiden name was Davies.

does not name Cloy or Overton.[15] James Burgess,[16] who laboured alongside Cooke and Royle, provides an alternative suggestion for the mission to Cloy in his journal. An entry in 1841 mentions that during their missionary travels in north Wales, Cooke returned to Overton 'to see his wife and family'.[17] An analysis of the 1841 census confirms that a Sarah Cook, aged 27,[18] lived in Overton with her daughter Sarah, aged 2, and her son, Fredrick, aged 1.[19] This strengthens the view that Cooke was commissioned to labour with Royle in this somewhat obscure area of north Wales because his family had relocated to the village. Therefore, it is possible to view the sending of these missionaries to this area, not as the first step in a specific plan to proselytise Wales, but instead as a practical move suggested by Cooke's married status and home in the area.

Secondly, entries in Burgess' journal support the view that Cloy, Overton was simply a base for missionary activity that included the border areas of England as well as Wales. James Burgess had joined Cooke, Royle and James Burnham[20] at Overton in January 1841. Although little reference has been made to his journal, it confirms that although Overton and Cloy are mentioned fairly frequently, Burgess, Cooke, Royle and others travelled to other towns and villages, including some across the border in England. The journal records the progress of the mission as its representatives moved through Wales between January and October 1841. They appear to have taken a route south rather than west into the Welsh heartland. This may have been due to Burgess, Cooke and Royle possessing no proficiency in the Welsh language – the three being Englishmen – but Burgess never mentions this as a specific impediment to missionary success. As the months passed, Burgess began to return to

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[15] Ronald D. Dennis, 'The Beginnings of Mormonism in North Wales' (2 March, 2005), Welsh Mormon History http://welshmormon.byu.edu/Resource_Info.aspx?id=2389 accessed 16 August 2016. Blair Collection, Willard Marriot Library, University of Utah. See Letters of Brigham Young 1836-42: http://content.lib.utah.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/uu-ptbf/id/944/rec/17 accessed 16 August 2016.

[16] *James Burgess' Journal*, https://dcms.lds.org/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?dps_pid=IE2053976 accessed 20 August 2016. Burgess was born in Lancashire in 1818, and was baptized into the Mormon faith in October 1840, and ordained as a priest in December that same year.

[17] *James Burgess Journal*, The lists of Mormon Pioneers who arrived in the valley of the Salt Lake on 10 September 1852 confirms these were the names of Cook[e]'s wife and children https://history.lds.org/overlandtravel/companies/206/henry-w-miller-company-1852

[18] Dennis spells the name without the final 'e' in 'The Welsh and the Gospel', p. 238.

[19] The child's name also supports the view that this was the family of Mormon priest, Frederick Cooke, as does the fact that none of the family were born in Flintshire.

[20] He is recorded on the 1841 Census record for Wales as living at Cloy, Overton, Flintshire http://search.ancestry.co.uk : accessed 26 March 2013. It states he was born in 1796 'in foreign parts'. See also: https://history.lds.org/missionary/individual/james-burnham-1800?lang=eng which states Burnham was born in Massachusetts, USA. Burnham wrote reports to the *Millennial Star,* suggesting that was the leader of the Mission at Overton.

a place he referred to as 'The Pant' (probably the village of Pant, near Oswestry), where there was a home offering hospitality and a base to the missionaries. Thus rather than the beginning of a specific Welsh mission, Cloy and Overton became a base for Royle and Cooke to spread their message into a wider area, including Shropshire. By March 1841 they had taken their message to Welshpool, and Burgess' journal indicates that during the first few months, they continued to return to Overton and 'the Cloy'. On 11 March 1841, a Conference was held at Ellesmere, Shropshire, another place frequently visited by the missionaries, and possibly considered to be a more important centre for Mormon activity than Overton, despite the fact that Burgess' journal records the church at Ellesmere had only twenty members, while at Overton there were ninety-nine. Hawarden, with a membership of thirty-five, was also represented in the Ellesmere Conference. Thus, almost six months after the sending of Cooke and Royle to Overton, the Conference was held in Shropshire, rather than at a specifically Welsh base.[21] This appears to confirm that the concept of an official Welsh mission may be somewhat artificial at this stage, and that the plan to proselytise various areas was somewhat fluid. The journal mentions visits to Newtown in the early summer of 1841 and to Ruabon and Montgomery, but also makes reference to other visits to places across the English border, such as Shrewsbury and Ironbridge. Burgess sometimes returned to Lancashire to preach in Eccles, Bolton and Rochdale, until he was finally given a new commission to Bradford in February 1842.

Thirdly, the view that the Mormon mission to Wales should be regarded as broader at this stage may also explain why after notable initial success at Overton, with 150 converts in four months, [22] little is known about the church after April 1841, when the Overton branch became part of the Liverpool conference. Ron Dennis has noted that 'the Overton saints are rather a mystery in Welsh church history, as no existing records make further mention of them …'[23] He suggests that they may have heeded the call to emigrate at this early stage, and indeed Burgess' journal reveals that this supposition is almost certainly correct. As this would not have been an organized group emigration, names cannot be checked against passenger lists and no separate list of members of the Latter-day Saints branch in the Overton area appears to have

[21] In July 1841, Cooke moved his family to Oswestry. See *James Burgess' Journal.*
[22] *Millennial Star*, vol.1, no.11 (March, 1841), p.284.
[23] Dennis, 'The Welsh and the Gospel', p. 239.

survived.[24] However, James Burnham, who had joined Royle and Cooke in north Wales by December 1840, led a party of emigrants that sailed from Liverpool to New Orleans aboard the 'Hope' on 5 February 1842.[25] The passenger list of the 'Hope' includes the names of the Matthews and Ashley families. Burgess' journal contains references to a Brother Matthews living near Wrexham and a Brother Ashley living at Lightwood Green, near Overton. While it cannot be asserted with absolute certainty that these are the same people, it is at least possible, if not likely, because the *Millennial Star* recorded that 270 passengers, mostly Latter-day Saints, were aboard the 'Hope' when it sailed. Emigration may well have played a part in the dwindling numbers in the area of Overton.

Furthermore, what happened to the church at Overton is not a complete mystery. The *Millennial Star* records that the church was still in existence in May 1845 under the leadership of Charles Phelps, along with the Pool Quay branch in Montgomeryshire.[26] It may be that the lack of information about Overton was due to the fact that it was not viewed as key to the Mormon endeavours but was one part of a wider mission, not just to Wales but also to the border areas of England. Meanwhile, a separate north Wales branch continued to exist as part of the Liverpool conference.[27] It is clear from a report in June 1847 to the *Millennial Star* that Latter-day Saints in north Wales remained linked to the Liverpool conference and came under the direction of Lorenzo Butler.[28] By March 1848, the north Wales conference

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[24] It provides one explanation for the decline in members in the area and may be supported by an investigation of James Burgess' journal. He mentions that talk of emigration to 'Zion' was already present at the Overton church in March 1841.

[25] See: Mormon Migration https://mormonmigration.lib.byu.edu/mii/voyage/166?passenger=on&mii=on&account=on&scandinavia=on&netherlands=on&sweden=on&query=ashley&europe=on&dateFrom=&dateTo=&voyage=on accessed 23 August 2016: *James Burgess' Journal*; *Millennial Star*, vol.2, no.10 (February, 1842), p.155.

[26] *Millennial Star*, vol.7, no.10 (15 May, 1846), p. 160. Another Welsh branch at Presteigne was at this time part of the Mars Hill conference in Herefordshire, thus not all Welsh branches came under the leadership of the Welsh Presidency.

[27] The record of the Conference Minutes in the *Millennial Star* dated October 1844 show that elder Robert Martin represented the North Wales region at this time. Although there were only seventy-five members, plus three elders, six priests and three teachers, the minutes recorded that six people had been baptized since the General Conference. He reported that 'The members of this region were scattered over a great extent of country, about forty miles. The prospects were better at present than any former period'. *Millennial Star*, vol.5, no.5 (October, 1844), p. 74.

[28] *Millennial Star*, vol.9, no.12 (15 June, 1847), p.190. He was chosen to serve on a mission to England by the Quorum of the Twelve, under the direction of Brigham Young in May 1846. http://www.ldschurchnewsarchive.com/articles/28334/Camp-of-Israel-On-the-pioneer-trail.html accessed 12 December 2015. See also *Deseret News* (8 June 1996) https://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=Aul-kAQHnToC&dat=19960608&printsec=frontpage&hl=en accessed 12 December 2015. See also: *Millennial Star*, vol.9, no.2 (15 January, 1847), p. 32; *Millennial Star*, vol.9, no.4 (15 February, 1847) p.

had 128 members.[29] In June 1848 the *Millennial Star* described a Good Friday gathering in Shrewsbury when at 'about four o'clock, nearly one hundred Saints assembled from Poolquay [sic], Ellesmere, and other branches in North Wales belonging to the Liverpool conference …' It can be said with certainty, then, that progress continued in north Wales, in branches which had no connection with Captain Dan Jones who makes no reference in his Welsh language Mormon periodical, *Prophwyd y Jubili,* to the 'north Wales conference' or to Lorenzo Butler,[30] probably because they were officially part of the Liverpool conference. Although little is known of the specific areas served by Butler, it is apparent that his ministry was not unsuccessful. This contrasts with the activity of Captain Dan Jones. Jones arrived in Liverpool in early January 1845, and was first assigned to Wrexham. He had little success at this point,[31] but was established as the President of the entire Welsh mission in December 1845.[32] Thus the areas of north Wales that were linked to Liverpool were still active and relevant, and possibly because of the stable condition of these churches,[33] no progress reports from them were printed in the *Millennial Star*. Furthermore, these areas associated with what has been considered the official start of the Welsh Mormon mission, remained associated with Liverpool rather than any Welsh area, suggesting that they were always considered to be an extension of the English mission rather than a specific Welsh one. In contrast with the early stages of the mission at Overton, there were no further reports of opposition from the north Wales branch of the Liverpool conference. Neither did Captain Dan Jones report any opposition when he began his labours at Wrexham. While this does not enable us to

48; vol.9, no. 8 (15 April, 1847), p. 128; vol.9, no. 12 (15 June, 1847), p. 192; vol.9, no. 20 (15 October, 1847), p. 320.

[29] *Millennial Star*, vol.10, no. 12 (15 June, 1848), p. 182.

[30] Butler returned to America aboard the *Sailor Prince* on 24 September 1848, from Liverpool to New Orleans. *Millennial Star*, vol.10, no.19 (1 October, 1848), p. 296. http://mormonmigration.lib.byu.edu/Search/showDetails/db:MM_MII/t:voyage/id:329/keywords:Bowers accessed 12 December 2015. See also: *Millennial Star*, vol.11, no.1 (1January, 1849), p. 7.

[31] *Millennial Star*, vol.5, no.11 (April, 1845), p. 173.

[32] *Millennial Star*, vol. 7, no.1 (January, 1846), pp. 7-8.

[33] In September 1847 (*Millennial Star*, vol.9, no.24 (15 December 1847), p.370, a report from Butler revealed that in the six areas represented in the Liverpool Conference, the north Wales branch was second only to Liverpool, having 85 members to Liverpool's 424. Furthermore, the north Wales branch had more priests and deacons, and had baptized more converts since the previous Conference than any of the other branches except Liverpool. The North Wales branch had baptized 13 people, Liverpool 22. However, Birkenhead could claim only 2 baptized, Newton 3, Prescott 4 and Warrington none. *Millennial Star*, vol.9, no.24 (15 December 1847), p. 370. Butler still represented this branch in the Conference held in Liverpool on 26 December 1847. On this occasion Butler reported 103 members, with 18 baptized since the last Conference. Still second only to Liverpool in number of members, the north Wales branch had more members holding office than any other branch in the Liverpool conference. By March 1848, the north Wales conference had 128 members. At the start of this year Butler took charge of the Worcestershire Conference: *Millennial Star*, vol.10, no.1 (1 January, 1848), p. 6.

conclude there was no opposition, it suggests that any opposition experienced was not sufficiently serious to be recounted, or published in the *Millennial Star.*

While the attention of those writing on the history of the Welsh Mormon mission has focused on the assignment of Royle and Cooke to Cloy, near Overton, this has resulted in the activity of the Latter-day Saints in south Wales receiving little attention. As far as the history of the Mormon mission to south Wales is concerned, there is compelling evidence to suggest that while Mormon missionaries were proselytising in north Wales in the autumn of 1840, there had already been missionary activity in south Wales. Ron Dennis has acknowledged that there was some early *ad hoc* Latter-day Saint activity in Monmouthshire, and suggested that this activity possibly led to Mormonism being introduced into Wales some five months prior to the Manchester Conference of October 1840.[34]

However, evidence from the missionaries' journals reveals that even this was more substantial than previously considered. More attention needs to be given to this evidence that provides details of the activities of the early Latter-day Saint missionaries in Wales and enables us to understand with greater clarity, the opposition that they experienced.

Early activity in south-east Wales was not an 'official' Welsh mission, but the result of Mormon success in the bordering counties. The writings of Wilford Woodruff [35] support the view that there was a plan to proselytise Wales as early as the summer of 1840, and that such activity had already begun by the autumn of that year.

In 1840, Wilford Woodruff, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, experienced extraordinary success in his missionary activities working about twenty miles from the Welsh border in Worcestershire and Herefordshire. His greatest success came when he visited Hill Farm, Castle Frome, and there met a tenant farmer named John Benbow. Through him, he met Thomas Kington, the leader of the 'United Brethren', a group that had broken away from the Primitive Methodists in the 1830s.[36] The chapel owned by the 'United Brethren' was at Gadfield Elm,

[34] Dennis, 'The Welsh and the Gospel', pp. 236- 67
[35] Wilford Woodruff born in Connecticut in 1807, and converted to Mormonism in 1833. He was assigned to England as a missionary in 1839 and became President of the church's European Mission in 1844. He later became its fourth President in 1889, the highest office within the church.
[36] *Wilford Woodruff's Journal, 1833–1898,* ed. Scott G. Kennedy, 9 vols. (Midvale, Utah: Signature Books, 1983), 1:426. During the first thirty days after his arrival in the area, Woodruff had baptized forty-five

Worcestershire, and it subsequently became the centre of Latter-day Saint activity in the area. According to Mormon sources almost a whole congregation of United Brethren converted to the Mormon faith.[37]

As with any proselytising faith, the determination to spread its message would not have been constrained by geography. Ron Dennis suggests that the Welsh names of some of the converts and the geographical proximity to Wales allows for the possibility that the Mormon message spread into Wales through these contacts.[38] One of these converts, James Palmer, was baptized as a Latter-day Saint on 13 April 1840. He recorded his proselytising travels to Skenfrith and Monmouth with James Morgan,[39] a convert from Dymock, Gloucestershire. Whether they were the first Mormon missionaries in Wales is impossible to determine,[40] although comments made by Willard Richards[41] suggest Morgan was not a dynamic figure in the missionary endeavour.[42] With some expectation, Richards wrote:

> this is the field where the Lord wants Elder John Moon immediately after the conference – the door is open here … Bro. James is good but he is young & timid. I wish that Bro. Moon were here now – I feel he is the man for this place.[43]

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preachers and one hundred and sixty members of the United Brethren, who had access to one chapel and forty-five houses in which to preach, all of which were licensed according to law.

[37] For the story of this successful mission see V. Ben Bloxham, 'The Apostolic Foundations, 1840-1841', *Truth Will Prevail*, pp. 133-44. See also: http://www.cotswolds.info/worcestershire/oldest-mormon-chapel.shtml accessed 28 July 2017. The *Monmouthshire Beacon* (21 November 1840), reported the success of the Mormon mission in Gloucestershire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire with 320 members by the date of publication.

[38] Dennis, 'The Welsh and the Gospel', pp. 236-37. Dennis also notes that James Morgan had family members in Skenfrith, in Monmouthshire and may have wished to share his new faith with them. Morgan was baptized on 18 May 1840 in Dymock, and on the same day was ordained a priest.

[39] According to Palmer, Morgan had grandparents in Skenfrith, James Palmer, *Travels and Ministry in the Gospel* (Reminiscences), Church History Library, Call Number MS 1752, p. 14.

[40] http://welshmormon.byu.edu/Resource_Info.aspx?id=2160 accessed 26 March 2013.

[41] Willard Richards (1804-54) was born in Massachusetts, USA. He was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve and served on the British mission between 1840-41.

[42] Willard Richards' letter to Brigham Young 8 June 1840, Brigham Young office files: *General correspondence, Incoming, 1840-1877, Letters from Church Leaders and Others, 1840-1877,* Church History Library https://dcms.lds.org/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?dps_pid=IE3977662 accessed 20 May 2016.

[43] Willard Richards' letter to Brigham Young 8 June 1840, Brigham Young office files: *General correspondence, Incoming, 1840-1877, Letters from Church Leaders and Others, 1840-1877,* Church History Library https://dcms.lds.org/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?dps_pid=IE3977662 accessed 20 May 2016. Moon was from Wrightington, Lancashire and became a Latter-day Saint along with a number of his family during the initial stages of the British mission in 1837. See Evans, *A Century of "Mormonism" in Great Britain*, p. 54. It appears that unbeknown to Richards, Moon had emigrated to America on 6 June 1840, *Millennial Star*, vol.1, no.5 (September, 1840), p.136. Moon had the distinction of leading the first emigration of forty-one Latter-day Saints, sailing from Liverpool to New York aboard the *Britannia*. See Evans, p. 227.

Furthermore, this letter from Willard Richards to Brigham Young was written from 'Little Garway near Monmouth'[44] 8 June 1840, and reveals how close Latter-day Saint missionaries were to Wales by the early summer of 1840. Richards' letter suggests that the mission did not simply drift into Wales during *ad hoc* visits to places such as Skenfrith, but was planned, even at this early point. More significantly, he describes the location of Little Garway as '20 miles from Dymock (not quite in Wales as we supposed) but eight or nine miles from Monmouth …'[45] which suggests the intention had been to initiate a base of operations in Wales itself, or that Richards believed that this had already occurred. As this statement was made in June 1840, it preceded the Flintshire mission by four months.[46]

Also, in the summer of 1840, three months before the start of the Latter-day Saints' mission in Cloy, Flintshire, Woodruff wrote a letter to his wife stating:

> The foundation is now laid in such a manner in this country, and new doors opening in England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales, so that we have every reason to expect a greater increase for three months to come, than has been in the three that are past.[47]

Though lacking in detail, Woodruff's comment provides evidence that confirms that missionary activity was already in progress in Wales in the summer of 1840, three months before the generally accepted beginning of the mission to Wales initiated by the General Conference meeting in October that year. It seems possible that Woodruff, who had known such success at Gadfield Elm, Worcestershire, would have been keen to spread the message of Mormonism as far and wide as possible, and the proximity of the Welsh border with Herefordshire, Gloucestershire and Worcestershire would have meant missionaries would inevitably have crossed into Wales. Furthermore, James Palmer recorded that during November and December 1840 he had obtained a house for preaching in Monmouth.[48]

By April 1841 Woodruff reported to the *Millennial Star*:

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[44] Little Garway is 9.7 miles from Monmouth. Garway is 7.3 miles from Monmouth.
[45] Willard Richards' letter to Brigham Young, 8 June 1840. Brigham Young office files: *General correspondence, Incoming, 1840-1877, Letters from Church Leaders and Others, 1840-1877,* Church History Library.
https://dcms.lds.org/delivery/DeliveryManagerServlet?dps_pid=IE3977662 accessed 20 May 2016.
[46] *Millennial Star*, vol.1, no.6 (October, 1840), p. 165.
[47] The letter was dated 8 July 1840, Manchester*; Times and Seasons,* vol. 1, no. 11, (September, 1840) p. 168.
[48] Palmer, *Travels and Ministry in the Gospel* p. 14.

> I preached in the town of Monmouth to a full congregation, several offered themselves for baptism after meeting, which was left for others to administer. I attended the Garway Conference on 8 March.[49]

When the same report appeared in America,[50] Woodruff, perhaps to clarify his activity for his distant readers, states, 'I spent one evening in Monmouth, on the borders of Wales'. Woodruff's comment about Garway implies his visit to Monmouth was prior to 8 March 1841, where there was already a 'full congregation', although, of course, not necessarily all converts.

Despite the lack of any detailed information, in September 1841 the *Millennial Star* published a brief report on the activities of Levi Richards[51] in Monmouthshire. In his anti-Mormon booklet, Henry Caswall noted the places where Mormonism had spread:

> Elder Richards went to Monmouthshire, where he met the officers of a Mormon conference, representing one hundred and thirty-four members, and found 'a spirit of union and effort in the cause of Zion, superior to any former occasion of the kind.' About twenty had been baptized, three were 'ordained,' and a dozen additional places which had been opened for preaching were well established.[52]

Further evidence for the progression of the mission in south-east Wales can be found in a letter from Lorenzo Barnes, published in the *Millennial Star* in 1842.[53] He wrote that he had preached in Cheltenham and then moved on to Lea where he preached twice. He states:

> I then went on to Garway, were I preached five times to overflowing congregations; from thence I visited Abergavenny, and preached three times. The work appears to be upon the onward march in all these places.[54]

Barnes' statement confirms that the Latter-day Saints' mission was making progress in Abergavenny by 1842.

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[49] *Millennial Star*, vol.1, no.12 (April, 1841), p. 305.
[50] *Times and Seasons* vol.2, no.15 (1 June 1841), p. 435.
[51] Levi Richards (b.1789 Massachusetts, USA) served as a High Priest. He began his first mission to Britain in 1840. See: *Millennial Star*, vol.1, no.11 (March 1841): pp. 283-84. He travelled in the Monmouth and Abergavenny area, supporting James Palmer and John Needham. He frequently mentions the same people and places as Needham and Palmer.
[52] Henry Caswall, *The Prophet of the Nineteenth Century; or The Rise, Progress, and present State of the Mormons, or Latter-day Saints: to which is Appended, an Analysis of the Book of Mormon,* (London: J. G. F. & J. Rivington, 1843), p. 135. Caswall attributed this report to the *Times and Seasons*, (Nauvoo, Il.) vol.3, no.4 (15 December, 1841), p. 636. See also: *Millennial Star*, vol.2, no.5 (September, 1841), pp. 76-77).
[53] Lorenzo Barnes (1812-1842) was born in Massachusetts, USA and converted to Mormonism in 1833. He became a member of the First Quorum of Seventy in 1835 and held office as a high priest in 1838. He arrived in Britain as a missionary in 1841.
[54] *Millennial Star*, vol.2, no.12 (April, 1842), p. 190.

Dennis concludes his comments on this early period of the history of the Welsh mission between 1840-42 by noting that after nearly two years of proselytizing in the border towns of south Wales, there were only forty-four members.[55] It is this small number of conversions that has led to Latter-day Saints' activity in south-east Wales being overlooked in favour of the initial rapid progress in Overton.[56] However, while the number of conversions was somewhat unimpressive, this does not covey the level of activity being conducted by the Latter-day Saints in this area of Monmouthshire.

Therefore, there is evidence to suggest that while Royle and Cooke were beginning their mission in Cloy and Overton, a parallel mission was in progress in south-east Wales, and the borders of Herefordshire, one that was more energetic at an earlier stage than has previously been assumed, even if it met with little success. This may be further supported by the fact that the first place names in south-east Wales to be listed were originally linked to the Garway,[57] and Birmingham[58] conferences, clearly indicating that these areas had experienced significant Mormon activity during the years before William Henshaw became President of the church at Merthyr Tydfil in 1844,[59] with little indication of any serious or sustained opposition.

The most significant evidence that the early Mormon mission to Wales needs to be reassessed comes from the writing of John Needham. Needham had been born in Leeds in 1819, and had converted to Mormonism while working in Preston in 1837. He kept a personal journal of his missionary travels, from which a great deal may be learned about the Latter-day Saints' mission in Herefordshire and Monmouthshire, between 1840-42.[60] It was at the Manchester Conference in October 1840, that just as Royle and Cooke had done, Needham answered the call to 'labour in the Lord's

[55] Dennis, 'The Welsh and the Gospel', p. 241.
[56] Records are sparse for this period. The Overton branch remains the first organized branch as far as the available records are concerned.
[57] Abergavenny, Monmouth, Llanfoist, Llanthony were originally part of the Garway conference. *Millennial Star*, vol.3, no.2 (June, 1842), p. 29: vol.4, no.12 (April, 1844), p. 195
[58] Beaufort, Rhymney, Tredegar, Merthyr Tydfil, Aberdare were originally part of the Birmingham conference. *Millennial Star*, vol.4, no.12 (April, 1844), p. 195.
[59] Henshaw went to Merthyr Tydfil in 1843, and was given the presidency of the newly created Merthyr Tydfil conference at the General Conference held in Manchester in April 1844. *Millennial Star*, vol.4, no.12 (April, 1844), p. 197.
[60] John Needham, *Autobiography and Journal, 1840 August- 1842 December,* Call Number: MS 25895, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Church History Library, p. 173. He emigrated to Nauvoo in March 1843.

vineyard,' and was sent to Herefordshire.[61] From Garway he began his travels into Wales. Reflecting on his ministry, he wrote:

> In 1840 I went to Monmouthshire and Wales, and with God's blessing was enabled to do a great work there, for the people were quite ready to receive the gospel … I will give a sample of how I introduced the gospel in several towns and cities, by referring to my first visit in Abergavenny, in Monmouthshire. I stood up in the Market place, sang a hymn, prayed and then preached the gospel of Jesus Christ in my own simple way, but with great zeal and confidence … in a few weeks I had a flourishing branch of the Church started. Making that my headquarters, I organized many branches of the Church in Monmouthshire and Wales, getting help from other Elders and many that I ordained and sent out to preach. [62]

In a letter written about 1892, Needham[63] insisted that he was instrumental in bringing the Mormon message to south-east Wales.[64] Needham represented the Garway conference until 1843, which although in Herefordshire, included Abergavenny and Monmouth at this time. Needham wrote that he had served in Staffordshire and Birmingham but moved to his 'new fields in the fall of 1840.'[65] He claimed that he did not know James Burnham who served the church in north Wales, but accepted that the references to him in the *Millennial Star* were a reliable source of evidence for his labour, thus suggesting that he did not apply any special significance to the activity in Flintshire. He did not remember anyone by the name of Henshaw, although Elders Levi Richards and Curtis helped him in the Garway conference. He further added:

> I will give you the names of some of the Branches we organized—Abergaveny, [sic] Lantoney [sic] Abbey, Longtown, Hewshovell [sic], Lanfoist [sic], Llanellen, Lancathy [sic], the Welsh Iron Works. Bros. Palmer, Taysom, Harris, and others laboured with me. Some branches was [sic] organized in the winter of 40 and 41 and most of them in the year 1841. It kept 6 or 7 elders busy traveling from branch to branch in the years 1841 and 1842, for we had quite a conference of members and officers … Many of our branches was [sic] in the Welsh Hills, or I might say in small valleys between the Hills such as Lantoney

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[61] *Millennial Star*, vol.1, no.6 (October, 1840), p. 167.
[62] Andrew Jenson, *LDS Biographical Encyclopedia*, vol. 1, (Deseret News, Salt Lake City), pp. 414-16, 1941.
[63] The letter was written from Logan City, Utah (about 1892) to Dr. R. A. Hasbrouch, Salt Lake City (Ms d 3327 – Church History Library). See http://welshmormon.byu.edu/Resource_Info.aspx?id=11940 accessed 1 December 2015.
[64] http://welshmormon.byu.edu/Resource_Info.aspx?id=11940 accessed 18 September 2013.
[65] See 'Needham, John - the first missionary in South Wales: LETTER OF JOHN NEEDHAM (Ms d 3327 – Church History Library) http://welshmormon.byu.edu/Resource_Info.aspx?id=11940 accessed 1 December 2015.

> [sic] Abbey and Longtown. Those in Monmouth even was [sic] just on the border of Wales and spoke the Welsh language.[66]

Needham maintained that he could not categorically claim to be the first Elder that preached in Wales, but knew of no one prior to his arrival, and if Henshaw laboured in Wales before him, then this would have been before the autumn of 1840 and the year 1841. When Needham left for America in March 1843, he had been told that Henshaw was labouring in Abergavenny among the 'Welsh Saints', but he could not confirm this was the case. He concluded 'I believe I was the first Elder that preached in Abergavenney [sic].'

While he was in charge of the Garway conference he ordained 'Elders and others and sent them out into Monmouth and Wales' and he claimed to have been involved in organising branches at places such as Abergavenny, Llanthony, and Llanfoist. He noted that James Palmer had worked with him and some branches were organized in the winter of 1840-41 with most being organized in 1841 thus confirming the view that a mission to south–east Wales was in progress at this early date.[67] Taking Needham's own statements into account, it appears that we may conclude that the first Latter-day Saint missionary activity in south Wales appeared in the border counties of Monmouthshire and that this had probably begun shortly after the successes experienced in Worcestershire and Herefordshire. At the very least, evidence suggests that this was contemporaneous with the mission in Flintshire. Furthermore, the concept of a deliberate and direct Welsh mission at this time may be somewhat artificial. There was instead an aspect of fluidity regarding plans to proselytise various areas including the English border areas.

As we shall see below, the Latter-day Saint missionaries experienced various forms of opposition wherever they began to preach, but they made comparatively little comment about it, suggesting that this was sporadic and tolerable, even if occasionally very unpleasant. Although reports of opposition in Flintshire appeared in the *Millennial Star,* no reports appear on the progress or opposition experienced in south-east Wales, suggesting that this was not serious enough to require mention.

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[66]Needham, John - the first missionary in South Wales: LETTER OF JOHN NEEDHAM (Ms d 3327 – Church History Library) http://welshmormon.byu.edu/Resource_Info.aspx?id=11940 accessed 1 December 2015. It is difficult to identify Hewshovel and Llancathy with any certainty, but they appear to refer to places in the surrounding district of Abergavenny.

[67] Although Ron Dennis did not originally mention the foundational work of Needham in south-east Wales, his subsequent research has led to him to acknowledge Needham as 'the first missionary in South Wales' on his website http://welshmormon.byu.edu/Resource_Info.aspx?id=11940 accessed 25 April 2016.

The lack of such reporting may also explain why the Monmouthshire has not received the same attention of the Flintshire mission, and thus has been somewhat underestimated in the construction of the story of the early Latter-day Saint mission to Wales.

Flintshire: Success and Opposition

The initial success of the Mormon missionaries in Flintshire has been well documented.[68] Dennis has observed 'opposition in Wales generally grew as the Church did',[69] and this appears to have been the case in Flintshire.

Opposition to the Latter-day Saints took a variety of forms. One form appears to have been constant throughout the 1840s, and that was opposition in the form of the printed word. Shortly after the arrival of Mormonism in Britain, tracts, pamphlets and newspaper stories appeared regarding the origins of this new religion, and in particular the character of its founder. The power of this medium to inform opinion, disseminate information and create public awareness is clear through the repetition of particular claims in publications from all parts of Great Britain.

The first and most influential anti-Mormon publication was by Richard Livesey, and was published in 1838.[70] From the earliest days of the Mormon mission in Wales, Livesey's claims were repeated time and again as they had been in England, and based on these claims, newspaper stories concerning Joseph Smith presented him as untrustworthy and his message as unreliable.[71] Livesey's tract described the supposedly questionable character of Joseph Smith and his family, and their involvement in 'money-digging' that is, using certain arts to find treasure for a fee. Livesey claimed the Smith family was well-known as fortune-tellers and suggested that the purpose of Mormonism was to obtain money for a set of dishonest men who, from the beginning had been involved in fraudulent activities. He also claimed that

[68] Dennis, 'The Welsh and the Gospel', p. 238; R. L. Evans*, A Century of "Mormonism " in Great Britain*, p. 184-85;
[69] Dennis, 'The Welsh and the Gospel', p. 241.
[70] Richard Livesey, *An Exposure of Mormonism, being a Statement of facts Relating to the Self-Styled 'Latter-day Saint,' and the Origin of the Book of Mormon* (Preston: J. Livesey, 1838). Livesey was a Methodist Episcopal minister, who although originally from West Bradford, near Clitheroe in England, had recently returned from ministering in Winchendon, Massachusetts. A large portion of the material was taken from E.D. Howe's *Mormonism Unvailed* [sic].
[71] Even before the Mormon message had entered Wales the *Silurian* (24 November 1838) had printed an article that conveyed this impression.

Solomon Spaulding's fiction *Manuscript Found* was the origin for Mormonism, and argued that the fact that members of the Mormon Church were expected to tithe and consecrate their property to the church indicated that money was the prime motivation of its leaders. The tract was a reworking of arguments that had originated in America. However, he was the first in Britain to introduce a number of themes that would be used by numerous successive writers. These themes included the concept of the movement as a fraudulent moneymaking scheme that profited only a few individuals, the dubious character of Joseph Smith and his family, and the doubtful origins of *The Book of Mormon.*[72] Thus, the importance of this tract should not be underestimated.

These claims found their way into the *North Wales Chronicle*, 20 October 1840. Just three weeks after his arrival, Henry Royle reported that he had established a church of thirty-two members.[73] It appears that this success attracted the attention of the Welsh press, which responded with a number of accusations about the movement. The newspaper reiterated the key elements of Livesey's assertions for their Welsh readership, including the claim that Mormonism was little more than a money-making scheme.[74] The article stated:

> That any portion of our rural population should be the dupes of this religious imposture and absurdity is as strange as it is too true. Emissaries from some unknown quarter are actively engaged making proselytes 'with *considerable* and melancholy success.'[75]

No definition of this 'success' is given, but appears to be quantified by the willingness of some to sell their property and emigrate to America, which the *North Wales Chronicle* regarded as evidence that 'some worldly scheme is at the bottom of this, is more than probable, because *money transactions* are essential to the success of the enterprise.'[76]

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[72] Craig L. Foster *Penny Tracts and Polemics: A Critical Analysis of Anti-Mormon Pamphleteering in Great Britain (1837-1860),* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2002), p. 52.
[73] *Millennial Star*, vol.1, no.7 (November, 1840), p. 192.
[74] E.g. *Pembrokeshire Herald and General Advertiser* (18 July 1845); *Cambrian* (15 May 1841); *Amserau* 4 August 1848; *Seren Gomer* Cyf. XXIV, Rhif. 315 (Rhagfyr, 1841), pp. 373-74.
[75] *North Wales Chronicle* (20 October, 1840).
[76] *North Wales Chronicle* (20 October, 1840).

The *North Wales Chronicle* also revealed its opposition to Mormonism by repeating a number of claims concerning Smith that had already appeared in the British press.[77] It stated:

> Joseph Smith, jun., and his family, about the time he pretended to have discovered the book of Mormon, were known as fortune tellers and money diggers; and that their recourse to tricks of juggling for the purpose of finding money, which he said was hid in the earth about the time of the American revolution. In those arts, J. Smith, jun., was a noted practitioner.[78]

It added that Smith was 'known as a wicked man; that he was a cheat and a liar, and used profane language, being intemperate and quarrelsome.'[79] It denounced Smith's 'principal witness' Martin Harris as a liar and wife beater and Smith's other associate, Oliver Cowdery, as having been of good character before he met up with Smith. According to E. D. Howe's account *Mormonism Unvailed*, [80] to which the *North Wales Chronicle* directed its readers, Smith and Harris had planned to invent the story of the finding of the golden plates as part of a money making scheme. They had been known, it was claimed, for their delinquency within their community:

> They were regarded by the community generally as a lying, indolent set of fellows, in whom no confidence could be placed; and the younger Smith's character for the truth was so notoriously bad, that he could not be, and was not, believed when he was under oath … Smith confessed his object in pretending to find the plates was to make money; saying, when it is completed, my family will be placed on a level above the generality of mankind!![81]

However, this was not the first time a Welsh readership had been given information about Mormonism, or warned about Smith's supposedly dubious character. As early

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[77] E.g. *Morning Chronicle* (19 October, 1838); *Silurian* (24 November 1838); *Worcestershire Chronicle* (8 November, 1838); *Leeds Intelligencer* (1 August, 1840).
[78] *North Wales Chronicle* (20 October, 1840).
[79] *North Wales Chronicle* (20 October 1840).
[80] E. D. Howe, *Mormonism Unvailed,* For a discussion of the claims regarding Solomon Spaulding's work and the origins of Mormonism, see Lance D. Chase, 'Spaulding Manuscript', *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, p. 1402; e.g. *Leeds Intelligencer* (11 July 1840); *Preston Chronicle* (9 January 1841); *Staffordshire Advertiser* (26 December 1840); *Morning Chronicle* (9 January 1841); *The Gloucester Journal* (19 December 1840); *Gloucester Chronicle* (19 December 1840); *Hereford Journal* (20 December 1843); *Worcester Journal* (11 January 1844), etc. Notably, therefore the connection had appeared in the press on the borders of Wales http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/compoundobject/collection/EoM/id/4391/show/4231 accessed 12 February 2015. See also: Lester E. Bush, Jr., 'The Spaulding Theory Then and Now', *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, 10 (Autumn 1977): pp. 41-42.
[81] *North Wales Chronicle* (20 October 1840).

as 1838 the newspaper the *Silurian*[82] had recounted the origin of the *Book of Mormon* and suggested that this was Smith's invention. The comments by the *North Wales Chronicle* on the emerging Latter-day Saint mission in Flintshire reveal that views about the origins of Mormonism were deeply entrenched and difficult to quell. The press in Wales disseminated these views and created an unfavourable impression of the movement that almost certainly provided ammunition for its opponents. Latter-day Saints have always denied that there was any truth in these allegations, but similarities between the *Book of Mormon* and Spaulding's fiction, together with Smith's 'youthful indiscretion' regarding the use of a 'peep-stone' to make money from the unsuspecting, gave credence to such tales, whether deserved or undeserved. One of the most frequently used terms in the press to describe Smith was 'imposter' and one of the most regularly used descriptions of Mormonism was 'imposture'.[83] Those who became Latter-day Saints were most frequently described as 'dupes',[84] a popular term in newspapers of the 1840s and one often applied to a political context.

The *Millennial Star* was so incensed by the claims of the *North Wales Chronicle* that it prefaced Royle's report with a summary of the accusations made in the newspaper as '"AWFUL DELUSIONS!" "SHOCKING BLASPHEMY!" "DREADFUL FANATICISM!" "TERRIBLE DECEPTION!" "DAMNABLE HERESY!" …'[85]

It is impossible to tell whether the article in the *North Wales Chronicle* influenced the opponents of the Latter-day Saints at Overton, but the *Millennial Star* had clearly been apprised of its content. James Burnham wrote to the *Millennial Star* in December 1840, to report on the progress of the mission. By this time, fifty-six converts had been baptized at Overton. However, there was local opposition at this stage emanating primarily from local ministers. Burnham wrote that 'The priests have raised [sic] in opposition to the truth, and they slander and falsify men's characters',[86] though no details were given.[87]

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[82] *Silurian* (24 November 1838).
[83] E.g. *Morning Post* (11 October 1838); *Hereford Journal* (10 November 1840); *Principality* (23 November 1849), etc.
[84] E.g. *Cambrian* (15 May 1841); *Welshman* (9 August 1844); *Morning Post* (4 November 1846), etc.
[85] *Millennial Star*, vol.1, no.7 (November, 1840), p. 191.
[86] *Millennial Star*, vol.1, no.6 (December, 1840), pp. 212-13.
[87] It is not possible to identify these 'priests' and the term is used in a generic sense. Records reveal that at this date, Cloy had a Primitive Methodist chapel, and there was an Anglican church and a

Another report on the continuing success and opposition experienced by Burnham at Overton appeared in the *Millennial Star* in January 1841:

> I have been stoned twice since I came to this place, only once received harm … I held a discussion, and had a good opportunity to preach the gospel to them, in their own chapel in this place, where they had previously closed doors against our preaching ... We have in this region near 100 who have obeyed the gospel …[88]

This reveals a strategy that appears to have been common at the outset of the Latter-day Saints' British mission, namely to gain permission to use an existing chapel as a base from which to preach their message. Although having been granted permission to preach in an existing place of worship, it is perhaps unsurprising that, when more was learned about the distinctive Mormon message, the initial welcome turned to opposition. While this was associated in Mormon minds with the minister's fear of the loss of members of the congregation, it may of course have been due to an increased awareness and genuine rejection of Mormon teachings. However, in Burnham's report, after considerable initial hostility, the missionaries were given an opportunity to preach in a local chapel, although this accommodating attitude did not last. In a letter dated 10 February 1841, Burnham reported that although they continued to be successful, opposition had intensified:

> We have great opposition, - the priests are combined against us, and they stir up the baser sort against us, in order to disturb our meetings. If we hold meetings at a private house that has not been licensed they are sure to enter complaint and have them fined … We have many places to preach in yet; we have opened a place in Oswestry and Whittington, and have commenced baptizing at Oswestry – the prospect is good, although the opposition is great… I have organized two branches of the church, consisting of about 150 members…[89]

Two accusations are significant here, namely, that the 'priests' encouraged some of the local ruffians to disturb the meetings (an accusation later repeated regarding the ministers of Merthyr Tydfil),[90] and that the law regarding the need for preaching licences was used to ensure Mormon missionaries were fined.[91] This latter *modus*

Methodist chapel in Overton. Thus, there is a possibility that the opposition experienced at Cloy emanated from at least one of these sources.

[88] *Millennial Star,* vol.1, no.9 (January, 1841), pp. 238-39.

[89] *Millennial Star*, vol.1, no.11 (March, 1841), p. 284.

[90] *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Rhif. 24, (Mehefin, 1848), p. 85.

[91] This is a reference to the legal requirement for a preaching license for Nonconformist preachers under the terms of the so-called Act of Toleration 1689. For full details of the requirements of this law see Hywel D. Emmanuel, 'Dissent in the Counties of Glamorgan and Monmouth', *National Library of Wales Journal*, vol.8, no.4, Winter, 1954, pp. 399-418.

operandi of the opponents of Mormonism appears to have been used regularly against the Mormon missionaries. For example, at Monmouth James Palmer had found it necessary to obtain a preaching licence, which he read aloud in public.[92] Captain Dan Jones ensured that there were preaching licenses in place for Latter-day Saint meeting venues,[93] suggesting that he was a well aware that this tactic was used by the opponents of Mormonism,[94] but also demonstrating the Latter-day Saints' willingness to work within the law.

Dennis offers an alternative explanation for the increasing opposition:

> The rate of increase during the first four months after missionaries were assigned to Overton is astounding … And in a small village such as Overton one can easily imagine the excited reaction of the local religious leaders as their parishioners, the source of at least part of their income, changed their allegiance and left their pews in favour of the despised Mormons.[95]

A number of conclusions may be drawn from this evidence from the Cloy and Overton district. Local ministers were regarded as responsible for the opposition experienced and it was claimed these ministers employed certain disreputable characters to disturb Mormon meetings, though such an allegation is difficult to substantiate. Dennis suggests their motivation was a fear of loss of income as their congregations dwindled. Within the first six months of its activity in north Wales, the Mormon mission was clearly gaining followers despite suffering local opposition. While unpleasant, the character of this opposition does not seem to have been particularly serious, and Burnham does not appear to have been overly distressed by it.

As far as the mission in Overton is concerned, information in addition to that which appeared in the *Millennial Star* can be found in James Burgess' journal.[96] This records his missionary travels between January and October 1841. Not all entries are dated,

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[92] Palmer, *Travels and Ministry in the Gospel*, pp. 38-39.
[93] E.g. Evidence shows that Captain Dan Jones ensured that he had applied and received a license for preaching. E.g. Dan Jones of the parish of Merthyr Tydfil, application no. 311, 16 December 1848, a schoolroom in the village of Llanfabon (endorsed 18 December 1848), *Emmanuel*, vol.9, no.1 (Summer, 1955), p. 28. Dan Jones of the parish of Merthyr Tydfil, application no. 583, 16 December 1848, New Inn, Penydarren (endorsed 18 December 1848); *Emmanuel*, vol.9, no.2 (Winter, 1955), p. 223; Dan Jones of the parish of Merthyr Tydfil, application no. 674, 16 December 1848, the King's Head, Castle Street, Tredegar, (endorsed 18 December 1848); *Emmanuel*, vol.9, no.1 (Summer, 1955), p. 41.
[94] *Glamorgan, Monmouthshire and Brecon Gazette and Merthyr Guardian* (March 27 1843), recounted the case of a Latter-day Saint preacher, removed from the streets of Cardiff for his own protection. He possessed a preaching licence in a different district. His request that he should be allowed to continue preaching on the streets of Cardiff was dismissed, but he was not fined.
[95] Ronald D. Dennis, 'The Beginnings of Mormonism in North Wales.' http://welshmormon.byu.edu/Resource_Info.aspx?id=2389 accessed 16 August 2016.
[96] James Burgess was born in Lancashire in 1818, and baptized as a Latter-day Saint in October 1840, joining the missionaries in Flintshire in January 1841. He emigrated to America in September 1842.

thus it is not always possible to confirm the exact whereabouts of the missionaries on any given date. However, they provide an insight into Latter-day Saint activity for this ten-month period, the opposition they experienced and their response to such opposition.

First, Burgess' journal provides details of the area visited by the missionaries, and contains clear evidence that the missionary activities were not confined to Wales or focused simply on making Welsh converts. From the base at Overton and 'the Cloy', Burgess visited other Welsh towns and villages such as Lightwood Green, Welshpool, Newtown, Montgomery, Llanfaircaereinion, Llanamonech (sic) (Llanymynech), Berriew, Ruabon, and Pool Quay Montgomeryshire.[97] However, it becomes clear that Burgess, often with Royle and Cooke, crossed the border into England, and visited Ellesmere, Colemere, Llansilin, Shrewsbury, Ironbridge and Berrington. He not only travelled south to Montgomeryshire, but also spent time in Shropshire, confirming this was a mission intended to reach as many places as possible within a radius of approximately forty-five miles, be they in Wales or in England.

Secondly, there is evidence that on arrival in the places recorded, the missionaries employed various strategies in order to propagate their message. They usually began by preaching in the open air, which was sometimes quite successful, as on one occasion at Oswestry when, according to Burgess, they addressed four to five hundred people.[98] Following this first step, it appears to have been common practice among them to attempt to use a local place of worship as a venue where they could invite people to hear their message, though this tactic seems to have been rarely successful, and even permission tentatively given was frequently withdrawn. When Burgess visited Llanfaircaereinion in early April 1841, he and Frederick Cooke called at the home of a Wesleyan Methodist preacher, hoping to gain permission to use his chapel. Unfortunately, he was not at home, so they sought out the local Baptist minister. While this minister at first agreed to the request, he later made excuses and withdrew his permission. At Llansilin all requests for the use of a chapel were turned down. Regarding Burgess and Cooke's first visit to Welshpool, Burgess wrote 'we tried to get a room for preaching in and we had thought of Preaching in the streets

[97] The mention in the *Millennial Star* in June 1848 of Good Friday gathering in Shrewsbury of nearly one hundred Saints assembled from places in the North Wales branch of the Liverpool conference such as Pool Quay and Ellesmere, implies the significance of the work of the missionary work of figures like Burgess.
[98] *James Burgess' Journal*.

and there we tried to get a Chapel and went to see three or four of the Members and there got liberty to have the Chapel.'[99] Shortly after, upon his return to Welshpool, they 'preached at night in the Babtists [sic] Chapel to a pretty fair congregation.' In March 1841, they engaged in a planned public 'discussion' with some Methodist preachers. It had been agreed that they should concentrate on a discussion of the Bible, but Burgess complained that the Methodists took the debate beyond the agreed terms, although he provided no detail.

There is some evidence of hostility in the journal, with incidents of stone-throwing, and a particularly unpleasant incident in Ironbridge when Burgess injured his shoulder after being pulled off a chair. However, there are also examples of favourable attitudes towards the Mormon missionaries. In Newtown, a local schoolteacher offered Burgess and Cooke a room, but on this occasion they accepted an offer by another person who loaned them a larger room for one week. On a second visit to Newtown in the early summer of 1841, they managed to borrow a Wesleyan chapel in which to hold an evening meeting. Their employment of the local town crier to advertise this event resulted in a large and 'attentive' congregation. Despite the frequently reiterated claim in the press that Mormonism was a 'money-making' scheme', the impoverished lifestyle of the missionaries suggests they had no interest in making money, and this accusation never appears to have been directed towards them. On the contrary, Burgess depicted their lives as one of hardship and frequent hunger and referred to instances when the missionaries slept in barns. Burgess and his co-workers, including Royle and Cooke, travelled extensively, living by the principle, often mentioned in the early journals of these missionaries, of travelling 'without purse or scrip'. They were reliant on the hospitality of local people to provide them with food and shelter. Burgess noted that in Montgomery, the people were too poor to help the missionaries, while in places such as Welshpool, they were given money to pay for their lodgings and on one occasion, a woman who had heard their preaching offered to find them a bed for the night, and gave them supper and breakfast the following morning. The authenticity of the early missionaries' commitment to their message cannot be questioned. 'The Pant', outside Oswestry, became a base during their travels. Thus, their experience was not always negative, and sometimes they were met with kindness and acceptance. However, although Burgess often described his audience as 'large' and 'attentive' his journal does not

[99] *James Burgess' Journal*.

record any actual conversions. On one preaching visit to Llanymynech some of the crowd promised to be baptized when he returned to the area. However, he does not record that they fulfilled this commitment.

Thirdly, Burgess, in his journal, provides evidence of the type of opposition experienced by the missionaries. Shortly after his arrival at Overton they experienced a 'rough' meeting when 'some men come [sic] and tied the door and smoked some sulfer [sic] through the key hole and when we came out they followed us and rung old cans and things after us …'[100] This evidently did not deter them, and shortly afterwards during one of their frequent visits to Oswestry, they 'preached at night to a large congregation they were very rough they threw stones through the windows and kicked up such a row in the room and began to push shout and scream.'[101] On another occasion at Oswestry, the door of the room they were preaching in was tied and the lock broken. At Ellesmere stones were thrown at the Latter-day Saints while they were preaching in a chapel, to the extent that one woman tried to protect herself against the volley by putting up an umbrella. At Colemere they encountered 'a gang of rough men twenty or more of them … with old cans … all manner of tinkling things' disrupted the meeting and followed them 'driving us before them … close to our heels' as they travelled on to Ellesmere. On a later visit to Welshpool in the summer of 1841, Burgess noted that they were moved on from preaching in the market place by a 'policeman', who threatened them with gaol if they did not comply, despite Burgess' protestation that he was a licensed preacher.

Burgess also provides evidence that opposition originated from a number of ministers. In April 1841, he preached at Llanymynech, where after preaching in the open air he was denounced by a preacher from the Primitive Methodists. A few days later in Montgomery, another Primitive Methodist preacher questioned the Latter-day Saints about the *Book of Mormon.* This is one of the rare occasions when Burgess recorded the topic that caused the opposition. Burgess wrote:

> He said we did not preach from the Bible but we had got another book which we preached from. He wanted to look at our book so we let him look at it. As it happened it was the Bible so he was deceived. He wanted to know if we had not another book which we believed in We [sic] told him we had and we could prove it to be true from the Bible.[102]

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[100] *James Burgess' Journal*. See also, Dennis, 'The Welsh and the Gospel', p. 239.
[101] *James Burgess' Journal.*
[102] *James Burgess' Journal*.

The outcome was that Burgess noted, 'he said he should preach the night following against us and prove that we did not preach the gospel the Primitive Methodists were quite ashamed of him for he let the enemy overcome him and went in a passion.'[103] Later that month, while preaching in Llanymynech, a 'church parson' tried to stop them by interrupting their preaching. However, Burgess commented that he was too drunk to make sense, with a boot on one foot and a shoe on the other. At Berriew, Burgess and his companions asked the Wesleyans if they might be allowed to preach at their place of worship. Although some agreed, others refused and the request was denied.

It appears that the most notable opposition experienced by Burgess and his companions, including Henry Royle, usually came from either Primitive Methodists or Wesleyans in the area in which they travelled, probably because they were the most prominent of the denominations in that part of the country.[104] There is very little information about the grounds for opposition, but it is noteworthy that when Burgess recorded the content of a disagreement, it revolved around the Latter-day Saints' belief in the *Book of Mormon.*

Burgess made little reference to any success in terms of conversions, but wrote often about large groups of 'attentive' listeners. It is clear that the arrival of the missionaries in the various towns and villages often engendered public interest, but no information is given about the beginnings of the local branches in these places.

James Burgess' journal, then, provides a picture of the developing ministry that began at Cloy, Overton, but was not confined to this area. It also reveals some of the early opposition to the missionaries, sometimes emerging from conflict with local ministers, and sometimes originating in harassment from local ruffians intent on disrupting Mormon meetings. Wherever they took their message in Wales and across the English border, there was often some kind of opposition – being moved on by police, challenged by ministers, and occasional stone throwing. We may conclude that while there was often antagonism to the Latter-day Saints and their message, the missionaries suffered no serious harm, and they seem to have accepted that this was an inevitable consequence of their ministry, with Burgess noting on one occasion,

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[103] *James Burgess' Journal.*
[104] http://www.welshchapels.org/nonconformity/wesleyan-methodists/wesleyan-pre-1851/ accessed 29 July 2107. This website provides maps indicating the distribution of Nonconformist chapels pre-1851.

following stones being thrown at the windows, 'we thought about the Apostles when they were in the flesh preaching and did not mind them.'[105] Harassment and unpleasantness most certainly accompanied their public preaching on many occasions, but clearly no serious danger existed, for Burgess and his companions continued to return to the places they had visited, time and again. This source therefore suggests that despite occasional encounters with Methodists, there appears to have been no official or organized opposition or persecution of the missionaries.

Monmouthshire: Success and Opposition

Ron Dennis has suggested that James Morgan,[106] and James Palmer[107] from Dymock, Gloucestershire, may have begun evangelising in an unofficial capacity on the Welsh borders.[108] Although records are scant regarding this period in the history of the Mormon mission, James Palmer and John Needham recorded their travels and this provides valuable information about the activities of the Latter-day Saints during the period 1841-42. Although Ron Dennis has made brief references to information found in James' Palmer's journal,[109] neither Dennis nor any other historian writing about the Welsh Mormon mission have employed these resources to develop a picture of Mormon activity in Wales at this time.

Although detail is sometimes lacking, these journals paint a picture of the developing Latter-day Saint movement in Monmouthshire and enable us to learn where the missionaries travelled and preached their message, the strategies they employed, and the opposition they encountered. Thus they provide invaluable evidence that widens our knowledge and understanding of a number of aspects regarding Latter-day Saint activity at this time.

First, the accounts of Palmer and Needham enable us to understand the scope of the mission. It would appear that Palmer began his missionary activity at Skenfrith. This small village on the border with England may have been chosen because his companion James Morgan had grandparents living there.[110] However, opposition

[105] *James Burgess' Journal*.
[106] Dennis, 'The Welsh and the Gospel', pp. 236-7.
[107] Dennis, 'The Welsh and the Gospel', pp. 240-41.
[108] According to the 'Minutes of the Conference held at Gadfield Elm chapel in Worcestershire, England, June 14th, 1840' Palmer was given the office of priest at Kilcott (about five miles from Dymock in Gloucestershire), *Millennial Star*, vol.1, no.4 (August 1840) p. 84.
[109] Dennis, 'The Welsh and the Gospel', pp. 239-240.
[110] Dennis, 'The Welsh and the Gospel', p. 240.

caused him to move on to Llanthony in the early part of 1841. Although Palmer initially received 'cold treatment' at Llanthony, it would later become one of the places most frequently visited by the Latter-day Saint missionaries.[111] According to Needham his first preaching excursion to Monmouth began on 4 January 1841. Palmer's writing reveals that he had made frequent visits to Monmouth from November 1840. Throughout 1841, Palmer and others visited Monmouth on a regular, sometimes weekly, basis,[112] where Wilford Woodruff was preaching to a 'full congregation' in Monmouth by March 1841.[113]

Secondly, the journals of Palmer and Needham supply evidence that the establishment of homes, which offered support to the itinerant missionaries, appears to have been a feature of the Mormon mission. It is from the journals of Palmer and Needham that we learn that private homes played an important part in the early years of the Welsh Mormon mission

Palmer, accompanied by Elder James Barnes[114] from Garway, visited a Methodist chapel in Monmouth on 27 December 1840, where they asked to be allowed to preach, just as other missionaries had done. Although this request was declined, some of the congregation attended a Latter-day Saint meeting later that evening, although no mention is made of the location. Their message was not well received and the meeting became noisy with the response from the crowd being that 'they had a light in their souls and had no need of ducking.'[115] This suggests that part of their message included the preaching of baptism by immersion. Despite the disappointing response, a man named Constance invited them to continue the exposition of their message at his home. Constance lived at the Swifts Buildings in Monmouth.[116] The following day the missionaries visited house to house with their message.

While in Monmouth, Palmer often preached at the Swifts Buildings, which the 1841 census shows was living accommodation for a number of families. Thomas Constance who lived there with his family frequently hosted the Latter-day Saint missionaries, including James Barnes. On one later occasion, in Monmouth, after speaking at the

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[111] Dennis, 'The Welsh and the Gospel', p. 241.
[112] E.g. 23 January 1841, 1 February 1841, 15 March 1841, 29 March 1841, 17 May, 23 May etc.
[113] *Millennial Star*, vol.1, no.12 (April, 1841), p. 305.
[114] James Barnes also kept a journal. See *James Barnes Diary, 1840 August -1841 June* Call Number: MS 1870, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Church History Library
[115] Palmer, *Travels and Ministry in the Gospel,* p. 16.
[116] 1841 Census. Thomas Constance, his wife and young son are the only family named Constance listed in Monmouth.

home of 'Brother Maston' in Chippenham Terrace, Palmer later that evening baptized John Evans, his wife Mary Evans and Mrs Maston, having previously baptized Evans' daughters Emma and Martha.[117] According to Palmer, John Evans was a local Baptist minister.[118]

Throughout Palmer's writing he provides evidence of the importance of private homes to the movement, such as the home of the Evans and Maston families in Chippenham Terrace, and the Constance family in Swifts Buildings, where Latter-day Saints gathered for house meetings and where itinerant missionaries could rely on support. He provides an insight into how the movement operated and the support given by local converts that enabled the work to continue. Furthermore, these homes in Monmouth were some of the earliest Mormon meeting places in Wales, a fact that has hitherto gone unnoticed. There is no record of these homes or families suffering any persecution from the opponents of the movement, or that the use of these homes as meeting places resulted in any local opposition.

In addition to Mormon activity in Monmouth, Palmer frequently visited Llanthony Abbey where he had first preached in February 1841.[119] His account provides evidence that this became another important resting place for the Mormon missionaries. In May 1841, Palmer visited a place he referred to as 'Little Park' where a certain Mrs Powles and her mother gave him and Elder Littlewood a warm welcome (although Mr Powles was at first hostile and unpleasant to the missionaries).[120] The location of 'Little Park' cannot be identified with any certainty, but it became an important base for the Mormon missionaries at this time.[121] John Needham was also a regular visitor, and his journal makes many references to visiting 'Park Bach' which he places as five and a half miles from Abergavenny.[122] The identification of 'Park Bach' with 'Little Park' is supported by the separate journal entries of Palmer and

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[117] Palmer, *Travels and Ministry in the Gospel*, p. 36. The baptism took place 'between the hours of 12 and 1 oclock [sic] at night'.
[118] Palmer, *Travels and Ministry in the Gospel*, p. 35. However, the 1841 census describes John Evans as a baker living at 3, Chippenham Terrace, Monmouth, with his wife Mary and daughters Martha and Emma. That this is the same John Evans is evidenced by the fact that Martin Littlewood, Palmer's travelling companion and preacher, is also listed on the census as living with the Evans family at this time. The Maston family lived next door. Martin Littlewood was born 1818 in Lancashire. He was baptized as a Latter-day Saint in February 1840.
[119] Palmer, *Travels and Ministry in the Gospel*, p. 27.
[120] Palmer, *Travels and Ministry in the Gospel* p. 37.
[121] This may be the 'Park Estate' of the Earl of Abergavenny, on which there were cottages at this time.
[122] John Needham, *Autobiography and Journal, 1840 August- 1842 December,* Call Number: MS 25895, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Church History Library, p. 173

Needham that record that they were both at this place in early June in 1841.[123] 'Little Park' appears to have been a place where the Mormon missionaries could return time and again to receive rest and sustenance and can be compared to 'The Kitchen' in Garway, the home of the Arthur family, where James Palmer frequently returned and where the meetings of the Garway Conference often took place.[124]

Palmer's record builds a picture of how the Latter-day Saints operated in the Abergavenny area and reveals the way in which they relied on local converts to support the work and provide bases from which they could plan their mission. This information reveals the importance of Abergavenny in the history of the Mormon mission during the early 1840s, an area which has received no attention. Wherever 'Little Park' was, it was a source of support and an important base for the early missionaries. There is no evidence that any of the supporters of the Latter-day Saints at places such as 'Little Park' were subject to any form of persecution or unpleasant opposition, and the acknowledgement of the hospitality given to the Latter-day Saint missionaries at Llanthony and 'Little Park' suggests that the picture of the Welsh mission should not simply be one of opposition and persecution.

It was from 'Little Park' that Palmer and Elder Martin Littlewood first ventured into Abersychan at the end of May or early June 1841, taking one 'Mrs Powles' with them, as she was familiar with the area.[125] This initial visit evidently bore fruit. By 1844, the Abersychan branch was made part of the newly formed Merthyr conference under the authority of William Henshaw.[126] Using 'Little Park' as a base, Palmer recorded his first 'visit to the Vortex [sic] ironworks 9 June 1841, Whales [sic]'.[127] On this first visit, Palmer preached to the people in the evening and they asked him to return the following week, which he did. He commented that some of the furnaces were not running at that time due to the depression in the iron industry and this had led to the

[123] Needham writes what often appears to be 'Park Baeth', but Palmer's reference to 'Little Park' indicates Needham means 'Park Bach'. Their separate journal references to a shared visit in June 1841 supports this.
[124] *Deseret News*, http://www.deseretnews.com/article/765550800/Picturing-history-Thomas-Arthur-home.html?pg=all accessed 8 June 2016. The missionaries often went to the 'Pigeon House', situated in Lugwardine, Herefordshire e.g. Palmer, *Travels and Ministry in the Gospel* p. 50. Meetings of the Garway Conference were sometimes held in the Thomas Arthur home, commonly called 'The Kitchen,' in south-west Herefordshire, England.
[125] Palmer, *Travels and Ministry in the Gospel,* p. 38.
[126] *Millennial Star*, vol.4, no.12 (April, 1844), p. 195.
[127] Palmer, *Travels and Ministry in the Gospel*, p. 40. It is probable that Palmer meant the Varteg Ironworks, as this was near Abersychan, which he had recently visited for the first time. This suggestion is supported by the fact that the Varteg Ironworks was in decline at this time, a point noted by Palmer. It closed in 1844.

suffering of the people there as they were left in poverty without the necessities of life.[128] Palmer made a third visit to the works around 19 July 1841, between preaching visits to Abergavenny, Monmouth, Buckholt and Llanthony Abbey. He provides no evidence of any physical or verbal opposition at the works. By September 1841, Palmer was preaching in Hay on Wye and Presteigne.[129]

Thirdly, information found in Palmer's journal is supported by newspaper reports at this stage. His mention of Presteigne indicates that he was taking the Mormon gospel into Radnorshire. The *Hereford Journal* stated that 'this mischievous sect appears to be on the increase on the borders of Herefordshire' and described a Mormon tea party held in Presteigne.[130] It reported on the activity of the Latter-day Saints and its influence on the local population:

> Several of them have been baptized, or rather immersed in brooks, ponds, ditches, and even coolers. Some have been plunged in the bogs of Comb's Moor, to the amusement of many of the inhabitants of Presteign, [sic] who attended the ceremony. They have made some attempts to be heard at that place, but the people have too much good sense to listen to their stupid and blasphemous harangue.[131]

Clearly they made converts in the area, despite the fact that the article suggests they had not received a hearing.

Therefore, Palmer's journal provides strong evidence regarding the areas covered by the early Latter-day Saint missionaries and the strategies employed by them. While there was opposition, this was not official or organized and it did not prevent them pursuing their goal. No mention is ever made in the writing of Palmer or Needham that their inability to speak Welsh impeded their missionary intentions in any way. However, while it was probably Captain Dan Jones' ability to speak Welsh that took the mission into its next stage in Wales, there is evidence even in the early years that Palmer realised the value of the ability to communicate in the Welsh language. While preaching at Llanthony Abbey in December 1841, he was approached by an emotional young man:

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[128] Palmer, *Travels and Ministry in the Gospel*, p. 40
[129] Palmer, *Travels and Ministry in the Gospel*, p. 49. In November 1841, Levi Richards' Diary records such disruption of a Latter-day Saints' meeting that a constable had to be called. This may be the same incident recorded in the *Hereford Journal* (17 November 1841). See *Levi Richard's Papers: Diaries, vol. 2 (January 22-13 March, 1842),* The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Church History Library.
[130] *Hereford Journal* (17 November 1841). The *Leeds Times* (27 November 1841) also carried this story.
[131] *Hereford Journal* (17 November 1841).

> he was a Welch [sic] man and understood the Welch [sic] tongue, was well headucated [sic] and would ave [sic] been useful in the ministry of the gospel among his countrymen, if he could ave [sic] been steadfast in the church … I told him plainly the time had come for the saints to sacrifice and it was the will of the God of Heaven and hearth [sic] that he should go forth among his fellows the welch [sic] people without purse or scrip as I had done, and preach the gospel to them in their own languige [sic]….[132]

While it is impossible to identify the young man, the incident suggests the possibility that there were at least some anonymous Welsh-speaking converts who were prepared to take Mormonism to their home areas. Indeed Palmer notes that it was this young man who had visited him in Longtown, Herefordshire and initially invited him to Llanthony Abbey.[133]

By 4 May 1841, we learn that Needham and his travelling companions Elder Richard Steel[134] and a certain Mrs Howels [sic], travelled to Abergavenny where they went in search of 'a place to preach in'. The following day, they attended a Baptist meeting and 'heard sermons preached in Welch [sic] and 1 in English.' Needham noted that although they had hoped to be allowed to preach there, the request was declined. Despite a less than welcoming response on their initial visit, progress was made at Abergavenny.

During the summer of 1841, Needham's journal confirms that as with Palmer, Llanthony Abbey was used as a resting place during the mission to the area. Like Palmer, Needham often returned to the base at Garway, Herefordshire. The newly founded Mormon churches of the Abergavenny area initially became part of the Garway conference,[135] a connection that remained until the establishment of the Merthyr Tydfil conference in 1844.

One of the most important things to emerge form a study of John Needham's journal is the evidence it provides that reveals the importance of Llanfoist, just outside Abergavenny. While the significance of this small village on the outskirts of

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[132] Palmer, *Travels and Ministry in the Gospel*, p. 56
[133] Palmer, *Travels and Ministry in the Gospel*, p. 56
[134] Richard Steel is recorded as a priest and one of the volunteers for missionary service in the *Millennial Star*, vol.1, no.6 (October, 1840), p. 167. He served as an Elder with Needham in the Garway conference by 1841, and is listed as a 'preacher of the Gospel' on the 1841 census, while staying at Lanarch in Dorstone, Herefordshire. He was born in that county in 1821, as the census gives his age as 20.
[135] Needham represented the Garway Conference at the General Conference held on 15 May in Manchester 1842. The Garway conference at this time included the branches of 'Garway, Abergavenny, Monmouth, Keven, Orcop and Euyasharrold [sic]', *Millennial Star*, vol.3, no.2 (June, 1842), p. 29.

Abergavenny has previously gone unnoticed, Needham's journal indicates that it was a central place for his ministry.

Needham provides us with a snapshot of the early Latter-day Saint community at Llanfoist. His journal entry for 12 October 1841 records the first time he preached there. In December he 'baptized Elener Vaun [sic], Elizabeth[?] Davies and Catherine Davies' at Llanfoist.[136] Within a couple of days he baptized John Davies and returned to Monmouth, which he continued to visit regularly. His journal entries for the first three months of 1842 noted numerous preaching engagements at Llanfoist, including visits from other travelling Mormon preachers such as Elder Theodore Curtis.[137] On 4 April 1842 Needham recorded leaving Llanfoist with Curtis and some other Latter-day Saints to visit the ironworks in Blaenavon for the first time.[138] Thus, Llanfoist emerged as one of the earliest bases for Mormon missionary activity in Monmouthshire.

As with Palmer's journal, Needham's accounts of his mission reveal that converts to Mormonism in the area became vital to the success of the mission. These people facilitated the mission by providing homes at which itinerant preachers such as Needham could stay and receive sustenance. This was important as the main means of travel was by foot, with Needham complaining about the severe problems he was experiencing with his feet,[139] an issue also faced by James Palmer who accompanied Needham on a number of occasions.[140] As Burgess had done from Overton, Palmer and Needham travelled 'without purse or scrip', frequently slept in barns and went hungry. The journals record that meetings were held at these homes, thus it becomes clear that these became the first Latter-day Saint places of worship in the Abergavenny area. While preaching was often in the open-air, prayer meetings involving teaching and worship occurred in homes. Needham never mentions that any issue arose regarding preaching licenses in the Abergavenny area at this time. As far as Abergavenny and Llanfoist are concerned there is again no evidence that those

[136] Needham, *Autobiography and Journal*, p. 152. Elenor Vaughan, Elizabeth Davies and Catherine Davies are listed as residents in Llanfoist in the 1841 Census.
[137] Theodore Curtis was born in Connecticut in 1815. He initially laboured in Ireland, but by 1841 ministered in Cheltenham, where a case of blasphemy was brought against him. The case was later dropped. *Cheltenham Chronicle* (20 May 1841); *Millennial Star*, vol.2, no.4 (August, 1841), p. 63; *Millennial Star*, vol.3, no.7 (November, 1842), pp. 125-6.
[138] Needham, *Autobiography and Journal*, p. 175.
[139] Needham, *Autobiography and Journal*, p. 135, 11 August 1842
[140] James Palmer, *Travels and Ministry in the Gospel*, p. 39.

who supported the missionaries were ever subject to any kind of persecution or personal attack due to their affiliation.

John Needham's journal gives us some information about Latter-day Saint worship. However, little detail is included. Apart from prayer meetings held in the homes of supporters, we learn that Needham 'administered the Bread and Wine to the Saints'[141] during Sunday meetings, but also 'broke bread' during week-night prayer meetings.[142] On a number of occasions he records praying for the sick,[143] and occasionally mentions speaking in tongues, for example at the home of 'sister Tucker' in Abergavenny.[144] On other occasions, faithful members were confirmed in the role of teacher.[145] These are always brief references, and it is not possible to gain further detail from these journal entries. In these early years of the Welsh mission it is clear therefore that missionaries such as Needham, exercised faith in praying for the sick and believed in the practice of spiritual gifts such as speaking in tongues. Yet, neither Needham nor Palmer ever mentioned that these activities were the cause of extensive dispute or opposition. On one occasion in November 1842, a man, who had been kicked by a horse, sent for Needham. Needham recorded that he shared the Mormon 'gospel' with him and laid hands on him, but did not record that the man was converted. Thus, Mormon teachings about such things as healing the sick were evidently known among the public of the Abergavenny area, although he does not mention that they were a specific cause of opposition. It would appear that the antagonism to these aspects of Mormon teaching increased as a result of their activity at Merthyr Tydfil under the ministry of William Henshaw, and more noticeably under that of Captain Dan Jones.

One family in particular supported Needham at Llanfoist.[146] Needham commented on 30 September 1842 'with Brother and Sister Edwards I have mostly made my home.' He stayed and ate with the Edwards family almost every time he preached at Llanfoist, although he also received hospitality from the Davies and Morgan families. In Abergavenny he was supported by the Dayer family, and frequently lodged at their

[141] E.g. Needham, *Autobiography and Journal*, p. 221, 23 October 1842.
[142] E.g. Needham, *Autobiography and Journal*, p. 198, 31 August 1842.
[143] E.g. Needham, *Autobiography and Journal*, p. 230, 3 November 1842; p. 232, 5 November 1842.
[144] E.g. Needham, *Autobiography and Journal*, p. 184, 30 June 1842.
[145] E.g. Needham, *Autobiography and Journal*, p. 236, 18 November 1842.
[146] These were William (b. 1801) and Elizabeth Edwards (b.1810).

home on Frogmore Street.[147] Their neighbours, the Tucker family[148] who had converted to Mormonism, also provided hospitality to Needham when he visited Abergavenny. Thus, Frogmore Street became an important base for the Latter-day Saints, and certainly one of the earliest centres for the movement in Abergavenny.

In July 1842 Needham and Curtis revisited the ironworks in Blaenavon. Again he appears to have experienced no opposition from those at the ironworks. At this time, some months after the emigration of James Palmer, Elder Charles Taysom[149] joined Needham to assist him in his work at Llanfoist and Abergavenny. Throughout the summer of 1842 Needham and his co-workers concentrated their efforts on this area, with frequent visits to Llanellen on the outskirts of Abergavenny, where the Davies family supported them and Llanthony Abbey where the Gwillim family, who had frequently hosted Palmer, now provided a base for Needham.[150] On 27 August 1842 Needham wrote 'I went to Chapel–a-feen [Capel-y-Ffin] … and preached there for the first time. I had a good time.' Thus, at this early stage of the Welsh mission opposition did not occur on every occasion that the Latter-day Saints established either a preaching station or a church. However, as time passed and the movement gained momentum in the Merthyr area the character of the opposition changed to include far more emphasis on the written word. The arrival of Captain Dan Jones at the beginning of 1846, as President of the Welsh mission, based in Merthyr Tydfil, appears to have the catalyst that changed the nature of the debate, as will be discussed in the next chapter.

During the autumn of 1842, Needham and Taysom continued on the preaching circuit, holding meetings in Llanfoist at the Davies' home while staying with the Edwards family. They continued to visit Sister Gwillim in Llanthony Abbey, holding meetings in a Mr Pembridge's home.[151] Needham did not neglect his obligations in Herefordshire, and returned to Garway when possible. However the Garway

[147] The 1841 census confirms only one family by that name lived in Abergavenny, William Dayer (b.1786), Margaret Dayer (b. 1796) and their daughter Margaret (b.1826). That this is the same family is supported by a reference to William Dayer in Levi Richards' Diary 23 November 1841, p. 25. See *Levi Richard's Papers: Diaries, vol. 2 (January 22-13 March, 1842).*
[148] The Tuckers also lived on Frogmore Street, Abergavenny. This is confirmed by the 1841 Census that reveals that these are the only family named Tucker in Abergavenny at this date.
[149] Taysom (1818- 1891) was born at Lugwardine, Herefordshire. He had converted to Mormonism in 1840, during the ministry of Wilford Woodruff.
[150] Needham records the name as Gwilliams, but the 1841 census shows that the family in Llanthony Abbey (Cwmyoy district) was actually named Gwillim.
[151] Needham, *Autobiography and Journal*, p. 218.

Conference was held in the home of Henry Davies in Llanellen on 31 October 1842,[152] which suggests that the mission in the Abergavenny district was of sufficient importance to make this a viable decision.[153] No previous chronicler of the Mormon mission to Wales has given attention to Abergavenny and Llanfoist in the reconstruction of the history of the Welsh Mormon mission. This information shows that there was significant Mormon activity there that has not previously been acknowledged and shows that there were missionaries active in this area of Wales at least contemporaneously with the mission in Flintshire, and possibly slightly earlier. It is certainly clear that Abergavenny and Llanfoist have a place in our understanding of the progress and development of the Welsh Mormon mission between 1840-43.

Furthermore, newspaper reports support the view that Abergavenny and Llanfoist were significant centres of Mormon activity during this period. Evidence from a report in the *Monmouthshire Merlin* for October 1842 indicates that the movement attracted a substantial amount of interest at this time, and people were willing to travel some distance to listen to debates about this new religion:

> The newly-imported sect of religionists, calling themselves 'Latter-Day Saints,' are making a mighty struggle for popularity in the neighbourhood of Abergavenny and a considerable degree of success has attended their indefatigable labours, especially among the unwary and ignorant. Their headquarters in this neighbourhood is the village of Llanfoist, where many have become converts to their wild vagaries. Occasionally, discussions have entered upon their meetings, between their preachers and a few young men from Abergavenny, chiefly of the Baptist denomination. It was agreed upon a short time since, that a public discussion between one of them and a journeyman shoemaker, should take place in the Teetotal Hall, on Friday night last. The thing had been long talked-of for many miles around, and as the inhabitants of the places at which the Mormonites preach, felt great interest in the coming debate, vast numbers of the country people flocked in, many coming from places eight and ten miles distant. About seven o'clock, Cross-street, opposite the Market-place, was quite thronged, and on the door of the hall being thrown open, the rush was terrific, and in a few minutes the room was literally crammed. On Mr. Daniel intimating to them his fears that the floor would give away, the rush towards the door out again beggars description; and it is a source of thankfulness that no life was lost. Of course, it is needless to say that no discussion took place.[154]

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[152] Needham, *Autobiography and Journal*, p. 227.

[153] Although Needham's journal (pp. 227-29) provides information on branches and numbers, it is difficult to read in this section, the original pages having been written over by Needham. It reads 'Abergavenny and Llanfoist 29 Elders/Teachers/ Deacons B (Blaenavon?) 5, Park Bach 6, Llanellen 14, … Llanthony 8 Members, Llanvano 4 members, ….' (p. 228).

[154] *Monmouthshire Merlin*, 1 October 1842. The connection with the Teetotal Hall suggests that the Mr Daniel mentioned in this article is possibly John Daniel, described as 'President of the Society' of

Other points are noteworthy. First, this report identifies Llanfoist as the 'headquarters' of the Latter-day Saints in the Abergavenny area in 1842, and it comments that the Mormons had enjoyed a 'considerable degree of success' although this was, admittedly, among the 'unwary and ignorant.' Although Llanfoist was not the headquarters in the official view of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, it was clearly the public perception at the time, which suggests that the Latter-day Saints were noticeably active in the area. The regularity with which John Needham stayed in the Edwards' home might well have given the impression to local people that Llanfoist was the headquarters for local Latter-day Saint activity, although officially it was in Garway, Herefordshire.

Just under a year later, the *Monmouthshire Merlin* published another report that referred to Llanfoist, further supporting the view that this small village was significant for the Latter-day Saint cause during these early years of the mission in south-east Wales. This article, entitled a 'Sentimental Journey of a Sportsman from Abergavenny to Swansea', reported:

> The first village we pass is Llanfoist, now half depopulated, for the 'Latter Day Saints' have a fortnight ago wiled [sic] off half its prudent inhabitants to the wiles of America – their new Jerusalem – which alone is to survive the approaching wreck of our terrestrial globe. In the earthquake the poor Llanfoist men imagined they would have a bad chance, being immediately under the lofty Blorenge, though we much question if its massy rocks could injure their thick skulls. We rather think the audacious granite might in the concussion be macadamised for road dust.[155]

Despite the derogatory comment about the intelligence of those who had succumbed to Mormonism, what is significant here is that a notable number of Llanfoist residents had converted and emigrated as early as 1843, well before Dan Jones arrived in Wales some two years later.[156] The article reveals the motive for the emigration of the Llanfoist residents was a response to the Latter-day Saints' preaching about Zion and

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teetotallers in Abergavenny in an article recording a Christmas tea party at the Abergavenny Temperance Hall in the *Monmouthshire Merlin* 31 December 1842; *Hereford Times* (31 December 1842). In the previous October 1842, a Mr J. Daniel is recorded as a contributing speaker in an article entitled 'Jubilee of the Baptist Missionary Society at Abergavenny', *Hereford Times* (15 October 1842); *Monmouthshire Merlin* (8 October 1842). If this is the same J. Daniel, then it would confirm that he was a Baptist and suggests a possible link between Daniel and the 'few young men from Abergavenny, chiefly of the Baptist denomination'.

[155] *Monmouthshire Merlin*, (9 September 1843).

[156] Captain Dan Jones arrived in Liverpool in January 1845 and made his first visit to the Merthyr church in August 1845. He was appointed President of the Welsh mission in the December Conference of 1845.

the imminent end of the world.[157] There is no suggestion of an economic motive in this newspaper report, despite Llanfoist being a village where the 1841 census indicates that most inhabitants were engaged in the mining industry, ironworks or agricultural labouring, and therefore might be considered to be in the category of those who hoped emigration would bring a better life. Neither is there any suggestion in the newspaper report that they were motivated to leave because they had suffered persecution. Their motivation is attributed to their desire to reach 'Zion'.

A comparison between the 1841 census with the 1851 census confirms that there had been a notable movement of the population of this small village.[158] No record of the names of Mormon converts at Llanfoist at this time is available and therefore it is not possible to establish how many people emigrated in 1843. However, if the writer of this article is correct in stating that a large number of Latter-day Saints had left Llanfoist a fortnight before the article was published, it seems probable that these would have been aboard the *Metoka* which sailed from Liverpool to New Orleans on 5 September 1843.[159] The ship's passenger list confirms that six families aboard this vessel came from Wales. The first family listed were the Davies family – Catherine (b.1811),[160] John (b.1808), Mary (b.1836), Catherine (b. 1840) and an infant named Caroline. This family can be identified with a family living in Llanfoist on the 1841 census, but absent from the 1851 census. A second family, also called Davies can be

[157] At this time 'Zion' was identified with the Mormon community at Nauvoo, Illinois. Prior to the imminent Second Coming of Christ, Latter-day Saints were to expect wars and natural disasters and thus true safety and peace would only be found in 'Zion.' The *Hereford Journal* (22 May 1844) recorded that attendance at the Abergavenny fair had been reduced due to a prophecy of the Latter-day Saints that an earthquake would destroy the town at 12 o'clock on the 14 May. Many had left the town 'in fear' and did not return until the following day.

[158] The proximity of Llanfoist to Blaenavon Iron works (approximately 5 miles) would have meant that migration for work played a part in its changing population demographic, and although the 1851 census has 48 less people living in Llanfoist than the 1841 census, it contains 114 surnames not listed in 1841.

[159] A passenger list for the voyage of the *Metoka* which left Liverpool 5 September 1843, and arrived in New Orleans on 27 October 1843 may be found on the Mormon Migration website http://mormonmigration.lib.byu.edu/Search/showDetails/db:MM_MII/t:voyage/id:233/keywords:1843 accessed 26 April 2016. It is not possible to determine precisely where the passengers came from, but the website does list the country in British Isles from which they travelled. Out of 186 Latter-day Saints who were passengers, twenty-one are listed as coming from Wales. The age of individuals and occupation is given on this passenger list. A brief account of the departure of the *Metoka* was printed in the *Millennial Star*, vol. 4, no.5 (September, 1843), p. 80. The following edition also included a short article by James Needham (the father of John Needham), concerning the favourable conditions aboard the *Metoka*, *Millennial Star*, vol. 4, no.6 (October, 1843), p. 87.

[160] Birthdates for the families listed here are determined from the 1841 Census. They also correspond with the birthdates on the passenger list within an acceptable parameter as the 1841 census enumerators were instructed to round down a person's age to the nearest multiple of five. A person aged 69, for example, was enumerated as 65.

found on the 1841 census at Llanfoist. This family consisted of James Davies (b.1795), Elizabeth Davies (b.1797), James Davies (b.1826), and Maria (b.1834).[161] Again this family does not appear in Llanfoist in the 1851 census, but mother, father and son are recorded on a list of immigrants on Ron Dennis' *Welsh Mormon History* website as travelling from Llanfoist to America on the *Metoka* on 5 September 1843.[162] A couple named William (born 1801) and Elizabeth Edwards (b.1810) also residents of Llanfoist in 1841, are named on the *Metoka* passenger list in 1843, and do not appear on the 1851 census for Llanfoist. The Mitchell family – Bridget (b.1813), George (b.1817), James (b.1836), Edward (b.1838), Emma (b.1841) and Mary Jane an infant, can also be found on the 1841 census for Llanfoist and the passenger list for the *Metoka*, but also do not appear on the 1851 census, confirming their departure.[163] Furthermore, these families are named in John Needham's journal and the Edwards family, having provided a base for Needham at Llanfoist. Two other couples aboard the *Metoka* were also connected with Llanfoist. George Whitby (b.1813) and his daughter Sarah Ann Whitby (b.1836) are recorded living in Abergavenny on the 1841 census, less than two miles from Llanfoist.[164] Also aboard the *Metoka* were Charles Taysom[165] (b.1818) and his wife Maria (b.1822), whom he had married in Abergavenny in 1842.[166] Taysom had laboured alongside Needham in the Abergavenny and Llanfoist area.[167] Taken in conjunction with the newspaper report, there is clear evidence that Mormon emigration had taken place from Llanfoist in 1843, even though the numbers were not large.

This means that as far as the Mormon mission in south-east Wales is concerned, it is possible to conclude that Welsh converts from this area were among the earliest to

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[161] The 1841 Census also lists a daughter Elizabeth born in 1829, and another daughter Ann born in 1840. Ann died in 1842 and a parish record exists for her burial on 3 May 1842 at Llanfoist. There may be a number of reasons why Elizabeth was not on the voyage. The common place nature of the name makes it difficult to identify with precision whether she lived in Llanfoist in 1851, or had married. She may have chosen not to emigrate.

[162] http://welshmormon.byu.edu/Immigrants_Listing.aspx accessed 26 April 2016.

[163] Needham mentions praying for the Mitchell's child in his diary, confirming that this family were Llanfoist converts. Needham, *Autobiography and Journal*, p. 216

[164] The census includes a wife named Sarah Whitby (b.1820), not listed on the passenger list.

[165] The passenger list for the *Metoka* lists this name as Tayson.

[166] England & Wales Marriages 1837-2008, (October, November, December 1842).

[167] *John Needham: First Missionary to Wales.* http://welshmormon.byu.edu/Resource_Info.aspx?id=11940 accessed 26 April 2016. Taysom was from Herefordshire and is listed as a shoemaker on the 1841 England census and on the *Metoka* passenger list. It is possible, though not certain, that Taysom was the shoemaker mentioned in the *Monmouthshire Merlin* in the public discussion between one of the young Baptist men and 'a journeyman shoemaker', which should have taken place in the Teetotal Hall, Abergavenny in September 1842: *Monmouthshire Merlin* (1 October 1842).

heed the call to emigrate to the United States. Not only that, it is possible to identify who some of these families were and where they had come from. In this case Llanfoist appears to be significant in the story of the emigrating Welsh. While the article in the *Monmouthshire Merlin* in September 1843, may have used hyperbole in describing Llanfoist as being 'half depopulated' by the recent emigration, the departure of at least six families that travelled on the *Metoka* to New Orleans, clearly made an impression locally.[168] Furthermore, the newspaper report of a baptism in the canal at Llanfoist in 1847 of a woman from whom 'three devils' had been cast out indicates that the Latter-day Saints' mission in the area continued beyond that first migration.[169]

The records of Palmer and Needham paint a limited but informative picture of Mormon activity in Monmouthshire during the years 1840-43. The picture is one of an itinerant ministry, supported by those who had experienced conversion and who provided food and lodging for the travelling missionaries. The journals give the names of these people, and without the support of families such as the Dayers, the Edwards, and the Gwillims, to name just a few, the mission of the Mormons could not have succeeded in this area. Furthermore, evidence from newspaper reports between 1841-1843 confirms the activity of Mormon missionaries in the Abergavenny, Llanfoist and Radnorshire area. These reports supplement the journals of Palmer and Needham and help to construct a more complete picture of the earliest missionary activity in Monmouthshire.

In addition to increasing our knowledge of the strategies employed by Latter-day Saints missionaries in Monmouthshire, the people who supported them and the areas where they travelled, Palmer and Needham provide information about the opposition they encountered. Both men travelled from place to place by foot, often returning to their base in Garway. There are no indications that they were regularly attacked or frequently suffered any form of violence while travelling in the area of Monmouthshire. One occasion stands out because of its rarity, although this occurred

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[168] *Monmouthshire Merlin*, (9 September 1843). A study of the passenger list for the *Champion* that sailed from Liverpool to New Orleans the following month on 21 October reveals that among the 91 Mormon emigrants there were none from Wales.

[169] This brief story was reported across Britain, from Pembrokeshire to Liverpool, and as far west as Lincolnshire and Bedfordshire: c.f. *Monmouthshire Merlin* (17 April 1847); *Pembrokeshire Herald and General Advertiser* (16 April 1847); *North Wales Chronicle* (20 April 1847); *Worcester Journal* (8 April 1847); *Lincolnshire Chronicle* (16 April 1847); *Liverpool Mercury* (16 April 1847); *Stamford Mercury* (16 April 1847); *Bedfordshire Chronicle* (16 April 1847).

over the English border. During the winter of 1841, Palmer recorded a nasty attack by a 'gang of ruffians' at Gorsley, Herefordshire. The assailants had followed Palmer and his companions through the snow following a Latter-day Saint meeting and threw missiles at the group. They demanded money and Palmer was hit in the eye, sustaining a minor injury, although his concern was to protect a female member of the party. Eventually the attackers dispersed. However, the demand for money suggests they were not attacked in this case because of their religious persuasion.

In the autumn of 1841 Palmer and Needham had been joined by Levi Richards,[170] another Mormon missionary who received support at Llanthony and from the Dayer family in Abergavenny. Although he also kept a journal of his travels, he made no mention of any feeling of fear or danger while commuting between preaching venues in the Monmouth, Llanthony or Abergavenny areas.

Nevertheless, the journals clearly reveal that there was opposition, and that they encountered varying degrees of unpleasant and disruptive behaviour, despite more serious attacks such as the one at Gorsley being rare. Evidence exists that supports the view that they experienced opposition from ministers of religion of various denominations.

One of the first references to such opposition occurs when Palmer visited Skenfrith. On a number of visits he experienced opposition from a Roman Catholic.[171] Opposition from this source was unusual, but there appears to have been support for Roman Catholicism from some families in this area, sufficient to build a small Roman Catholic Church and burial ground in 1846.[172] The opponent challenged Palmer by reading newspaper comments about the Latter-day Saints that Palmer characterized as 'a tissue of falsehood against our principles.'[173] This suggests that newspapers played a part in the dissemination of information about Mormonism and that public opinion could be influenced in this way even prior to the arrival of Latter-day Saint missionaries. The same Roman Catholic opponent challenged the missionaries on

[170] Levi Richards papers: *Diaries*, MS 1284; vol. 2, 1842 January 22-March 13, 1842, Church History Library, Church of Jesus Christ of Later-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah. See D. Michael Quinn, 'They Served: The Richards' Legacy in the Church', *Ensign* (January 1980). https://www.lds.org/ensign/1980/01/they-served-the-richards-legacy-in-the-church?lang=eng accessed 6 December 2015.
[171] Dennis, 'The Welsh and the Gospel', p. 240.
[172] Donald Attwater, *The Catholic Church in Modern Wales* (London: Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 1935), p. 28.
[173] Palmer, *Travels and Ministry in the Gospel*; Dennis, 'The Welsh and the Gospel', pp. 240-41.

further visits to Skenfrith, also using an anti-Mormon pamphlet to challenge them. We have no evidence about the contents of the pamphlet, but Revd John Simons and Revd William Morrish had both published anti-Mormon pamphlets in Ledbury, less than twenty-five miles from Skenfrith, by this date.[174] Despite being offered hospitality and being invited to visit a local Methodist preacher who listened to his message, the opposition from the Roman Catholic made Palmer despair of making any further progress and this ultimately led to the Mormon missionaries resolving not to continue preaching at Skenfrith and washing the dust off their feet in the symbolic action based on the teachings of Jesus in Mark 6:11.[175] However, there is no suggestion that the opposition was anything other than verbal.

Upon arrival in Monmouth in December 1840, Palmer and his companions followed the usual practice and 'visited a Methodist chapel [sic] and asked them the prevelidge[sic] to preach in their house.' However, they failed to obtain such permission and preached in a private house. 'Some Methodists' attended this meeting and Palmer noted that 'they were a noisy set some of them cried out.' Despite this 'a good spirit was manifested.' Palmer wrote that the main opposition emanated from the Revd Thomas James, a Wesleyan Methodist minister in Monmouth.[176] Palmer described him as someone who was 'very abusive' and who 'wished to see a sign'. James did not receive much support from the people who wished to hear the Latter-day Saints' message.

From Palmer's records we learn that there was increasing opposition. On New Year's Eve, Palmer wrote that he had received 'ruff [sic] treatment' at Monmouth.[177] Palmer wrote to the church at Garway when they realised they would need additional support at Monmouth. Indeed, upon returning to Garway, the opposition at Monmouth affected Palmer's companion Elder Barnes and his 'nerves gave way.'[178] This may suggest that the opposition was sustained and more unpleasant than it had been prior to this point, although Palmer gives no specific information. Within a couple of days, Palmer returned to Monmouth with Elder Needham and preached at a meeting where the 'congregation was a mixed multitude consisting of a babtist [sic]

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[174] Revd John Simons, A *Few more Facts Relating to the Self-styled 'Latter-day Saints'*, (Ledbury: Printed by J. Gibbs, 1840); Revd W. J. Morrish *Origin of the Book of Mormon; a Warning from a Minister to his Flock* and *A Second Warning from a Minister To his Flock* (both printed in Ledbury by J. Gibbs, 1840).
[175] Palmer, *Travels and Ministry in the Gospel*, p. 12.
[176] The Wesleyan Methodist chapel had opened in St. James Street, Monmouth in 1837.
[177] Palmer, *Travels and Ministry in the Gospel,* p. 18.
[178] Palmer, *Travels and Ministry in the Gospel,* p. 19.

weslyans [sic] and ranters and some ware [sic] nonreligionist.'[179] On this occasion the debate focussed on the Latter-day Saints' claim that baptism was essential for salvation. Therefore, by the end of 1840, Monmouth had become a significant base for Latter-day Saint activity, and this according to Palmer had resulted in some alarming opposition.

On 25 January 1841 in a public meeting, Revd James challenged Palmer regarding the authority of the *Book of Mormon*. This had been an issue faced by Burgess in Montgomery. On this occasion the crowd physically removed Revd James from the meeting in order to hear the Latter-day Saints speak.[180] Yet again, when the reason for disagreement with a local minister is explained, we learn that the issue under dispute was the *Book of Mormon.* Although the Revd James threatened to oppose Palmer wherever he went, by 1 February 1841 Palmer concluded 'it appears the Rev. James has played himself out' and Palmer preached 'to a large and attentive audience' at Monmouth. Evidently, large numbers of people wanted to listen to the Latter-day Saints rather than the Revd James. This was not a permanent change in the response of the people of Monmouth, as in early May, Palmer met with hostility after he had begun to preach:

> suddenly the house was in an uproar, before I could scarcely obtain a starting point, caused by disorder [sic] persons that had come there on purpose to break up our meeting they were told to be silent, but they knocked down the man that demanded order, and dragged him outside and punished him severely and manifested a disposition to drag me out allso [sic], but no man laide [sic] hands upon me, on the 10th of May I, preached there … that evening there was an amount of caterpilars [sic] let loose in the house designing to put out the lights if possible and all this is the work of Christian people so called in fare [sic] famed Christian England.[181]

However, despite the evidence of local opposition, the evening ended on a positive note, with the baptism of two converts in the early hours of the following morning.

Opposition was also experienced when the Mormon message was taken to Presteigne in September 1841. Evidence for this can be found in the *Hereford Journal's* [182] account of a Latter-day Saint tea party in St David's Street, Presteigne. This newspaper report is significant because it provides non-Mormon evidence that the Latter-day Saint missionaries sometimes faced challenging and aggressive behaviour

[179] Palmer, *Travels and Ministry in the Gospel*, p. 19.
[180] Palmer, *Travels and Ministry in the Gospel,* p. 23-24.
[181] Palmer, *Travels and Ministry in the Gospel,* p. 36.
[182] *Hereford Journal* (17 November 1841).

from those who opposed the movement. It confirms the frequently made claims that Mormon missionaries sometimes met with a hostile response, although in this case the report that some people were laughing implies that there was no serious threat to safety.

The article reported that the house was full when two men entered 'with masks on their faces and large driving whips.'[183] The scene was clearly one of chaos, with some people laughing, some crying and some trying to escape, while half a dozen people were thrown into a water cooler. Several ran out of the house in an attempt to get the attention of some constables. One or two of these constables cleared the house to the disappointment of the Latter-day Saints and many of their followers. The article concluded that it was the wish of the 'respectable inhabitants of Presteign [sic], that the Saints may never make their appearance in the town again.' Palmer had gone to Presteigne to support elder Spires, who had been in conflict with a local Methodist minister.[184] However, the press description of the Mormon message as a 'stupid and blasphemous harangue'[185] was most certainly antagonistic.

During May 1841, John Needham visited Llanthony Abbey, where he preached 'to a large congregation of people'. At this time, when the missionaries first visited Abergavenny, they were unable to get the people there to open their houses to them as 'the peoples' minds where [sic] predgadist [sic] against us from the evil reports they had her [sic] so [we] could not get them to open there [sic] houses.'[186] There is no indication of the source of this prejudice, but after spending a morning there they returned to Llanthony Abbey, where the people were 'very kind'. [187]

On 10 June 1841 Needham recorded: 'went to Abergaveny [sic] and preached in a house for the first time then.'[188] He returned to Abergavenny to preach in a house on 23 June 1841, but this time was opposed by a 'Church Minister' who had 'come with the entention [sic] of turning the Breathen's [sic] minds, from the truth.' Needham claimed that the minister had stated that even if the Latter-day Saints took all his

[183] *Hereford Journal* (17 November 1841).
[184] The first Presteigne Methodist chapel had been built on St David's Street in 1810, the street mentioned in the report in the *Hereford Journal* (17 November 1841). The proximity of the chapel to the house where the tea party was held may have been a trigger to the fracas that ensued, although this can only be speculative. http://www.coflein.gov.uk/en/site/8252/details/methodist-church-wesleyanprimitive-scottleton-st-and-high-st-presteigne accessed 5 August 2016.
[185] *Hereford Journal* (17 November 1841).
[186] Needham, *Autobiography and Journal*, p. 124.
[187] Needham, *Autobiography and Journal*, p. 24.
[188] Needham, *Autobiography and Journal*, p. 130.

members they could not take his salary.[189] This appears to have been yet another occasion the opposition of a local minister was explained as emanating from fear of losing members of the congregation and the resultant financial consequences. However, initial hostility resulted in some success at Abergavenny, as a couple of weeks later he recorded that after preaching in the streets a woman asked to be baptized, although she was prevented from doing so by her husband.[190]

By 11 September 1842, Needham recorded some opposition at Llanfoist. This came in the form of a man named Shatlock,[191] who Needham later refers to as 'a Baptist Preacher'.[192] Following 'a good meeting' at Llanfoist, Needham stated they agreed to meet for discussion in the evening, although he made no further comment regarding this meeting or its content. On Friday 23 September 1842, a public debate was arranged in Abergavenny at the Temperance Hall. This is clearly the aforementioned event described in the *Monmouthshire Merlin*.[193] Although Shellock (as Needham calls him on this occasion) would not face Needham in a public discussion, he had arranged a public meeting for Needham to make his case, although this seems never to have come to fruition. Despite the failure of this attempt at a public meeting, while staying at Llanellen two days later, Needham recorded 'Mr Shellock Baptist preacher came and opposed me by preaching in the streets.' Thus, although this man appears to have been fairly relentless in his opposition, Needham does not seem overly concerned by his persistence.

The account in the *Monmouthshire Merlin*[194] named Llanfoist as a place 'where many have become converts to their wild vagaries.' While this language is negative about the Latter-day Saints, it is not an attack on any specific Mormon doctrine or activity. We also learn from this newspaper report that 'discussions have entered upon their meetings, between their preachers and a few young men from Abergavenny, chiefly of the Baptist denomination.'[195] Unfortunately, no information is given about the subject of these discussions, but there is no suggestion that they were conducted with hostility, or that they resulted in any unpleasant behaviour. Finally, what is perhaps

[189] Needham, *Autobiography and Journal*, p. 131.
[190] Needham, *Autobiography and Journal*, p. 135, 7 July 1841.
[191] Needham, *Autobiography and Journal*, p. 204
[192] Needham, *Autobiography and Journal*, p. 211. It is difficult to determine his name as Needham gives three variations of it, calling him Shatlock, Shellock, and Shelock. It has not been possible to identify this person from the 1841 census and it is probable that Needham has recorded his name incorrectly.
[193] *Monmouthshire Merlin* (1 October 1842).
[194] *Monmouthshire Merlin* (1 October 1842).
[195] *Monmouthshire Merlin* (1 October 1842).

most significant is that this article identified the chief opponents as members of the Baptist denomination. These Baptists are described as 'young men' and there is no suggestion that they counted ministers in their number, or that they intended harm, but rather were engaged in discussion. The Baptist cause was particularly evident in Abergavenny at this time. It had been home to the Academy for the training of Baptist ministers from 1807 until it moved to Pontypool in 1836.[196] No specific reason is given for the antipathy of Baptists to Mormonism and as we do not know the subjects that were raised by these Baptists, it is possible to suggest that as elsewhere, opposition appears to have arisen from the denominations that were the most prominent in the area where the Latter-day Saints arrived.

James Palmer emigrated to Nauvoo on 15 March 1842 aboard the *Hanover,*[197] and he was to be followed by John Needham a year later when he set sail from Liverpool to New Orleans aboard the *Yorkshire* on 8 March 1843.[198] Evidence for the success of their mission between 1840 and the beginning of 1843 is apparent from reports published in the *Millennial Star*. In the General Conference held in Manchester on 15 May 1842, the Birmingham conference recorded no branches in Wales, but the Garway conference, represented by John Needham, included the branches of 'Garway, Abergavenny, Monmouth, Keven, Orcop and Euyasharrold [sic].'[199] Almost two years later, in the General Conference held in Liverpool on 6 April 1844, the Birmingham conference reported branches which included 'Pendarren [sic], Abersychan, Beaufort, Rummy [sic], Tredager [sic], Merthyr Tydvill [sic], Aberdare.'[200] At this time the Garway conference reported branches in 'Garway, Llanfoist, Buckle, Ewiasharold [sic], Llanthony and Llanvano [sic]'.[201] Furthermore, it was at this Conference that the south Wales mission took on its separate identity, for:

> It was also moved by Ward, and voted, that the branches of Beaufort, Rummy [sic], Tredager [sic], Merthyr Tydvill [sic], and Aberdare be organized into a

[196] The *Religious Census of 1851* indicates that there were three Baptist chapels in Abergavenny at this time – the Welsh Baptist Chapel (erected 1769), Providence Chapel, Lion St, (erected 1828), and Frogmore Street Chapel, Baptist (erected 1815), the latter being the largest, and still in use today (although the nearest LDS church today would be the Cwmbran or Merthyr branch).
[197] https://mormonmigration.lib.byu.edu/mii/voyage/159?dateFrom=1841&sweden=on&europe=on&query=Palmer&passenger=on&netherlands=on&mii=on&account=on&scandinavia=on&dateTo=1845&voyage=on accessed 9 June 2016.
[198] https://mormonmigration.lib.byu.edu/mii/passenger/70019?sweden=on&mii=on&netherlands=on&voyage=on&dateTo=&query=Needham&dateFrom=&europe=on&scandinavia=on&passenger=on&account=on accessed 10 June 2016.
[199] *Millennial Star*, vol.3, no.2 (June, 1842), p. 29.
[200] *Millennial Star*, vol.4, no.12 (April, 1844), p. 195.
[201] *Millennial Star*, vol.4, no.12 (April, 1844), p. 195.

> Conference, to be called the Merthyr Tydvill Conference: and that elder William Henshaw preside over the same.[202]

Therefore, in conclusion it appears that the missionary activity of Palmer and Needham ultimately led to significant progress in the area of the Rhymney and Sirhowy valleys, although it has not proved possible to establish the parties responsible for this or the level of its success. William Henshaw had been baptized as a Latter-day Saint in 1841 at Wolverhampton.[203] Henshaw had arrived in Merthyr Tydfil in 1843, and his work over the year clearly led to his becoming President of a separate Merthyr Tydfil branch in 1844. However, the level of Mormon success in south-east Wales prior to the arrival of Henshaw has not been given the consideration it is due, possibly because these Welsh areas were part of the Birmingham and Garway conferences and the evidence from church records is sparse for this period. It is evident that the writing of James Palmer and John Needham reveals extensive missionary activity, and throws light on the methods and activities of these Latter-day Saints as they travelled throughout the Monmouthshire area around Abergavenny and frequently back to their base in Garway. The journals also throw light on the opposition these missionaries experienced, which although ever present, was apparently neither intolerable nor life-threatening, enabling us to conclude that its *ad hoc* nature and the fact that sometimes kindness and support were experienced mean that it is more appropriately defined as opposition rather than persecution.

Conclusions

The aim of this chapter was to review the evidence regarding the early years of the Latter-day Saints Mission to Wales, between 1840-1843. As has been seen, historians of this period have understood the sending of Henry Royle to Cloy in October 1840 as the definitive start of a Mormon mission to Wales. However, there is evidence to suggest that Mormon missionaries were active in Monmouthshire some months prior to the arrival of Royle, and that even following his arrival in Wales he, along with Frederick Cooke did not confine their missionary activity to Wales, but simply used Cloy as regular base to proselyte areas in Shropshire as well as Montgomeryshire. Thus we need to broaden our understanding of the early Mormon mission, and the

[202] *Millennial Star*, vol.4, no.12 (April, 1844), p. 195: ' Ward' refers to elder Thomas Ward (1810-1847), who was editor of the *Millennial Star* 1842-46.
[203] Dennis, 'The Welsh and the Gospel', p. 241

study of the missionary journals enables us to do this. Significantly, it is a study of the journals of the Mormon missionaries that has provided considerable information on the early mission. In particular they have revealed the strategies employed by the missionaries as they travelled to various towns and villages in Wales, and the support given to them by various converts who opened their homes to offer hospitality and sustenance as well as for use as regular meeting places. Evidence from the journals has not been employed previously to reconstruct the travels and experiences of the first missionaries to Wales, but clearly they provide an image of the aims, experiences and achievements of those serving the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints at this time.

Apart from providing a clearer understanding of the activities of the early Mormon mission, the writings of contemporary Mormon missionaries provide some information about the opposition experienced. They record opposition from a Roman Catholic, Methodists, Wesleyan Methodists and Baptists, but in the main it is opposition in the form of debate and dispute rather than persecution or threats of violence. It is opposition arising from doctrinal disagreement rather than prejudice *per se*. Occasionally the opposition did become noisy and unpleasant, possibly with the potential of violence, but no actual harm appears to have been done and the instances of unpleasant or potentially dangerous behaviour are few and far between. There is no evidence, arising from their own accounts, that either Palmer or Needham feared for their safety on their travels in Wales. After the initial difficulties in Monmouth, neither missionary records that they felt the pressure of opposition was too difficult to handle. There was clearly opposition from Nonconformist sources, but it was in the form of words rather than in organized action, and on no occasion do the missionaries record feeling threatened or in danger on these occasions. Nor was there any attempt stop their activity or intimidate their supporters. Thus it is evident that at this stage of the Welsh Mormon mission to interpret their experiences as evidence of persecution would be to overstate the situation, although it is possible to confirm that there was conflict and opposition. This is in contrast to the years when Captain Dan Jones was President of the Welsh mission, and when, as we shall see in subsequent chapters, it is claimed that the Latter-day Saints were victims of constant expressions of persecution.

Therefore, this chapter has provided information that develops our understanding of the Latter-day Saints mission to Wales between 1840-44, and consequently revises the accepted narrative of this period. The thesis will now proceed to discuss the Latter-day Saints Mission to Merthyr Tydfil, 1844-1849, which is the period that until now has received the most attention.

Part 2

A Reassessment of the Opposition to the Latter-day Saints, with Particular Reference to W. R. Davies

As the Latter-day Saints' mission to Wales developed and the movement spread, perhaps inevitably, its character changed. There were two important factors that contributed to this change in character: the establishment of the headquarters of the Welsh mission at Merthyr Tydfil and the appointment of Captain Dan Jones as President of the Welsh mission.

During this period, the Mormon mission evolved from being primarily an improvised, itinerant and rural missionary enterprise, to being an organised mission directed from the Welsh industrial heartland of Merthyr Tydfil. Furthermore, the debate was expressed through literature on both sides, which has given rise to Mormon claims that W. R. Davies, minister of Caersalem, Dowlais was most 'vociferous foe' and 'archenemy' of the Latter-day Saints in Wales. These claims will be investigated in the forthcoming chapters.

Chapter 3

The Latter-day Saints Mission to Merthyr Tydfil, 1844-1849

The missionary work initiated by Palmer and Needham in Monmouth, Abergavenny and Llanfoist was the beginning of the Welsh Mormon mission in south-east Wales. The message of the Latter-day Saints continued to spread until the Merthyr Tydfil conference was established in 1844.[1] It was in this industrial heartland that Mormonism would achieve its greatest success in Wales. It was the Merthyr Tydfil branch that Captain Dan Jones affectionately referred to as the 'mother branch of Britain'.[2] Taking into consideration the importance of this branch in the history of the Welsh Mormon mission, it is important to have an overview of developments at Merthyr Tydfil. This chapter will provide an outline of the leadership of William Henshaw and Captain Dan Jones and provide a background narrative for the opposition that emerged there.

William Henshaw

The General Conference of Latter-day Saints, held at the Music Hall in Liverpool on 6-9 April 1844, created a new branch of the church at Merthyr Tydfil with William Henshaw appointed as President of the conference that would also include the branches of Penydarren, Beaufort, Rhymney, Tredegar, and Aberdare.[3] While it is not possible to identify who first took the Mormon gospel to these areas, Ron Dennis notes that William Henshaw baptized his first family, William Rees Davis, his wife Rachel and their two sons, on 19 February 1843 and laboured in this area for just over a year prior to Henshaw becoming President in 1844.[4] The Penydarren Branch was organized on 25 March 1843.[5] There were 32 members in the Penydarren

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[1] *Millennial Star*, vol.4, no.12 (April, 1844), p. 195.
[2] Douglas J. Davies, *Mormon Spirituality: Latter Day Saints in Wales and Zion*, (Nottingham: University of Nottingham, 1987), p.8; *Millennial Star*, vol.10, no.8 (15 April, 1848), p.122.
[3] *Millennial Star*, vol.4, no.12 (April, 1844), p. 195.
[4] Ronald D. Dennis, 'The Welsh and the Gospel', p. 238, V. Ben Bloxham, James R. Moss and Larry C Porter (eds), *Truth Will Prevail: The Rise of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the British Isles, 1837-1987* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1987), p. 241.
[5] Ronald D. Dennis, *Indefatigable Veteran: History and Biography of a Welsh Mormon Elder,* (Provo Utah: Rhydybont Press, 1994), p. 11. Dennis refers to a record of the establishment of the Penydarren branch, kept by Edward Roberts. This lists the first baptisms at Penydarren, and manifestations of the gift of speaking in tongues, from 19 February 1843 to 31 March 1844. See Ron Dennis' website *Welsh Mormon History* 'Early Baptisms in Wales'. http://welshmormon.byu.edu/Resource_Listing_new.aspx?group=Writings accessed 6 January 2016.

Branch by the following June, and by the end of 1844 there were 50 members and another branch was organized in Rhymney.[6]

Little is known about William Henshaw. Ron Dennis notes that he was from Cornwall and spoke no Welsh.[7] British census records for 1841 confirm the presence of William Henshaw, a miner, his wife Mary Ann and daughter Sarah in Wolverhampton, none having been born in the county they lived in, but all born in Britain.[8] Dennis has suggested that Henshaw may have had a connection to Wales, because his wife Mary Ann Lewis was Welsh.[9] Henshaw certainly laboured in the Merthyr Tydfil area in 1843 and 1844, and it was in this industrial heartland that the Mormon mission was to find its greatest success in Wales.

There is evidence that Henshaw was successful in his ministry. After a year as President, the minutes of the Manchester General Conference, held 6-9 April 1845, recorded: 'Elder William Henshaw stated that Merthyr Tydvill [sic] conference was in a prosperous condition. Two years ago he first went there and met with much opposition; but some became obedient to the gospel …'[10] Specific information about Henshaw's activities at Merthyr is, nonetheless, difficult to find, as no records have survived,[11] although in an unpublished letter to a friend in north Wales, dated 6 May 1843, Revd W. R. Davies Baptist minister at Caersalem, Dowlais, noted that during the previous three months the Latter-day Saint 'minister' had baptized between ten and twelve converts.[12] There is no record of the opposition he encountered there.[13]

See also Murland R. Packer *History of Elisha Hurd Groves (5 November 1797-29 December 1867) and William Rees Davies (31 July 1806-5 February 1865) and Related Families* (Utah, Packer 2011), p.125-126.

[6] Dennis, 'The Welsh and the Gospel', p. 241.

[7] Dennis, 'The Welsh and the Gospel', p. 241.

[8] British Census 1841. Emigration records of the Henshaw family in 1851 confirm that the family in Wolverhampton on the 1841 Census is the correct William Henshaw. The names are correct for his wife and daughter, the year of his birth in 1811 and his occupation. Henshaw and his family wife Mary Anne, daughter Sarah Jane, and sons Joseph, Hyrum and Cyrus, emigrated from Liverpool to New Orleans (beginning their journey in Newport), aboard the *Olympus* on 4 March 1851 http://mormonmigration.lib.byu.edu/Search/searchAll/keywords:Henshaw accessed 4 January 2016.

[9] Dennis, *Indefatigable Veteran*, p. 6. Marriage records indicate that a William Henshaw married a Mary Ann Lewis in Llanelli on 3 December 1835.

[10] *Millennial Star*, vol.5, no.11 (April, 1845), p. 170.

[11] Dennis, *Abel Evans, Indefatigable Veteran*, p. 6.

[12] W. R. Davies to William Jones, 6 May 1843, Cwrtmawr Collection, National Library of Wales.

[13] The exception is his encounter with Revd W. R. Davies, related in Davies' pamphlet, Parch W. R. Davies, *Y Seintiau Diweddaf: Sylwedd pregeth a dradoddwyd ar y gwyrthiau, er mwyn goleuo y cyffredin a dangos twyll y creaduriaid a alwant eu hunain yn 'Seintiau y Dyddiau Diweddaf.* (Merthyr Tydfil: Argraffwyd David Jones, 1846).

Lack of information surrounding William Henshaw may explain why little assessment has been made of his achievements. However, one source seems to support the view that his contribution to the Mormon mission to Wales has been underestimated, namely the writing of Eliza R. Snow Smith.

Henshaw had been sent to Penydarren, just outside Merthyr Tydfil by Lorenzo Snow.[14] In a biography of her brother's life and work, Eliza R. Snow Smith wrote that before taking charge of the church in London, Lorenzo Snow held several meetings in Wolverhampton, where he established a branch of the church. She added:

> A man, by name William Henshaw, was one of the number who embraced the Gospel at that time, a man of ability and force of character, he became very useful as a minister of and advocate for the truth. Brother Snow ordained William Henshaw to the Priesthood, and sent him on a mission to Wales to introduce and open the Gospel door to that people. He was very successful and greatly blessed in his labors. He had baptized several hundred persons and organized quite a number of branches of the Church in that country previous to the arrival of Captain Dan Jones…[15]

Snow concluded her comments on Henshaw by stating that after 'having performed a great and good work', baptising several persons who became prominent and influential preachers in the church, following his emigration to America, he made a 'shipwreck of his faith' by dying as a drunkard in New Orleans.[16]

Henshaw is mentioned in Joseph Smith's *History of the Church* where two statements are made about his activities in the Merthyr area. First, the entry for 19 February 1843 states:

> Elder William Henshaw having been directed by Elder Lorenzo Snow to go to South Wales, he commenced preaching privately to several families in Pen y darren, n? [sic] Merthyr Tydvil [sic], Glamorganshire— in the English

[14] Lorenzo Snow (1814-1901) had been converted to Mormonism after meeting Joseph Smith in Kirtland, Ohio, in 1831, and joined the mission to Great Britain (between1840-43). He worked alongside the members of the Quorum of the Twelve who were also serving in Britain, and went on to preside over the London branch which doubled its membership during his time there. It was Snow who presented Queen Victoria and Prince Albert with two specially bound copies of the Book of Mormon. Eventually Snow became President of the Quorum of the Twelve in 1889, and then the fifth President of the church in 1898.

[15] Eliza R. Snow Smith *Biography and Family Record of Lorenzo Snow, One of the Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret New Company, 1884), p. 53.

[16] Snow Smith *Biography and Family Record of Lorenzo Snow*, p. 53. Henshaw's penchant for alcohol may be supported by an account in the *Principality* (16 November 1849), which described an all night gathering of Latter-day saints in the home of Thomas Lewis in Pontypool. The gathering was 'entertained at supper with something more than a reasonable sufficiency of beer… The President [Henshaw] superintended the whole of the strange affair, and not till dawn of the day did the company break up, when most of the male and female members had some difficulty in finding their way home.' This appears to be the one and only account of Henshaw in the secular press.

> language, a number of whom believed his testimony; and this day baptized William Rees Davis, his Wife and two of his Sons, and commenced preaching publicly in bro. Davis house— about one third of the people only understanding the English Language—[17]

The second entry concerning Henshaw was dated 25 March 1843, and states:

> Elder William Henshaw who has encountered considerable opposition since he commenced preaching in South Wales, organized the Pen-y-darran [sic] branch, and ordained William Rees Davis, Priest, who commenced preaching in the Welsh language, which caused opposition to increase and a considerable number to receive the gospel; while he established that branch of the Church, Bro. Henshaw supported himself by work in the Coal Mines.[18]

Ron Dennis has noted: 'At Henshaw's invitation Davis also began to proselytize in both English and Welsh, thus apparently becoming the first to teach the tenets of the Latter-day Saints in the ancient Celtic tongue.'[19] However, if we bear in mind Palmer's encounter with a Welsh speaker at Llanthony Abbey in December 1841, it is possible there were other Welsh–speaking converts who shared the message in their native tongue, prior to William Davis.

By the end of 1846, having been replaced by Jones as President of the Merthyr Tydfil branch, Henshaw's role in the church was redefined. By the time of the General Conference in Manchester 31 May-2 June 1846, it was proposed that the Garway conference be linked to Wales under the presidency of Captain Dan Jones. At Nantyglo in the first gathering of the newly formed Monmouthshire conference on 15 November 1846, Jones appointed William Henshaw to 'take charge of the Garway conference, which is under his supervision, and joined to Wales, and that Abergavenny and Newport be part of that conference.'[20] Certainly by the summer of 1848, part of the Herefordshire conference near Garway was affiliated to the Welsh mission under the presidency of Captain Dan Jones.[21] This decision, it may be suggested, was indicative of the long association with Herefordshire and its influence in eastern Wales.

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[17] *History*, 1838–1856, volume D-1 [1 August 1842–1 July 1843] p.1473. This constitutes the fourth of six volumes documenting the life of Joseph Smith and the early years of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints http://josephsmithpapers.org/paperSummary/history-1838-1856-volume-d-1-1-august-1842-1-july-1843?p=116&highlight=Henshaw accessed 5 January 2016.
[18] *History*, 1838–1856, volume D-1 [1 August 1842–1 July 1843] p. 1502.
[19] Ronald D. Dennis, 'The Church of Jesus Christ of the [sic] Latter-day Saints (Mormons)', in Richard C. Allen, David Ceri Jones, Trystan Owain Hughes (eds), *Religious History of Wales: Religious Life and Practice in Wales from the 17th Century to the Present Day* (Cardiff, Welsh Academic Press 2014), p. 167.
[20] *Prophwyd y Jubili*, no.6, vol.1 (December, 1846), p. 161.
[21] *Millennial Star*, vol.10, no.16, (15 August, 1848), p. 254.

The lack of specific evidence regarding Henshaw's work for the Latter-day Saints' cause in south Wales, makes it difficult to evaluate his contribution in any depth. It also makes it difficult to determine the type of opposition he experienced. However, his labours prior to the arrival of Captain Dan Jones, and his appointment as President of the Merthyr Tydfil conference indicate that his contribution was not insignificant, especially in the light of the claims of Eliza R. Snow Smith that he had baptized several hundred converts.[22] Snow Smith stressed the importance of her brother's role and the work of William Henshaw in Wales. It may be suggested that her comments imply that neither her brother Lorenzo Snow, nor William Henshaw, had received the acknowledgement due to them for their part in the establishment of the south Wales mission. She wrote:

> It is due to the integrity of history that this statement should be made, as it has generally been supposed, by those not familiar with the early period of the work abroad, that Captain Dan Jones was the founder of the Welsh mission. It was Lorenzo Snow who started that mission, and his convert, Elder William Henshaw, was the instrument, after which Dan Jones went into Wales, and agitated the whole of that country with the gospel and power of the Church.[23]

Snow Smith certainly did not deny the notable success of Captain Dan Jones, but sought to draw attention to the way in which Jones' achievements overshadowed the earlier contribution of Henshaw, perhaps simply because they were better documented, though admittedly largely by himself.

In any case, Henshaw's work at Merthyr Tydfil was the next important phase of the Mormon mission that had spread westwards from Abergavenny. The *Millennium Star* in January 1846 reported on events at a Special Conference held in Manchester on14-15 December 1845, that the Merthyr Tydfil conference numbered 493 members, 11 elders, 15 priests, 14 teachers, 7 deacons, with 187 baptized since the previous Conference. It was at this time that Dan Jones became the President of the entire Welsh mission, and within three months replaced Henshaw as the President of the Merthyr Tydfil conference.

[22] Snow Smith, *Biography and Family Record of Lorenzo Snow,* p. 53.
[23] Snow Smith, *Biography and Family Record of Lorenzo Snow*, p. 53.

While no evidence survives of any details regarding opposition or persecution experienced by William Henshaw,[24] accounts of increasing hostility were to be recounted by Captain Dan Jones in the Mormon periodical *Prophwyd y Jubili*, and in his reports to the *Millennial Star,* suggesting that either opposition increased under Captain Dan Jones, or that he was more ready to report it. In particular, Jones identified Revd W. R. Davies, minister of Caersalem, Dowlais as the main source of persecution. The arrival of Captain Dan Jones would appear to be a transitional moment. His leadership, with its boldness and energy, invigorated the Welsh mission of the Latter-day Saints and was committed to its defence. The character of the mission changed. It was no longer dependent on the itinerant and slightly *ad hoc* missionary activity of the English missionaries such as Royle and Cooke or Palmer and Needham. There was now a headquarters for the mission at Merthyr Tydfil, the populous industrial capital of Wales. Furthermore there was a fearless President who could direct a campaign to proselytise his homeland. From 1846 until the mass organized emigration of Welsh 'Saints' in 1849, evidence of opposition to the Latter-day Saints was more apparent in newspapers and religious periodicals, but with the establishment of *Prophwyd y Jubili,* along with tireless pamphleteering, so was the Mormon defence.

Captain Dan Jones

The story of the Latter-day Saints' mission in south Wales has overshadowed their activity in other parts of Wales, primarily due to attention being focussed on Captain Dan Jones. However, this is due to the simple fact that the bulk of evidence relied on by historians of the Welsh Mormon mission concerns Jones, his polemical and apologetic writings and his reports to the *Millennial Star.*

As President of the Welsh mission, Jones' credentials were impeccable. Dan Jones was born in Halkyn, Flintshire, in 1810. He obtained the epithet 'Captain' because he owned a steamboat, named the 'Maid of Iowa', on the Mississippi river. It was here he first came into contact with the Latter-day Saints. Following his conversion to Mormonism, Jones was baptized in the Mississippi river in January 1843. He met Joseph Smith the following April and the two became close friends. Jones' native

[24] With the exception of Henshaw's encounter with Revd W. R. Davies, as described in Davies' pamphlet *Y Seintiau Diweddaf: Sylwedd pregeth a dradoddwyd ar y gwyrthiau, er mwyn goleuo y cyffredin a dangos twyll y creaduriaid a alwant eu hunain yn 'Seintiau y Dyddiau Diweddaf'* (Merthyr Tydfil: Argraffwyd David Jones, 1846),

ability in the Welsh language and his obvious enthusiasm for his new faith meant a call was extended to him on 11 May 1843 to 'prepare himself to take a mission to Wales'. [25] Jones was with Joseph Smith at the turning point of the new religion – the death of its founder at the hands of a mob in Carthage gaol on 27 June 1844. The night before Joseph Smith's murder, the two men had discussed their possible demise. Smith reportedly declared to Jones 'You will yet see Wales and fulfil the mission appointed you ere you die.' This was to be Smith's last prophecy.[26] Jones narrowly escaped, having left Smith only a short time prior to the fatal mob attack.[27]

Jones arrived in Liverpool in early January 1845, and was first assigned to north Wales.[28] One of his first actions was to publish a forty-eight-page pamphlet entitled *The dead raised to life, or the old religion anew. A Treatise on the Immutability of God.*[29] Despite his apparent gift for oratory, as witnessed in the General Conference in Manchester on 6 April 1845,[30] Jones had little success at this point in north Wales.[31] By December 1845, apart from himself and his wife, there were only three other members of his branch at Wrexham.[32] He was then appointed President of the entire Welsh mission and his missionary activities in north Wales came to an end. Wilford Woodruff made the reasons for this clear:

> Brother Woodruff rose to remark that, as brother Dan Jones had been sent on a special mission to Wales, by brother Joseph when living, he wished to see that appointment acknowledged by his conference; he considered it but just, and highly important, as brother Jones was the only person we had in this country who could speak, read, write, and publish in the Welsh language, he therefore proposed, that he receive the sanction of this meeting in his

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[25] Joseph Smith, *History of the Church* 5:386.
[26] Letter from Dan Jones to Thomas Bullock, 20 January 1855, p.10, Historical Department, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; see also *BYU Studies* (Winter, 1984), pp. 95-109.
[27] Jones claimed to have left Joseph Smith 'about an hour' before the mob attacked. *Millennial Star*, vol.5, no.11 (April, 1845), p. 170.
[28] Ron Dennis, 'Dan Jones, Welshman: Taking the Gospel Home', *Ensign* (April, 1987), https://www.lds.org/ensign/1987/04/dan-jones-welshman-taking-the-gospel-home?lang=eng accessed 11 December 2015.
[29] *Y farw wedi chyfodi yn fyw: neu'r hen grefydd newydd. Traethawd yn dangos anghyfnewidioldeb teyrnas Dduw.* (William Bayley, Wrexham,1845). This was based on Parley Pratt's pamphlet *A Voice of Warning,* (New York: W. Sandford), 1837. Pratt had arrived with the first missionaries to Great Britain in 1839, and was editor of the *Millennial Star* from 1840-42, but had penned *A Voice of Warning* outlining the doctrines of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in 1837.
[30] 'We are utterly incapable of doing anything like justice to the address of Captain Jones, for though delivered while struggling with disease, such was its effect upon ourselves, and we also believe upon others, that we ceased to write, in order to give way to the effect produced upon our feelings.' *Millennial Star*, vol.5, no.11 (April, 1845), p. 170.
[31] *Millennial Star*, vol.5, no.11 (April, 1845), p. 170.
[32] At this stage the Merthyr Tydfil branch had 493 members, 11 elders, 15 priests, 14 teachers, 7 deacons, with187 baptized since the previous Conference.

> appointment, and that he preside over the churches in Wales, subject of course, to the presidency in England.[33]

Thus, Woodruff had supported Jones for two key reasons – his commission to the Welsh mission sanctioned and initiated by Joseph Smith himself, and his ability to communicate in the Welsh language. The proposal was unanimously accepted. In fact, the statement that Jones was the only person who could propagate the Mormon gospel in the Welsh language was not totally accurate, as William R. Davis who had been baptized by Henshaw in 1843, was already spreading the Mormon message in his mother tongue.

It is clear that Captain Dan Jones brought with him four distinct advantages as far as the Welsh Mormon mission was concerned. First, he had known Joseph Smith personally and had been with the 'Prophet' just prior to his murder. Secondly, Smith had delivered a very specific prophecy about Jones' calling and mission to Wales, and this mission could hardly be questioned or doubted, since Smith himself foretold it. Thirdly, Jones was a Welshman and able to use his native tongue to promote the Mormon cause.[34] Finally, Jones was unquestionably a gifted orator, able to engage an audience and elicit an emotional response.[35]

The Latter-day Saints' mission to Wales now entered what may be argued was a very significant new phase. It changed from being a verbal message presented in towns and villages by the itinerant missionaries, to being presented in pamphlets and a monthly periodical. When Mormonism was challenged, especially in print, this challenge was swiftly met with a stringent literary response from Jones.

Jones was a prolific pamphlet writer, and founder and editor of the Welsh Mormon periodical *Prophwyd y Jubili* that first appeared in July of 1846, six months after he began presiding over the missionary work in Wales. Thirty issues were printed over the next two and a half years. In addition Jones also published a hymnal for Welsh Latter-day Saints, a 104-page history of the Church, and a 288-page scriptural commentary in defense of the Church.[36] Following the publication, in 1845, of Jones'

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[33] *Millennial Star*, vol. 7, no.1 (January, 1846), pp. 7-8.
[34] On the importance of these claims, see Douglas J. Davies, *Mormon Spirituality: Latter Day Saints in Wales and Zion*, (Nottingham: University of Nottingham, 1987), p. 5
[35] *Millennial Star,* vol.5, no.11, (April, 1845) p. 170.
[36] Dennis, 'Dan Jones, Welshman: Taking the Gospel Home' *Ensign* (April, 1987), https://www.lds.org/ensign/1987/04/dan-jones-welshman-taking-the-gospel-home?lang=eng accessed 16 February 2016.

first Welsh pamphlet, he produced a second pamphlet entitled *Proclamation of the Twelve Apostles in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.*[37] Dan Jones' brother, known as 'John Jones, Llangollen', printed this second pamphlet, on his press at Rhydybont, Llanybydder in Carmarthenshire.[38] His third pamphlet *Reply to Objections*[39] was published shortly afterwards in 1846. The work attempted to dispel common accusations addressed to the Mormons, a necessary task according to Jones. In a letter written from Rhydybont and dated 7 February 1846, which was published in the *Millennial Star,* Dan Jones writes:

> I have also a reply ready, to a pamphlet published lately; printed in Welsh, at Merthyr, against my first pamphlet, by a clan of priests, misrepresenting us, and our good Mormon creed, most foully … The people tell such lies about us as to stir up the curiosity of many to hear us. I have two chapels now in the neighbourhood to preach in when I can…[40]

Almost from the beginning of Jones' Presidency in Wales in December 1845, he was challenged by the publication of literature from Welsh Nonconformist sources. According to Dennis, Dan Jones' first pamphlet had caused such a stir in Wales that a group of Baptist ministers joined forces with a group of Independent ministers and commissioned David Williams, a lay preacher from Abercanaid, to write a rebuttal.[41] Williams produced a 32-page pamphlet entitled *The deceit of the Latter-day Saints Exposed.*[42] Williams challenged Captain Jones to prove that God had sent him by healing all the sick of Merthyr Tydfil, or by drinking something deadly without

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[37] Capt. Dan Jones, *Annerchiad y deuddeg apostol yn Eglwys Iesu Grist, Saint y Dyddiau Diweddaf at holl frenhinoedd y ddaear, at Raglaw, ac at lywiawdwyr Unol Daleithiau yr Amerig, ac at lywyddion, a holl bobl y byd* (John Jones, Rhydybont, 1845). This was a translation by Captain Dan Jones of a work originally produced by the Quorum of the Twelve, *Proclamation of the Twelve Apostles in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. To all the kings of the earth, to the president and to the governors of the United States of America, and to the rulers and all the people of the world* (New York, 1845).

[38] John Jones (1801-1856), was quite a controversial figure in Wales. He had been involved in debates concerning the temperance movement and baptism while he was living in Llangollen. He had been invited to Rhydybont by the Independents, where he became both minister and owner of a printing press.

[39] Captain Dan Jones, *Atebydd y gwrthddadleuon a ddygir yn fwyaf cyffredinol drwy y wlad yn erbyn Saint y Dyddiau Diweddaf, a'r athrawiaeth a broffesant; mewn ffurf o ymddyddan, er symud y rhwystrau oddiar ffordd y Cymry ymofyngar, heb, 'anmhwyllo ynghylch cwestiynau, ac ymryson ynghylch geiriau, o'r rhai y mae cenfigen, ymryson, cableddau, a drwg dybiau yn dyfod; ac na ddaliont ar CHWEDLAU ac achau anorphen, y rhai sydd yn peri cwestiynau, yn hytrach nag adeiladaeth dduwiol, yr hon sydd trwy ffydd: gwnaed [pawb] felly.'* (Rhydybont: John Jones, 1846). This pamphlet was partly based on Orson Pratt's *Dialogue Between Tradition, Reason, and Scriptus*, which had been printed in his *Prophetic Almanac* for 1845.

[40] *Millennial Star*, vol. 7, no.4 (15 February, 1846), p. 63,

[41] Captain Dan Jones, '*Y Farw wedi ei chyfodi yn fyw';* Ronald D. Dennis, *Welsh Mormon Writings: From 1844-1862. A Historical Bibliography,* Religious Studies Center: Specialized Monograph Series, vol.4 (Salt Lake City, Utah: Brigham Young University, 1988), p. 24.

[42] David Williams, *Twyll y Seintiau Diweddaf yn cael ei ddynoethi mewn nodiadau byr ar draethawd a ysgrifenwyd yn diweddar gan Capt. D. Jones, dan yr enw, 'Traethawd ar anghyfnewidioldeb teyrnes Duw.'* (Merthyr: D. Jones, 1845).

suffering any harmful effect. He questioned the Latter-day Saints' views regarding additional scriptures, and the absolute necessity of baptism. Jones responded by publishing his pamphlet with the strange title *The scales, in which are seen David weighing Williams, and Williams weighing David: or David Williams, from Abercanaid contradicting himself, caught in deceit, and proved deistic.*[43] In this pamphlet, Captain Dan Jones assumed a 'scornful attitude'[44] toward David Williams, weighing him on scales, with David on one side and Williams on the other. The idea behind this strange imagery is that Williams' arguments were contradictory when balanced against each other, and that ultimately his denial that God could intervene miraculously in the affairs of men, made him a deist. Jones also challenged the observations Williams had made regarding his second pamphlet.[45] Williams had described it as 'one so presumptuous as if it had been written by the fingers of the devil, who had dipped his pen in the venom of dragons or in the fiery furnace itself, and had it printed in the gates of hell'.[46] Jones believed that Williams was 'chained' to his 'prejudiced traditions.'[47]

Clearly, even at the outset, the tone of the opposition to the message of the Latter-day Saints was uncompromising and challenging, but it may be argued, so was Jones' response. Regarding Jones' reply in *The Scales*, Dennis notes that, 'Throughout the entire 16 pages, full of satire and derision, Jones simply follows the standard, mid-nineteenth-century techniques of the polemic.'[48] Of course, it may be suggested that Williams was also pursuing the same technique. Williams wrote no further pamphlets on the subject at this stage, being satisfied that a reprint of his original pamphlet would be sufficient to make his case. However, Dennis notes that Williams then 'went to *Y Bedyddiwr* … in an effort to scandalize the Mormons'.[49] Williams wrote two letters to *Y Bedyddiwr* concerning Thomas Jones, an apostate Mormon who had made some serious defamatory claims about the movement.[50]

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[43] Captain Dan Jones, *'Y glorian, yn y hon gwelir David yn pwyso Williams, Williams yn pwyso David: neu David Williams, o Abercanaid yn gwrthddweyd ei hun, wedi ei ddal yn ei dwyll, a'i brofi yn ddeistaidd',* (Rhydybont, J. Jones, 1846). The title was taken from the book of Job (Job 15:6, 11:3).
[44] Dennis*, Welsh Mormon Writings*, p. 24
[45] Captain Dan Jones, *Annerchiad y deuddeg apostol.*
[46] Williams*, Twyll y Seintiau Diweddaf*, p. 29.
[47] Jones, *Y glorian,* p. 2.
[48] Dennis, *Welsh Mormon Writings*, p. 25.
[49] Dennis, *Welsh Mormon Writings,* p. 27
[50] *Y Bedyddiwr*, Cyf. V, Rhif. 55 (Gorphenaf, 1846), pp. 250- 251; *Y Bedyddiwr*, Cyf. V, Rhif. 58 (Hydref, 1846), pp. 269- 270.

That there was concern about Williams' pamphlet is clear from a letter written by Dan Jones to Wilford Woodruff in which he asked for a letter authorising him to raise funds from the 'Welsh Saints' in order to produce a pamphlet to counter the opposing arguments of a 'group of priests' published in a recent publication. He expressed the fear that 'if it is not answered some weak Saints and sinners may stumble about it.'[51]

Williams' work signalled the deepening of Welsh literary opposition to the Latter-day Saints. The next phase of the attack was engaged by the re-entry into the debate in 1846 by Revd William Robert Davies from Caersalem Baptist chapel, Dowlais. Identified by Ron Dennis as the key player in the Welsh Nonconformist opposition to the Latter-day Saints, his role will be discussed in chapters 4 and 5.

Success and Opposition

Unquestionably, under the leadership of Captain Dan Jones, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints increased its membership in Wales during the mid to late 1840s. In 1846 there were nine hundred new members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and four new branches were established,[52] and in 1847 over 1,000 convert baptisms took place, with over 1,700 converts made in 1848.[53] The mission in Wales had evolved from its beginnings as a rural itinerant English language ministry, into a mission based in the industrial heartland at Merthyr, and extending from Pembrokeshire to Anglesey.

There is considerable evidence for Jones' success. In March 1848 Jones became ill with a recurrent lung condition, and had to take an enforced break from his activities. However,

> His consolation lay in the ten or so people a week being baptized at Merthyr. Hence his fond name for Merthyr as the 'mother branch of Britain'. This growth increased as the months passed with about a hundred a month reported from May of 1848 … One Mormon funeral at Merthyr attracted a crowd of nigh on a thousand mourners.[54]

[51] Dennis*, Welsh Mormon Writings*, p. 24, Letter to Wilford Woodruff, 2 January 1846, LDS Church Archives.
[52] Davies, *Mormon Spirituality,* p. 8.
[53] Ronald D. Dennis, 'The Church of Jesus Christ of the [sic] Latter-day Saints (Mormons)', p. 169
[54] Davies, *Mormon Spirituality,* p.8; *Millennial Star*, vol.10, no.8 (15 April, 1848), p. 122.

A letter by Captain Dan Jones was sent to the *Millennial Star* describing the Welsh General Conference at Merthyr Tydfil, that began on 23 December 1848:

> Our Hall, which will hold two thousand people, was so crowded before the morning service commenced, that we had to engage another hall nearly as large, which was also soon filled to overflowing, and continued so for two days with but little intermission. Scores had come from one to two hundred miles; all the hotels, taverns, and private lodgings in the town, so far as I have heard, were thronged like an Egyptian fair…[55]

By this date, just two months prior to Jones' departure for America with a mass emigration of Welsh 'Saints', Jones reported to the *Millennial Star* that the following progress had been made since the previous Welsh Conference in July, including the founding of 17 new branches:

> The statistics of the morning meeting showed the total number of branches in Wales to be 55, and organized 17 new branches; including 156 elders, 180 priests, 147 teachers, 67 deacons. Baptized since the last conference 1001; total members 3603; total baptized in the last year 1,939; which will average nearly 1000 a year since I have been in Wales, with brighter prospects for the future.[56]

The *Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian, Glamorgan, Monmouth, and Brecon Gazette*, among many other newspaper editions across Britain,[57] also reported on this half-yearly meeting of the Latter-day Saints in the large hall of the White Lion, Merthyr[58] on 31 December 1848. In these secular reports it was stated that although 1,500 people gathered there, more wished to gain entrance.

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[55] *Millennial Star*, vol.11, no.3 (1 February, 1849), p. 38-42.
[56] *Millennial Star*, vol.11, no.3 (1 February, 1849), p. 38-42.
[57] E.g. *Pembrokeshire Herald and General Advertiser* (19 January 1849); *Monmouthshire Merlin (*3 February 1849); *North Wales Chronicle* (6 February 1849); *London Daily News* (25 January 1849); *Morning Post* (26 January 1849); *The Times* (26 January 1849); *The Examiner* (27 January 1849); *The Ipswich Journal* (27 January 1849); *Manchester Times* (27 January 1849); *Reading Mercury* (27 January 1849); *Winsor and Eton Express* (27 January 1849); *Dundee, Perth and Cupar Advertiser* (30 January 1849); *South Eastern Gazette* (30 January 1849); *Derby Mercury* (31 January 1849); *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser* (31 January 1849); *Worcestershire Chronicle* (31 February 1849)*Bath Chronicle and Weekly Gazette* (1 February 1849); *Brighton Gazette* (1 February 1849); *Perthshire Advertiser* (1 February 1849); *Wiltshire Independent* (1 February 1849); *Greenock Advertiser* (2 February 1849); *Stamford Mercury* (2 February 1849); *Royal Cornwall Gazette* (2 February 1849); *Bucks Herald* (3 February 1849); *Northern Star and Leeds General Advertiser* (3 February 1849); *Yorkshire Gazette* (3 February 1849).
[58] *Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian, Glamorgan, Monmouth, and Brecon Gazette* (13 January 1849). Captain Dan Jones was licenced to preach at this venue known as the Cymreigyddion Hall (No. 481, Endorsed: Certificate dated March 27 1846).: Hywel D. Emanuel 'Dissent in the Counties of Glamorgan and Monmouth', *National Library of Wales Journal* vol.9, no.1 (summer, 1955), p. 41.

Despite the apparent success of Mormonism in Wales, from the beginning of his Presidency, Jones maintained that there was significant persecution of the Latter-day Saints. Nevertheless, the newspaper accounts of this large gathering of Latter-day Saints makes no suggestion of hostility to the Mormons or to Captain Dan Jones. Instead, reports focused on the statistics given by Jones on the growth of Mormonism and noted:

> The thousands of Mormons in Wales appear to have great affection for and confidence in Capt. D. Jones, who intends returning in February to the Valley of the Salt Lake…About 300 saints intend emigrating with him…[59]

Much of the persecution Jones cited had taken the form of written challenges by various members of the Nonconformist churches, as we shall see in Chapters 4 and 5. However, he also claimed that this persecution of Latter-day Saints involved incidents into which the community at Merthyr was drawn. Jones asserted that much of the opposition was focused on him, and reported such incidents to the *Millennial Star.*

In these accounts, Jones provides evidence of the persecution he suffered at Merthyr. In a letter dated 8 July 1847, Jones recorded the reception he received in Merthyr Tydfil upon his return from his travels:

> The first salutation after my arrival, was an invitation from the Mayor to defend myself against charges. When I reached his worship, he was in a hasty stew, reading a long catalogue of charges which were at the head of a lengthy petition to banish us from the limits of the city; attached were the names of the clergy, rev. doctors, lawyers, and deacons, and, following, the names of their deluded followers. After a dozen attempts I succeeded in hearing my own voice, and proceeded to defend myself against their charges, one at a time. The first was *Blasphemy.* 2. *Infidelity.* 3. Saying the end of the world was at hand, thereby scareing [*sic*] people out of their senses – taking them to a foreign country, and selling them as slaves, &c., &c., &c. You'll be surprised to hear that the chief magistrate had been made to believe these lies so firm, that he had actually made his arrangements to put me in prison, which he told me to my face![60]

Jones continued the account by adding that although the debate went on until midnight, ultimately the mayor announced that Captain Jones 'has proven Mormonism to be the *"Established church"* according to Paul's theory.' Jones defended Mormonism in the public square the following morning. His preaching included reference to the persecution suffered by the Mormons:

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[59] *Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian Glamorgan, Monmouth, and Brecon Gazette* (13 January 1847).
[60] *Millennial Star*, vol.9, no.19 (1 October, 1847), p. 300.

> When I cited them to the treatment which we received in our native land, and among the graves of our fathers, for our religion, there was hardly a dry face in the vast assembly, even the sergeant of police who had presented, and big nobs who had signed the petition, wept like babies. The mayor ordered the police and reporters there, and they never were in a more suitable place of worship![61]

Despite Jones' claims of a threatening and volatile atmosphere nothing impeded his preaching that morning, nor was he apparently in any personal danger. This appears to be evidenced by his statement that he returned to preach in the same place that evening, when the mood had apparently become even more supportive of his cause against injustice, concluding 'All the cry through the streets was, shame on the preachers and corporation for their persecution.'[62] Evidently, Jones, and according to this account, many other people, imputed the blame for such persecution not only to local officials but also to 'preachers'. Jones asserted that the persecution of Latter-day Saints was deliberately planned and engineered by the local ministers. Unfortunately, despite the involvement of a local magistrate there is no reference to this incident in the newspapers. This is surprising, considering the notability of Captain Dan Jones, and the fact that newspapers sometimes recorded incidents concerning Latter-day Saints and magistrates.[63] However, this may simply have been because the incident ended peaceably, an ultimately there was little to report.

In another letter by Jones, dated 22 August, but printed in the *Millennial Star* in October 1847, Jones claimed 'these regions are like a boiling pot; the priests mad with rage, and their flocks leaving them and embracing the gospel continually.'[64]

> The priests of the various sects hereabouts hold secret committees, purposely to devise plans to oppose the Saints; and the last plan concocted was to bribe 30, in Dowlais, of their most daring and shameless, belonging to the various schools and chapels, to interrupt, harass, and oppose our officers when preaching! This they do faithfully, by crying out in their faces while preaching, '*you are a liar,' &c.* Some of their preachers are burning with such zeal for their *holy goddess* and her family, that they cannot keep out of the fuss.[65]

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[61] *Millennial Star*, vol.9, no.19 (1 October, 1847), p. 300.
[62] *Millennial Star*, vol.9, no.19 (1 October, 1847), p. 300.
[63] E.g. *Glamorgan, Monmouthshire and Brecon Gazette and Merthyr Guardian* (25 March 1843); *Hereford Times* (7 December 1844); *Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian, Glamorgan, Monmouth, and Brecon Gazette* (31 July 1847); (20 May 1848); *Leicester Chronicle* (14 April 1849*).*
[64] *Millennial Star*, vol. 9, no.20 (15 October 1847), p. 300.
[65] *Millennial Star*, vol. 9, no.20 (15 October, 1847), p. 300.

Jones insisted that the persecution was intense. Referring to those who opposed the Latter-day Saints as desperate characters, Jones claimed that for the previous two Sundays, the hall where the Latter-day Saints held their meetings, was surrounded with 'hundreds of such [desperate] characters' in broad daylight 'gnashing their teeth, and threatening everything', in addition to throwing stones through windows. The day before he had written this letter to the *Millennial Star,* 29 September 1847, Jones claimed 'many thousands of such people congregated and incited the people against us all they could'. He added that 'It is dangerous for me to go among them now, for some declare that they consider it God's service to rid themselves of me!'[66] This atmosphere continued into 1848, when Jones wrote again to the *Millennial Star,* complaining of 'mobbings' and that people were not only being 'turned out' of their chapels, but that they were 'turned out of their work because of their religion'.[67] Jones also made it clear that opposition from ministers was not confined to the Merthyr area. At Llanelli, ministers warned their congregation that they would be excommunicated if it were discovered that they had attended the Latter-day Saints' newly opened chapel.[68]

In September 1847, public lectures against Mormonism were delivered by Revd Edward Roberts (Iorwerth Glan Aled) in Caersalem chapel Dowlais. As a result, Jones claimed that the persecution of Latter-day Saints in the Merthyr area reached a crescendo. He warned the readers of the *Millennial Star* 'You need not be surprised should you hear of Carthage tragedies in Wales, ere long'[69] suggesting that his own life was at risk of ending in a similar manner to that of the Mormon founder. Again, according to Jones, in Dowlais at this time, there were 'thousands of the rabble reiterating the foul epithets of the clergy' and 'the whole towns [sic] and works hereabouts, containing over 60,000 people, are actually drunken with infatuation, and rage for or against Mormonism'.[70] The scene depicted is one of threats and violence against the Latter-day Saints, and it would seem reasonable to expect that reports of this would have found their way into the secular press.

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[66] *Millennial Star*, vol. 9, no.20 (15 October, 1847), p. 318.
[67] *Millennial Star*, vol. 10, no.10 (15 April 1848), p. 123.
[68] *Millennial Star*, vol. 11, no.6 (15 March, 1849), p. 92. The chapel was opened in January 1849, *Udgorn Seion,* Cyf. 1, Rhif. 2 (Chwefror, 1849), p. 42.
[69] *Millennial Star*, vol. 9, no.20 (15 October, 1847), p. 319.
[70] *Millennial Star*, vol. 9, no.20 (15 October, 1847), p. 318. Jones also asserts that the clergy conspired to prevent Mormon converts obtaining work from the ironmasters, by claiming that Mormonism could be linked with Chartism.

Unfortunately, no such reports exist to confirm Jones' claims and there appears to be no other independent evidence, secular or religious, for this deteriorating situation in the Merthyr area. While this is not to suggest that there was no serious opposition and a potentially hazardous environment for the Latter-day Saints in the Merthyr area at this time, it does raise the question whether the level of threat was a matter of perception, with the Latter-day Saints as a minority group, naturally feeling intimidated by hostile reactions.

However, there is evidence from one newspaper report that describes a very different mood in Merthyr in the summer of 1847. The report depicts a Merthyr where people freely expressed their views in public. While these views were apparently expressed vehemently, leading to heated debate, there is no suggestion of violence or danger to anyone, or that the Mormons were particular targets for any form of attack. The *Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian Glamorgan, Monmouth, and Brecon Gazette* reported:

> Public lectures are getting frequent; and crowds of people are often seen in the neighbourhood of Market-square and George Town [sic], listening to open-air orators upon Teetotalism, and upon the truths or errors of Mormonism – subjects upon which the speakers get impassioned, and sometimes quarrelsome. It is amusing, on Sunday evenings, in the neighbourhood of the Dynevor's Arms, to find three speakers within hearing of each other expressing their sentiments, upon distinct subjects, at the same time; and these scenes sometimes end in very hot discussions.[71]

The writer's use of the term 'amusing' to describe the Sunday evening debates precludes any suggestion that there was any threatening atmosphere at this point. While it is true that the lectures of Revd Edward Roberts may have heightened awareness of the controversy surrounding the origins of Mormonism, no successive newspaper reports pass any comment on this.

Ron Dennis has asserted that by the end of 1848, the danger reached a point when Captain Dan Jones feared for his life. He notes: 'Some of Jones's fellow emigrants also wrote of the severe opposition just prior to their departure from Merthyr Tydfil to

[71] *Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian Glamorgan, Monmouth, and Brecon Gazette* (21 August 1847).

Swansea en route to Liverpool.'[72] Nevertheless, Jones himself wrote to the *Millennial Star* in January 1849 reporting that:

> The persecutions about Merthyr increase and wax hotter as the time grows nigh for the Saints to emigrate, but I am not alarmed for my life, because I believe that my existence will be prolonged to torment the emissaries of hell much more than ever yet.[73]

Dennis quotes from his translation of the Welsh Mormon publication *Udgorn Seion*:

> The life of our dear Brother Captain Jones was in such danger that his house was attacked almost every night for weeks before his leaving Merthyr, so that his godly life was not safe in sleeping except between guards from among his brethren; and there were scoundrels so inhuman who had been paid to kill him as he left, so that he had to leave secretly the day before.[74]

It remains curious why there are no newspaper reports indicating a level of persecution of Latter-day Saints in Merthyr that would have resulted in Jones needing protection while in fear for his life.

While many newspapers carried the report that Captain Dan Jones was preparing to emigrate with a large group of Welsh Latter-day Saints, none show any awareness that he was a figure that had been subject to any dangerous opposition or threats to his life. In fact, the only time the secular press published any accounts of the activities of Captain Dan Jones were in conjunction with the planned mass emigration of Latter-day Saints from Wales in 1849, which he organized and led. These were reports of the aforementioned meeting of Latter-day Saints at the White Lion, Merthyr in December 1848, and the account of the departing Latter-day Saints the following February, 1849.

There are a number of possible explanations for the lack of press coverage of mounting tension or of persecution of Latter-day Saints at Merthyr. The first of these would naturally be that the press made a conscious decision not to report such events. Possibly there was a loss of interest in the Latter-day Saints by this date, or that it was decided for prejudicial reasons, that reporting on the Latter-day Saints'

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[72] Ronald D. Dennis, *The Call of Zion: The Story of the First Welsh Mormon Emigration,* Religious Studies Center: Specialized Monograph Series, Vol.2 (Salt Lake City, Utah: Brigham Young University, 1987), p. 7.
[73] *Millennial Star*, vol. 11, no.6 (15 March 1849), p. 92.
[74] Dennis, *The Call of Zion*, p.7; *Udgorn Seion,* Cyf. 1, Rhif. 3 (Mawrth, 1849,), p. 58.

troubles would perhaps provide them with undue publicity and exacerbate an already tense situation. Considering the wide variety of stories reported on the Latter-day Saints throughout the 1840s, some with more of a curiosity value than actual newsworthiness, this seems unlikely. Another possibility is that Captain Dan Jones viewed the situation from a very different perspective. He was, after all, closely associated with the events at Carthage gaol, having left the company of Smith and others only a matter of hours before Smith's murder. It would not be unnatural for Jones to have become highly sensitised to threats of violence or possible attack, however real or imagined. Nevertheless, without supporting evidence from newspaper reports, the level of opposition directed at Captain Dan Jones and the Latter-day Saints cannot be confirmed independently. Also unsubstantiated are Jones' claims that trouble was stirred up from the pulpits, although it would hardly be expected that newspapers would have confirmed such reports. These are very strong accusations, but without further evidence it is impossible to identify the parties responsible.

The Emigration of 1849

It seems the plans for emigration gave birth to a rumour that the Mormon emigration was a scheme to sell people into slavery. From the Mormon point of view, this was another attack on their credibility, another attempt to discredit them with the public. In February 1849, just before the mass emigration, the *Millennial Star*, printed a letter from Dan Jones, in which he wrote:

> All kinds of lying stories that the father of lies and his emissaries can invent are being told of me; such as, that I am going to take this company over and sell them as slaves. I am called a swindler, thief, and everything but what I really am; even this is preached out of pulpits, and published in the religious magazines of the day unblushingly: and when I walk the streets I am frequently gazed at as though I had hoofs and horns: and, with the fingers of scorn pointed at me, they say, 'there is the man who is taking all the property of the Latter-day Devils, and is going to sell them as slaves,' &c. This is by no means uncommon, but a general topic among rich and poor, far and near.[75]

Jones was referring to an article in *Seren Gomer* by Anti-Humbug from Glanyrafon, who asserted:

[75] *Millennial Star*, vol.11, no.3, (1 February, 1849), pp. 38-42.

> After receiving enough money to get a ship or ships to voyage to California, their Chief-President [Dan Jones] will sail them to Cuba, or some place like it, and will sell them as slaves, every jack one of them. It would serve them right for having such little respect for the book of Christ and giving it up for the books of Mormon.[76]

However much Mormonism was misrepresented and misunderstood the call to emigrate had gathered strength. This was the promise of liberty and freedom to worship in a land portrayed as the new Zion for those 'saints' with the courage and faith to leave all behind in Wales and begin a new life around the Great Salt Lake. According to Douglas Davies 'The *Millennial Star* faithfully presented the call to emigrate to America as an intrinsic part of response to the Mormon message on the part of British converts.'[77] As far as *Prophwyd y Jubili* was concerned, emigration was a constant theme in all thirty issues. Dan Jones' main weapon in his mission to convert the Welsh to Mormonism had been the printing press, and the publication in Welsh of *Prophwyd y Jubili,* as well as his many pamphlets. Dennis notes 'converting his compatriots, however, represented only one of his objectives. Getting them "home to Zion" was the ultimate goal'.[78] Thus, emigration to the New Jerusalem was always the aim of the devout Welsh Latter-day Saints. Although Ron Dennis has imagined the relief of the Welsh Mormons as they sailed away from the 'pernicious influences of the Welsh reverends',[79] there would have been great expectation among the emigrants as they began their journey to the 'New Jerusalem', irrespective of any economic motive or escape from persecution.

In the February edition of 1848, Jones announced that official approval had been given for the Welsh to begin making definite plans for emigrating in the following year. *Prophwyd y Jubili* published a new song in a later edition. It was entitled 'Hail California', and had probably been composed by Dan Jones himself.[80] Two months later, *Seren Gomer* included a parody of this hymn entitled 'Invitation to California', signed 'Dryw Bach', which poked fun at what he considered to be the unrealistic aspirations, hopes and dreams of the Latter-day Saints.[81]

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[76] *Seren Gomer,* Cyf. XXX1, Rhif. 397 (Hydref 1848), p. 305. At this point in history the term 'California' described the area of the far west United States. Though the emigrants were heading for Utah, this area was only ceded to the US from Mexico in 1848 and did not join the Union until 1896.
[77] Davies, *Mormon Spirituality,* p. 4.
[78] Dennis*, The Call of Zion*, p. 2
[79] Dennis, *The Call of Zion,* p.12.
[80] 'Henffych California', *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Rhif. 28, (Hydref 1848), p. 158.
[81] 'Gwahoddiad I California', *Seren Gomer*, Cyf. XXX1, Rhif. 399 (Rhagfyr 1848), pp. 373-74.

The plan was that the Welsh Latter-day Saints were to gather in Liverpool by 15 February 1849.[82] The most detailed account of the emigration appeared in the Swansea based newspaper the *Cambrian.*[83] This report was repeated, usually verbatim (with few newspapers making any substantial changes) across Britain, thus accepting the accuracy of the *Cambrian's* account. It was one of the most detailed of all reports during the 1840s regarding the Latter-day Saints.[84] The account of the departure from Swansea to Liverpool also appeared in the American press.[85]

The tone of the report is significant, as although this account uses words such as 'fanaticism' and 'deluded', it is not harsh or prejudicial, but generally quite positive. It has a tone of bemused respect for those about to emigrate. There is no reference to any form of persecution suffered by this group of Mormon émigrés, and this is nowhere suggested as a reason for their departure. Neither is the article one of mockery for this endeavour nor does it take the opportunity to denounce any specific aspect of Mormon teaching. No reference is made to any opposition the Latter-day Saints had experienced, neither are any of their opponents among the ranks of Nonconformist ministers mentioned, suggesting that much of the opposition that emerged at Merthyr was localised and of little national interest, ultimately having significance only to the local leadership.

According to the *Cambrian*, preparations were made to leave Merthyr, and as elsewhere a meeting was convened prior to departure:

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[82] The Mormons who lived in North Wales would make their own way to Liverpool as individuals or in small groups, but those who lived in South Wales would meet in Swansea and take the steamer to Liverpool, a journey of about thirty-four hours.

[83] *Cambrian* (16 February 1849).

[84] E.g. *Principality* (16 February 1849); *Welshman* (16 February 1849); *Pembrokeshire Herald and General Advertiser* (23 February 1849); *Carnarvon and Denbigh Herald and North and South Wales Independent.* (24 February 1849); *Bristol Mercury* (17 February 1849); *Bristol Times and Mirror* (17 February 1849); *Caledonian Mercury* (22 February 1849); *London Daily News* (22 February 1849); *The Times* (22 February 1849); *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette* (24 February 1849); *Hampshire Advertiser* (24 February 1849); *Ipswich Journal* (24 February 1849); *Northampton Mercury* (24 February 1849); *Northern Star and Leeds General Advertiser* (24 February 1849); *Oxford Chronicle and Reading Gazette* (24 February 1849); *Reading Mercury* (24 February 1849); *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper* (25 February 1849); *Dundee, Perth, and Cupar Advertiser* (27 February 1849); *Greenock Advertiser* (27 February 1849); *Derby Mercury* (28 February 1849); *Worcestershire Chronicle* (28 February 1849); *Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette* (1 March 1849); *Royal Cornwall Gazette* (2 March 1849); *Stamford Mercury* (24 February 1849); *Leeds Intelligencer* (3 March 1849).

[85] The *National Intelligencer* (22 March 1849) published in Washington D.C. attributed its account to the *Swansea Herald.* The *Daily Union* (16 March 1849 also in Washington D. C. gave *The Cambrian* as its source. *The New York Daily Tribune* (2 May 1849) claimed that from April to September or October, emigration from Liverpool would be temporarily discontinued because of the sickness prevalent in New Orleans. It noted that 300 Welsh were due to sail on 1 March and another 300 Welsh and English expected to depart on 15 March.

> These misguided men commenced their expedition to California from Merthyr and the surrounding districts on Monday last. The farewell sermon was preached on Sunday by their commander-in-chief Captain Dan Jones.[86]

The article reported that Swansea was 'quite enlivened' by the arrival of several waggons loaded with luggage and accompanied by the 'bold peasantry' of Carmarthenshire. An almost equal number of inhabitants from Merthyr Tydfil and its surrounding districts joined the group. Dan Jones entered the town 'amidst the gaze of hundreds of spectators and in the evening he delivered his valedictory address at the Trades Hall to a numerous audience, the majority of whom were led by curiosity to hear his doctrines, which are quite novel in this town.' The report identified the emigrating Latter-day Saints as 'many substantial farmers from the neighbourhoods of Brechfa and Llanybydder, Carmarthenshire', and their motives were regarded without suspicion or derision:

> They seem animated only with the most devout feelings and aspirations which seem to flow from no other sources (judging from their conversations) than a sincere belief that the end of the world is at hand and that their Great Captain of Salvation is soon to visit his *bobl yn ngwlad y Saint*… It is the intention, we are informed, not to visit the gold regions, but the agricultural district, where they intend, they say, by helping one another, to reside in peace and harmony to exemplify the truth of 'brotherly love' not in name but in practice. [87]

The account continued by observing that several of the emigrants were elderly men aged from 70 to 90 years of age and whose 'hoary locks' not only proclaimed their 'lengthened years' but made it questionable whether they would actually live to see America 'yet so deluded are the poor and simple saints that they believe that everyone amongst them, however infirm and old they may be, will as surely land in California safely as they started from Wales. Their faith is most extraordinary.'
On the Wednesday morning after being addressed by Captain Dan Jones, all boarded the vessel 'in admirable order and extraordinary resignation.' Their departure was witnessed by hundreds of spectators and whilst the steamer 'gaily passed down the river' the Latter-day Saints commenced singing a favourite hymn.

A final comment by the *Cambrian* reflects the mood of the spectators: 'On entering the piers, however, they abruptly stopped singing and lustily responded to the cheering

[86] *Cambrian* (16 February 1849).
[87] *Cambrian* (16 February 1849).

with which they were greeted by the inhabitants.' While it is impossible to know the demographic of the spectators at the scene (inevitably, many would have been relatives, friends or other Latter-day Saints), the attitude of those present and the tone of the report does not appear to suggest animosity towards those departing, which is significant in the light of suggestions that the Mormons were persecuted wherever they had appeared in Wales.

Even at their point of departure, the Latter-day Saints were resolute in their assertion that they had suffered persecution, and that this persecution had been encouraged and perpetuated by various ministers. *Udgorn Seion,* which had replaced Dan Jones' periodical *Prophwyd y Jubili,* dealt with this issue.[88] It published a letter signed by twenty-five of the departing Latter-day Saints. It was entitled 'Last greeting of the emigrating Saints' and summarized the persecution they believed they were now escaping:

> Many preachers of the different sects, after slandering us and smearing our characters through the Welsh publications and condemning our dear religion from their pulpits, and doing everything they could to disgrace us and to shatter our feelings are even here when we are on board the ship, and as if they had one foot out of Babylon, they are trying to frighten the Saints about the sea voyage, about the country and about everything which is good, trying to persuade them to everything except that which they should do. [89]

William Phillips, the new Welsh President of the Latter-day Saints responded by describing the scene when the Welsh emigrants arrived in Liverpool from Swansea. The Revd Henry Rees[90] and some 'of the sectarian preachers of the town'[91] enquired whether the Latter-day Saints on board were Welsh. Establishing that this was indeed the case they asked whether it was true that there were widows on board who had prepared clothes and shoes for their departed husbands to wear. According to this account, Rees and those with him had received letters from 'respected ministers in South Wales' informing them of this situation. Captain Dan Jones and William

[88] *Udgorn Seion,* Cyf.1, Rhif .3 (Mawrth, 1849), p. 60.
[89] *Udgorn Seion,* Cyf.1, Rhif. 3 (Mawrth, 1849), p. 58.
[90] Henry Rees (1798 - 1869), was a famous minister among the Calvinistic Methodists in his day. He moved to Liverpool at Christmas 1836 and ministered there to the Calvinistic Methodist community that had a number of churches. Long recognized as the foremost leader of the Calvinistic Methodists in Wales, he was appointed moderator of the North Wales C.M. Association in 1855-6 and again in 1867, and became the first moderator of the General Assembly in 1864. *National Library of Wales, Dictionary of Welsh Biography*- http://wbo.llgc.org.uk/en/s-REES-HEN-1798.html (accessed 27 June 2015).
[91] Dennis, *The Call of Zion,* p. 11. See also: Ronald D. Dennis, *Zion's Trumpet,* Religious Studies Center: Specialized Monograph Series vol.15 (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University, 200l)), p. 60.

Phillips, replied that it was a 'barefaced lie' and offered the following explanation: 'There are on the ship some widows who have kept some things of their husbands out of respect, but not to greet them with in California.'[92]

However, despite the suggestion that this was yet another false claim spread about by 'sectarian preachers', there is evidence that this claim originated in the *Principality* newspaper that reported:

> Many scores if not hundreds of this sect left this town and neighbourhood the beginning of this week for the far-famed region of California. Some widows who have buried their husbands here have taken their clothes with them, expecting to meet them in that distant country! Do we really live in the 19th century?[93]

Furthermore, it did not appear in the Nonconformist press until March 1849, a month after it had appeared in the *Principality,* and a month after the emigration.[94] Again, this is an example of the religious press taking its information from the secular newspapers.

According to *Udgorn Seion* Revd Rees and his companions unsuccessfully attempted to dissuade the Welsh Latter-day Saints from continuing their journey. It claimed that underhand tactics were employed. These involved attempts to persuade wives and children not to undertake the journey with their husbands and proffered alarming descriptions of the hardships and rigours of such a journey.[95] It is of course, possible to interpret this differently. It could have been genuine concern for the welfare of women and children as they embarked on such a rigorous voyage. However, Phillips' account in *Udgorn Seion* ended fairly positively. He claimed that when they explained their principles to Revd Henry Rees and his associates, especially their emphasis on the importance of the Bible, he gave them his blessing. Unfortunately, there are no press reports of Revd Henry Rees' encounter with the Latter-day Saints before their departure, although there is no reason to doubt such an occurrence. While Mormon sources clearly indicate that such an event took place, it may not have seemed

[92] *Udgorn Seion*, Cyf. 1,Rhif. 3 (Mawrth, 1849,), p. 60.
[93] *Principality* (16 February 1849); *Y Drysorfa*, Rhif. XXV11 (Mawrth 1849), p. 96.
[94] *Y Drysorfa*, Rhif. XXV11 (Mawrth 1849), p. 96; *Y Drysorfa Gynnulleidfaol,* Cyf. V11, Rhif. 75 (Mawrth, 1849), p. 94.
[95] *Udgorn Seion,* Cyf. 1, Rhif. 3 (Mawrth, 1849), p. 58.

newsworthy enough for the press to pass comment, although Henry Rees was a well-known figure in the press at this time.[96]

On Monday 26 February 1849, 249 Welsh Mormons set sail aboard the *Buena Vista* from Waterloo Dock Liverpool to what they regarded as 'Zion'. Seventy-seven other Latter-day Saints should have travelled with them, but had to remain another week before sailing on the *Hartley* with 161 English and Scottish converts. Having left Liverpool on 26 February 1849, the intrepid 'Saints' landed at New Orleans on 19 April 1849. On the 26 October 1849 they 'achieved the goal of all faithful Welsh Mormons' [97] and finally arrived in the valley of the Great Salt Lake.

Emphasising the success of the Latter-day Saints' Welsh mission, and notably with no reference to any persecution suffered by the emigrants the *New York Daily Tribune* 2 May 1849 noted:

> Their creed is daily gaining proselytes, not from the lower orders only, but among the wealthiest and most influential classes. They have gained many converts in Wales, where they form a very large and respectable portion of the population. The facts that a Mormon paper published in a little town of Wales receives liberal support from the members of that creed, and that the Mormon church of Wales is represented in the Manchester Mormon General Assembly, go to show that they must at least have acquired some importance in that country.[98]

Over the next decade thousands more Welsh Latter-day Saints arrived in the Salt Lake Valley. They usually emigrated in small groups rather than companies such as those aboard the *Buena Vista* in 1849. The most notable exception was the company that set sail aboard the *Samuel Curling* in 1856. Captain Dan Jones had returned to Wales to serve a second mission (1852-56), when he became editor of *Udgorn Seion* following the emigration of John Davis. He finally left for America aboard the *Samuel Curling* with 560 Welsh Latter-day Saints. The Welsh Mormons developed their own communities in Malad (Idaho), Willard, Wales and Spanish Fork. In the 1840s and 1850s Welsh Mormonism reached the pinnacle of its success. Ironically, the doctrine of emigration, 'the gathering' to Zion and longed-for goal of Latter-day Saints, was perhaps the key factor in its decline.

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[96] E.g. *Welshman* (29 May 1846); *Principality* (22 December 1848); *Carnarvon and Denbigh Herald and North and South Wales Independent* (28 June 1846) etc.
[97] Dennis, *The Call of Zion,* p. 66.
[98] *New York Daily Tribune*, (2 May 1849).

Conclusions

As this chapter has demonstrated, there can be no doubt about the contribution made by William Henshaw and Captain Dan Jones, and that their mission to Merthyr Tydfil remains the enduring success story of the Latter-day Saints' mission to Wales during the 1840s. Despite the lack of records, it is evident that Henshaw had laid a firm foundation for this work prior to Jones' arrival. Jones came imbued with an authority from Joseph Smith himself, and his ability to speak and write in the Welsh language provided a copious flow of Mormon literature through which he could defend Mormonism and disseminate its distinctive teachings. That numbers increased following Jones arrival at Merthyr and the start of his Presidency of the Welsh mission is evident from the statistics cited by Jones in his correspondence with the *Millennial Star*.

However, from this point, the character of the mission changed. No longer was it simply a fairly *ad hoc* itinerant ministry, where local hospitality created bases for the Mormon missionaries as they 'travelled without purse or scrip'. While itinerant ministry continued and converts such as Abel Evans travelled to Anglesey to preach the Mormon gospel, there was now a base at the populous and industrial heartland of Merthyr, from which Captain Jones could plan and direct operations.

The culmination of Dan Jones' first mission to Wales was undoubtedly his organization and direction of the first mass emigration of Welsh Latter-day Saints. Through *Prophwyd y Jubili* he prepared these converts, many from rural Carmarthenshire, for the enormous challenge of emigration, and the fact that 326 Welsh 'Saints' heeded his call is a tribute to his role as their leader.

However, Dan Jones' leadership appears to have marked a change in attitude to the Latter-day Saints. That they faced opposition and hostility during the first nine years of their mission to Wales is not in dispute, although the early missionaries make it clear that they also received kindness and support from many people. When the headquarters of the Mormon mission settled in Merthyr Tydfil, Captain Dan Jones continually claimed that the opposition increased. While figures like Palmer and Needham identified some of their opponents as ministers from different denominations, Jones was to focus on the opposition from one specific source, namely Revd W. R. Davies, Caersalem, Baptist chapel, Dowlais. Such was the decline in relations with local opponents that Jones claimed that by 1849, he was in fear of his

life. He laid the blame for local hostility squarely upon the shoulders of the Nonconformist ministers, in particular W. R. Davies.

However, his view of the extent of persecution suffered by the Latter-day Saints during his leadership needs to be re-examined, and in particular his assertions about the role of W. R. Davies. There is surprisingly little reference to Jones in the secular or denominational press. The lack of any such reporting inevitably raises questions regarding the significance of the Latter-day Saints in the general public view, and suggests that while the Mormons experienced opposition in the localities in which they operated, this localised opposition was of little interest to the wider public. Neither was it of a sufficiently serious nature to be reported. This suggests that there needs to be a reassessment of the opposition by Revd W. R. Davies and his fellow representatives of Nonconformity. The following chapters will outline the claims made about Davies' opposition, and will reassess the importance of his role as the chief opponent of Mormonism.

Chapter 4

Outlining the Opposition to the Latter-day Saints' Mission to Wales 1840-49

Those who initially reconstructed the history of the early Mormon mission to Wales,[1] made little reference to the opposition experienced by the Latter-day-Saints. Although it was acknowledged that Captain Dan Jones fought a 'war of words … against local ministers of religion at Merthyr',[2] it was Ron Dennis, Welsh Mormonism's primary chronicler, who first drew attention to the significance of one individual in the opposition faced by the Latter-day Saints in Wales,[3] namely, the Revd William Robert Davies (1798-1849), minister of Caersalem Baptist chapel, Dowlais. As a result, Davies has come to be regarded by those writing about this period as the leading Welsh antagonist of Mormonism.[4] The Mormon periodical, *Prophwyd y Jubili* made frequent reference to Davies' criticism of the Mormons,[5] and it is this evidence from Captain Dan Jones, along with an assessment of Davies' writings in the denominational periodicals, that led to Dennis' conclusion that Davies was 'one of the earliest and most relentless enemies of Mormonism'[6] and Mormonism's 'most vociferous opponent in Wales until his death in 1849.'[7]

Dennis' conclusions are based upon an assessment of the apologetic literature emanating from the Mormon side of the debate. His reliance on this evidence in

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[1] R. L. Evans, *A Century of Mormonism in Great Britain*, (Salt Lake City: Publishers Press, 1937; repr.1984), pp. 184-200; David Williams, 'The Welsh Mormons', *Welsh History Review*, 7 (1948), pp.113-118; Douglas J. Davies, *Mormon Spirituality: Latter Day Saints in Wales and Zion*, (Nottingham: University of Nottingham, 1987).
[2] Douglas J. Davies, *Mormon Spirituality*, p. 7
[3] Ronald D. Dennis, 'The Welsh and the Gospel', in V. Ben Bloxham, James R. Moss and Larry C Porter (eds), *Truth Will Prevail: The Rise of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the British Isles, 1837-1987* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1987), pp. 242-259.
[4] Lisa Ann Jackson, 'A Mission to Wales', *BYU Magazine*, Fall 2002, http://magazine.byu.edu/article/a-mission-to-wales/ accessed 23 April 2016. Jackson is described as an editor for the Latter-day Saint publication *Liahona Magazine.* She describes Revd W. R. Davies as 'one of their most vocal foes regularly using religious periodicals—in addition to sermons and letters—to launch his offensives.' See also: Geraint Bowen *Ar Drywydd Y Mormoniad,* (Llandysul: Gomer Press, 1999), pp. 11-12, 35, 52.
[5] E.g. *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Rhif.14 (Awst 1847), pp. 120-123; *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Rhif.15 (Medi 1847), pp. 134-137; *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Rhif.24 (Mehefin 1848), pp. 85-86; *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Rhif.27 (Medi1848), p. 131
[6] Ronald D. Dennis, *Prophet of the Jubilee,* Religious Studies Center: Specialized Monograph Series, Vol.10 (Salt Lake City, Utah: Brigham Young University, 1997), p. 32.
[7] Ronald D. Dennis, 'The Welsh and the Gospel', p. 242.

isolation from other sources raises the possibility that he has overstated the role of W. R. Davies, and that Davies' place as the key opponent to Mormonism requires fresh examination. Furthermore, Dennis' classification of Davies as the 'most vociferous' and 'relentless' enemy of Mormonism, needs to be considered in light of the tone, volume and regularity of his comments on the Latter-day Saints.

This chapter will look in detail at Ron Dennis' claims that the religious periodicals became an instrument of persecution against the Mormon cause and that the key contributor to this opposition was W. R. Davies. By referring to accounts published in newspapers, the chapter will seek to discover whether or not there was anything unique about the Welsh Nonconformist response and whether it constituted persecution or should be viewed as part of a more general reaction to the Latter-day Saints.

A Changing Scene: Timeline

As might be expected, any study of a nine-year period can be divided into various phases of development. This is also the case in this examination of the Welsh opposition to Mormonism. It might be helpful to note, at the start, the main phases of the Mormon mission.

1840	The First Latter-day Saint missionaries arrive in Wales. Henry Royle sent to Cloy, Overton at the Manchester Conference 6 October 1840. Frederick Cooke 'to labour' with Royle.
1841	*Seren Gomer* is the first religious periodical to publish articles on the Mormons (January and December).
1843	Mormon Elder William Henshaw conducts his first baptism in Merthyr Tydfil on 19 February 1843. The movement begins to grow in this area.
1844	'Tobit ger y Bont' writes his first article about the Mormons to *Y Bedyddiwr* (March). His second article appears in *Y Bedyddiwr* in April. This contains the first use in print of the pejorative term 'Satanists' for the Latter-day Saints. Joseph Smith is murdered in Carthage Gaol, Illinois (27 June 1844).

1845	Captain Dan Jones arrives in Liverpool in January. Jones is assigned to Wrexham (April) and produces his first pamphlet. David Williams, Abercanaid responds with the first anti-Mormon pamphlet published in the Welsh language. Captain Dan Jones becomes President of the Welsh Mission (December).
1846	Captain Dan Jones succeeds Henshaw as President of the Merthyr Tydfil branch (March). Revd W. R. Davies publishes his pamphlet containing his sermon on miracles and the deceit of the Latter-day Saints (March). Articles in opposition to the Latter-day Saints, by Davies and 'Quick yn Dwr', appear in *Y Bedyddiwr* in March 1846. *Y Bedyddiwr* publishes an additional letter by Davies in June. Other contributors begin to write to the Nonconformist periodicals on the Mormons. *Prophwyd y Jubili* begins monthly publication in July.
1847	Four letters on the Latter-day Saints, attributed to Davies by Dennis, appear in the Nonconformist press (January, September and two in December). Revd Edward Roberts lectures against Mormonism at Dowlais (September and November 1847). Increase in the number of articles on the Latter-day Saints published by Nonconformist periodicals.
1848	Revd Edward Roberts publishes his lecture on the 'Deceit of Mormonism' in pamphlet form. Five letters by W. R. Davies on the Latter-day Saints appear in the Nonconformist press. At least twenty-four articles on the Mormons appear in the Welsh religious press by other writers.
1849	January 1849, *Udgorn Seion* replaces *Prophwyd y Jubili,* under the editorship of John S. Davis. February 1849, 249 Latter-day Saints (plus an additional seventy-seven one week later) leave Wales for the Valley of the Salt Lake in the first mass organized emigration under the leadership of Captain Dan Jones. Contributions to the debate on Mormonism continue with articles in Nonconformist press. W. R. Davies dies of cholera in September 1849.

This brief overview suggests that the appointment of Captain Dan Jones as President of the Welsh Mission at the end of 1845 was a transitional moment in the story of the Welsh Mormon mission. Under Jones' leadership numbers of the Latter-day Saints in Wales increased and he became a prolific and belligerent apologist for the movement. Little appeared in the Welsh press before that time; opposition increased after it.

The Early Years: 1840-43

During the 1830s, the Nonconformist periodicals in Wales gave no attention to the developing Latter-day Saint movement in America, nor did they consider the movement worthy of comment following its arrival in England in 1837. It was not until 1841 that observations were made on Mormonism in a Welsh Nonconformist periodical. Thus, the anti-Mormon comments made by W. R. Davies were not the first to appear in print in Wales. This section will consider information about the Latter-day Saints that had been published prior to his first contribution to the debate in 1844.

Between 1841-43, the Nonconformist periodicals, *Seren Gomer* and *Y Diwygiwr* published four articles about the Latter-day Saints. While these articles contained various negative comments about the movement, they were not particularly aggressive in their opposition. When considered alongside reports that had already appeared in newspapers,[8] these comments, while defining Mormonism as a deception, were comparatively mild.

The first article to discuss the Latter-day Saints appeared in *Seren Gomer* in January 1841 and was entitled simply 'The Mormons'.[9] The tone of the article is descriptive and informative rather than polemical. It claimed that representatives of the movement had arrived in Gloucestershire and other parts of England, although they were more prevalent in America, their 'Promised Land'. The article included a history of Joseph Smith and the origins of Mormonism. It compared the sudden appearance

[8] E.g. *Morning Chronicle* (19 October 1838); *Worcestershire Chronicle* (8 November 1838); *Silurian* (24 November 1838).
[9] *Seren Gomer,* Cyf. XXIV, Rhif. 304 (Ionawr, 1841), pp. 6-8

and attraction of Mormonism to other religious developments that proved short-lived, such as 'the Swedenborgs, the Southcotians, and other hotheads'. It predicted that Mormonism would have an equally short life span.[10] The term 'hotheads' was often applied to radical political or religious groups by both the secular and religious press. It carried with it the suggestion of impulsive, and irrational extremism. While this article suggested the composition of the *Book of Mormon* as the invention of Smith, it was not particularly destructive in its attack, claiming 'the principles which it teaches are not in themselves immoral or wicked, but are largely paraphrases of the New Testament.' *Seren Gomer* acknowledged that its information had been derived from an unidentified 'English writer' and a comparison with an article entitled 'The Mormonites' printed in the *Gloucester Journal,* 21 November 1840 reveals the clear dependence of *Seren Gomer* on the English account. The structure and content of the article is reprinted virtually verbatim.[11] Despite being critical of Mormonism, both articles argued that any form of persecution of its adherents should be avoided, primarily because this would cause the spread of the movement.

The second article appeared eleven months later in *Seren Gomer*.[12] The tone differed from the first one, and its view of Mormonism was more critical. Its intention was to warn others not to be drawn into the Mormon 'deception' and 'shameful superstition', which it claimed was simply a means to 'entice foolish people'. The claims intended to deter those reading them from any involvement in Mormonism.

Evidence for such claims was found in the salutary tale of Thomas Margretts,[13] a small cattle farmer from the Cheltenham area, who was 'bewitched' by Mormon preaching that led to his conversion and subsequent decision to emigrate. The account gave a full description of Margretts' experiences. Having sold everything he possessed, Margretts, his wife and six children sailed from Liverpool to New Orleans on 1 February 1841,[14] travelling with a hundred other converts.[15] After enduring the

[10] *Seren Gomer*, Cyf. XX1V, Rhif.304 (Ionawr, 1841), p. 7.
[11] *Gloucester Journal* (21 November 1840).
[12] *Seren Gomer* Cyf. XXIV, Rhif. 315 (Rhagfyr, 1841), pp. 373-74. The author is unnamed.
[13] The newspaper reports that record the story spell the name 'Margretts' (or less frequently, Margaretts).
[14] *Seren Gomer* is mistaken on three counts here. Mormon migration records state that Thomas Margaret, his wife Elizabeth and three children sailed from Liverpool to New Orleans aboard the *Echo,* on 16 February 1841.
https://mormonmigration.lib.byu.edu/mii/voyage/116?mii=on&query=%27Echo%27&voyage=on&dateTo=1842&passenger=on&dateFrom=1841&account=on accessed 20 March 2017.

many hardships of the voyage, on arrival at Nauvoo they discovered thousands of Mormon disciples in a pitiful state, with few of the basic 'necessities of life'. In addition to food shortages, Yellow Fever had broken out. *Seren Gomer* claimed that the 'New Jerusalem' of Mormonism was situated in the 'unhealthiest place in America', and added that it hoped that this information might act as a deterrent to those tempted to follow Margretts' example. In addition to this, the periodical questioned the character and motivation of Joseph Smith. Margretts claimed Smith had constantly badgered him to purchase large areas of land near the 'New Jerusalem', and he came to believe that Smith was driven by the prospect of financial gain. The fact that Smith was unable to show Margretts the golden tablets on which the original revelation of the *Book of Mormon* had been given, completed the disillusionment, and thus, after staying there for just three weeks the disenchanted Margretts and his family left in secret (for fear they would be prevented from leaving) and returned to England. *Seren Gomer* noted that the whole venture had been an expensive waste of money, as in total Margretts had spent the considerable sum of £200 on this excursion.[16] The article concluded with the comment that Margretts had determined that if any of the 'deceitful saints' were to cross his threshold again he would most certainly unload the contents of his double-barrelled shotgun into their skull![17]

Despite the clear warning tones of the article, a survey of newspapers from the period indicates that when *Seren Gomer* published this story in December 1841, it had been in the public domain for many months.[18] It appears that *Seren Gomer* had once again translated the account of the story from an English newspaper. On 23 August 1841, four months before the account in *Seren Gomer,* the *Cheltenham Journal* published the story of Margretts and his experiences. Most of the subsequent newspaper accounts were attributed to this source, although the story had first appeared in the

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[15] 109 Latter-day Saints undertook this voyage, led by a church leader named Daniel Browet https://mormonmigration.lib.byu.edu/mii/account/308?mii=on&query=%27Echo%27&voyage=on&dateTo=1842&passenger=on&dateFrom=1841&account=on accessed 20 March 2017.

[16] The equivalent of £19,040, in 2016, according to the Bank of England Education Resources Inflation Calculator. http://www.bankofengland.co.uk/education/Pages/resources/inflationtools/calculator/default.aspx accessed 28 August 2017.

[17] *Seren Gomer* Cyf. XXIV, Rhif. 315 (Rhagfyr, 1841), p. 374.

[18] E.g. *Worcester Journal* (26 August 1841); *Cambrian* (28 August 1841); *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette* (28 August 1841); *Monmouthshire Beacon* (28 August 1841); *Bath Chronicle and Weekly Gazette* (2 September 1841); *Bristol Mercury* (4 September 1841); *Hereford Times* (11 September 1841); *Preston Chronicle* (18 September 1841).

Cheltenham Chronicle.[19] In Wales, the *Monmouthshire Beacon,* and the *Cambrian* had also published the story in August. Again, a comparison between the article on Margretts' experiences published in the *Gloucester Journal*[20] (an English newspaper widely available in Wales)[21] and the account published in *Seren Gomer* four months later, reveals that, with the exception of some minor local detail of relevance to its Gloucestershire readership,[22] they are virtually identical. Margretts' story was widely reported across Britain, airing the claim that the Latter-day Saints were associated with a moneymaking scheme. Unsurprisingly, the *Millennial Star* responded. It published a letter of complaint that had been sent to the *Cheltenham Journal* disputing claims made in the Margretts' story maintaining these were 'barefaced falsehoods and glaring inconsistences'. It claimed Margretts' return had been prompted by his wife's ill health. [23] Nevertheless, the story of Thomas Margretts had received considerable publicity before *Seren Gomer* decided it was worthy of repetition for the benefit of its Welsh-speaking readership.

Almost a year later *Seren Gomer* published another short article on the Mormons.[24] Again, this story had already appeared in Wales in the *North Wales Chronicle,* as well as in newspapers throughout England, at least a month prior to its inclusion in *Seren Gomer*.[25] In this case the article commented on the 'many thousands' who had already left Birmingham, Manchester, and other places in England, for Nauvoo, believing Joseph Smith to be 'the only medicine for their souls.' It recorded a strange tale of one woman who when warned of the dangers of the journey, claimed she feared nothing because she believed that even if the ship sank she would be taken in the belly of a whale to arrive safely at the New Jerusalem. It passed no comment on her credulity, but allowed its readers to make their own judgement.

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[19] The article was entitled 'Mormonism in its true colours.' *Cheltenham Chronicle* (19 August 1841).
[20] The *Gloucester Journal* (28 August 1841).
[21] See: Hannah Baker, *Newspaper, Politics, and Public Opinion in Late Eighteenth-Century England,* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1998), pp. 123-124.
[22] E.g. Margretts' farm was at Evington. He had heard the Mormon message in a neighbour's house at Leigh, etc.
[23] *Millennial Star*, vol.2, no.6 (October, 1841), pp. 88-89.
[24] *Seren Gomer*, Cyf. XXV, Rhif. 326 (Tachwedd, 1842), p. 351. The author is unnamed.
[25] *John Bull* (1 October 1842); *Derby Mercury* (5 October 1842); *Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette* (6 October 1842); *North Wales Chronicle* (11 October 1842); *Royal Cornwall Gazette* (7 October 1842); *Stamford Mercury* (7 October 1842); *Worcester Herald* (8 October 1842). Most attributed their source as the *Birmingham Advertiser.*

Seren Gomer was not the only Nonconformist periodical to publish conclusions of Mormonism during this period. In 1843, *Y Diwygiwr* printed an article about the supposed attempt of Joseph Smith to walk on water.[26] The reference to Smith in *Y Diwygiwr* was in the context of a letter to the editor by John Griffiths, written from Cincinnati, 26 July 1843, and originally addressed to his parents,[27] describing to them his travels in the United States. He wrote that 'Lately Joe has been performing miracles to deceive the people, by walking on the surface of the water; during the night he had placed some benches with feet about a foot under the water'. [28] Unfortunately, someone removed one of the benches and Smith sank in the water in front of crowds of people. The writer added that it was 'strange how willing men are to show contempt for God's Son, and follow heretics'.

The characterization of Joseph Smith as less than genuine in his intentions, promoted by the press, was therefore being reinforced in Welsh Nonconformist literature, but it did not originate there. As early as 1838 the Monmouthshire newspaper, the *Silurian*[29] had printed the same story in an article entitled 'The Mormons' which described Joseph Smith as a 'modern imposter.'[30] In this account it was claimed that ropes had been placed beneath the water, rather than benches. Indeed, that year the story was widely reported throughout Britain, from Scotland to Worcestershire.[31] It appears to be a story that refused to go away and was well known in America where it originated.[32] Even four years after Smith's death, a similar story involving Smith's claims to be able to walk on water appeared in the *North Wales Chronicle* in 1848.[33] In this account, entitled 'A Mormon Miracle' Smith prepared to demonstrate that he could walk on water. He asked the crowd if they had sufficient faith to believe he could do it. When they responded that they did, Smith declared that that was all

[26] Dennis, 'The Welsh and the Gospel', p. 242. *Y Diwygiwr* (Rhagfyr, 1843), pp. 370-71.
[27]It was stated that he was the son of the Revd S. Griffiths, Horeb, Llandysul. Revd Samuel Griffiths (1783 - 1860), Independent minister. NLW *Welsh Biography online* http://yba.llgc.org.uk/en/s-GRIF-SAM-1783.html accessed 20 March 2017.
[28] *Y Diwygiwr* (Rhagfyr 1843), pp. 370-71.
[29] *The Silurian*, (24 November 1838).
[30] *Morning Chronicle* (19 October 1838). The story was attributed to their Philadelphia correspondent.
[31] E.g. *Reading Mercury* (27 October1838); *Liverpool Mercury* (2 November 1838); *Leeds Times* (3 November 1838); *Preston Chronicle* (3 November 1838); *Worcestershire Chronicle* (8 November 1838); *Fife Herald* (8 November 1838); *Newcastle Courant (*9 November 1838); *The Operative* (11 November 1838).
[32] For a full discussion of this story see J. Taylor Hollist 'Walking–on–Water Stories and Other Susquehanna River Folk Tales about Joseph Smith', *Mormon Historical Studies*, vol.6, no.1 (Spring 2005), pp. 35-52.
[33] *North Wales Chronicle* (14 November 1848) The story was attributed to *Blackwood's Magazine*.

that was needed and abandoned the attempt.[34] The fact that newspapers were continuing to print such stories indicates the persistence of claims that reinforced a negative view of Smith's character, and by association the legitimacy of Mormonism itself.

Therefore, during the early years of the Mormon mission in Wales, evidence suggests that *Seren Gomer*, and *Y Diwygiwr* were not instigators of negative comments on the Latter-day Saints to their Welsh audience, but disseminators of information already in the public domain. This may be regarded as a fairly restrained approach, but at this stage the Latter-day Saints' activity in Wales was localized and the numbers of adherents comparatively small, with William Henshaw reporting just over 500 members of the Merthyr Tydfil conference at the end of 1845.[35] These articles were, of course, unhelpful for the Mormon cause, reiterating stories redolent with scepticism and suspicion. Mormonism had arrived in England three years prior to its arrival in Wales, and it would be reasonable to suggest that this was sufficient time for various perceptions regarding Mormonism to have crossed the border. Furthermore, by the time the first articles on Mormonism were published by the Welsh denominational periodicals, a growing number of anti-Mormon tracts had already been produced in England.[36] While these early articles in the Welsh religious press may have caused some readers to question the validity of Mormonism, others would have already been aware of the criticism that existed concerning the movement.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the articles that appeared in the Nonconformist press between 1841-1843, were infrequent and unoriginal in content. Nevertheless,

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[34] E.g. *Morning Post* (6 November 1848); *Chester Chronicle* (10 November 1848); *Westmorland Gazette* (11 November 1848); *Newcastle Guardian and Tyne Mercury* (11 November 1848); *Dundee. Perth and Cupar Advertiser* (14 November1848); *Worcestershire Chronicle* (15 November 1848); *Cheltenham Chronicle* (16 November1848); *Glasgow Herald* (27 November 1848); *John O' Groat Journal* (1 December 1848); *Hereford Times* (10 February 1849).

[35] *Millennial Star*, vol.7, no.1 (1 January, 1846), p. 3.

[36] E.g. Richard Livesey *An Exposure of Mormonism, being a Statement of Facts relating to the Self-Styled 'Latter Day Saints,'* and the *Origin of the Book of Mormon,* (Preston: Printed by J. Livesey, 1838), the first anti-Mormon book to be published in Great Britain; David Latimer St. Clair, *To the Followers of the Latter-day Saints,* (Cheltenham: Willey, 1840). For a complete list of anti-Mormon tracts at this time see: Craig L. Foster *Penny Tracts and Polemics: A Critical Analysis of Anti-Mormon Pamphleteering in Great Britain (1837-1860),* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2002).

they aided the dissemination of negative information about Mormonism. However, as the movement spread, events at Dowlais resulted in one Baptist minister writing to *Y Bedyddiwr* to comment on the activities of the Latter-day Saints in his area. The minister was Revd W. R. Davies.

Revd W. R. Davies

In March 1844, a letter about the Latter-day Saints was published in *Y Bedyddiwr*. Up to this point, this periodical had remained silent about the movement. The letter was signed with the pseudonym 'Tobit ger y Bont'. It described an incident in Dowlais involving the Latter-day Saints that he considered particularly troubling. Based on Captain Dan Jones' oft-repeated claims, Ron Dennis asserts that 'Tobit ger y Bont' was Revd W. R. Davies.[37] It is also Dennis' contention, again based on Jones' assertions,[38] that Davies wrote other anti-Mormon letters and articles using further pseudonyms 'I', 'Quick yn Dwr', 'Gwcw y Don', and 'T. ab Ieuan'.[39] The writings that Dennis has identified as the work of Davies are found chiefly in the Baptist periodical *Y Bedyddiwr,* although they also appear in *Y Tyst Apostolaidd, Seren Gomer* and *Y Drysorfa Gynnulleidfaol*. Dennis has identified and listed seventeen 'anti-Mormon' writings by Davies.[40] These include Davies' only pamphlet,[41] printed in March 1846.[42] So convinced is he of the identity of the writer that, when referring to these articles

[37] E.g. *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Rhif. 20, (Chwefror, 1848), pp. 21- 23. Captain Dan Jones identified W. R. Davies as 'Tobit ger y Bont' in his pamphlet *Atebydd y gwrthddadleuon a ddygir yn fwyaf cyffredinol drwy y wlad yn erbyn Saint y Dyddiau Diweddaf, a'r athrawiaeth a broffesant; mewn ffurf o ymddyddan, er symud y rhwystrau oddiar ffordd y Cymry ymofyngar, heb, 'anmhwyllo ynghylch cwestiynau, ac ymryson ynghylch geiriau, o'r rhai y mae cenfigen, ymryson, cableddau, a drwg dybiau yn dyfod; ac na ddaliont ar CHWEDLAU ac achau anorphen, y rhai sydd yn peri cwestiynau, yn hytrach nag adeiladaeth dduwiol, yr hon sydd trwy ffydd: gwnaed [pawb] felly'* (Rhydybont: John Jones, 1846).
[38] *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Cyf.1, Rhif. 1, (Gorffennaf, 1846), pp. 24-25; *Atebydd y Gwrthddadleuon.*
[39] 'Published Anti-Mormon Writings of W. R. Davies', Ronald D. Dennis, 'The Reverend W. R. Davies vs Captain Dan Jones', *BYU Studies,* 27, no.2 (1987), or https://byustudies.byu.edu/PDFViewer.aspx?title=5818&linkURL=27.2DennisReverend-74fb8b35-8bfc-42b7-b2d9-a8a70561fd81.pdf accessed 17 April 2014. Three articles appear under the pseudonym 'Tobit ger y Bont', one article using the name 'QUICK-YN-DWR', one article written by 'Gwcw y Don', and one by 'T. ab Ieuan.' The rest are signed using his proper name. In 'The Welsh and the Gospel', p. 244, Dennis identifies two articles written by 'I' with Davies, although these are not included in the list of seventeen items.
[40] 'The Reverend W. R. Davies vs Captain Dan Jones'.
[41] Davies, *Y Seintiau Diweddaf.*
[42] Dennis also includes in his list of seventeen items, a second version of this pamphlet. According to Dennis was reprinted and revised in 1847, although Dennis has concluded, following an exhaustive search, that this version is no longer extant. Evidence for the existence of a revised second pamphlet is based entirely on the statements of Captain Dan Jones in *Prophwyd y Jubili*, Rhif. 14 (Awst, 1847), p. 21. Jones claimed Davies had re-vamped his original treatise as a 'catechism for Sunday schools.' Dennis has made an exhaustive, yet fruitless search for a copy of the second edition. Dennis, 'The Reverend W. R. Davies vs Captain Dan Jones', p. 63.

Dennis uses the pseudonyms and the name Davies interchangeably. It is the volume of material thus amassed that has led Dennis to conclude that Davies was 'the most vociferous foe of Mormonism in Wales'.[43] He notes that when Captain Dan Jones was appointed President of the Welsh Mission in December 1845, 'One of Elder Jones's first objectives as their new president was to defend them and their faith against the increasing opposition from Rev. Davies and his colleagues of the clergy'.[44] This statement concedes that Davies was not alone in his opposition to Mormonism.

However, no other opponent receives similar attention or has been ascribed the same level of vehemence in the campaign against the Latter-day Saints, despite the fact that authors such as 'Anti-Humbug' of 'Glanyrafon' wrote to *Seren Gomer* with equivalent ferocity[45] accusing the Latter-day Saints of various forms of deception in their writings and teachings on baptism, miracles, prophecy, and visions. 'Gwilym ab Dewi, Talywaen'[46] also wrote to *Seren Gomer* expressing strong opposition to claims by the Latter-day Saints of healing miracles. More consideration will be given to these contributors in the following chapter, but it appears, *prima facie*, that W. R. Davies has received a disproportionate amount of attention due to the volume of printed matter directed against him by Captain Dan Jones in the Mormon publication *Prophwyd y Jubili.*

The attention that Dennis has given to W. R. Davies' opposition to Mormonism reveals that he believes that Davies's writings wielded a powerful influence. He allocates it far more attention than anti-Mormon pamphlets by other authors, or the preaching and lecturing of other important ministerial figures. He has described Davies as a 'relentless' enemy of Mormonism.[47] Regarding Davies' motivation for the start of his tireless campaign, Dennis has suggested that this can be traced to the increasing conversion rate of local people to Mormonism. He notes that 'When his first article appeared in March 1844, the Mormons in the Merthyr Tydfil area numbered just over one hundred, enough to provoke the alarmed Davies into action'.[48]

[43] Ronald D. Dennis, 'Reverend W. R. Davies vs Captain Dan Jones', p. 53.
[44] Dennis, 'The Welsh and the Gospel', p. 250
[45] *Seren Gomer*, Cyf. XXXI ,Rhif. 397 (Hydref, 1848), pp. 304-305.
[46] *Seren Gomer*, Cyf. XXIX, Rhif. 371 (Awst, 1846), pp. 234- 235. Talywaen is near Dolgellau.
[47] Ronald D. Dennis*, Prophet of the Jubilee,* p. 32.
[48] Dennis, 'The Welsh and the Gospel', p. 242.

In itself this is not an unreasonable assumption. No minister would wish to see his congregation dissipated, whether by alternative denominations or by new religious movements. However, in claiming that loss of chapel members motivated ministerial opposition to the Latter-day Saints, Dennis was merely repeating a claim made by Mormons themselves, even at the time. Following the very first Mormon meetings in Preston at the Vauxhall chapel in 1837, the ensuing opposition of its minister, Revd James Fielding was attributed to his fear that he was losing his congregation.[49] R. L. Evans, the first writer to produce a history of the Mormon mission in Britain, explained: 'Communicants are the paid minister's customers, and as a matter of sound business he resents their loss.'[50] When James Burnham wrote to the *Millennial Star* recounting his progress in Flintshire in early 1841, he ascribed the opposition he was experiencing to 'some of the priests' who caused disturbances in Mormon meetings because 'they are all in arms [sic] about their flocks, they call us *robbers* and *infidels,* declaring that we rob other churches.'[51] As a motive for opposition, this clearly imbedded itself in the minds of the Mormon missionaries. It could well have played a part in creating animosity between ministers and Latter-day Saints. However, attributing too much importance to this motivation ignores the possibility that other factors were at play, such as the belief that the teachings and practices of the Latter-day Saints were considered to be incompatible with traditional or orthodox Christianity. Despite superficial similarities, in fact the differences between traditional Christianity and Mormonism were sufficient to mobilise those who defended the former to expose the divergence in their beliefs.

That membership of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was increasing in Davies' area is unquestionable. Undoubtedly, 1843 was a significant year for the progress of Mormonism in the Merthyr Tydfil area and conversions began to increase. The Mormon Elder William Henshaw, regarded as the earliest Mormon missionary sent to this area, reported his first baptism on 19 February 1843, shortly after beginning his mission.[52] Among Henshaw's early baptisms was a member of W. R. Davies' congregation. In a letter to a friend that same year, Davies himself confirmed

[49] Orson F. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball; an Apostle; the Father and Founder of the British Mission* (Salt Lake City: Printed by the Kimball family, at Juvenile Instructor office 1888), p. 141.
[50] R. L. Evans, *A Century of 'Mormonism' in Great Britain*, (Salt Lake City: Publishers Press, 1937; repr.1984), p. 29.
[51] *Millennial Star*, vol. 1, no.9 (January, 1841), p. 239.
[52] Dennis, 'The Welsh and the Gospel', p. 241.

that the Latter-day Saints were experiencing some success having baptized ten or twelve people, including a female member of Caersalem.[53] Dennis confidently asserts that 'it was no doubt this conversion that brought Davies into the arena'.[54] According to Dennis, Davies was now 'alarmed' by recent Mormon success, and thus concerned about what this might mean for the future of his ministry at Dowlais, despite the fact that Davies expressed no opinions about the movement in his private letter to his friend. In order to evaluate the claim that loss of membership was the trigger for W. R. Davies to begin his literary campaign against the Latter-day Saints, we need to assess the content of those writings to discover the issues that exercised him most.

The Writings of Revd W. R. Davies

That Davies was a significant figure in the opposition to Mormonism in Wales during the 1840s is beyond doubt. There are two distinct areas in which this opposition to the Latter-day Saints was expressed: first, through letters and articles sent to the religious press mostly signed by Davies and thus undeniably from his pen, plus Davies' pamphlet on the Latter-day Saints and miracles (1846); secondly, his involvement in anti-Mormon activity in Dowlais, for example, the lectures against Mormonism given at Caersalem in September 1847, and claims made by Captain Dan Jones in the Mormon periodical *Prophwyd y Jubili.*

This section will consider the list of seventeen articles[55] Dennis has identified as emanating from Davies' pen, and the nature of their opposition to Mormonism will be reviewed. The issue of authorship of these articles will be considered in the next chapter.

There are five elements to the opposition found in the material identified by Dennis, namely:

[53] W. R. Davies to William Jones, 6 May 1843, Cwrtmawr Collection, National Library of Wales.
[54] Dennis, 'The Reverend W. R. Davies vs Captain Dan Jones', p. 53.
[55] Dennis, 'Reverend W. R. Davies vs Captain Dan Jones'.

1. Mormon claims regarding healing and spiritual gifts;

2. Davies' comments on the topic of the Latter-day Saints and baptism;

3. Accusations of 'Forged' letters published in the Baptist press designed by Davies to bring the Mormons into disrepute;

4. The use of the pejorative term 'Satanists' for the Latter-day Saints;

5. 'Predictions about the Mormons' and 'A warning to the Welsh about the Mormons'.[56]

Each of these elements will now be analysed in order to provide an understanding of W. R. Davies' views and discover whether his reputation as cruel persecutor of Latter-day Saints[57] can be sustained.

The articles identified by Dennis as having been composed by Davies vary in length from 650 words to 2,000 words. In a number of cases during 1847-48 information is repeated in different periodicals. Thus, the following headings take the topics Davies addressed in order of the length of his response to them.

1. Davies and Mormon Claims Regarding Healing and Spiritual Gifts

More than any other issue, it is the subject of Mormon claims of healing miracles and the practice of spiritual gifts that engaged the attention of W. R. Davies. This issue was at the heart of half of the seventeen 'anti-Mormon writings' identified by Dennis as the work of W. R. Davies. It is the constant premise of these writings that claims that miracles had taken place were false, and that there was no evidence to substantiate them, neither was there evidence for claims of speaking in tongues, or successful exorcisms. Davies regarded such claims as deception. Furthermore, it appears that his comments on these claims were the most contentious as far as the Latter-day Saints were concerned.

With reference to Davies' first letter in *Y Bedyddiwr* in March 1844 Dennis notes:

[56] Dennis, 'Reverend W. R. Davies vs Captain Dan Jones'.
[57] *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Rhif. 15 (Medi, 1847), p. 134.

> Under the pseudonym of 'Tobit ger y bont' Davies presents a 600-word diatribe against the Mormons. The first few sentences are indicative of his approach to dealing with the Mormons during the next five years until his death in 1849 of cholera.[58]

These 'first few sentences' consisted of a brief description of the beliefs and actions of the Latter-day Saints in the area of Penydarren. 'Tobit' states:

> The mad and foolish men, who call themselves the 'Latter-day Saints' have arrived in Pendaran [sic]. They profess to perform miracles, prophesy, speak in strange tongues, yes, in a word everything the apostles did. I am sorry to report that a number of the dregs of society are now believers.[59]

This first short letter by 'Tobit ger y Bont' was entitled 'A Strange birth among the "Saints"'. Dennis is concerned with two aspects of Davies' comments concerning this incident: first, the disrespect and sarcasm with which Davies treats William Henshaw, labelling him as the 'Arch Deceiver' by claiming that healing had taken place; second, his prejudicial attitude towards the possibility of healing through the laying on of hands by members of the Latter-day Saints, which he regarded as 'nonsense and presumption.'[60]

This 'diatribe' described a local incident concerning a pregnant woman who was suffering from terrible fainting spells.[61] Since she was a Latter-day Saint, her husband, fearful that she might die, called for a certain John Jones known as the *'the middle man',* who laid hands on her to pray for her recovery. After half an hour it was believed that she was cured, but it soon became apparent that this was not the case. At this point someone was sent to Rhymney to fetch William Henshaw, at that time the leader of the Latter-day Saints in Merthyr Tydfil. 'Tobit' then refers to Henshaw with four sobriquets: 'The Arch Deceiver', 'The Great Prophet', 'The Father of All', and

[58] Dennis, 'The Reverend W. R. Davies vs Captain Dan Jones', p. 53.
[59] *Y Bedyddiwr,* Cyf. 111, Rhif 27, (Mawrth 1844), p. 99.
[60] Dennis, 'The Welsh and the Gospel', p. 242.
[61] *Y Bedyddiwr* further describes these (in brackets, in English) as 'hysterics'.

the 'Chief Apostle.'[62] Dennis, who describes Davies as 'prejudiced and often inaccurate'[63] notes:

> After Henshaw's failure - this according to Davies, of course - a doctor was sent for. The physician determined that the lady had given birth to a child which had died in the process. Davies's final comment: 'I did not think there were men so stupid in Wales to believe such a heap of nonsense and presumption.'[64]

There is no Latter-day Saint account of what happened during this incident, or any Mormon defence by the participants of their actions, partly because no Mormon periodical existed in Wales at that time. The focus of the criticism of Davies centres on his offensive terminology and his unwillingness to accept the possibility of miraculous healing. Davies' words unquestionably provide an insight into his attitude towards not only the incident, but also those involved in it, but his expression of his opinion on this matter does not necessarily mean he harboured a desire to persecute those he condemned.

It is worth noting here that Dennis asserts that following his second article on an entirely different issue, 'Tobit' or Davies was responsible for yet another two articles regarding a failed healing. He claims that 'For his third and fourth articles, Davies used "I" as his pseudonym'. These shorter articles concluded that the Mormons were 'nothing but heretics, wolves, false prophets and deceivers'.[65] This assertion is problematic, as Dennis does not count these articles by 'I' in his list of the seventeen 'Published Anti-Mormon Writings of W. R. Davies'[66] and does not discuss his reasons for identifying Davies with 'I'. The first article by 'I' referred to the arrival of the Latter-day Saints in 'this area', which he identified as Abersychan. He then describes the unsuccessful healing of a Mormon convert, previously a prominent member of the local Wesleyans.[67] This man had developed a wound on his knee two days after his

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[62] It seems that Davies is using the term 'Apostle' in a generic sense rather than official Latter-day Saint terminology, when it refers to the highest priesthood office of the Melchizedek priesthood. The President of the Church is always an apostle, as are the members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Captain Dan Jones was not officially an 'Apostle', Dennis, *Indefatigable Veteran*, p. 33.
[63] Dennis, *Indefatigable Veteran,* p. 7.
[64] Dennis, 'The Reverend W. R. Davies vs Captain Dan Jones', p. 54.
[65] Dennis, 'The Welsh and the Gospel', p. 244.
[66] 'Published Anti-Mormon Writings of W. R. Davies', Ronald D. Dennis, 'The Reverend W. R. Davies vs Captain Dan Jones', *BYU Studies,* 27, no.2 (1987), p. 55.
[67] He further identifies the man as the brother of 'George the Chartist', who since his conversion to Mormonism had become known as St. George. Abersychan had strong links with the Chartist movement, thus suggesting the accuracy of the location of this incident.

baptism and was unable to work. Despite prayer by the Latter-day Saints his condition deteriorated, although he held out the hope of future recovery when Henshaw visited the area.[68] 'I' noted in a second letter, that although 'quack Henshaw'[69] had visited, the man's condition remained unimproved.[70] There are some similarities between 'Tobit' and 'I'. Both refer to Henshaw, although he remains unnamed in the first letter by 'Tobit'. Both writers state that converts had been made from among the Wesleyans. However, if 'I' is to be identified with W. R. Davies it is perplexing that 'I' identified himself with Abersychan, some eighteen miles from Dowlais. The identification of both as emanating from the same individual is therefore at least questionable despite the similarity of content. If 'I' can be identified with a different contributor, then we may conclude that the same issue, namely claims of healing, that concerned Davies at Dowlais were causing consternation in Abersychan.

Following a break of almost two years in the literary conflict between the Nonconformist press and the Latter-day Saints, the dispute began again in March 1846. For two years, then, W. R. Davies published nothing on the subject of the Latter-day Saints, despite the fact that he lived in the same community where their numbers continued to increase. It may be suggested that this was not the action of a man concerned to maintain a reputation for being the chief foe of the Latter-day Saints. It also brings into question whether Davies' activity can justly be described as 'relentless' in its approach to the Mormons. In the General Conference in Manchester in April 1845, Henshaw had reported that the Merthyr Tydfil conference was in 'a prosperous condition'. Furthermore, 'Two years ago he first went there and met with much opposition; but some became obedient to the gospel, and the signs followed the believers; gifts, blessings, and visions were in their midst …'[71] In light of such claims, why, if Davies was determined to discredit the Latter-day Saints, did he write nothing during this extraordinary period of Mormon activity? It is entirely possible that while he condemned the movement and had little patience with its claims, the ministry of William Henshaw did not overly concern him, even though he continued to win

[68] *Y Bedyddiwr,* Cyf.111, Rhif. 28 (Ebrill, 1844), p. 123.
[69] Dennis attributes this epithet to Davies in 'The Welsh and the Gospel', p. 242, but it was only used by 'I'.
[70] *Y Bedyddiwr,* Cyf.111, Rhif. 29 (Mai, 1844), p. 160.
[71] *Millennial Star*, vol. 5, no.11 (April, 1845), p. 170.

converts. It may even be possible that Mormon claims about miraculous occurrences had died down a little. By July 1845, Henshaw wrote to the *Millennial Star* to report that he had baptized another forty converts.[72] In a Special General Conference held in Manchester on 14-15 December 1845, Henshaw reported that the Merthyr conference now consisted of 493 members.[73] It seems surprising, given such a level of success, that W. R. Davies wrote no letters regarding the Latter-day Saints to *Y Bedyddiwr* or any other periodical during 1845. While we cannot determine what he might have said locally or in the pulpit, this absence of interest during a period of numerous Mormon conversions seems strange if indeed he was 'one of the earliest and most relentless enemies of Mormonism.'[74] Furthermore, while Davies published nothing on Mormonism in the denominational press for almost two years, it seems that no one else did either, at least during 1845. Meanwhile, 'Tobit ger y Bont' had written to *Seren Gomer* on other topics that had engaged his interest, for example 'Yr Iaith Gymreig', a letter in which he rebuked *Seren Gomer* for its use of too many English words in published articles.[75] This in addition to three other letters[76] to the religious periodicals on unrelated issues would appear to indicate that his interest in the Latter-day Saints was not to the exclusion of other concerns, and presents us with grounds to question his depiction as a 'relentless' persecutor of the Latter-day Saints.

However, it is apparent that by March 1846 'Tobit' was once again motivated sufficiently to comment on the Latter-day Saints in his area. On this occasion, Davies, according to Dennis, wrote again to *Y Bedyddiwr* on the topic of healing, but this time under a new pseudonym, namely 'Quick yn Dwr'.[77] Dennis believes that:

> although the article was signed with a pseudonym, the author obviously was the Rev. Davies again, this time on a rampage against 'the Latter-day Satanists' that would end only with his death three years later.[78]

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[72] *Millennial Star*, vol. 6, no.2 (1 July, 1845), p. 28.
[73] *Millennial Star*, vol. 7, no.1 (1 January, 1846), p. 3. Henshaw remained in Merthyr until March 1846, when Captain Dan Jones was appointed as President of the Merthyr Tydfil conference, in addition to his overall Presidency of Wales, *Millennial Star*, vol. 7, no. 7(1 April 1846), p.104.
[74] Ronald D. Dennis*, Prophet of the Jubilee,* p. 32.
[75] *Seren Gomer*, Cyf. XXV111, Rhif 356 (Mai, 1845), pp.140-41. See also Cyf. XXV111, Rhif 355 (Ebrill, 1845), pp.112-113; *Y Bedyddiwr,* Cyf.1V, Rhif.42 (Mehefin, 1845), p. 117; Cyf.1V, Rhif. 37(Ionawr, 1845), pp. 14-15.
[76] *Y Bedyddiwr,* Cyf.1V, Rhif. 37 (Ionawr, 1845), pp. 14-15 ; *Seren Gomer*, Cyf. XXV111, Rhif 355 (Ebrill, 1845), pp. 112-113 ; *Y Bedyddiwr,* Cyf.1V, Rhif. 42 (Mehefin, 1845), p. 171.
[77] *Y Bedyddiwr,* Cyf. V, Rhif. 51 (Mawrth, 1846), p. 111-112.
[78] Dennis, 'The Welsh and the Gospel', p. 251.

The claim that the author of this 'extremely sarcastic article'[79] is so 'obviously' W. R. Davies is asserted rather than demonstrated, and it appears to rest entirely on Captain Dan Jones' claim that this was the case,[80] as there is no other evidence to connect W. R. Davies with this pseudonym. The sarcasm is clear in the title of the piece, namely, 'A Miracle! A Miracle! At last!' In this account 'Quick yn Dwr' 'ridiculed the Saints'[81] for claiming to have miraculously healed a man named William Hughes, a collier who had broken his leg in an accident at work.[82] 'Quick yn Dwr' challenged the truth of this claim. He maintained that when the doctor returned to check on the leg, 'some fool had taken off the bandage'. Hughes then explained how this had come to pass and the part played by the Latter-day Saints was revealed. 'Quick yn Dwr' contended that the leg remained unhealed and that this was obvious as Hughes was at that time receiving parish relief.[83] The heart of the matter for the Latter-day Saints was the scornful way in which 'Quick yn Dwr' dismissed and derided the possibility that Hughes had been healed, referring to such claims as 'hellish arrogance' and 'satanic deception', which clearly were strong and somewhat offensive expressions.[84] He asserted that his claims could be verified by inspection of William Hughes' condition and stated that 'The "Satanists" professed many miracles, and deceived a host of ignorant, irreligious and good for nothing men.'[85]

It may be argued that this challenge by 'Quick yn Dwr' becomes all the more significant when considered in light of the importance of the episode for the Latter-day Saints. It was hailed as the definitive evidence that the miraculous was not only possible, but in fact occurring among the Latter-day Saints in Wales. It is unsurprising that Captain Dan Jones defended the claim with vigour.[86] Dennis draws attention to the fact that this incident was such an example of miraculous

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[79] Dennis, *Indefatigable Veteran,* p. 30.
[80] Captain Dan Jones, *Amddiffyniad y Saint, yn ngwyneb camgyhuddiadau y rhai a alwant eu hunain yn 'y Don,' yn y Seren Gomer, Ionawr, 1847,* (Rhydybont: J. Jones, 1847).
[81] Dennis, *Indefatigable Veteran,* p. 30.
[82] It may be noted here that the incident involving William Hughes bears similarities to the one recorded by 'I'. However, the location is different, and Hughes' wound was due to an accident, while in the case at Abersychan, a wound appeared on the man's knee following his baptism, severe enough almost to cost him his life. Furthermore, William Hughes' incident was published in *Y Bedyddiwr,* in 1846, two years after the case in Abersychan.
[83] *Y Bedyddiwr,* Cyf. V, Rhif. 51 (Mawrth, 1846), p. 112. This claim was later vehemently denied in *Prophwyd y Jubili*, Cyf.1, Rhif. 6 (Rhagfyr, 1846), p. 149.
[84] *Y Bedyddiwr,* Cyf. V, Rhif. 51 (Mawrth, 1846), p. 112.
[85] *Y Bedyddiwr,* Cyf. V, Rhif. 51 (Mawrth, 1846), p. 111.
[86] *Prophwyd y Jubili*, Cyf.1, Rhif.1 (Gorphenaf, 1846), pp. 24-28.

intervention that it continued to be retold. Many years later, in 1882, it appeared in an American publication designed to encourage faith among young Latter-day Saints.[87]

Dennis asserts that Davies' attitude towards the miraculous was based on his 'unwavering Protestantism', which 'declared that the heavens were closed as far as further revelation was concerned and that no one could go about healing the sick, as did the Apostles of old'.[88] However, the major concern of the writer stems not simply from a belief that miracles were only possible in New Testament times, but rather that the Latter-day Saints had claimed locally that William Hughes' leg had been completely restored when, according to 'Quick yn Dwr', this was manifestly not the case. His motivation may well not have been to exploit an opportunity to persecute the Latter-day Saints, but rather the provision of an alternative account of local events and an exposé of what he considered to be false claims.

Thus, one of the most significant claims of miraculous healing by the Latter-day Saints was condemned by 'Quick yn Dwr' as false. It is unsurprising that this particular incident intensified the animosity between the Latter-day Saints and their opponents. However, despite the strong language used by 'Quick yn Dwr', and despite the bitterness of claim and counter claim regarding this incident, we may ask whether the reaction of Davies to the claims of the Latter-day Saints in the William Hughes case, constitutes persecution or more accurately, opposition that was strong and challenging and, in Davies' view, corroborated by the empirically verifiable condition of Hughes' leg.

Dennis maintains that Jones immediately prepared a response to Davies' article about William Hughes and sent it to the editor of *Y Bedyddiwr* in Cardiff, hoping that he

[87] B. F. Johnson, *Early Scenes in Church History,* (Juvenile Instructor Office, Salt Lake City, 1882), p. 39.
[88] Dennis, *Indefatigable Veteran,* p. 30.

would 'demonstrate enough fairness to print it'.[89] According to Jones,[90] the sworn testimony of William Hughes and 'signed affidavits of non-Mormon eyewitnesses' to the healing were also supplied, but not printed.[91] It is not possible to verify this claim, but according to Dennis, Jones was further outraged at the editor's refusal to print the letter and 'This injustice constituted one of the principal motivating factors in Jones's decision to establish *Prophwyd y Jubili*'.[92] Dennis notes 'Davies's sarcasm spurred Elder Jones to action'.[93] He argues that it became clear to the Welsh Mormons that they were unlikely to receive fair treatment from the various religious publications in Wales, and that this caused them to produce their own monthly publication which could circulate their teachings throughout Wales and provide a defence against 'the vicious attacks being levelled at them by the Reverend Davies and others'.[94] Thus, the establishment of *Prophwyd y Jubili* is attributed solely to the fact that the religious periodicals such as *Y Bedyddiwr* refused to publish any defence by the Latter-day Saints,[95] a claim that will be investigated in the next chapter.

In any case, it is important to consider whether this was an entirely unexpected response, and why Jones deemed it likely that the religious periodicals would have considered publishing views contrary to their own ethos and established viewpoint. Even prior to the William Hughes case or Davies' pamphlet, in December 1845, in a letter to Brigham Young,[96] Jones complained that the 'religious magasines [sic]' had refused to publish any of his attempts at defending Mormonism, indicating his expectation that they would have done so. There was one occasion where a religious periodical expressed its determination not to allow space for the Mormon point of

[89] Dennis, *Indefatigable Veteran,* p. 30. He bases this assertion on Jones' claim to have done so in *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Cyf.1, Rhif. 6 (Rhagfyr, 1846), pp. 148-149.
[90] *Prophwyd y Jubili*, Cyf.1, Rhif.1 (Gorphenaf, 1846), pp. 24-28. Jones published the letter he had sent to *Y Bedyddiwr*, plus the signed testimonies of the eye-witnesses in this first edition of *Prophwyd y Jubili*, p. 28. *Y Bedyddiwr* made no mention of this correspondence. In one unrelated instance, *Y Drysorfa Gynnulleidfaol,* Cyf.1V, Rhif.44, (Awst, 1846), p. ii, stated that it was unwilling to publish a letter by Captain Dan Jones, because it was against the principles of the periodical to print anything that was personal or ungentlemanly, and that furthermore, the letter had contained blasphemy. The note was part of a response to all correspondents whose contributions were not considered worthy of publication.
[91] Dennis, 'The Welsh and the Gospel', p.251.
[92] Dennis, 'The Reverend W. R. Davies vs Captain Dan Jones', p. 59.
[93] Dennis, 'Dan Jones, Welshman: Taking the Gospel Home', *Ensign*, Vol.17, (April 1987), pp. 50-6; https://www.lds.org/ensign/1987/04/dan-jones-welshman-taking-the-gospel-home?lang=eng accessed 10 April. 2017.
[94] Dennis, *Indefatigable Veteran,* p. 37.
[95] *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Cyf.,1 Rhif 1 (Gorffennaf 1846), p.2 of the wrapper.
[96] LDS Church Archives; Dennis, *Welsh Mormon Writings From 1844 to 1862,* p. 46.

view. This came following a letter by 'Meiriadog'[97] who had engaged in debate at Llanfaircaereinion with the Latter-day Saint missionary Robert Evans. 'Meiriadog' had challenged Evans to a debate, promising that *Y Bedyddiwr* would print his views. However, in a footnote, the editor responded that while *Y Bedyddiwr* was always ready to print a defence of anyone against whom accusations had been made, '*Y Bedyddiwr* does not exist as a tool for them [the Mormons] to spread their tales and assertions up and down the country.'[98] Furthermore, it is not entirely accurate to say that the religious periodicals were completely unwilling to publish anything containing the Latter-day Saint point of view, as there were occasions, admittedly rare, but still evident, when a Mormon viewpoint was given space in a Nonconformist religious periodical.[99]

Moreover, it might have seemed the next logical step for the Latter-day Saints to print their own periodical, given that Captain Dan Jones had been publishing Mormon pamphlets from the outset of his return to Wales in 1845. Jones had been appointed President of the Welsh mission in December 1845, on the grounds that he 'could speak, read, write, and publish in the Welsh language.'[100] *Prophwyd y Jubili* (1846-48) included a substantial amount of material taken from the *Millennial Star,* and gave the Welsh-speaking 'Saints' access to distinctively Mormon ideas, particularly regarding emigration to the New Jerusalem.[101] When David Williams, Abercanaid, produced his pamphlet entitled *The Deception of the Latter-day Saints Exposed,*[102] Captain Jones was content to respond with his own sixteen-page pamphlet defending Mormonism against Williams' accusations, describing Williams in the preface as devoid of reason and scripture and being 'closely chained to his prejudiced

[97] 'Meiriadog' was John Edwards, (1813–1906), Baptist and poet. He lived in Llanfaircaereinion, in 1844. See NLW Welsh biography http://yba.llgc.org.uk/en/s-EDWA-JOH-1813.html?query=meiriadog&field=name accessed 19 December 2016.
[98] *Y Bedyddiwr*, Cyf. V, Rhif. 57 (Medi, 1846), p. 354.
[99] E.g. *Y Bedyddiwr*, Cyf. V, Rhif. 53 (Mai, 1846), pp. 193-94; *Seren Gomer*, Cyf. XXIX, Rhif. 373 (Hydref 1846), pp. 301-303.
[100] *Millennial Star*, vol. 7, no.1 (January, 1846), pp.7-8.
[101] The only fact known about the circulation of *Prophwyd y Jubili* is a comment made by Dan Jones in a letter to the editor of the *Millennial Star.* This report of the 26-27 December 1847 Merthyr Conference, notes that he had increased the monthly circulation to 1200; *Millennial Star*, vol. 10, no.8 (15, April, 1848), p. 122. Jones adds that in 1847, he published ten pamphlets, amounting to 850,000 pages. The total number of converts at this stage was 1933. It is not possible to confirm how many were Welsh speakers, and thus would have read *Prophwyd y Jubili.*
[102] Williams, '*Twyll y Seintiau Diweddaf yn cael ei ddynoethi'.*

traditions'.[103] While he was satisfied to reply in a pamphlet to David Williams, with the exception of a pamphlet addressed to 'Gwcw y Don',[104] he appears to have expected the religious periodicals to publish the Mormon responses to criticism until the publication of *Prophwyd y Jubili* in 1846.

Although it is not possible to be certain whether Davies was 'Quick yn Dwr', we can be certain that W. R. Davies held unequivocal opinions regarding the Latter-day Saints' claims to perform miracles and speak in tongues. These views are evident in his only published pamphlet on this subject, written in 1846: *The Latter-day Saints: Substance of a sermon which was given on the miracles, to enlighten every man and show the deceit of the creatures who call themselves the 'Latter-day Saints'*.[105] Dennis asserts that 'the Reverend Davies had frequently delivered his scathing remarks about Mormonism from the pulpit, but in order to reach a greater audience, he printed his remarks in a twenty page pamphlet …'[106] At this point in 1846, Captain Dan Jones, who had been back in Wales for just over a year, had published three pamphlets on the topic of Mormonism, indicating that he was at least as determined to defend the Mormon cause as W. R. Davies was to challenge it.

The strident language of this treatise, which had originally been presented as a sermon by Davies, indicates the level of his conviction in confronting the issues that had arisen with the arrival of Mormonism in the Merthyr area. His readiness to name Jones and Henshaw, and describe his somewhat forceful encounters with the latter, would appear to indicate his willingness to be identified as an opponent of Mormonism. His preparedness to put his name to this potent document may suggest

[103] Captain Dan Jones, *Y glorian, yn y hon gwelir David yn pwyso Williams, Williams yn pwyso David: neu David Williams, o Abercanaid yn gwrthddweyd ei hun, wedi ei ddal yn ei dwyll, a'i brofi yn ddeistaidd,* (Rhydybont: J. Jones, 1846).
[104] Captain Dan Jones, *Amddiffyniad y Saint, yn ngwyneb camgyhuddiadau y rhai a alwant eu hunain yn 'Gwcw y Don,' yn y Seren Gomer, Ionawr, 1847*, (Rhydybont: J. Jones, 1847). It is not possible to be certain that W. R. Davies was 'Gwcw y Don', despite Dan Jones' belief that he was behind this pseudonym. He is not named in the pamphlet.
[105] Davies, '*Y Seintiau Diweddaf'.*
[106] Ronald D. Dennis, *Prophet of the Jubilee*, p. xliii.

that he was not concerned to hide his identity as an opponent of Mormonism and defender of the Christianity he professed.[107]

The pamphlet allows us to draw some conclusions about Davies' viewpoint. The question here is whether the publication of such a treatise can be equated with persecution. The intention of the pamphlet was to provide evidence that challenged Latter-day Saint claims. It opposed such claims, but from the perspective of Captain Dan Jones, such challenges felt like persecution.

Davies dealt with a number of issues. In his foreword, he lamented the fact that the Welsh, after 'withstanding the beast of Rome' and other 'false' religions, would demean themselves by believing the 'unreasonable rubbish and deceit' of the Latter-day Saints. These words could be regarded as a definition of his position regarding Mormonism, as reflected in the pamphlet's title. The pamphlet makes clear his views on William Henshaw, whom Davies described as an 'ignorant, unlearned and disreputable Englishman from Cornwall' who had recently been incarcerated in Cardiff gaol.[108] He claimed that while the Latter-day Saints preached their 'foolishness' without charge, they took every opportunity to take money from people. Davies referred to biblical verses throughout his treatise in order to define the term miracle and argue against the claims that miracles were a familiar occurrence among the Latter-day Saints. He discussed the offices of the church and the gifts of the Holy Spirit as defined in the New Testament (1 Cor. 12-14), and concluded that only the weak-headed and ignorant would follow Mormonism. It is in this pamphlet that Davies reveals that he tested William Henshaw on two issues. First, he asked the Englishman to speak in the Welsh language as evidence of his ability to speak in tongues, which he was unable to do.[109] Secondly, when Henshaw asserted that he had

[107] Davies produced a re-worked edition of this pamphlet in July 1847, which is now no longer extant. However, Ron Dennis counts this as one of the 'Anti-Mormon writings of W. R. Davies'. See Dennis, 'Reverend W. R. Davies vs Captain Dan Jones', Table 1, p. 55.
[108] No evidence can be found to support this allegation, but neither Captain Dan Jones nor Ron Dennis ever refutes it. However, a further reference of Henshaw's time in prison is mentioned in *Y Bedyddiwr*, Cyf.111, Rhif. 31(Gorphenaf, 1844), pp-220-21. In a letter sent to *Y Bedyddiwr* by Baptist minister James Wilkins, Georgetown, Merthyr, the Latter-day Saints compared 'Hanshaw [sic]' to St Paul, as like the apostle, he had spent time in gaol, in his case at Cardiff, having been arrested following a Chartist protest at the Merthyr Iron Company.
[109] W. R. Davies, *Y Seintiau Diweddaf,* p. 16.

'seen people raised from the dead *with his own eyes*' and quoted Jesus' promise (cf. Mark 16:18) that his followers would remain unharmed if they drank any deadly thing, Davies sent his daughter to buy some poison to test Henshaw's faith. Henshaw's refusal to engage in this test was sufficient evidence for Davies that he was a false prophet, and without the faith he professed. Davies also made reference to a woman named 'Magws fach' to argue his case regarding local Latter-day Saints' claims to perform miracles. Davies may have made reference to her as an easily identifiable figure in the locality, possibly well-known for claims about her new religion. For Davies, the evidence against the Latter-day Saints ability to produce miracles was again empirical and he stated:

> Doesn't '*Magws fach*' have faith? Did she have a strong knee instead of the withered one? I expect to see her next time without her crutch: but if I meet her in the same state, do not speak about a miracle, for shame's sake, as the *praiseworthy* apostle, the *Cap. D- -l J- - s*, has been, and is now, in Merthyr. No, no, the age of miracles is gone.[110]

Davies also mentions her in the conclusion to his treatise, stating:

> Where is Magws and her barren knee? It's funny to see her carrying *The Proclamation of the Twelve Apostles* taking it everywhere to persuade people, confirming her ability to perform miracles and hearing her piteously preaching her lies in full voice …[111]

It is not possible to identify 'Magws fach', but in his reply to Davies' pamphlet in *Prophwyd y Jubili*, Captain Dan Jones stated:

> If you were a servant of God, according to your own reasoning, you should have healed 'Magws fach', as you call her: you had enough time, and she followed your sect for around forty years, and you a servant of God, never administered the healing medicine to her, nor even prayed for her to be healed: for that would surely have been to pray for a miracle.[112]

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[110] Davies, *Y Seintiau Diweddaf,* p. 16.
[111] Davies, *Y Seintiau Diweddaf,* p. 20: Capt. Dan Jones, *Annerchiad y deuddeg apostol yn Eglwys Iesu Grist, Saint y Dyddiau Diweddaf at holl frenhinoedd y ddaear, at Raglaw, ac at lywiawdwyr Unol Daleithiau yr Amerig, ac at lywyddion, a holl bobl y byd,* (Rhydybont: J. Jones, 1845). This was a translation by Captain Dan Jones of a work originally produced by the Quorum of Twelve, *Proclamation of the Twelve Apostles in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. To all the kings of the earth, to the president and to the governors of the United States of America, and to the rulers and all the people of the world* (New York, 1845).
[112] *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Cyf.1 Rhif V (Tachwedd, 1846), p.131.

Davies' pamphlet certainly challenged the beliefs of the Latter-day Saints, and exposed their teachings to debate. It used sarcastic and mocking language, and attempted to reinforce Davies' view that 'Magws fach' for all the claims of healing, had manifestly not improved, and her reliance on crutches was testimony to that truth. Davies' pamphlet, therefore, provides the definitive summary of his position regarding the Latter-day Saints. He disputed their claims and denounced their teaching on miracles and spiritual gifts in the strongest terms.

Dennis draws attention to the fact that Captain Dan Jones devoted over half the twenty-eight pages of the September issue of his periodical 'to counter Davies's offensive',[113] and 'finished this task with an additional dozen pages spread over the October, November and December issues'.[114] He further notes that:

> Dan Jones gives a differing account of the meeting between Henshaw and Davies. According to Jones, Davies had invited Henshaw to his home and had even offered him the opportunity to become his assistant preacher. Henshaw refused the post and the poison that was offered to him.[115]

This account implies that Davies' antagonism towards the Latter-day Saints' leader was in part, generated by Henshaw's rejection of Davies' proposition, which Davies then perceived as a rebuff. Dennis, evidently relying on Dan Jones' comment, suggests that Davies only offered the poison, after his proposition had been rejected. Jones added that it was from that time that Davies had 'been trying to blacken his [Henshaw's] character with every story he can find'.[116] Little can be said to defend Davies regarding the poison incident, as it was Davies himself who first related and published the story. However, the extraordinary claim that Henshaw was offered the position of assistant preacher at Caersalem will be examined in the next chapter.

Davies continued on his theme of the deception of failed healing in June 1846. This time *Y Bedyddiwr* printed a letter signed by W. R. Davies exposing the 'tricks' of the Latter-day Saints by revealing more of their activities arising from their belief in miracles. Davies quoted an article in the *Silurian* published 9 May 1846, which was

[113] *Prophwyd y Jubili*, (Medi 1846), pp. 70-78.
[114] Dennis, 'The Reverend W. R. Davies vs Captain Dan Jones', p. 61.
[115] Dennis, 'The Reverend W. R. Davies vs Captain Dan Jones', p. 61.
[116] *Prophwyd y Jubili*, Cyf. 1. Rhif. 3 (Medi 1846), pp. 79-80.

printed in a number of newspapers.[117] The article had described an unsuccessful attempt by the Latter-day Saints to bring a child back to life in Wakefield. Davies had translated the report in the *Silurian* on 'Wakefield: The Mormon Delusion' verbatim.[118] He claimed the Latter-day Saints in this case tried to hide their 'shame' by blaming the boy's mother for her lack of faith. They had also tried to open the eyes of another child whom they had anointed with oil, but without success. He used this information to draw a parallel with events at Merthyr. According to Davies, although the 'Apostle' (alluding to Jones) carried oil in his pocket when travelling between Merthyr, Cwmbach and Aberdare, nobody knew of anyone who had received any virtue from it. His own comments were brief and again he reaffirmed his concern that while claims were being made regarding healing, no evidence for such miraculous occurrences existed. Once more, the theme of the Latter-day Saints' failure to provide evidence for healing miracles appears to be central to Davies' opposition to Mormonism. However, his retention of this view and his promotion of it in various periodicals indicates the strength of his conviction on this issue, but its reiteration however many times can hardly be equated with persecution of the Latter-day Saints.

Furthermore, the potency of Davies' article, of course, needs to be measured by the fact that this story of events at Wakefield had already received an airing in the press, and is likely to have been known to at least some of the readership.

In November 1846 a brief article by 'Cethlydd y Don' was published in *Seren Gomer*.[119] No attempt has been made to identify this author, or explain his pseudonym, however, Dennis notes, 'Surprisingly, the article is pro-Mormon, a truly unusual phenomenon in the religious periodicals of that time.'[120] This is an acknowledgement that at least in this case a defence of Mormon activity was published. The writer commented about the opponents of the Latter-day Saints that:

[117] E.g. *Daily News* (6 May 1846); *Worcester Journal* (7 May 1846); *Bells New Weekly Messenger* (10 May 1846); *Blackburn Standard* (13 May 1846).
[118] *Silurian* (9 May, 1846).
[119] *Seren Gomer*, Cyf. XXIX, Rhif. 374 (Tachwedd, 1846), p.343.
[120] Dennis, 'Reverend W. R. Davies vs Captain Dan Jones', p. 61.

> If they had the … Queen's seal on their girdle, I am certain that they would put the Latter-day Saints through the same experience that Stephen had, and many of their pastors would hold their coats.[121]

The article by 'Cethlydd y Don' elicited a response by 'Gwcw y Don' in the January 1847 edition of *Seren Gomer.*[122] This rejected the suggestion that there was an over-zealous attitude of persecution towards the Latter-day Saints. In this instance, Dennis has identified Davies as the author behind the 'strange pseudonym,'[123] again basing this assumption on Captain Dan Jones' identification of Davies as the writer.[124] The author wrote from the Merthyr area, and again referred to the William Hughes case, thus making it entirely possible that the author was Davies, although there is no evidence that Davies used this *nom de plume* elsewhere. 'Gwcw y Don' wrote that many had travelled to Merthyr to visit William Hughes in the hope of seeing the man leaping and jumping, however to their disappointment they found him ill, with a large lump on his leg. Furthermore, he invited those who would dispute this fact, to visit him and see that he was still in the same condition, or at least he had been for a period of six or seven months after the false prophets had laid hands on him.[125]

Dennis has noted that the article concluded with a 'curious'[126] poem deriding the Latter-day Saints' claims that miracles were not just possible, but in fact occurring in contemporary Wales. According to Dennis, Jones was 'rabid' when the article came to his attention,[127] and he proceeded to publish a twelve-page pamphlet in response.[128] This pamphlet identified both 'Gwcw y Don' and 'Quick yn Dwr' as W. R. Davies, and referred to his 'foolish and untruthful treatise' on miracles. It systematically took each of the various published anti-Mormon claims and attempted to refute them.

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[121] *Seren Gomer*, Cyf. XXIX, Rhif. 374 (Tachwedd, 1846), p. 343.
[122] *Seren Gomer*, Cyf. XXX, Rhif. 376 (Ionawr, 1847), p. 7.
[123] Dennis, *Welsh Mormon Writings From 1844 to 1862,* p. 50.
[124] Dennis, 'Reverend W. R. Davies vs Captain Dan Jones', p. 61. See also Dennis, *Welsh Mormon Writings From 1844 to 1862,* pp. 48-50.
[125] *Seren Gomer*, Cyf. XXX, Rhif. 376 (Ionawr, 1847), p. 7. Dennis maintains that Davies' calculations regarding the dates are incorrect, since Hughes 'received blessings' from the Mormon Elders on 18 and 21 January 1846. Taking this into consideration, the six or seven months of illness would have concluded in August. Since the article was published in January 1847, Dennis believes it is strange that Davies would issue an invitation for people to visit the still unrecovered Hughes. Dennis, 'Reverend W. R. Davies vs Captain Dan Jones', p. 61.
[126] Dennis, 'Reverend W. R. Davies vs Captain Dan Jones', p. 61.
[127] Dennis, *'Welsh Mormon Writings'*, p. 50.
[128] Captain Dan Jones, *Amddiffyniad y Saint.*

Dennis notes: 'Hardly a month would go by in 1847 without an attack by W. R. Davies or a defense by Dan Jones appearing in print, and the verbal exchanges from the pulpits were doubtless even more frequent.'[129] This slightly overstates the case. Even in his own list of the 'Published Anti-Mormon writings of W. R. Davies'[130] Dennis lists four articles by Davies in January, September, plus two more in December. Jones responded in March, August, September and November of that year. It was during July 1847 that Dennis suggests that Davies published a second edition of his pamphlet on the Latter-day Saints and miracles. Although Dennis counts this reprinted pamphlet as one of the seventeen anti-Mormon writings of Davies, without any evidence of the existence or content of the supposed second edition of Davies' pamphlet, it is not possible to assess any contribution it may have made. Thus, it may be suggested at this point that this should not be counted as one of Davies' anti-Mormon writings.[131]

In January 1848, W. R. Davies, this time using his own name,[132] wrote again to *Y Bedyddiwr*.[133] The following month *Y Drysorfa Gynnulleidfaol* printed the same letter. Dennis has counted both in his list of anti-Mormon articles by W. R. Davies, though in truth this is one article printed in two journals. While these contributions form part of Dennis' list of Davies' seventeen anti-Mormon writings and aid the view that he was a 'relentless' and 'vociferous' opponent, when the content of this article is analysed it is possible to conclude that he was adding very little to the debate.

Once again, Davies had used a story that had appeared in the secular press to provide evidence regarding Mormon claims of miracles. While it is clear that Latter-day Saints would have been displeased that such accounts were being repeated, the story was already in the public domain and did not originate with Davies. In this case this

[129] Dennis, 'Reverend W. R. Davies vs Captain Dan Jones', p. 63.
[130] Dennis, 'Reverend W. R. Davies vs Captain Dan Jones', p .55.
[131] Dennis' evidence for the existence of this second reprint is based on the refutation of it by Dan Jones in the August 1847 edition of *Prophwyd y Jubili.*
[132] From December 1847 to July 1849 Davies wrote seven articles, all under his own name, perhaps indicating that he had no desire to conceal his true identity.
[133] *Y Bedyddiwr,* Cyf.V111, Rhif.73, (Ionawr, 1848), p. 17.

story had also appeared in *Y Diwygiwr* the previous December,[134] and Captain Dan Jones had responded in the January edition of *Prophwyd y Jubili.*[135]

On this occasion, Davies' article consisted of a newspaper report from 1842, taken from the *Ottoway Free Trader*, implicating Joseph Smith in the assassination attempt of Governor Boggs[136] of Illinois. Davies wrote that he wished the story to be printed for 'the eternal shame and memory of the scoundrel, Jo [*sic.*] Smith, and the eternal shame of his mad and insane followers.' Davies, who had signed his own name in his request to the editor to print these articles, made his reason for wanting his article published clear: 'They speak a lot about their miracles, and the thousands who saw them, and here is one of them … which is worth recording, translating, and publishing for the monoglot Welsh'.[137] It was Davies' contention that this attempt to convince people that the miraculous was possible was nothing more than 'a Satanic and evil deception.'

He included a story he had discovered in the press that supported his view that claims of the miraculous were based on trickery. This item involved the story of a Mormon prophet named Strange [sic][138] who gathered people around him with the promise that if they built him a house he would imbue them with a supernatural gift. Upon completion of the house he took his followers into a church, anointed them with a strong smelling substance and sent them into a darkened room. Upon their re-emergence each one shone like the sun, and great rejoicing followed. One of the people involved doubted the validity of the experience and arranged for the substance with which they had been anointed to be tested. The result was that the substance was a mixture of oil and phosphorous, which gave an altogether different explanation for the apparently supernatural event. Davies concluded: 'If any Satanist

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[134] *Y Diwygiwr,* (Rhagfyr, 1847), p.39.
[135] *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Rhif.19 (Ionawr, 1848), pp. 3-5.
[136] Lilburn William Boggs (1796 –1860) was the sixth Governor of Missouri from 1836 to 1840. He is now most widely remembered for Missouri Executive Order 44, known by Mormons as the 'Extermination Order'.
[137] *Y Drysorfa Gynnulleidfaol*, (Chwefror, 1848), pp. 37-38.
[138] This is a misprint or an error by Davies. The man in question was James Strang (1813-56). Strang split from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in 1844, although he put forward his claim to succeed Joseph Smith following Smith's death. He formed his own breakaway movement known as 'Strangites', which amassed 12,000 followers by the time of his assassination in 1856.

denies any of the above facts, let him read the *Weekly Dispatch* for Oct. 31, 1847.'[139] It was a story that had been widely reported in the British press, including in Wales, thus Davies' claims were hardly revelatory.[140]

It is important to bear in mind that the language and approach of the writing found in the denominational periodicals bears the hallmark of polemic debate of the time. It is irrefutable that Davies' language was provocative, but so too was the language of Captain Jones. An example of this style of sarcasm and humour may be found in the final article that Dennis lists under Davies' anti-Mormon writings.[141]

Dennis passes no comment on the content of Davies' article that appeared in *Seren Gomer* in July 1848. Once again adding his real name to the article, Davies referred the reader to the Mormons' 'senseless and loathsome little book', namely *Prophwyd Y Jubili*.[142] This time, Davies' theme was 'Satan casting out Satan' and the story involved the failure of the Latter-day Saints to cast out evil spirits from a Mormon named Phillip Seix living in Nantyglo. It was claimed that this man was possessed by an evil spirit and had been overcome with madness. After a great many attempts at exorcism involving the Elders W. Phillips and A. Evans,[143] and despite temporary improvements in the man's condition, he reverted to his wild and uncontrolled behaviour. Finally, he had such a serious outburst of violence and shouting that the people were so afraid that they called the '*Victoria police'* and he was eventually restrained. He was subsequently committed to the 'lunatic asylum.'[144] Davies invited the reader to ponder the question why the Latter-day Saints had been unable to free this man from Satan's power. He asked wryly whether the 'devil of Nantyglo' was particularly powerful and resistant to exorcism, and speculated that perhaps it was the 'devil of Nantyglo' that prevented the Mormons from 'fulfilling their miracles

[139] *Y Bedyddiwr,* Cyf. V11, Rhif. 73 (Ionawr, 1848), p. 17.
[140] E.g. *Welshman* (5 November 1847); *Monmouthshire Beacon* (6 November 1847). *Monmouthshire Merlin* (13 November 1847).
[141] *Seren Gomer,* Cyf. XXXI, Rhif. 394 (Gorphenaf, 1848).
[142] *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Rhif. 21 (Mawrth, 1848), pp. 43-45.
[143] Although Davies names the men involved, these names had already been published in the account in *Prophwyd y Jubili.*
[144] *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Rhif. 21 (Mawrth, 1848), p. 43. This article also notes that the Latter-day Saints excommunicated Seix.

everywhere'.[145] Seix was a man of some means, and Davies also implied that this was the reason for the Latter-day Saints' interest in him. Again, although Davies appears to have actively sought ways to discredit the Mormon message, the Latter-day Saints themselves had published the story, and Davies appears to enjoy recounting it.

Therefore, we may conclude that on issues surrounding miracles and other spiritual gifts, Davies clearly opposed the Latter-day Saints using strong language both in the denominational press and in his pamphlet. It appears that the Latter-day Saints considered the printing of Davies' forthright views on these subjects deeply offensive, and it is this that Dennis believes created an atmosphere of persecution targeted at the Latter-day Saints. While the language used was extreme, Davies' articles served as a challenge to the Mormons to provide evidence to corroborate their claims. Whether they could or not, any argument they made clearly did not satisfy Davies.

In addition to Latter-day Saints' claims of miracles and spiritual gifts there were other Mormon practices with which W. R. Davies took issue. One in particular, has caused Ron Dennis to draw the conclusion that Davies was so opposed to the Latter-day Saints that he was prepared to make false statements about them in order to discredit them.[146] The practice in question was baptism, and it was on this subject that 'Tobit ger y Bont', whom Dennis identifies as Davies, began his first letter to *Y Bedyddiwr* in March 1844. While the comment was a brief one, its import was immense.

2. Davies and Baptism

As we might expect from a Baptist minister, Davies took an interest in the Latter-day Saints' position on baptism. With the exception of an entire article on a local debate on baptism that had occurred in 1844, some of his comments are fairly brief being included in only two other articles in the periodicals, referring to re-baptism by the Latter-day Saints and the Mormon practice of baptism for the dead. However, Dennis

[145] *Seren Gomer,* Cyf. XXXI, Rhif. 394 (Gorphenaf, 1848), p. 202.
[146] Ronald D. Dennis, 'The Church of Jesus Christ of the [sic] Latter-day Saints (Mormons)', Richard C. Allen, David Ceri Jones, Trystan Owain Hughes (eds), *Religious History of Wales: Religious Life and Practice in Wales from the 17th Century to the Present Day* (Cardiff: Welsh Academic Press, 2014), p. 167.

argues that from the outset Davies was prepared to make statements about the Latter-day Saints that he knew to be untrue, motivated by a desire to create prejudice and prevent the spread of the movement. This assertion is significant. It not only characterizes the strength of Davies' feelings of opposition to the Latter-day Saints, but also defines the character of the man behind such accusations.

In his first letter on the Latter-day Saints in *Y Bedyddiwr* in March 1844, 'Tobit ger y Bont' began with a startling claim: 'They baptize at night, and those being baptized must remove their clothes and go into the water stark naked!'[147] Dennis has argued that Davies' writing is 'heavily biased'[148] and comments:

> The Reverend Davies knew perfectly well that Latter-day Saints were not baptized in the nude; he most likely included this observation to prejudice the reader's mind against such 'fanatical' people as the Mormons.[149]

Davies is thus depicted as a man willing to go to extraordinary lengths to defeat Mormonism, and with this image in mind it becomes easy to imagine Davies as the author of 'shameful persecution' depicted by Captain Dan Jones.[150] Dennis concludes that 'Mormons were shocked at this accusation',[151] a reasonable reaction to such an allegation, as nothing in official Mormon teaching suggested this practice was necessary. Two years later, the rumour that Mormons practised naked nocturnal baptism apparently still persisted, as Captain Dan Jones felt the need to address these issues in his pamphlet *Atebydd y Gwrthddadleuon*.[152] Jones described this charge as 'a false accusation, without one word of truth in it. It is one of the thousand lies being constructed by our enemies, and spread about'. He challenged anyone to supply proof of one example of this occurring. In the same pamphlet, Jones also endeavoured to explain that Mormon baptisms were often conducted at night out of

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[147] *Y Bedyddiwr,* Cyf. 111, Rhif 27, (Mawrth 1844), p. 99.
[148] Dennis, *Indefatigable Veteran,* p. 5.
[149] Dennis, *Indefatigable Veteran,* p. 5.
[150] *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Rhif. 15 (Medi, 1847), p. 134.
[151] Ronald D. Dennis, *Welsh Mormon Writings From 1844 to 1862: A Historical Bibliography* (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, BYU, 1988), p. 22.
[152] Using the literary device of a discussion between the 'Saint' and a 'sectarian' to address public questions about Mormonism, Captain Dan Jones has the 'sectarian' outraged and puzzled by the Mormon demand that baptism should be undertaken in the nude. Captain Dan Jones, *Atebydd y gwrthddadleuon a ddygir yn fwyaf cyffredinol drwy y wlad yn erbyn Saint y Dyddiau Diweddaf, a'r athrawiaeth a broffesant; mewn ffurf o ymddyddan, er symud y rhwystrau oddiar ffordd y Cymry ymofyngar, heb, 'anmhwyllo ynghylch cwestiynau, ac ymryson ynghylch geiriau, o'r rhai y mae cenfigen, ymryson, cableddau, a drwg dybiau yn dyfod; ac na ddaliont ar CHWEDLAU ac achau anorphen, y rhai sydd yn peri cwestiynau, yn hytrach nag adeiladaeth dduwiol, yr hon sydd trwy ffydd: gwnaed [pawb] felly.'* (Rhydybont: John Jones, 1846).

necessity because they engendered persecution when done in daylight and in full public view. His decision to deal with this issue indicates that it was something that continued to create public suspicion about the Mormons. He does not ascribe the origin of such rumours to Davies, but Dennis, who appears to be reliant on evidence from Jones' pamphlet at this point, believes that Davies repeated these statements knowing they were untrue and with the sole intention of discrediting the Latter-day Saints.[153] However, despite his controversial comments, 'Tobit ger y Bont' never returned to this particular aspect of baptism. Instead, while staying with the topic of baptism he chose to write to *Y Bedyddiwr* describing debates with the Latter-day Saints that had taken place locally.

Dennis cites the second article by 'Tobit ger y Bont' as another example of Davies' vehemence and determination to discredit Mormonism. He comments that 'In April 1844 the Reverend W. R. Davies again spewed out his venom against the Latter-day Saints.'[154] The word 'venom' is a strong one, and reinforces Davies' role as a bitter antagonist. The reason for this somewhat strident description lies in the vocabulary applied by Davies, as the fiercest aspect of this account is the use of the term 'Satanists' for the Latter-day Saints. The narrative appears to be fairly innocuous, although 'Tobit' takes the opportunity to direct some criticism against the Independents for their belief in paedobaptism.

In this letter, 'Tobit ger y Bont' claimed to present the activities of the Latter-day Saints in a balanced way, revealing their weaknesses, but also acknowledging their strengths because 'it is unfair falsely to accuse Satan, despite his Satanic nature.'[155] Dennis notes:

> In his second article, published in April 1844, Davies presented what he called 'an account of their [the Mormons'] failure together with their success', the 'failure' being that the missionaries had not won any converts from amongst

[153] Dennis, *Indefatigable Veteran*, p. 5.
[154] Dennis, *Indefatigable Veteran*, p. 9.
[155] *Y Bedyddiwr,* Cyf.111, Rhif. 28 (Ebrill, 1844), pp. 123-124.

> the Baptists, and the 'success' being that they had been able to baptize a few 'men of the sprinkle', as Davies called them.[156]

'Tobit' related recent events in the surrounding areas of Merthyr. He recounted how Dafydd Oliver, a Baptist minister in Georgetown and fellow minister James Wilkins, entered into three debates with the local Latter-day Saints. 'Tobit' maintained that the Mormons had failed to convince anyone in their belief that their faith enabled them to speak in tongues, prophesy, heal the sick, or raise the dead as the original apostles had done, concluding that the third debate ended with 'all the listeners acknowledging as one that the Saints had become Satanists.'[157] Following this public failure, the Latter-day Saints removed themselves to various locations around the Merthyr area to continue debating the same issues. When they moved to the area of Bethesda Independent chapel, Merthyr, the Independents selected a 'knowledgeable young man' from among their members to defeat the Latter-day Saints.[158] The first debate on miracles was easily won by the Independents. However, 'Tobit' noted that when the debate turned to the subject of infant baptism, the Latter-day Saints 'killed the "sprinklers"' on the spot, and the young man, and later his father, were converted to Mormonism. 'Tobit' commented that the Latter-day Saints were jubilant at the two conversions from the Independents, but noted that this had only occurred because the debate had focused on infant baptism

Despite Dennis' belief that Davies was 'prejudiced and often inaccurate',[159] he accepts the truthfulness of the details of this second article by 'Tobit' in *Y Bedyddiwr*, as he regard*s* them as foundational to the story of the conversion of the 'knowledgeable young man', whom he identifies as the Mormon missionary Abel Evans. Dennis concedes:

> Ironically, for lack of extant journals or records containing information concerning this early period of the Welsh Mormons, it is chiefly to the Rev. Davies and his series of articles in *Y Bedyddiwr* that we owe thanks for our

[156] Dennis, 'The Welsh and the Gospel', p. 243. 'Tobit' did not invent the term 'men of the sprinkle', as perhaps Dennis implies. It was a term frequently applied to those who taught and practised infant baptism, just as the term 'dippers' was used for those who practised baptism by full immersion. Examples of these terms can be found in *The Baptist Reporter and Missionary Intelligencer*, (November, 1848), pp. 436, 438.
[157] *Y Bedyddiwr,* Cyf.111, Rhif. 28 (Ebrill, 1844), p. 123.
[158] Dennis has identified this young man as Abel Evans. A full account of his life, conversion and contribution to Mormonism can be found in Dennis' aforementioned work *Indefatigable Veteran.*
[159] Dennis, *Indefatigable Veteran*, p. 7.

present knowledge about these early events. Despite their heavily antagonistic bias, Davies's four articles contain valuable information about this otherwise unknown era of Church history.[160]

'Tobit ger y Bont' conceded that the apostles had performed miracles, but in an age that had passed, and bemoaned the fact that people still clung to 'old Papist customs' which led to an inability to stand their ground in front of the weakest enemies. He concluded that had the debaters been Baptists instead of Independents the Mormons would have been defeated. In this case, the account appears to be nothing more than a description of a series of local debates, in which the writer also takes the opportunity of berating the Independents. Since the writer is true to his declared aim of revealing the 'weakness and strength' of the Latter-day Saints, we may ask whether there was anything in this account that was particularly harmful to the Mormon cause. Again there is a reference to the miracles and spiritual gifts the Mormons claimed to practise and a denial by 'Tobit ger y Bont' that such things had come to pass. It is this aspect of Mormonism that 'Tobit' condemns, not its origins, founder or wider theological views.

The final comment regarding baptism and the Latter-day Saints by W. R. Davies, this time signing his own name, dealt with the Mormon belief in the practice of baptism for the dead. It appeared in *Y Bedyddiwr* in June 1848. It might be argued that to have written to a Baptist periodical on the topics of baptism for the dead and rebaptism was not entirely surprising, as it would appear to be a legitimate topic for discussion. In this article, Davies' comment regarding the Latter-day Saints' baptismal practices was concerned with this unorthodox practice. His reporting on local incidents involving Latter-day Saints, despite his use of the pejorative term 'Satanists' is not particularly threatening. It is possible to suggest that writings such as these were no more damaging to the Latter-day Saints than articles on the movement that had been appearing in the press throughout the 1840s.

[160] Dennis, 'The Welsh and the Gospel', pp. 242-43. The 'four articles' in this instance possibly refer only to those by 'Tobit ger y Bont' and 'I', which were published in 1844. It is difficult to be sure why Dennis singles out 'four articles' or which articles he considers reveal most about the LDS church at this time.

Again although Dennis lists this among Davies' 'anti- Mormon writings' he does not discuss Davies' concerns regarding this practice. Davies explained that those who die without being 'offered the gospel of Joe Smith, or the Mormon Bible' were 'in some middle place, between heaven and hell (similar to the Popish purgatory).'[161] To illustrate his disapproval of such teachings, Davies recounted the story of a young man from Dowlais who had recently been converted to Mormonism. Following his own baptism, he and a group of fellow Latter-day Saints rushed to his mother-in-law, who was still grieving after the recent loss of her husband, a faithful member of the Baptists. Their urgent request was that her son-in law be baptized on behalf of her dead husband, for as Davies explained, without such baptism they believed the husband would remain in a place between heaven and hell. The widow was distressed by the suggestion and after being first moved to tears, in anger she chased them from the house with a poker. Davies did not confine his critical comments to the Latter-day Saints alone. He condemned the 'equally foolish' conduct of the Independents' referring to an account in the periodical, *Y Diwygiwr*.[162] This story concerned a young woman who had died during the birth of her first child. During her funeral, the child was baptized on the lid of her coffin. Davies denounced this practice, arguing that John the Baptist had baptized in the river Jordan, not on the lids of coffins. He concluded his arguments regarding baptism by relating a local story of a young married couple that had joined the Latter-day Saints. The two had been convicted of theft and consequently served prison sentences. Upon their release they were re-baptized by the Mormons, and this was the third baptism for one of them. Davies claimed that despite their criminal conviction no-one among the Latter-day Saints was allowed to condemn the couples' behaviour. It is not an article that contains violent or irrational opinions. While it condemns the Mormon viewpoint, it is hardly the basis for claims of persecution.

Thus, Davies' comments on issues surrounding baptism were varied, but not theologically detailed or particularly stringent. It is the use of the pejorative 'Satanists' for the Latter-day Saints, in his second letter to *Y Bedyddiwr* that is perhaps the most inflammatory element in these writings.

[161] *Y Bedyddiwr* Cyf. V11, Rhif. 78 (Mehefin, 1848), pp. 209-210.
[162] *Y Diwygiwr*, Cyf. X111, Rhif. 152 (Mawrth, 1848), p. 97.

Davies and the 'Forged Letters'

The contentious issue surrounding the so-called 'forged' letters can be found in two of 'anti-Mormon writings', published in *Y Bedyddiwr* in March and June 1846, the second of these involving his defence of his previous claims. In this case Davies' character and integrity is further brought into question, and the implication that he was prepared to employ underhand methods to discredit the Latter-day Saints is clear.

Dennis contends that, in addition to this article about the supposed healing of William Hughes' leg in *Y Bedyddiwr* in March 1846, 'the Reverend W. R. Davies also had printed two forged letters, both intended to discredit Mormonism.'[163] Dennis stops short of asserting that Davies knew the letters to be 'forged' when he sent them, but this was clearly the view of Captain Dan Jones who declared that with regard to the Mormons, Davies was 'a man they knew had been for years with all his might accepting every evil about them eagerly, and searching for libellous material, as the wild animal for prey.'[164] A first step in looking at this claim is to establish the content of these letters, and question whether the author achieved his perceived goal of damaging Mormonism by sending information he knew was not genuine.

The first of these letters purported to have been written by Emma Smith, the widow of Joseph Smith.[165] Dennis suggests that Davies submitted this letter to the Baptist periodical.[166] Clearly, the motive for printing this letter was to cast doubt on the integrity of Mormonism, but there is no evidence of how this letter had come to the attention of *Y Bedyddiwr.*

An editorial comment introduced the letter claiming it was an insight into this 'fanatical movement'.[167] It had originally appeared in the *New York Sun*, 9 December 1845, and had become notorious for Emma Smith's startling claim: 'I must now say that I never for a moment believed in what my husband called his apparitions and revelations, as I thought him laboring under a diseased mind.' By the time it

[163] Dennis, *Indefatigable Veteran,* p. 32.
[164] *Prophwyd y Jubili*, Cyf.1, Rhif. 3 (Medi, 1846), p. 79.
[165] *Y Bedyddiwr*, Cyf. V, Rhif. 51(Mawrth 1846), p. 90.
[166] Dennis, 'Reverend W. R. Davies vs Captain Dan Jones', pp. 58- 59: *Y Bedyddiwr*, Cyf. V, Rhif. 51(Mawrth 1846), pp. 90-91.
[167] *Y Bedyddiwr*, Cyf. V, Rhif. 51(Mawrth 1846), p. 90.

appeared in *Y Bedyddiwr,* the Mormon publication, *Times and Seasons*, printed in Nauvoo[168] had published a brief statement from Emma Smith declaring that that the letter in the *New York Sun* was a forgery. It had been pronounced genuine in the *New York Sun* by James Arlington Smith, a disaffected Mormon, whom Dennis suggests was 'probably the real author of the letter.'[169] A disclaimer did not appear in the *New York Sun* until 25 January 1846. However, while there are serious doubts about the authenticity of the Emma Smith letter, some issues surrounding her relationship with her husband are confirmed by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.[170] We may conclude the letter was probably a forgery, but of course we cannot be sure that the person who supplied the letter knew at that point that it was not genuine.

The second 'forged' item consisted of a 250-word letter dated 10 January 1846, submitted by W. R. Davies, which purported to have been written by the two Mormon Elders, Abel Evans and William Henshaw. It issued a challenge to W. R. Davies, 'an honest man' to defend his position, face to face with the 'praiseworthy Apostle' Captain Dan Jones in a public debate at the 'White Lion' in Merthyr Tydfil.[171] In a preface to the letter *Y Bedyddiwr* defended its decision to print the challenge and Davies' reply because of 'the arrogance of these fiends who call themselves the "Saints" and their attacks on religious and irreligious men, continuing in the areas of the Works.'[172] Dennis describes the editor's preface to the letter[173] as 'an indication of the extreme animosity the Baptists felt towards the Mormons.'[174] This is a somewhat sweeping statement. It cannot be equivocally stated that all Baptists felt 'extreme animosity' towards the Mormons. There was no indication that the young

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[168] *Times and Seasons*, vol.6 (15 January 1846), p. 1096.
[169] Dennis, 'Reverend W. R. Davies vs Captain Dan Jones', *BYU Studies*, vol. 27, no.2, (1987), p. 59
[170] 'Loyal to her husband for seventeen years through all the vicissitudes that his mission had entailed, Emma Smith was unable, at the end, to make the sacrifice that the doctrine of plural marriage required. She struggled between her faith in her husband's prophetic role and her aversion to a principle that he, as Prophet, had been instructed to institute. After Joseph's martyrdom in June 1844, Emma unfortunately became a symbol of the dissension within the Church.' When Brigham Young led the majority of Latter-day Saints to the valley of the Great Salt Lake in 1846-47, Emma decided to remain in Nauvoo with her family. In December 1847, Emma Smith married Lewis Bidamon, a non-Mormon, further estranging her from the Church. *Encyclopedia of Mormonism,* http://eom.byu.edu/index.php/Smith,_Emma_Hale accessed 26 November, 2016.
[171] The Cymreigyddion Hall, above the 'White Lion' was the official meeting place of the Latter-day Saints in Merthyr Tydfil. Captain Dan Jones was granted a preaching license for this venue, in March 1846. See Hywel D. Emmanuel, 'Dissent in the Counties of Glamorgan and Monmouth', *National Library of Wales Journal*, vol.9, no.1 (Summer, 1955) p. 41.
[172] *Y Bedyddiwr,* Cyf. V, Rhif. 51 (Mawrth, 1846), p. 90.
[173] *Y Bedyddiwr,* Cyf. V, Rhif 51 (Mawrth, 1846), p. 91.
[174] Dennis, *Indefatigable Veteran,* p. 32.

Baptist men of Abergavenny felt such intensity of feeling when they debated with the Mormons there in 1842, for example. [175]

Davies' response was printed immediately following the 'forged' letter.[176] He refused to accept the challenge to a public debate for a number of reasons. The tone of Davies' reply was somewhat haughty and dismissive.[177] First, he considered that the request came from persons beneath his consideration. Secondly, he regarded their opinion of themselves as the 'only true Church of Christ' and their use of the title 'Apostle' for Captain Jones as 'below scorn'. Thirdly, Davies regarded their 'mad and presumptuous doctrines' as beneath anyone with common sense. Fourthly, Davies claimed the frequently suggested motive of financial gain[178] as the true reason for a public debate, suggesting that money could be made from pamphlets sold by Captain Dan Jones afterwards. Finally, Davies stated that he refused the offer of a debate out of respect for the Biblical imperative found in 1 Timothy 6:5, to withdraw from people who, due to their corrupt minds, constantly involve themselves in disputes, and who believe godliness to be a means for financial gain. Davies advised Captain Dan Jones to return to work on his 'ship or fishing boat'[179] and William Henshaw return to his birthplace in Cornwall to make fools of the Cornishmen. Davies concluded by relating several incidents which he claimed had occurred in Wales: the failure of Henshaw to help a woman in distress in labour, the failure of a Latter-day Saint who had promised to heal all the children of Dowlais, and an incident when the '*police'* were called after some Mormons were caught stealing from a reputable shop in Dowlais. They were later imprisoned. Davies claimed that these accusations could be corroborated by a number of witnesses.

Regarding this 'forged letter' of Henshaw and Evans, Dan Jones claimed the sole reason for submitting the letter was merely a stratagem employed by Davies, without concern for the truth of the situation. Dennis accepts Jones' view that Davies' claim

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[175] *Monmouthshire Merlin* (1 October 1842).
[176] *Y Bedyddiwr,* Cyf. V, Rhif 51 (Mawrth, 1846), pp. 91-93.
[177] Dennis*, Indefatigable Veteran*, p. 33.
[178] This was a much-repeated theme in the British press. By 1846 it had been a constant accusation against Joseph Smith e.g. *North Wales Chronicle* (20 October, 1840). As we have seen some financial deception had been suggested in the case of Thomas Margretts e.g. *Seren Gomer*, (Rhagfyr, 1841), p. 374; *Gloucester Journal* (28 August 1841).
[179] Jones had been the owner of the Mississippi steamboat 'Maid of Iowa'. It was while working on this vessel that he first heard the Mormon message in 1843. The vessel transported many British Mormon immigrants from St. Louis to Nauvoo. See: Donald L. Enders, 'The Steamboat "Maid of Iowa": Mormon Mistress of the Mississippi.' *Brigham Young University Studies*, vol. 19, no. 3 (1979), pp. 321–335; Dennis, *The Call of Zion,* p. 2.

that Evans and Henshaw had issued this challenge to him as 'a complete lie, worded and devised in such a way as to give the said Mr. Davies a reason to laugh at them.'[180] Dennis asserts 'This letter served as the Reverend Davies's excuse to issue his arrogant and extremely sarcastic reply, printed immediately following the letter.'[181] Furthermore, Henshaw and Evans were later to allege that Davies had been seen with a similar letter, containing the name of Dan Jones, some three months earlier and had threatened to have it published. Jones had responded with a warning that if such a letter appeared then the public should not believe it, as it was a forgery.[182]

Dennis suggests that the 'forged' letter bore the marks of a clever counterfeiter as it was 'filled with grammatical errors and mis-spellings in Welsh' which 'together with the belligerent tone of the letter, suggest that it was written by men of limited education and intelligence who were ready to show the smart-aleck Davies a thing or two now that they had their champion [Captain Jones] in town.'[183] Evidence that the letter was forged rests on two considerations. First, Henshaw knew no Welsh, so he probably did not write it. Secondly, Abel Evans had only received a limited education, so although he could have written the letter, as a Latter-day Saint, Evans was aware that Dan Jones did not hold the office of 'apostle' and would not have used that terminology to describe him.[184] Nevertheless, the strength of this argument needs to be tested, as even if Henshaw and Evans did not write it, there is no evidence that Davies or anyone else was the author.

This particular issue was compounded by the fact that William Henshaw and Abel Evans flatly denied ever having written the letter, or inviting Davies to a public debate. It was they who claimed that the letter was a forgery. They sent a letter of protest to the editor of *Y Bedyddiwr* stating that they did not write, or cause to be written, the letter bearing their names.[185] The editor printed their letter and according to Ron Dennis this was 'the only time a Mormon protest was allowed to appear in any of the contemporary religious periodicals.'[186] The spirit of fair-play by *Y Bedyddiwr* in printing Henshaw and Evans' response was somewhat nullified by an

[180] *Prophwyd y Jubili*, Cyf. 1. Rhif. 3 (Medi 1846), p. 78.
[181] Dennis, *Indefatigable Veteran,* p. 33.
[182] *Prophwyd y Jubili*, Cyf.1, Rhif. 1 (Gorphenaf, 1846), pp. 24-28; Dennis, *Indefatigable Veteran*, p. 33
[183] Dennis, *Indefatigable Veteran,* p. 33.
[184] Dennis, *Indefatigable Veteran*, p. 33.
[185] *Y Bedyddiwr*, Cyf. V, Rhif. 53 (Mai, 1846), pp. 193-94.
[186] Dennis, 'The Reverend W. R. Davies vs Captain Dan Jones', p. 58.

editorial comment that concluded that those who had seen the letter sent to Davies had also compared it with the latest one written by Henshaw and Evans and had come to the conclusion that they were written by the same hand.

Davies would not allow the matter to rest and responded to the accusations of forgery in the June issue of *Y Bedyddiwr*.[187] He claimed that there were witnesses present when he received the letter through the post, and regarded it as the duty of the editor to publish 'the tricks of the Satanists', although this comment still did not prove who might have written it.

Dennis also draws attention to the fact that even Captain Dan Jones' non-Mormon brother, Revd John Jones, Independent minister at Rhydybont, Carmarthenshire, entered the debate and rebuked W. R. Davies on this matter. This interpolation by John Jones is somewhat puzzling. He certainly appears to side with the Latter-day Saints against Davies. As John Jones was not a Mormon, nor ever became one, we may ponder why he chose to do so, although it is impossible to know his motivation in this case. It is noteworthy that, in the manner of his brother, John Jones equates the opposition to Mormonism printed in the religious periodicals with persecution.

He wrote in *Y Golygydd*, of which he was the editor at this time:

> If Abel Evans and William Henshaw wrote this letter to Mr. D., they deserve to be rebuked; but not half as much as he himself deserves for the letter he sent in reply … It is true that many heresies are preached by them; but, in the name of goodness, what is consuming Mr. Davies, and the others who write against them? Do you not know that the way to increase a strange sect is to persecute it, thereby taking on a more unclean and libellous character than it has? ... We beg, for the sake of the character of our literature, that our editors not release any more such persecution into their pages; and for the sake of the withering and ending of the Mormons, that no one persecute or disrespect them.[188]

However, leaving aside questions about Davies' involvement in sending false information to *Y Bedyddiwr* in order to discredit the Latter-day Saints, there is one

[187] *Y Bedyddiwr*, Cyf. V, Rhif. 54 (Mehefin, 1846), p. 232.
[188] *Y Golygydd*, (Ebrill, 1846), pp. 89-90.

aspect of his opposition that is not open to question. His unswerving denunciation of the Latter-day Saints is most apparent in his use of the term 'Satanists' to describe the Mormons.

4. Davies and the term 'Satanists'

There is no doubt that W. R. Davies frequently employed the alliterative term 'Satanists' for the Latter-day Saints. It can be found in twelve of the seventeen 'anti-Mormon writings' attributed to him. Dennis has no doubt 'it was he who coined the nickname "Latter-day Satanists" to describe the Welsh Mormons',[189] and notes that 'This epithet, coined by W. R. Davies, was immediately adopted by other Mormon-haters throughout the principality of Wales',[190] although the fact that it was used by others makes tracing its originator even more difficult.

It appears to have been a form of denigration that Latter-day Saints found particularly irksome. Dennis has made this point when describing the emotions of those Latter-day Saints who chose to emigrate to the 'New Jerusalem' with Captain Dan Jones in February 1849:

> The label which really caused the Mormons to breathe fire was one applied to them by the Reverend W. R. Davies, Baptist minister from Dowlais; he called them Latter-day 'Satanists.' It is little wonder, then, that the emigrants stood their ground on board the *Buena Vista* and gave prayers of thanksgiving that they would soon be free of such pernicious influences as the Welsh reverends.[191]

In September 1847, *Y Tyst Apostolaidd* published the final letter by 'Tobit ger y Bont' on the topic of the Latter-day Saints.[192] This Baptist periodical first introduced the topic of 'The Mormons' to its readers in an article in January 1847.[193] In the following September, 'Tobit ger y Bont' outlined the reasons for calling the Latter-day Saints

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[189] Dennis, *Welsh Mormon Writings From 1844 to 1862*, p. 48
[190] Ronald D. Dennis, 'William Howells: First Missionary to France,' in *Supporting Saints: Life Stories of Nineteenth-Century Mormons* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1985), pp. 43–81.
[191] Ronald D. Dennis, *The Call of Zion: The Story of the First Welsh Mormon Emigration,* Religious Studies Center: Specialized Monograph Series, Vol.2 (Salt Lake City, Utah: Brigham Young University, 1987), p.12
[192] *Y Tyst Apostolaidd*, Cyf.11 (Medi, 1847), pp.199-201.
[193] *Y Tyst Apostolaidd*, Cyf.11 (Ionawr, 1847), pp. 16-17.

'Satanists', suggesting perhaps that he was the originator of the sobriquet. 'Tobit' appealed to the editor to print his comments 'for the sake of the country and nation; but mainly for the sake of the truth.'[194] As might be anticipated, 'Tobit' returned to his argument about the Latter-day Saints' claim to perform miracles, and the lack of any evidence to substantiate this claim. He also revealed his complete outrage that the Latter-day Saints were claiming that there were more witnesses to prove the *Book of Mormon* than there were regarding the claims of the New Testament.

It is impossible to be certain that W. R. Davies initiated the use of the term 'Satanists' for the Latter-day Saints. However, he may well have been its creator, as Davies was known for being a straight talker having on one occasion told a member of his own congregation that he was as 'dull as a horse'.[195] The play on words 'Saints' and 'Satanists' may hint at Davies' tendency for forthright speech, but it was clearly an offensive term that antagonised the Latter-day Saints. His use of the term in his second letter to *Y Bedyddiwr* in April 1844,[196] may suggest that this epithet was becoming part of common usage even at this early date. An article in *Y Bedyddiwr* relating the death of Joseph Smith further suggests this. It concluded by posing the question 'What will the saints (or rather the Satanists) say about this?'[197] Thus the term was in use by 1844. In 1846, Davies had prefaced his pamphlet by stating 'I sincerely beseech everyone not to give the name of "Saints" to this foul mob; rather let them be given their proper names, that is, "Nineteenth-century Satanists."'[198]

To conclude, Davies used the term 'Satanists' in the majority of the articles listed by Dennis as his 'anti-Mormon writings'. Latter-day Saints were clearly offended by this pejorative term, and viewed its use as a form of persecution. It is an example of language used with intent to offend and defame opponents. However, in order to strike a balance on this issue we need to ask whether Davies alone responded in this manner or whether there is evidence that the vocabulary of Captain Dan Jones was equally offensive and provocative when directed against his opponents. This question will be discussed in the next chapter.

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[194] *Y Tyst Apostolaidd*, Cyf.11 (Medi, 1847), p. 199.
[195] *Y Bedyddiwr,* Cyf. X, Rhif 110 (Chwefror, 1851), p. 42.
[196] *Y Bedyddiwr,* Cyf.111, Rhif. 28 (Ebrill, 1844), p.123.
[197] *Y Bedyddiwr,* Cyf. 111, Rhif 33 (Medi, 1844), p. 294.
[198] Davies, *'Y Seintiau Diweddaf'*, p. iv.

5. 'Predictions about the Mormons' and 'A warning to the Welsh about the Mormons.'

These headings are the titles given by Ron Dennis to two 'anti-Mormon writings' by W. R. Davies in 1847. As the titles suggests, they deal with a number of different issues raised by Davies in these articles to the Nonconformist press.

The article Dennis categorises as 'predictions about the Mormons' was a comparatively short piece of 600 words. It appeared in *Seren Gomer* in December 1847.[199] Dennis lists this as an 'anti-Mormon' writing by Davies, as it condemns the movement as a heresy, although this perhaps might be expected in a Baptist periodical. While it censures Joseph Smith and predicts the decline of Mormonism, there is nothing new in the article's comments on Mormonism.

It took the form of an open letter addressed to Revd Daniel Jones, an 'old, experienced'[200] Baptist minister in Felinfoel, Carmarthenshire. Davies invited discussion regarding a problem that he believed would soon face more and more ministers in Wales - namely the return to churches of those who had been enticed by Mormonism but had become disillusioned. Davies posed the question whether, on the basis of the Bible, the church of God could accept these people back into 'union and communion' with the family of God. The article again condemned Mormonism as the work of the 'wicked, foolish, hypocritical, and lying scoundrel Joe Smith' and its success associated with 'foolish men' who were to the amazement of every wise man, ready to believe anything rather than the truth. Davies confidently, though ultimately incorrectly, predicted the impending demise of such a movement, and hence the return of its adherents to their previous affiliations.[201]

Davies' article entitled 'A Warning to the Welsh, Religious and Irreligious' appeared in *Seren Gomer* in December 1847. He claimed that 'a swarm of idle, disreputable and lazy men' from Merthyr, Dowlais and Aberdare were travelling the country claiming

[199] *Seren Gomer*, Cyf. XXX1 [XXX], Rhif. 387 (Rhagfyr, 1847), p. 368.
[200] *Seren Gomer*, Cyf. XXX1 [XXX], Rhif. 387 (Rhagfyr, 1847), p. 368.
[201] *Seren Gomer*, Cyf. XXX1 [XXX], Rhif. 387 (Rhagfyr, 1847), p. 368.

to preach the gospel for free, but 'the way they go about things is to *hawk* (*hokian*) some senseless, worthless old books and pamphlets, full of lies.' [202] It is clear from the use of such derogatory language that Davies had no respect for the Latter-day Saints and that the publishing of such descriptions would have been offensive to them. It is in this article that Davies sought to answer accusations that had been made about him by Captain Dan Jones in *Prophwyd y Jubili.*[203]

Dennis only lists one more contribution from the pen of Revd W. R. Davies,[204] namely, on the effect of cholera on membership among the Latter-day Saints.[205] This short letter was published in August 1849, when the cholera epidemic raged throughout the Merthyr area.[206] It simply noted that during these dark days little was heard of claims regarding the increase in numbers joining the Latter-day Saints. However, the author was T. ab Ieuan, who Dennis identifies as W. R. Davies, based on Captain Dan Jones' identification in *Prophwyd y Jubili.*[207] This will be discussed when the pseudonyms are analyzed in the next chapter.

It is clear, then, that Dennis gives considerable attention to the articles and letters in the Nonconformist press that he believes originated with W. R. Davies. While he does not suggest that Davies was alone in his literary protestations, he maintains, based on the evidence of Captain Dan Jones, that Davies was the most influential and significant foe of Mormonism. Furthermore, that this 'relentless' attack on the Latter-day Saints was tantamount to persecution.

Davies and the Growth of Mormonism: 1847-48

Whereas the previous sections have dealt with the content of W. R. Davies' writing, it is Dennis' contention that Davies not only wrote to the denominational periodicals condemning Mormonism, but also took action to halt its progress. For Dennis, 1847

[202] *Seren Gomer*, Cyf. XXX1 [XXX], Rhif. 387 (Rhagfyr, 1847), pp. 375-376.
[203] *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Rhif. 14, (Awst, 1847), pp. 121-122.
[204] Dennis, 'Reverend W. R. Davies vs Captain Dan Jones', pp. 53-65, Table 1, p. 55.
[205] *Seren Gomer,* Cyf. XXXI, Rhif. 394 (Gorphenaf, 1848), p. 248.
[206] The 1849 cholera epidemic killed 1,682 in Merthyr alone.
[207] Jones, *Atebydd y Gwrthddadleuon*, p. 22.

was a significant year because it is at this time he believes that W. R. Davies went a step further in his campaign against the Latter-day Saints. He argues that the motivation for this increased antagonism was the increase in Mormon converts in the area. According to Dennis, the strategy employed by Davies and some of his fellow Nonconformist ministers was to condemn Mormonism in a series of local lectures. Dennis once again demonstrates complete dependence on Captain Dan Jones in his interpretation of these events. Jones was to make extraordinary claims about the effects of these lectures. These will now be examined and assessed.

For Dan Jones the planning of a lecture that was critical of Mormonism was equated with persecution. Jones claimed in *Prophwyd y Jubili* that secret meetings had been held. He wrote 'a secret council was held in Dowlais by the chief leaders of the persecutors to devise plans to persecute the innocent Saints.'[208] Dennis notes that Roberts 'joined Davies in his crusade against the Mormons'[209] and that 'together they planned to give the "home stroke"'[210] to Mormonism.

Evidence supports the claim that the Latter-day Saints were making a substantial number of converts at this time. During the latter half of 1847, 523 people were baptized into the Mormon faith in south Wales, 110 in the Merthyr branch alone. These statistics reveal that every Sunday, five new members were welcomed into the church.[211] According to Dennis the increase of converts provoked a reaction:

> Dan Jones was as excited as the Reverend W. R. Davies was worried at this astonishing growth rate. No minister felt safe from the 'Mormon menace,' and they were all in constant worry that more of their followers would change direction and be led away by the 'deceitful' LDS Elders. The ministers constantly told their congregations to close their doors to the Mormons and never read their publications.[212]

[208] *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Rhif XV11 (Tachwedd, 1847), p. 172.
[209] Dennis, 'Reverend W. R. Davies vs Captain Dan Jones', p. 63.
[210] This term was used in *Seren Gomer*, Cyf. XXX1 [XXX], Rhif. 385 (Hydref, 1847), p. 318. Dennis defines this as a 'coup de grace'. See: Dennis, *Welsh Mormon Writings*, p. 58.
[211] Dennis, *Abel Evans, Indefatigable Veteran*, p. 76.
[212] Dennis, *Abel Evans, Indefatigable Veteran*, p. 76.

Dennis draws attention to the fact that the bulk of 'convert baptisms' during 1845 and 1846 were mainly in the Merthyr Tydfil area. Between twenty and forty baptisms had taken place each month. He adds:

> the growth rate nearly doubled in May and June of 1847, during which time some longstanding members of W. R. Davies's congregation in Dowlais became Mormons. Davies then invited a neighboring [sic] colleague of the cloth, the Reverend Edward Roberts, to lecture at his (Davies's) pulpit in Dowlais and deliver the 'home stroke' to the growth of Mormonism … Roberts had also lost members of his own congregation in Rhymney to the hated Mormons, and he eagerly joined forces with Davies in the campaign.[213]

Dennis unfortunately does not provide evidence regarding the number or identity of converts to Mormonism from among Roberts' congregation at Rhymney. Yet again, the argument that there was a direct correlation between the increase in the conversions to Mormonism and an increase in opposition by local ministers is evinced.

Jones' claims about the effects of Roberts' lecture are considerable. They certainly present a view of Merthyr as an unpleasant if not considerably dangerous place for Latter-day Saints by the end of 1847. The depiction of the persecution suffered by the Latter-day Saints is clearly dependent on the testimony of Captain Dan Jones. While this does not in itself make the evidence unreliable, it does raise a number of questions that need consideration before drawing conclusions about this period.

As part of this united strategy the Revd Edward Roberts[214] gave his first lecture on 2 September 1847 at Caersalem, Dowlais, and again the following night at Bethania Independent chapel, Dowlais,[215] where Revd D. Jones from Cardiff also spoke. Captain Dan Jones attended the first lecture and requested that his planned rebuttal the following night be advertised to the congregation, a request that was, according to

[213] Dennis, *Welsh Mormon Writings*, p. 58.
[214] Edward Roberts (1819–1867), known as 'Iorwerth Glan Aled', was a poet, writer and Baptist minster at Rhymney.
[215] One of the key opponents of Mormonism who spoke on the night of 3 September 1847 was Revd D. Jones, Tabernacle Baptist chapel, Cardiff. Captain Dan Jones wrote two articles addressing Revd Jones' statements in *Prophwyd y Jubili,* 1 Rhif XV1 (Hydref, 1847), pp. 151-154; *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Rhif XV11 (Tachwedd, 1847), pp. 165-168

Jones, denied with accompanying threat of violence.[216] Jones wrote to the editor of the *Millennial Star*, giving an outline of the content of Roberts' first lecture.[217] He stated that the chapel 'was crowded with anxious listeners, who, with opened mouths, eagerly anticipated to hear the funeral sermon of Mormonism.'[218] That evening 'the big seat was crowded with reverends, &c., from far and near' and many charges were brought against Mormonism.[219] Roberts' lecture was based on established anti-Mormon literature such as E. D. Howe's *Mormonism Unvailed [sic],* and other anti-Mormon writers such as Henry Caswall.[220] W. R. Davies and other 'reverends' were present, described by Jones as a 'clan of very reverend and holy persecutors.'[221] That Dennis' interpretation of these events is derived from Captain Dan Jones is evident from Jones' own explanation: 'We had baptized over 150 there in a short time, previous to this skirmishing, and that is the cause of these hirelings coming out thus to save their crumbling and tottering crafts.'[222] Furthermore Dennis' belief that this activity constituted an attempt to destroy Mormonism comes from some astounding comments by Captain Dan Jones that there was an atmosphere of intense persecution at Dowlais at this time, where there were 'thousands of the rabble reiterating the foul epithets of the clergy'[223] and where:

> The whole towns [sic] and works hereabouts, containing over 60,000 people, are actually drunken with infatuation, and rage for or against Mormonism. This is all the topic [sic], and reverends, out of the pulpits, have actually declared that we should be treated as Joe Smith was;[224]

Jones warned the readers of the *Millennial Star* 'You need not be surprised should you hear of Carthage tragedies in Wales, ere long',[225] suggesting that, like Smith, his own life was at risk. The reference to 'reverends' asserting that all the Latter-day Saints should meet an end in the manner of Joseph Smith can be traced back to assertions

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[216] *Millennial Star*, vol. 9, no.20 (15 October 1847), p. 318.
[217] Roberts published a pamphlet based on this lecture, namely, *Twyll Mormoniaeth; Darlith a Draddodwyd Gan y Parch. E. Roberts, Gweinidog y Bedyddwyr, Rumney* (Merthyr Tydfil: David Jones, 1848).
[218] *Millennial Star*, vol. 9, no.20 (15 October 1847), p. 318.
[219] *Millennial Star*, vol. 9, no.20 (15 October 1847), p. 318.
[220] E. D. Howe, Painesville, 1834; Henry Caswall, *The Prophet of the Nineteenth Century; or The Rise, Progress, and present State of the Mormons, or Latter-day Saints: to which is Appended, an Analysis of the Book of Mormon.* (London: J. G. F. & J. Rivington, 1843).
[221] *Millennial Star*, vol. 9, no.20 (15 October 1847), p. 318.
[222] *Millennial Star*, vol. 9, no.20 (15 October 1847), p. 318.
[223] *Millennial Star*, vol. 9, no.20 (15 October 1847), p. 318. Jones also asserts that the clergy conspired to prevent Mormon converts obtaining work from the ironmasters, by claiming that Mormonism could be linked with Chartism.
[224] *Millennial Star*, vol. 9, no.20 (15 October 1847), p. 319.
[225] *Millennial Star*, vol. 9, no.20 (15 October 1847), p. 319.

made about W. R. Davies by a Mormon convert, Job Rowland. Rowland, 'one of Davies's former members' apparently claimed:

> I was with the Baptists for thirteen years ... As soon as the Saints came to these areas our teachers, especially Mr. W. R. Davies, began to persecute them and hate them, saying all manner of evil against them. Mr Davies said one time in our house that his desire was to do the same with their Elders as was done to Joseph Smith, that is to kill them. That, together with many other things prompted me to look into their principles.[226]

This startling claim was published in *Prophwyd y Jubili.*[227] While there is no evidence, at least in his published words, that W. R. Davies ever advocated any type of physical harm against the Latter-day Saints, Dan Jones was sufficiently convinced that he had made the above statement to print it in his periodical. Clearly Davies had opposed the Mormons from the outset of their mission in the Merthyr area. However, was the description of his opposition as 'saying all manner of evil against them', simply a description of his frequent refutation of claims that miraculous healings had taken place? Was it opposition in the form of contradiction of Mormon claims rather than malicious and baseless defamation? These questions will be considered in the next chapter.

Dennis provides further evidence that the attitude and condemnation of Mormonism by W. R. Davies was counter-productive by citing the case of 'William Howells, a lay minister with the Baptists prior to his conversion to Mormonism in 1847' who also 'gave credit to W. R. Davies for helping him see the light.'[228] Howells[229] claimed:

> I hardly knew anything about the Saints or their religion until the Rev. W. R. Davies came to Aberdare to show their deceit; and to my surprise, the more he pounded his Bible on the pulpit and shouted, 'Great fraud, devilish hypocrisy, and miserable darkness of the Satanists of the Latter-days,' the more the principles of the Saints shone, like rays of divine truth, to the point of making me begin to believe if these men were satanic, that his 'satanic majesty' had more of the divine truth of the Bible than did the religion which I professed.[230]

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[226] Dennis, 'The Reverend W. R. Davies vs Captain Dan Jones', p. 64: See also *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Rhif. 30, (Rhagfyr, 1848), p. 187.
[227] *Prophwyd y Jubili*, Rhif. 30 (Rhagfyr, 1848), pp. 187-188.
[228] Dennis, 'The Reverend W. R. Davies vs Captain Dan Jones', p. 64.
[229] William Howells was the first Mormon missionary to France, and led a successful mission there.
[230] *Udgorn Seion* Cyf. I Rhif. 5 (Mai, 1849), p. 94; Dennis, 'The Reverend W. R. Davies vs Captain Dan Jones', p. 64.

Therefore if we accept the claim that Revd W. R. Davies and Revd Edward Roberts colluded in an attempt to destroy Mormonism through public lectures, the effects of those lectures were far-reaching, both in raising levels of persecution and in aiding the growth of Mormonism.

Although Davies' literary contribution to the debate on Mormonism began to dwindle by 1848, one event caused Latter-day Saints to claim a victory. Dennis has noted:

> The most triumphant conversion story of the time, however, was that of Rees Price, a former Baptist who had worked closely with the Rev. Davies himself. It caused a good deal of excitement amongst the Saints to have a high-ranking officer of the enemy camp defect from the Baptist and seek religious asylum with the Mormons, and Dan Jones was unabashedly exuberant as he wrote about it in the March 1848 *Prophwyd y Jubili.*[231]

Jones described Price as Davies' 'right-hand man'.[232] Rees Price's own testimony was published in the September edition of *Prophwyd y Jubili.*[233] He claimed that he had been a member of the Baptist denomination for nine years, receiving the 'best advice' from Revd W. R. Davies always to investigate and seek the truth thoroughly. Regarding Davies, Price asserted:

> I heard his persecution and false accusations constantly of the 'Latter-day Saints in the meetings, from pulpits, through the publications, and about the houses and roads … I was convinced in the end that they were unfounded and derived from an evil principle, and I understood also that Mr. Davies could not disprove, to my satisfaction, the principles the Saints professed.[234]

Eventually it was Revd Edward Roberts' sermon against Mormonism that caused Price to leave the Baptists and join the Latter-day Saints. Captain Dan Jones noted that 'This is that man for whom Mr. Davies shows such contempt with his slime through the publications recently',[235] a reference to Davies' denial that Price was his 'right-hand man'.[236] The assertion in *Prophwyd y Jubili*[237] that 'two others of Mr. Davies's members were baptized after him, and several before that, despite Mr.

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[231] Dennis, 'The Welsh and the Gospel', p. 258,
[232] *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Rhif. 21 (Mawrth, 1848), p. 45.
[233] *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Rhif. 27 (Medi, 1848), pp. 131-133.
[234] *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Rhif. 27 (Medi, 1848), p. 131.
[235] *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Rhif. 27 (Medi, 1848), p. 133.
[236] *Y Bedyddiwr* Cyf. V11, Rhif. 78 (Mehefin, 1848), p. 210; See also *Y Drysorfa Gynnulleidfaol,* (Mehefin, 1848), p. 169.
[237] *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Rhif. 21 (Mawrth, 1848), p. 45.

Davies's assertion that only one old woman left him for the Saints' was totally denied by Davies. He claimed that one old lady left Caersalem, and another woman, namely Rees Price's wife, left Elim.

Therefore, the evidence from Captain Dan Jones clearly presents W. R. Davies and his supporters as indomitable and relentless opponents of the Latter-day Saints, to the extent that their words and accusations created an atmosphere of persecution in the Merthyr area. Jones' claims in *Prophwyd y Jubili* and the *Millennial Star* have become the foundation for Latter-day Saint reconstruction of the history of this period, and have remained unchallenged.

Conclusion

Following the arrival of the Latter-day Saints in Wales in 1840, the Nonconformist periodicals began to publish articles that were critical of the movement. Initially, these were not particularly aggressive in their opposition, having taken no interest in the movement until 1841. In comparison with reports that had already appeared in the newspapers these early articles were relatively mild. However, as the movement began to spread and a greater awareness of Mormonism developed, the Nonconformist press published an increasing number of articles and letters that were concerned with some of the practices and teachings of the Latter-day Saints.

As we have seen Ron Dennis has focused attention on one writer in particular, namely Revd W. R. Davies. His identification of Davies as the man behind the pseudonyms rests entirely on the assertions of Captain Dan Jones. Dennis has identified seventeen anti-Mormon writings from the pen of Davies, written to the religious periodicals over a period of five years, and he uses this evidence, without question, to draw the conclusion that Davies was 'one of the earliest and most relentless enemies of Mormonism.'[238] In addition to this Dennis, relying entirely on Captain Dan Jones' assertions in *Prophwyd y Jubili,* has suggested that Davies was Mormonism's chief foe,

[238] Ronald D. Dennis, *Prophet of the Jubilee,* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Brigham Young University, 1997. Religious Studies Center: Specialized Monograph Series, Vol.10), p. 32.

accepting Jones' claim that Davies was the author of a 'cruel and shameful persecution'[239]

We may conclude with Dennis, that during the period 1844-48, W. R. Davies wrote articles in his own name or possibly under a variety of pseudonyms, including 'Tobit ger y Bont', along with at least one edition of his pamphlet on his sermon regarding the Latter-day Saints and miracles. However, this chapter has shown that from analysis of Davies' writings it becomes evident that Davies' opposition falls into two distinct phases. During 1844 he wrote only twice to *Y Bedyddiwr,* using the pseudonym 'Tobit ger y Bont'. Two years passed before he wrote again. During this period when the Latter-day Saints experienced considerable growth in conversions under the ministry of William Henshaw, Davies is surprisingly silent on the topic. Following the arrival of Captain Dan Jones, who became President of the Merthyr Tydfil branch in 1846, Davies once more, began to write to the religious periodicals. There is evidence to suggest that the appointment of Captain Dan Jones as President of the Welsh Mission at the end of 1845 was a seminal moment in the story of the Welsh Mormon mission. Under Jones' leadership numbers of the Latter-day Saints in Wales increased and he became a prolific and belligerent apologist for the movement. It is clear that the already existent opposition to the Latter-day Saints now intensified.

As we have seen, it is the contention of Dennis that it was the fear of losing members of his congregation to Mormonism that first 'alarmed' Davies and encouraged him to begin his attack on the Latter-day Saints. According to Dennis' reconstruction of events, again based on assertions by Captain Dan Jones, the loss of members of Davies' congregation eventually culminated in the loss his 'right-hand man' to the Mormons. He further accepts Jones' assertion that Davies was so embittered by Henshaw's refusal to become his assistant he was prepared to make false allegations and claims about the Latter-day Saints in order to undermine them. Davies' opposition reached its pinnacle when he planned the destruction of Mormonism by arranging for Revd Edward Roberts, Rhymney, to lecture in Caersalem chapel in September 1847. Ultimately, according to Dennis, Davies' 'relentless' attack on the

[239] E.g. *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Rhif. 15 (Medi, 1847), p. 134.

Latter-day Saints led to an atmosphere of persecution that made Captain Dan Jones fear for his life.[240]

This chapter has also revealed that the main issues that concerned Davies in his writings to the religious periodicals were concerned with the Latter-day Saints' belief in the availability of spiritual gifts for their believers, in particular the gift of healing, and baptism. This issue became Davies' main concern, as evidenced by his only pamphlet on this topic. His main contention was that despite the Latter-day Saints' claims of healing in the Merthyr area, he could see no evidence that such things had ever happened, and thus he denounced their claims as deception. As a Baptist minister, he also commented on Mormon beliefs on the practice of baptism by full immersion, multiple baptisms, and baptism for the dead. He is at his most controversial in his first letter about the Latter-day Saints, in which he asserted that they baptized naked and at night.

It is also evident that Davies wrote about local situations that concerned him, and he used evidence from what he had heard and seen to express his point of view.
He never wrote extensively about Mormonism or its origins, which might have been expected from a committed opponent. By 1844, many tracts and pamphlets had been published in Britain that had analysed and denounced the basis of this religion. Neither did he enter into the area of deeper theological debate regarding Mormon teaching.

Although it is acknowledged that Davies was not alone in his opposition to Mormonism, Dennis considers him to be the most relentless and vociferous opponent in this task. This assessment of W. R. Davies is evident from his conclusions about the Latter-day Saint reaction to news of Davies' death in September 1849. He states that when Davies the 'archenemy'[241] of the Latter-day Saints died, 'John Davis exercised admirable restraint at the notice he placed in the issue of *Udgorn Seion* for September 1849.' Davis' notice was a confirmation that Revd W. R. Davies was among the recent

[240] *Millennial Star*, vol. 9, no. 20 (15 October 1847), p. 319
[241] Dennis, *Indefatigable Veteran,* p. 126.

deaths. He wrote: 'Yes, it is true that the well-known Reverend W. R. Davies from Dowlais has died of cholera. He died soon after returning home at a time when it was thought that the disease had left the place'.[242] Davis' implication is clear, namely that W. R. Davies, after all the attacks he had made on the Latter-day Saints, ultimately revealed his true character by being absent from Dowlais while the disease raged among his neighbours and congregation, returning only when he believed the danger had passed. Regarding W. R. Davies' death, Dennis concludes:

> There was great relief among the Mormon community of Wales, and those who had suffered his verbal attacks and persecution for years were probably thinking that justice had finally prevailed.[243]

These are robust claims regarding Davies as an opponent of Mormonism in Wales.

However, Davies had expressed his views as a local Baptist minister. His responses to local incidents came from his theological commitment and conviction and were not simply the result of bigoted prejudice. We may conclude that there is no doubt that the language Davies used was inflammatory. He undoubtedly used pejorative language in regard to Mormonism, using words such as 'evil' 'foolishness' 'devilish' 'nonsense' 'deceit' 'lies', and for the Mormons, worst of all the derogatory term, 'Satanists', which as Dennis has noted was the most offensive term for the Latter-day Saints. Captain Dan Jones, and consequently Ron Dennis have equated this volatile vocabulary and Davies' strident opinions with persecution. By 1848, Captain Dan Jones' publication *Prophwyd y Jubili* regularly and directly made Davies the focus of attention as the author of 'cruel and shameful persecution'.[244] Therefore, Davies' language must be viewed in the light of the similar response of Dan Jones, which will be discussed further in the next chapter.

There was evidently a serious clash of theological conviction at the basis of the opposition between Captain Dan Jones and W. R. Davies. The question is whether the writings of W. R. Davies can be designated a form of persecution and whether W. R. Davies can justly be described as a persecutor of the Latter-day Saints on the basis that he opposed their teachings. The following chapter will examine each of the

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[242] *Udgorn Seion*, Cyf. 1, Rhif.9 (Medi, 1849), cover, p. 3.
[243] Dennis, *Indefatigable Veteran,* p. 126.
[244] E.g. *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Rhif. 15 (Medi, 1847), p. 134.

claims made about Davies, using additional evidence, in an attempt to determine whether he was as a 'persecutor' of the Latter-day Saints or merely a 'commentator' who used strong and provocative language.

Chapter 5

W. R. Davies: Arch-persecutor or Concerned Commentator?

It is clear that when Mormonism began to spread throughout Wales during the 1840s it met with opposition from a number of sources. However, Ron Dennis has concluded that the most unrelenting opposition came from Revd W. R. Davies. This chapter will examine assertions made about Davies as the 'most vociferous', 'relentless', persecutor of the Latter-day Saints and attempt to discover whether these can be upheld or challenged in the light of additional evidence.

Dennis introduces W. R. Davies in the following terms:

> In 1838 when forty-year-old William Robert Davies was ordained [sic] minister of the Baptist Caersalem Chapel in Dowlais (two miles from Merthyr Tydfil) he had probably never heard of the Latter-day Saints. Halfway into his eleven-year ministry at Caersalem, he would become the most vociferous foe of Mormonism in Wales. In addition to constant sermons against the new religion, Davies also published extensively in the various religious periodicals.[1]

He further notes that Davies was 'one of the earliest and most relentless enemies of Mormonism'.[2]

Dennis bases his conclusion on evidence from three main sources. First, articles and letters published in the Welsh denominational press. Secondly, pamphlets produced by anti-Mormon and Mormon writers in Wales during this period, including one by Davies. Thirdly, articles found in the Mormon publications, *Prophwyd y Jubili* and *Udgorn Seion*. It is particularly the articles published in these last two sources that have given rise to the claim that W. R. Davies, was, in the words of Captain Dan Jones, the instigator of a 'cruel and shameful persecution'.[3]

According to Ron Dennis there are two main areas in which W. R. Davies operated as an opponent of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, namely in writing

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[1] Ronald D. Dennis, 'Reverend W. R. Davies vs Captain Dan Jones', *BYU Studies*, vol.27, no.2, (1987), p. 53 https://ojs.lib.byu.edu/spc/index.php/BYUStudies/article/view/5664/5314 accessed 13 September 2016.
[2] Ronald D. Dennis, *Prophet of the Jubilee,* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Brigham Young University, 1997. Religious Studies Center: Specialized Monograph Series, Vol.10), p. 32.
[3] E.g. *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Rhif. 15 (Medi, 1847), p. 134.

articles and letters to various Nonconformist periodicals, and by preaching 'constant sermons against the new religion'.[4] While the former of these modes of attack is easy to substantiate, as the writings are extant, the latter is less so, and requires further evaluation.

Support for the claim that Davies preached 'constant sermons against the new religion' is based entirely on Dan Jones' writing in *Prophwyd y Jubili.* Jones makes frequent reference to Davies' sermons against the Mormons in this periodical,[5] although following extensive research no other evidence has come to light regarding their regularity or content. The only exception is Davies' published pamphlet on the Latter-day Saints and miracles, which had originally been delivered as a sermon.[6] Given that he took the trouble to write to the press about Mormonism, it is reasonable to suppose that W. R. Davies, on occasion, would have condemned Mormonism from his pulpit. But the frequency or vehemence of such utterances is more difficult to substantiate, apart from the recollections of two men, both of whom were Mormon converts. First, Rees Price, formerly a member at Caersalem, claimed he had turned to the Mormons because of Davies' 'persecution and false accusations constantly of the "Latter-day Saints" in the fellowship meetings, from the pulpits …'[7] Second, William Howells,[8] a lay minister with the Baptists prior to his conversion to Mormonism in 1847, claimed that the more W. R. Davies 'pounded his Bible on the pulpit and shouted' against the Latter-day Saints, the more he believed their message.[9] Neither account offers detail about the regularity of such occurrences. Alongside this, it ought to be noted that, between 1844 and 1846 Davies wrote nothing to the Nonconformist periodicals regarding the Latter-day Saints. While writing to the periodicals is an altogether different matter to addressing his

[4] Ronald D. Dennis, 'Reverend W. R. Davies vs Captain Dan Jones', *BYU Studies*, vol.27, no.2, (1987), p53 https://ojs.lib.byu.edu/spc/index.php/BYUStudies/article/view/5664/5314 accessed 13 September 2016.
[5] E.g. *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Rhif.14 (Awst1847), pp. 120-123; *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Rhif.15 (Medi1847), pp. 134-137; *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Rhif.24 (Mehefin 1848), pp. 85-86; *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Rhif.27 (Medi1848), p. 131 Ronald D. Dennis, 'Reverend W. R. Davies vs Captain Dan Jones', *BYU Studies*, vol.27, no.2, (1987), p. 53 https://ojs.lib.byu.edu/spc/index.php/BYUStudies/article/view/5664/5314 accessed 13 September 2016.
[6] Davies, *Y Seintiau Diweddaf.*
[7] *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Rhif. 27 (Medi, 1848), p. 131.
[8] Dennis, 'The Reverend W. R. Davies vs Captain Dan Jones', p. 64. William Howells was the first Mormon missionary to France, led a successful mission there.
[9] *Udgorn Seion* Cyf. I Rhif. 5 (Mai, 1849), p. 94; Dennis, 'The Reverend W. R. Davies vs Captain Dan Jones', p. 64.

congregation, it might at least suggest that the claims and progress of the Latter-day Saints were not consistently his immediate priority. Of course we cannot know, but the two-year break in his writing on this topic suggests a certain lack of interest or concern. Despite claims about Davies' central role as an opponent, no independent evidence exists regarding any organized anti-Mormon activity by him, and no record remains of his sermons. He is not mentioned in any newspapers of the period for any particular anti-Mormon stance or activity. While perhaps we should not expect this, by the end of the 1840s the press had reported on the anti-Mormon lectures of another Baptist minister, Revd John Rhys Morgan (Lleurwg), of Aberavon.[10] Despite his pamphlet and letters and articles to the denominational press, Davies might well have been more a commentator on local events than a renowned spokesman for the opposition to Mormonism.

The Pseudonyms

Alongside the above, some discussion is required regarding the authorship of the literature that has been identified with him. As noted in the previous chapter, Dennis has identified seventeen 'anti-Mormon' writings by Davies.[11]

Ron Dennis' List of 'Published Anti-Mormon Writings of W. R. Davies'.[12]

	Date	Periodical	Author	Subject	Words
1.	March 1844	*Y Bedyddiwr*	Tobit ger y Bont	Reference to Mormon baptism; Account of a failed healing	600
2.	April 1844	*Y Bedyddiwr*	Tobit ger y Bont	'Weakness and Strength' – an account of a debate on baptism	1, 500

[10] Rev. J. R. Morgan (Lleurwg) 1822-1900, Baptist minister, lecturer and poet. He moved to Aberavon in 1848, and on to Zion Llanelli in 1855. His anti-Mormon activity was recorded by the press: *Cambrian* (16 March 1849); *Principality* (16 March 1849); *Cambrian* (16 April 1849); *Cambrian* (21 November 1849).

[11] 'Published Anti-Mormon Writings of W. R. Davies', Ronald D. Dennis, 'The Reverend W. R. Davies vs Captain Dan Jones', *BYU Studies,* 27, no.2 (1987), or https://byustudies.byu.edu/PDFViewer.aspx?title=5818&linkURL=27.2DennisReverend-74fb8b35-8bfc-42b7-b2d9-a8a70561fd81.pdf accessed 17 April 2014.

[12] Ronald D. Dennis, 'Reverend W. R. Davies vs Captain Dan Jones', *BYU Studies*, vol.27, no.2, (1987), p53, https://ojs.lib.byu.edu/spc/index.php/BYUStudies/article/view/5664/5314 accessed 13 September 2016.

3.	March 1846	*Y Bedyddiwr*	W. R. Davies	Davies' response to the supposed challenge of Evans and Henshaw to a public debate.	1, 700
4.	March 1846	*Y Bedyddiwr*	Quick yn Dwr	'A Miracle! A Miracle! At last!!'Account of the supposed healing of William Hughes' leg.	650
5.	March 1846	Pamphlet	W. R. Davies	Substance of a sermon on the Latter-day Saints and miracles	20 pages
6.	June 1846	*Y Bedyddiwr*	W. R. Davies	Comments regarding the 'forged letter' supposedly by Evans and Henshaw.	750
7.	January 1847	*Seren Gomer*	Gwcw y Don	Response to a letter on the topic of 'zeal without knowledge' by 'Cethlydd y Don', published in *Seren Gomer,* November 1846	2, 000
8.	July 1847	Pamphlet	W. R. Davies	Reworking of the pamphlet published on miracles. Non-extant.	—
9.	September 1847	*Y Tyst Apostolaidd*	Tobit ger y Bont	Article on reasons why the term 'Satanists' should be applied to the Latter-day Saints.	1, 800
10.	December 1847	*Seren Gomer*	W. R. Davies	Predictions about the Mormons.	600
11.	December 1847	*Seren Gomer*	W. R. Davies	A warning to the Welsh about the Mormons. Davies defence regarding accusations in *Prophwyd y Jubili.*	800

12.	January 1848	*Y Bedyddiwr*	W. R. Davies	Quotes from newspaper reports on the Mormons	850
13.	February 1848	*Y Drysorfa Gynnulleidfaol*	W. R. Davies	Quotes from newspaper reports on the Mormons. This is identical to the above in *Y Bedyddiwr.*	
14.	June 1848	*Y Drysorfa Gynnulleidfaol*	W. R. Davies	A variety of Mormon offenses.	1, 900
15.	June 1848	*Y Bedyddiwr*	W. R. Davies	Identical to the above but including views regarding baptism for the dead.	1, 500
16.	July 1848	*Seren Gomer*	W. R. Davies	The failure of the Mormons to cast out evil spirits	1, 300
17.	August 1849	*Seren Gomer*	T. ab Ieuan	Effect of cholera on membership. Dennis' inclusion of this as an article by W. R. Davies is questionable.	250

A number of questions can be raised about the entries in this table. First, the list includes Davies' only pamphlet,[13] printed in March 1846, and the claim that it was revised the following year. Given that any revised text seems not to have survived (or at least come to light), we are left with sixteen examples of Davies' 'Anti-Mormon writings.' However, the final article on Dennis' list was written using the pseudonym 'T. Ab Ieuan.' Dennis has identified this as Davies, based on a statement by Captain Dan Jones.[14] Using the literary device of an imaginary discussion between a 'Saint'

[13] Parch W. R. Davies, *Y Seintiau Diweddaf: Sylwedd pregeth a dradoddwyd ar y gwyrthiau, er mwyn goleuo y cyffredin a dangos twyll y creaduriaid a alwant eu hunain yn 'Seintiau y Dyddiau Diweddaf.* (Merthyr Tydfil: Argraffwyd David Jones, 1846).

[14] Jones, 'Captain Dan Jones, *Atebydd y gwrthddadleuon a ddygir yn fwyaf cyffredinol drwy y wlad yn erbyn Saint y Dyddiau Diweddaf, a'r athrawiaeth a broffesant; mewn ffurf o ymddyddan, er symud y rhwystrau oddiar ffordd y Cymry ymofyngar, heb, 'anmhwyllo ynghylch cwestiynau, ac ymryson ynghylch geiriau, o'r rhai y mae cenfigen, ymryson, cableddau, a drwg dybiau yn dyfod; ac na ddaliont ar*

and a 'Sectarian', Jones dealt with the frequent questions raised regarding the Mormons. The discussion turned to articles that opposed the Latter-day Saints in the denominational press, and their authors. Jones' clearly inferred here that T. Ab Ieuan, Tobit ger y Bont and Davies were one and the same person.[15]

> … But I have understood more about him, and those correspondents who sent those lies to him; and if you notice, you'll see that the pen name behind nearly all of them is T. Ab. Ieuan or Tobit ger y Bont. You can recognise their style and sayings, word for word, whole sentences, one against the other… It is said that T. Ab Ieuan and Tobit live in D-L-s [sic]; and I believed that by tracing their work through the numbers of *Y Bedyddiwr*, that the only one who pleased them[sic] was the Revd. W. R. Davies … What is the secret between them? Will they both be generally in each others company? Perhaps these two are together in the pulpit too?[16]

However, Jones' suspicion, and Dennis' acceptance of his view, is in fact partially incorrect. T. Ab Ieuan was the pseudonym of Thomas Evan James (1824-1870) originally from Cardiganshire. He was ordained into the Baptist ministry in 1853, at Pontestyll, near Brecon having previously served as an un-ordained minister in Pembrokeshire.[17] His name appears in a variety of articles in *Seren Gomer* and *Y Bedyddiwr*, notably, perhaps, preaching in a meeting at Narberth in November 1852, some three years after the death of W. R. Davies, thus confirming, somewhat irrefutably, that they were not one and the same person.[18] This leaves us with fifteen articles.

According to Dennis, Davies used the pseudonym 'Tobit ger y Bont', on three occasions. The pamphlet *Atebydd y Gwrthddadleuon* by Captain Dan Jones attempted to repudiate all the accusations of 'Tobit ger y Bont' published in *Y Bedyddiwr* in March 1844 and in other correspondence published up to February 1846. Jones reaffirmed his belief that 'Tobit ger y Bont' could be identified with Davies in the first

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CHWEDLAU ac achau anorphen, y rhai sydd yn peri cwestiynau, yn hytrach nag adeiladaeth dduwiol, yr hon sydd trwy ffydd: gwnaed [pawb] felly.' (Rhydybont: John Jones, 1846), p. 22. He further identifies 'Tobit ger y Bont' with Revd W. R. Davies in *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Cyf.1, Rhif. 1, (Gorffennaf, 1846), pp. 24-25.

[15] An article by T. ab Ieuan 'Y Seintiau eto' described a failed hailing of a woman in childbirth in Rhymney; *Y Bedyddiwr,* Cyf.111, Rhif 30, (Mehefin, 1844), p. 196. The story is similar to the account in the first letter by 'Tobit ger y Bont' on the Latter day-Saints, which may explain why the comparison was made.

[16] Jones, '*Atebydd y Gwrthddadleuon*', p. 22.

[17] See: *National Library of Wales, Dictionary of Welsh Biography*, http://yba.llgc.org.uk/en/s-JAME-EVA-1824.html accessed 24 October 2016.

[18] *Y Bedyddiwr*, Cyf. X1, Rhif. 132 (Rhagfyr, 1852), p. 373.

edition of *Prophwyd y Jubili*, in July 1846.[19] Jones identified 'Tobit ger y Bont' with Davies as a result of an examination of the literary style and character of the letters. He also suggested, that as a minister in Dowlais, Davies was well placed to be aware of events at Penydarren, and as a Baptist minister had a clear motive for condemning Mormonism. At this point, the assertion appears to be more of a supposition than a definite identification of Davies as 'Tobit'. What is intriguing is that Jones' pamphlet (*Atebydd y Gwrthddadleuon*) was published in 1846, but he felt it necessary to refer to the article by 'Tobit' of March 1844 that noted the practice of naked, nocturnal baptism. He felt he needed to expose the identity of 'Tobit ger y Bont,' despite the fact that 'Tobit' had not published any anti-Mormon letter or article for two years, and would not write again on Mormonism using this *nom de plume* until 1847. Any reason for the action on Jones' part can now only be speculative. It might well point to Davies' condemnation of Mormonism from the pulpit and Jones might well have been trying to draw attention to the article's claim that he considered bizarre and malicious. But in doing so, he seems also to have stirred Davies again into taking up his pen against the Latter-day Saints after a two-year period of literary silence.

While it seems that Jones' claims were based on supposition, it can now be stated that 'Tobit ger y Bont' was almost certainly W. R. Davies, and not simply because he apparently never felt the need to accept or deny the accusation.

First, Davies lived at Gellifaelog,[20] in an area of Dowlais, known as 'Y Bont' or 'Pont Gellifaelog',[21] Secondly, while the use of the name 'Tobit' has, for Protestant Christians, a rather obscure association with the story of Tobit and the angel found in the Apocrypha,[22] although it is tempting to connect the name mischievously to the angelic visitation on which Mormonism was based, this is not the case. 'Tobit' had been writing under that pseudonym since 1827, three years prior to establishment of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and over ten years before Davies took

[19] *Prophwyd y Jubili*, Cyf.1, Rhif 1, (Gorffennaf, 1846), p. 23.
[20] Williams and Williams, *History of Caersalem, Dowlais*, p. 35.
[21] The 1875 OS map shows the position of Gellifaelog Bridge that took the main road from Merthyr to Dowlais across the Morlais Brook.
[22] *Book of Tobit, The Apocrypha.*

charge of Caersalem chapel.[23] 'Tobit', then, was a literary pseudonym employed in various articles and letters to the press over a long period of years. Furthermore, it is unlikely, in an age when authors and poets routinely employed pseudonyms, that 'Tobit' was deliberately seeking to conceal his identity from Mormon readers. The name was employed on numerous occasions with various suffixes, such as 'Tobit ger y Bont', 'Tobit Dowlais', or just 'Tobit',[24] and a wide range of subjects were discussed by him. 'Tobit' was in no sense preoccupied with one subject, a point confirmed by the fact that even during the years when he wrote against the Latter-day Saints, he also contributed articles on other issues, such as 'Yr Iaith Gymreig'[25] and 'Canu Mewn Angladdau', for example.[26] In fact, 'Tobit' was a fairly prolific writer to the religious periodicals, and not simply a man on a crusade against the Latter-day Saints, and his contributions on this topic need to be understood in the context of his writing as a whole.

All that aside, one fact would seem to identify 'Tobit' with W. R. Davies more than anything else. Between the years 1827 and 1837, 'Tobit' signed himself either as 'Tobit', 'Tobit Llan-Eyrw', 'Tobit Llan-Erw', or most commonly 'Tobit Llanerw.' Davies had served as minister to Ebenezer, Welsh Baptist Church Eglwyswrw, in Pembrokeshire from 1824 until he moved to Dowlais in 1838.[27] From 1839, 'Tobit' signed himself as 'Tobit Dowlais' or 'Tobit ger y Bont'. It seems clear, then, that 'Tobit' was a name adopted by Davies – for whatever reason – but the addition of a geographical setting suggests he was not intent on hiding his identity. Thus, despite

[23] The article 'Llyn Bethesa' by 'Tobit, Dowlais' was printed in *Ystorfa Weinidogaethol*, Cyf.11 Rhif 15 (May, 1839), pp. 147-8. See also *Ystorfa Weinidogaethol*, Cyf.11 Rhif 18 (Awst, 1839), pp. 244-45.
[24] *Greal y Bedyddwyr*, Cyf. I Rhif. 5 (Mai, 1827), p. 155; *Greal y Bedyddwyr,* Cyf. I, Rhif. 6 (Mehefin, 1827), p. 185; *Greal y Bedyddwyr*, Cyf. V, Rhif. 59 (Tachwedd 1831), pp. 332-334; *Greal y Bedyddwyr*, Cyf. V, Rhif. 60 (Rhagfyr, 1831), p. 365; *Greal y Bedyddwyr*, Cyf. VI, Rhif. 63 (Mawrth, 1832), pp. 73-75; *Greal y Bedyddwyr*, Cyf. VI, Rhif. 65 (Mai, 1832), pp. 135-137; *Greal y Bedyddwyr*; Cyf. VI, Rhif. 71 (Tachwedd, 1832), pp. 238-239; *Greal y Bedyddwyr*, Cyf. VI, Rhif. 71 (Tachwedd, 1832), pp. 239-240; *Greal y Bedyddwyr,* Cyf. VI, Rhif. 72 (Rhagfyr, 1832), pp. 368-370; *Greal y Bedyddwyr*, Cyf. VII, Rhif. 84 (Rhagfyr, 1833), p. 360; *Greal y Bedyddwyr*, Cyf. IX, Rhif. 104 (Awst, 1835), p. 236-237; *Greal y Bedyddwyr*, Cyf. XI, Rhif. 122 (Chwefror, 1837), pp. 42-43; *Ystorfa Weinidogaethol*, Cyf. II, Rhif. 15 (Mai, 1839), pp. 147-148; *Ystorfa Weinidogaethol,* Cyf. II, Rhif. 16 (Mehefin, 1839); p. 195; *Seren Gomer*, Cyf. XXII, Rhif. 285 (Mehefin, 1839), pp. 162-163; *Ystorfa Weinidogaethol*, Cyf. II, Rhif. 18 (Awst, 1839), pp. 243-244; *Ystorfa Weinidogaethol,* Cyf. III, Rhif. 25 (Mawrth, 1840), p. 97; *Seren Gomer*, Cyf. XXVII, Rhif. 346 (Gorphenaf, 1844), pp. 209-210; *Seren Gomer*, Cyf. XXVII, Rhif. 348 (Medi, 1844), pp. 271-272; *Y Bedyddiwr*, Cyf. IV, Rhif 37 (Ionawr, 1845), pp. 14-15; *Seren Gomer*, Cyf. XXVIII, Rhif. 355 (Ebrill, 1845), pp.112-113; *Seren Gomer*, Cyf. XXVIII, Rhif. 356 (Mai, 1845), pp. 140-141; *Y Bedyddiwr*, Cyf. IV, Rhif 42 (Mehefin, 1845) p. 171; *Y Bedyddiwr*, Cyf. VIII, Rhif. 87 (Mawrth, 1849), p. 100.
[25] *Seren Gomer*, Cyf. XXV111, Rhif 356 (Mai, 1845), pp. 140-41.
[26] *Seren Gomer*, Cyf. XXV11, Rhif 346 (Gorffennaf, 1844), pp. 209-10.
[27] *Y Bedyddiwr*, Cyf. X, Rhif 110 (Chwefror,1851), p. 38.

Jones' suggestion that he had discovered that Davies was the person behind the pseudonym 'Tobit ger y Bont,' it is entirely possible that in some circles at least, if not Mormon ones, this was well-known, in the same way that the regular contributor to newspapers and religious periodicals of the time, 'Brutus', was known to be David Owen (1795-1866).[28] We can be certain, then, that the three articles listed by Dennis and signed 'Tobit ger y Bont', were indeed written by Davies.

Unfortunately, it has not been possible to connect Davies to the names 'Quick yn Dwr'[29] and 'Gwcw y Don',[30] as there are no other articles written under these pseudonyms. Again, the connection with Davies is based solely on evidence from Dan Jones.[31] We know that Davies referred to Jones' brother, Revd John Jones, the leading Independent exponent of paedobaptism, as 'Quick',[32] thus 'Quick yn Dwr' may suggest the author was someone who held an immersionist view, which means that Davies could have been behind this pseudonym. It could be suggested that it would be strange for an author who had frequently employed one pseudonym (i.e., Tobit), and apparently done so without seeking to hide his identity, to adopt an entirely new name, and for so frequent a writer to employ such a name only on one occasion.[33] Again, this is not conclusive, but it raises the possibility of doubt that 'Quick yn Dwr' was a pseudonym employed by W. R. Davies. The same can be said of 'Gwcw y Don', whose article was a response to the pro-Mormon comments made by 'Cethlydd y Don' the previous November and is clearly a play on words ('Cethlydd' can mean cuckoo). But why would Davies employ a one-off pseudonym in this instance when he was clearly content to have his name, and oft-used pseudonym 'Tobit', associated with anti-Mormon literature? These questions throw some doubt on Davies' authorship of

[28] *Welsh Biography Online* http://yba.llgc.org.uk/en/s-OWEN-DAV-1795.html?query=brutus&field=name accessed 26 July 2017. W. R. Davies knew him personally, as evident in a letter to a friend, W. R. Davies to William Jones, 19 January 1846, Cwrtmawr Collection, National Library of Wales.
[29] *Y Bedyddiwr,* Cyf, Rhif. 51 (Mawrth, 1846), p. 111-112.
[30] *Seren Gomer*, Cyf. XXX, Rhif. 376 (Ionawr, 1847), p. 7.
[31] Captain Dan Jones, *'Amddiffyniad y Saint yn ngwyneb camgyhuddiadau y rhai a alwant eu hunain yn 'Gwcw y Don' yn Seren Gomer, Ionawr, 1847'*, (Merthyr Tydfil, printed by John Jones, Rhydybont, 1847).
[32] 'Tobit' refers to 'Quick', the leading exponent of the Independents on baptism in his second article on the Mormons and the local debates on baptism; *Y Bedyddiwr,* Cyf.111, Rhif. 28 (Ebrill, 1844), pp. 123-124. He also uses the term for Revd John Jones in a personal letter to a friend W. R. Davies to William Jones, 19 January 1846, Cwrtmawr Collection, National Library of Wales. There are numerous mentions of 'Quick' in the religious periodicals e.g. 'barn Quick enwog o Llangollen,' *Y Bedyddiwr,* Cyf. V, Rhif. 57 (Medi, 1846), p. 349: It appears that John Jones was sometimes known as 'Quick yn Tan', *Y Haul*, Cyf. V11, Rhif. 83 (Mai, 1842), p. 151.
[33] The author signs himself 'Quick yn Dwr, Merthyr', rather than 'ger y Bont' or 'Dowlais'.

two further articles. They may have been composed by him, but in the absence of conclusive proof, it can at least be suggested that they *may not* have been.

Dennis observes that 'Gwcw y Don' ended his letter with a 'curious' poem deriding the Latter-day Saints' claims that miracles were possible and occurring in contemporary Wales.[34] It is important to note that this poem was not the work of 'Gwcw y Don', but a person named 'G. Dinham', and it had previously appeared in *Amserau*. Dinham maintained that the acclaimed poet Clwydfardd[35] had composed it during an afternoon they had shared together.[36] The poem asserted that if miracles were possible, as in the days of the apostles, then the author would follow the Latter-day Saints. However, no miracle had been witnessed, and the Latter-day Saints would come to an end in the same manner as all false teachers, such as 'Southcote'.[37] Davies' *bête noir* was the apparent lack of empirical evidence to support any Mormon claim that miracles had occurred. Nevertheless, even if he was 'Gwcw y Don', and there is no conclusive proof that he was, then he had no connection with this poem apart from quoting it. This poem had been composed by a well-known Welsh poet of the time, who evidently shared the same opinions about Mormonism as those expressed by 'Gwcw y Don'. Clearly, then, some influential people in Wales held these opinions. Davies almost certainly would have concurred with the content of the poem, but the evidence suggests that there was wider opposition to the movement and that the Caersalem minister was not the only opponent of Mormon claims in the period or, indeed, that he was the most vocal and relentless persecutor of Latter-day Saints.

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[34] Dennis, 'Reverend W. R. Davies vs Captain Dan Jones', p. 61.
[35] 'Clwydfardd' (David Griffith, 1800-94) was the official bard of the Aberffraw Eisteddfod in 1849, becoming Archdruid of Wales in 1860. He had won a silver medal for his poetry as early as 1827, thus was a well known and respected figure by 1846. See: *NLW Welsh Biography* http://yba.llgc.org.uk/en/s-GRIF-DAV-1800.html?query=Clwydfardd&field=content accessed 27 October 2016.
[36] *Amserau*, (19 November, 1846).
[37] Joanna Southcott, (1750–1814), a prophet and writer, was born in Taleford, , Devon. She began to experience visions that enabled her to predict the future on earth from the forthcoming war with France to food shortages in the West Country. She gained a local following that spread to London in 1803-4. She had printed 1000 copies of the first part of her book, *The Strange Effects of Faith; with Remarkable Prophecies (Made in 1792)*, five more parts of which were published by the end of 1802. Between 1801 and 1814, Southcott published some sixty-five pamphlets, and gained a considerable following. See entry by Sylvia Bowerbank, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/printable/26050 accessed 4 December 2015.

There is no evidence that W. R. Davies used more than one pseudonym in his writings to the religious periodicals, nor is there any need to assume that he ever intended to conceal his identity when writing about the Latter-day Saints, especially as he used it when writing about a variety of other topics. While he never challenged Dan Jones' claim that he was 'Quick yn Dwr' and 'Gwcw y Don' in the press, arguments from silence are not entirely convincing. It could be, then, that of Dennis' seventeen articles, Davies in fact composed thirteen. It remains a significant number, though word count, content and the period over which they were composed, coupled with the fact that he wrote on other topics, all offer an alternative narrative to that offered by Dan Jones, and adopted by Ron Dennis, that he was 'relentless' in his opposition to Mormonism.

Mormon Conversions

A further claim which has been associated with Davies' name is that it was the early conversion of a member of his congregation to Mormonism that provoked 'the alarmed Davies into action',[38] and led to his first article as 'Tobit ger y Bont', in 1844. This was certainly the first letter in the religious press to describe a local incident in Wales involving Latter-day Saints. As has been established in Chapter 2, Mormon literature from the beginning of their mission to England established the notion of opposition to their cause firmly with ministers' fear of losing their membership and, possibly, also their stipend. It is worth reviewing this suggestion.

By the time of William Henshaw's arrival as leader of the Latter-day Saints in Merthyr in 1843, Davies had experienced a significant level of success at Dowlais, and had no reason to suppose that this would be threatened. The suggestion that conversion to Mormonism of one member of his congregation provoked his opposition,[39] does not, in itself, provide sufficient motive for Davies' entry into the debate. There are reasons to question this supposition.

[38] Ronald D. Dennis, 'The Welsh and the Gospel', p. 238, V. Ben Bloxham, James R. Moss and Larry C Porter (eds), *Truth Will Prevail: The Rise of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the British Isles, 1837-1987* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1987), p. 242.
[39] Dennis, 'The Reverend W. R. Davies vs Captain Dan Jones', p. 53.

First, we have evidence of Davies' initial reaction to Mormon activity in Merthyr in an unpublished letter to a friend, dated 6 May 1843. The personal nature of this type of correspondence would have allowed Davies an opportunity to confide any concerns about depletion of the membership at Caersalem, but evidence of any concern is absent. While he openly admits the loss of a member of his congregation, there appears to be no sense of 'alarm' as a result, nor indeed does he refer to the rate of conversion to the movement in the locality as if this were in any sense a cause for concern. He wrote:

> There is a new sect here, they call themselves the 'Latter-day Saints', they baptize as we do, and that by night – they profess that they can do everything the apostles did: heal the sick, cast out demons, raise the dead, speak in tongues, & & [sic] the minister was in the house with me trying to persuade me, he is having success and has baptized around 10 to 12 three months ago, and he has baptized one woman who was one of our members.[40]

At the same time, Davies informed his friend that he was baptizing on a weekly basis, and the only point he makes about the woman who had left Caersalem is that she was baptized for a second time when she joined the Latter-day Saints, a practice he did not condone.[41]

Secondly, there is evidence to suggest that it is questionable whether Davies ever became concerned that his ministry at Caersalem chapel, Dowlais, would be adversely affected by the success of Mormonism in the area. It seems that Davies had a very effective ministry that began 'full of zeal and enthusiasm'.[42] In June 1839 he organized the first Glamorganshire Baptist Association meetings in Dowlais. The attendance at the public services was estimated to be 7,000, and the 'clear increase of members' for the Baptist cause in Glamorganshire that year given is noted as 225.[43] Being 'a man of many parts and wide interests'[44] the Revd W. R. Davies, together with the Revd Thomas Davies of High Street English Baptist Church,[45] Merthyr, began working together as editors of a new Baptist magazine for young

[40] W. R. Davies to William Jones, 6 May 1843, Cwrtmawr Collection, National Library of Wales.
[41] W. R. Davies returned to this issue in June 1848: *Y Bedyddiwr* Cyf. V11, Rhif. 78 (Mehefin, 1848), p. 209-210.
[42] J. Ronald Williams and Gwyneth Williams, *History of Caersalem, Dowlais* (Llandysul: J.D. Lewis, Gomerian Press, 1967), p. 30
[43] *Cambrian* (29 June 1839).
[44] Williams and Williams, *History of Caersalem, Dowlais,* p. 31.
[45] Thomas Davies had been a founder member of Caersalem, Dowlais and was later to become principal of the Haverfordwest College.

people entitled *Y Cenhadydd Cymreig*. At the end of 1840, membership of Caersalem had increased by eighty-four and there had been sixty-one baptisms.[46] Such was the Church's growth that, in September 1841, Elim, Penydarren was formed as a branch and in September 1843, Hebron chapel opened in Caeharris. Davies had implemented a policy of establishing branches rather than increasing the size of Caersalem itself.[47] Although this meant losing members of his congregation to these new branches, there were still 364 members at Caersalem in 1848.[48] It would appear he had little reason to be concerned about any success experienced by the Latter-day Saints.

Furthermore, some years later, on the two Sundays before his death in 1849, he had baptized 150 people.[49] When he commenced his ministry at Caersalem the membership was 253, while this had risen to 380 by the time of his death.[50]
This would suggest that although he had challenged the Latter-day Saints for five years, their presence had not significantly affected his ministry or, indeed, the success or otherwise of the Baptist cause in Dowlais. Alongside this, it is clear that apprehension about finance was unlikely to have been a motivating factor in Davies' concern for lost members of his chapel.[51] As was the case for many Baptist ministers at that time, Davies supported his calling by alternative employment. In his case he kept a shop in Dowlais.[52] Thus, Davies' income was supplemented by his day-to-day employment, and never depended solely on the stipend provided by the congregation at Caersalem. Loss of chapel membership and, as a result, finance does not provide a convincing reason for him entering into the debate about Mormonism.

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[46] Williams and Williams, *History of Caersalem, Dowlais,* p. 31.
[47] Williams and Williams, *History of Caersalem, Dowlais*, p. 33.
[48] Williams and Williams, *History of Caersalem, Dowlais,* p. 34. On Whit-Monday, 19 June 1843, it was decided to hold a gathering of the seven Nonconformist Sunday Schools of Dowlais. The seven Sabbath Schools included 355 Sunday School teachers and 2,058 scholars; *Monmouthshire Merlin* (24 June 1843).
[49] Williams and Williams, *History of Caersalem, Dowlais,* p. 35.
[50] Williams and Williams, *History of Caersalem, Dowlais,* p. 35.
[51] Captain Dan Jones writing in *Prophwyd y Jubili,* constantly depicts W. R. Davies as a man motivated by a desire for money and the suggestion that ministers feared the loss of their congregations because of the subsequent effect on their stipends goes back to the earliest days of the Welsh Mormon mission and comments by the missionary James Burnham. See: *Millennial Star,* vol.1, no.9 (January, 1841), p. 238; *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Cyf.1, Rhif.3 (Medi 1846), p. 78; *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Rhif.14 (Awst1847), pp. 121-122; *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Rhif.21 (Mawrth 1848), p. 41; *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Rhif.24 (Mehefin 1848), pp. 85-86.
[52] T. M. Basset, *The Welsh Baptists,* (Llandysul: Gomer Press, 1977), p. 201.

Davies and Henshaw

Basing his conclusions on evidence from Captain Dan Jones,[53] Dennis believes that the enmity between W. R. Davies and the Latter-day Saints was also partly triggered by William Henshaw's refusal of Davies' invitation to become his assistant preacher at Caersalem.[54] This requires further scrutiny.

In the letter to his friend in 1843, Davies stated that 'the minister was in the house with me trying to persuade me'.[55] In this letter, there is no mention of Davies' invitation, or of any of Henshaw's gifts or abilities as would lead to the offer of a post as assistant preacher. In fact, the opposite is true. In this personal letter he refers somewhat dismissively to Henshaw as an 'ignorant little English collier.'[56] Secondly, and more significantly, William Henshaw did not speak Welsh. This is a fact Dennis employs to argue that Henshaw, whose name was on the apparently 'forged' letter sent to *Y Bedyddiwr* in 1846, could not have been its author.[57] Davies mentions Henshaw could not speak Welsh in his pamphlet, and refers to him as a Cornishman.[58] While not impossible, it is highly improbable that Davies would have considered a non-Welsh speaker for the post of 'assistant preacher' at Caersalem, given that the language of worship there was Welsh. Thirdly, in his pamphlet on the Latter-day Saints and miracles, Davies claims that Henshaw had 'recently been incarcerated in Cardiff gaol', a claim that could have been easily denied, but never was.[59] While again not impossible, it is extremely unlikely, particularly in the early 1840s, that Davies would have offered such a post to a man who had recently been in prison.[60] He would certainly only have offered the position of 'assistant preacher' to someone who would

[53] *Prophwyd y Jubili*, Cyf. 1. Rhif. 3(Medi 1846), p. 79.
[54] Dennis, 'The Reverend W. R. Davies vs Captain Dan Jones', p. 61.
[55] W. R. Davies to William Jones, 6 May 1843, Cwrtmawr Collection, National Library of Wales. This was presumably William Henshaw who had arrived in reported his first baptism on 19 February 1843, shortly after beginning his mission. Davies speaks of Henshaw in his home in his pamphlet: Parch W. R. Davies, *'Y Seintiau Diweddaf,* p. 17.
[56] W. R. Davies to William Jones, 6 May 1843, Cwrtmawr Collection, National Library of Wales.
[57] *Y Bedyddiwr,* Cyf. V, Rhif 51 (Mawrth, 1846), p. 91.
[58] Parch W. R. Davies, *Y Seintiau Diweddaf*, p.17, p. 8.
[59] W. R. Davies, *Y Seintiau Diweddaf,* p. iii.
[60] See *Y Bedyddiwr*, Cyf.111, Rhif. 31(Gorphenaf, 1844), pp. 220-21). In a letter, Baptist minister James Wilkins, Georgetown, Merthyr, noted that William Henshaw had been arrested and gaoled following a Chartist protest at the Merthyr Iron Company.

have shared his doctrinal views and however moderate Davies might have been it is unlikely he would have offered such a post to a Latter-day Saint.[61]

It may be possible, then, that W. R. Davies entered the arena with a much simpler motivation than that given to him by Dennis. He was a Baptist minister, who had been working tirelessly in the Baptist cause among the people of Dowlais. When he became aware of the doctrines, practices and claims of the Latter-day Saints he felt compelled to expose and challenge Mormonism and its claims and defend his own position. In his first article to *Y Bedyddiwr*, in March 1844, 'Tobit' (i.e., Davies) also makes a remark that indicates that his interest was not purely with the affect of Mormon conversion on members of the Baptist congregations:

> They do not consider the baptism of the Baptists worth anything … they say that only they have been sent by God. They baptize many from different denominations in this place, but mainly from the Wesleyans and one from the Baptists, a woman from the Llanidloes area, now known as 'Martha two baptisms.' I am pleased to announce to my fellow countrymen that they are nearly all English and Irish, and the English from the lower part of Dyfed, and many of them from the other side of Narberth.[62]

Therefore, while 'Tobit' expressed his disapproval of the Latter-day Saints in clear terms, he claimed Mormonism was experiencing its greatest success at this point with the Wesleyan Methodists and among people not originally from the Merthyr area. Again this brings into question the assertion that he was concerned about his own congregation. One of the primary offences appears to have been the Latter-day Saints' claim that they alone possessed the truth and that the baptismal rites conducted by the Baptists were valueless ('werth dim'). Thus, it is possible to suggest that one motive for writing the article was a response to the Latter-day Saints' attitude to local Nonconformists. 'Tobit' regarded their conviction that they alone had been sent by God as offensive, and it was this rather than their apparent success in gaining converts that alarmed him, especially as he noted that Mormonism was not really affecting local Welsh people.

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[61] Dennis, 'The Welsh and the Gospel', p. 241.
[62] *Y Bedyddiwr,* Cyf. 111, Rhif 27, (Mawrth 1844), p. 99. Tobit was probably correct in his assessment that the converts were predominantly English speakers, as Henshaw the leader of the Latter-day Saints in Merthyr at this point, spoke no Welsh.

It is impossible to consider the writings of W. R. Davies without concluding that he was a man incensed by the teachings and practices of the Latter-day Saints. However, it is possible to challenge the view that Davies was a man who had always relished controversy and wrote with the singular intention of discrediting the Latter-day Saints at any cost.

It is clear, for example, that W. R. Davies was not expected to be a controversial figure at Caersalem. Davies arrived in Dowlais in May 1838. It had taken three years for the church to find a new minister following the departure of its previous incumbent David Rees:

> Members were attracted to several men, all of whom had excellent preaching and pastoral gifts; but at the same time, they held strong doctrinal views. It was therefore decided to seek someone who would follow a middle course, and be essentially a minister of the gospel rather than a theologian. This would bring those who held different theological views together.[63]

The reference to a 'middle course' suggests that Davies was known as a man of moderate views. This is supported in an admittedly hagiographical biography of W. R. Davies, written by 'Mathetes'[64] and published in *Y Bedyddiwr*[65] following the Caersalem minister's death. 'Mathetes' claimed that after a number of years without a minister, Caersalem chapel called Davies to be a stabilising influence. The article alludes to divisions within the church and the hope of the congregation that he would bring peace to the situation. Davies appears not to have been a man prone to courting controversy, and thus his encounter with the Latter-day Saints must have emerged from personal convictions that led him to take up the challenge.

The Writings of W. R. Davies

As reported in the previous chapter, Davies' writing covered five main issues that had arisen from his contact with Mormonism, namely:

1. Mormon claims regarding healing and spiritual gifts;

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[63] Williams and Williams, *History of Caersalem, Dowlais*, p. 30.
[64] Revd John Jones (1821-1878), Baptist minister and writer.
[65] *Y Bedyddiwr,* Cyf. X, Rhif. 110 (Chwefror, 1851), p. 38.

2. Davies' comments on the topic of the Latter-day Saints and baptism;

3. Accusations of 'Forged' letters published in the Baptist press designed by Davies to bring the Mormons into disrepute;

4. The use of the pejorative term 'Satanists' for the Latter-day Saints;

5. 'Predictions about the Mormons' and 'A warning to the Welsh about the Mormons'.[66]

These matters will now be reviewed.

1. Mormon Claims Regarding Healing and Spiritual Gifts

The primary issue that engaged the attention of W. R. Davies was the claim of the Latter-day Saints 'that they can do everything the apostles did: heal the sick, cast out demons, raise the dead, speak in tongues…'[67] Not only did he mention this in a letter to a friend, but he repeated it in his first letter on the topic of the Latter-day Saints under the name 'Tobit ger y Bont' in March 1844.[68] Davies steadfastly refused to accept that the Latter-day Saints had healed anyone. Nor did he accept their claim to practise spiritual gifts. However, it may be suggested that a closer reading of Davies' writing on the subject reveals that there was an additional element to his criticism that may explain his vehemence on the subject, and that his claims were not as unreasonable as they were deemed to be by the Latter-day Saints.

Writing as 'Tobit ger y Bont', Davies related the story of a local incident involving the Latter-day Saints.[69] As noted previously, Tobit related the case of a woman member of the Latter-day Saints who was experiencing problems during childbirth. Although, hands were laid on her for recovery and William Henshaw had been sent for, her condition deteriorated and the child was born dead.[70] Ron Dennis explains Davies'

[66] Dennis, 'Reverend W. R. Davies vs Captain Dan Jones'.
[67] W. R. Davies to William Jones, 6 May 1843, Cwrtmawr Collection, National Library of Wales.
[68] *Y Bedyddiwr*, Cyf. 111, Rhif 27, (Mawrth 1844), p. 99
[69] *Y Bedyddiwr*, Cyf. 111, Rhif 27, (Mawrth 1844), p. 99.
[70] Dennis, 'The Reverend W. R. Davies vs Captain Dan Jones', p. 54.

condemnation of the incident by suggesting that this was motivated by his disbelief in the efficacy of prayer and the laying on of hands in the hope of miraculous cure.

However, Davies' reaction was mainly due to other factors. He claimed the woman's suffering had been unnecessarily prolonged. When the prayers of a local Latter-day Saint, John Jones (the 'middle-man') proved ineffective, they sent for Henshaw who was in Rhymney at the time. Upon his arrival, he prayed for the woman in question and it was thought that she had recovered. However, the following day her condition deteriorated. Henshaw returned to continue to pray for her. It was the afternoon before it was conceded that a doctor was needed. It appears that 'Tobit' was appalled at the indecency of the whole scenario. No women had been allowed in the room. He wrote:

> After the doctor had come in and observed the woman's condition, he found that she had given birth … and the child dead in the bed, and the room, as noted, full of men and servants!!! It would be too repugnant and insensitive to describe in detail all the circumstances for the public. Let this serve to show the nation that the 'Latter-day Saints' are like animals.[71]

Tobit's comparison of the Latter-day Saints' behaviour to that of animals may sound harsh to modern ears, but it indicates his level of disgust at what he considered gross impropriety. He would not have been alone in this reaction in the early 1840s.

Thus, rather than an expression of W. R. Davies' inability to accept the power of prayer and a distrust and scepticism about the Mormon leaders, the article constitutes an exposé of the practices of local Latter-day Saints that Davies found scandalous. It is not sustainable to claim that he wrote this first article on the Mormons simply to persecute them because they had made some conversions in the area. The article challenged their claim to perform miracles and to practise the spiritual gifts in the same way as the early church - the woman in question had not been healed and her child was dead. Women who could have helped with the birth had been banished from the room. 'Tobit' claimed that the whole scenario was too shocking to relate in detail. This example cited by 'Tobit' would inevitably have

[71] *Y Bedyddiwr,* Cyf. 111, Rhif 27, (Mawrth 1844), p. 100.

raised concern in light of the sensibilities of the age, but it was based on what he considered to be the lack of evidence that any miracle had occurred.

That Mormon claims of miracles and the practice of spiritual gifts were central to Davies' opposition of the movement is apparent in his only anti-Mormon pamphlet. It is clear that it was these specific teachings that exercised Davies, more than any alarm caused by conversions from his membership.[72] He believed that Mormon claims were not just exaggerated, but false due to the lack of any real evidence that they had occurred. Captain Dan Jones in his pamphlet *Atebydd y Gwrthddadleuon*,[73] alluded to this article written by 'Tobit' in March 1844. He dismissed the veracity of such claims by stating: 'We don't need to ask about the stories of those sick women, as everyone can see that it is not possible for those to be as described.' Thus, Jones implied that writers such as 'Tobit' had exaggerated or invented such accounts, motivated by the desire to besmirch the reputation of the Latter-day Saints.
The charge of repeating untrue stories about the Latter-day Saints is one that is levelled at Davies on more than one occasion. It has coloured the view of the man. But is it true?

Contrary to Dan Jones' claim, it is possible that 'Tobit' was referring to actual events. Newspaper accounts reveal that some years earlier an apparently failed attempt at miraculous healing had occurred in England, but with more serious consequences. While the original story was reported in the local newspaper the *Preston Chronicle* on 6 October 1838, it also appeared in the *Morning Post* [74] and a number of other regional newspapers.[75] This is not to suggest that 'Tobit' knew this story, but rather that claims about the miraculous, even if rare, were being widely reported. In this particular case,[76] Willard Richards, an elder in the 'Mormon sect'[77] and Ann Dawson

[72] Davies, *'Y Seintiau Diweddaf'.*
[73] *'Atebydd y Gwrthddadleuon'*, (John Jones, Rhydybont, 1846).
[74] *Morning Post* (11 October 1838); see also the *London Standard* (11 October 1838).
[75] E.g. *Berkshire Chronicle* (13 October 1838); *Ipswich Journal* (13 October 1838); *Leicester Chronicle* (13 October 1838); *Stamford Mercury* (19 October 1838). The geographical diversity of these newspapers indicates that such stories about the Latter-day Saints were not only of general interest, but often travelled far and wide.
[76] *Preston Chronicle* (6 October 1838).
[77] Other newspaper reports to this person as 'Waller Richards'. However, Willard Richards is correct. Willard Richards (1804–54) became a Latter-day Saint in 1835 when he received a copy of the *Book of*

'one of his flock' were charged with causing the death of Alice Hodgson. They appeared before magistrates at Preston Town Hall on 3 October 1838. Hodgson was Dawson's married daughter and had become ill shortly after the birth of her child. Although initially receiving treatment from a local surgeon, his services were dispensed with, and 'the prisoners and others became her medical advisors.' Her mother gave her 'ginger tea and cayenne pepper' but 'one witness stated that the prisoner Richards and others rubbed her body with rum.' This treatment was described by the surgeon as 'highly improper, and calculated to aggravate the malady of the patient.' After a few days Alice Hodgson died. Richards claimed he had had nothing to do with the deceased 'except as to praying with her, and spiritually advising her.' One Mr Bannister, speaking for the prosecution was recorded as stating that:

> the Mormonites were carrying on a most dreadful system with regard to sick people. Their object was to dispense with the attendance of medical men altogether, and they appointed a number of midwives who were under their especial tutorage.

He continued by expressing his belief that the whole ethos behind Mormonism was the creation of a moneymaking scheme. The magistrates decided that there was insufficient evidence to warrant a trial and the prisoners were released, but they expressed the hope that the 'ignorant and fanatical dupes of this new system of priestcraft would see their error, and abandon so mischievous and wicked a profession.'[78]

While there are clearly marked differences in this story to that described by 'Tobit', what is significant is that a man who served as a Mormon leader attended a woman who had become ill after childbirth, and that from the very outset of the British Mormon mission, there were cases where a rejection of qualified medical aid played a part in the case.[79] Such stories were in the public domain many years before 'Tobit'

Mormon near Boston, Massachusetts. From 1837 to 1841, Willard served a mission in England. On 14 April 1840, while still in England, Richards was ordained an apostle and member of the Quorum of the Twelve. Soon after he arrived in Nauvoo, Illinois, in 1841, he became private secretary to Joseph Smith and remained with the Prophet almost constantly, even in Carthage Jail on 27 June 1844.

[78] *Preston Chronicle* (6 October 1838).

[79] This was an issue that was to become increasingly associated with the Latter-day Saints as time passed, resulting in three high profile court cases in Wales in 1849, where the death of individuals was linked to lack of medical intervention. See *Cambrian* (25 May 1849); *Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian, Glamorgan, Monmouth, and Brecon Gazette* (2 June 1849); *Welshman* (12 October 1849).

wrote to *Y Bedyddiwr*, and W. R. Davies was not the first to express alarm at Mormon practices. It seems likely, then, that there was nothing in the account by 'Tobit' that was completely implausible, and the fact that a similar incident had occurred elsewhere adds to the story's credibility.

It is noteworthy that two years passed before W. R. Davies again wrote to *Y Bedyddiwr* regarding Mormon claims that a miracle had occurred,[80] that is, if it is true that Davies was 'Quick yn Dwr'. This two-year interval implies that Davies' attacks, at least in print, were not 'relentless'. W. R. Davies briefly recounted the story of William Hughes' leg in a private letter, mentioning that it had appeared in *Y Bedyddiwr,* although he does not say that it was he who had sent the story to the periodical.[81] If we assume it was Davies, then the break in writing may have been because he felt he had drawn sufficient attention to the conduct of the Latter-day Saints, or he may have been concentrating on producing his only published pamphlet,[82] which expressed clearly his concerns about Mormon claims regarding miracles and the practice of spiritual gifts.

'Quick yn Dwr' made his motive for writing to *Y Bedyddiwr* clear:

> I don't send these things to you for my own amusement, or to make it a matter of fun for others; but with the intention that the whole world understands such hellish arrogance, and the Satanic deception which lies in the heart of evil men.[83]

The words are strong, the opinion of the writer would inevitably be deemed offensive by Latter-day Saints, but it is questionable whether this is evidence that the writer sought to persecute the followers of Mormonism. That it is opposition is evident, but the writer never calls for harm to be done to the Mormons, or suggests any form of action to be taken to oppress or make their lives unbearable. Instead the article challenges their claims that miracles had taken place and takes the form of an exposé and warning, rather than any demand for persecution.

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[80] *Y Bedyddiwr,* Cyf.V, Rhif. 51 (Mawrth, 1846), p. 111-112.
[81] W. R. Davies [Recipient's name missing], 18 March 1847, 'Nefydd' Autograph Letters, MS 7163D, National Library of Wales.
[82] Davies, *Y Seintiau Diweddaf*.
[83] *Y Bedyddiwr,* Cyf. V, Rhif. 51 (Mawrth, 1846), p. 112.

Dennis claims that the account of the healing of William Hughes' leg is 'extremely sarcastic',[84] indicated by its title 'A Miracle! A Miracle! At Last!' It claimed:

> The 'Satanists' claimed to have done many miracles, and deceived many ignorant, irreligious and good-for-nothing crowds - they succeeded in enticing many of the dregs of Merthyr to follow them.[85]

'Quick yn Dwr' concluded that not only was Hughes' leg not healed, as the 'Satanists' had claimed but he was still unable to work and was claiming parish relief, a fact verifiable by contacting Roger Williams, the Relieving Officer for the parish of Merthyr. In the first edition of *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Jones took the accusations of 'Quick yn Dwr' and dismissed each one as a lie. The accusation that Hughes had claimed parish relief because of his poverty and inability to work was explained by the fact that his wife had applied for this, unbeknown to him,[86] an explanation which may have been forthcoming due to the publication in *Y Bedyddiwr* in June 1846[87] of a letter written by Roger Williams in which he confirmed that he had placed into the hands of Mrs Hannah Hughes, five shillings a week for six weeks, until she was able to obtain work. The payment had begun two weeks after Hughes' accident, which Williams further confirmed was 'a slight fracture of the small bone in the leg', a diagnosis that could be corroborated by the doctor involved. Williams appears to have written to *Y Bedyddiwr* in response to an article that had appeared the previous month. His reply was addressed 'To Mr. E Lewis, Cwm Gelli Dywyll'.[88] Lewis had written to *Y Bedyddiwr,*[89] challenging 'Quick yn Dwr' to prove his claims, which were being denied by the Latter-day Saints of Blackwood. They had heard that Hughes had not received a penny from Merthyr Parish relief.

Dennis maintains that Dan Jones immediately prepared a response to the claims made by 'Quick yn Dwr', and sent it to the editor of *Y Bedyddiwr* in Cardiff.[90]

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[84] Ronald D. Dennis, *Indefatigable Veteran: History and Biography of a Welsh Mormon Elder*, (Provo Utah: Rhydybont Press, 1994), p. 30.
[85] *Y Bedyddiwr,* Cyf. V Rhif. 51 (Mawrth, 1846), p. 111.Translation: Dennis, *Indefatigable Veteran*, p.288.
[86] *Prophwyd y Jubili*, Cyf.1, Rhif 1 (Gorffennaf, 1846), pp. 24-25.
[87] *Y Bedyddiwr,* Cyf. V, Rhif. 54 (Mehefin, 1846), p. 234.
[88] Cwm Gelli Dwyll is an area of Blackwood, Monmouthshire. Evidence for Latter-day Saint activity in this area can be found in *Prophwyd y Jubili*, Rhif.29 (Tachwedd, 1848), p. 188.
[89] *Y Bedyddiwr*, Cyf. V, Rhif. 53 (Mai, 1846), p. 194.
[90] Dennis, *Indefatigable Veteran*, p. 30.

He provided the sworn testimony of William Hughes and signed affidavits of non-Mormon eyewitnesses to the healing, which they refused to print.[91] Jones claimed that the editor of *Y Bedyddiwr* was 'a cruel persecutor and a constant slanderer' who refused time and again to print any defence of the Latter-day Saints.[92] 'Quick yn Dwr' did more than challenge the veracity of claims about healing – he also challenged Dan Jones' authority.[93] It may have been this attack on Jones that drew Mormon anger at this article, rather than simply the claim that William Hughes had not made a full recovery.

The case of William Hughes is important, not simply because Latter-day Saints cited it as the definitive example of a healing miracle, but because, Dennis contends, Jones' frustration at this and other editors' refusals to print anything in defence of Mormonism, led him to initiate his own periodical[94] in order that the Latter-day Saints might 'defend themselves against the vicious attacks being leveled at them by the Reverend Davies and others.'[95] Yet, the assertion that Jones was compelled to initiate the Mormon periodical, *Prophwyd y Jubili,* because no other means of defence was open to him, can be challenged for a number of reasons.

First, by the time the first edition of *Prophwyd y Jubili* appeared in July 1846, Jones had published at least four pamphlets, one notably an apologetic reply to the anti-Mormon pamphlet of David Williams, Abercanaid.[96] At the start of his mission in north Wales, Jones had published his first Mormon pamphlet with the printer William Bayley of Wrexham.[97] At various times therefore he considered pamphleteering an adequate and viable means to disseminate the Mormon message or provide a means of defence. He published eighteen additional pamphlets, and virtually all his work was printed on his brother's press at Rhydybont.

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[91] Dennis, 'The Welsh and the Gospel', p.251; see also *Prophwyd y Jubili*, Cyf.1, Rhif.1 (Gorphenaf, 1846), pp. 24-28.
[92] *Prophwyd y Jubili*, Cyf.1, Rhif. 6 (Rhagfyr, 1846), p. 149-150.
[93] *Y Bedyddiwr,* Cyf. V, Rhif. 51 (Mawrth 1846), p. 111.
[94] Dennis, 'The Welsh and the Gospel', p. 251.
[95] Dennis, *Indefatigable Veteran*, p. 37.
[96] Captain Dan Jones, *'Y glorian, yn y hon gwelir David yn pwyso Williams, Williams yn pwyso David: neu David Williams, o Abercanaid yn gwrthddweyd ei hun, wedi ei ddal yn ei dwyll, a'i brofi yn ddeistaidd',* (Rhydybont, J. Jones, 1846).
[97] Captain Dan Jones, *Y Farw wedi ei chyfodi yn fyw: neu'r hen grefydd newydd. Traethawd yn dangos anghyfnewidioldeb teyrnas Dduw*, (William Bayley, Wrexham, 1845).

Secondly, there is convincing evidence that it had always been the intention to publish Latter-day Saint literature on a Mormon press, and that this intention existed irrespective of the response of the religious periodicals in Wales. According to Dan Jones' own words in a letter to Thomas Bullock following his call to return to Wales, Joseph Smith had told him 'I have a check in the house for $1,200, as soon as I can get it cashed you shall have $1100 of it, and the start for Wales, not with your fingers in your mouth but prepared to buy a press, and do business aright.'[98] Smith's death meant that Jones never received the money, although Brigham Young supported his mission to Wales with the provision of $500.[99] Even before Dan Jones left America for Wales this plan was in place. It was probably envisaged that this press would publish material that was apologetic in nature, as it would have been naive to expect that the denominational periodicals of Wales would provide the Latter-day Saints with an outlet to defend or propagate their beliefs. The *Millennial Star* had been published in England since 1840, and a similar Welsh periodical might likewise have been anticipated, at least once there was a mission to the Welsh-speakers. Even more significantly, in a letter dated 7 February 1846, a month prior to the publication of the letter by 'Quick yn Dwr' in *Y Bedyddiwr*, Dan Jones wrote to the *Millennial Star*:

> I intend publishing a Welsh magazine, monthly, price threepence [sic], to proclaim the everlasting truths of Mormonism through Wales, as I hinted at Manchester, and I have greater encouragements continually;[100]

It can be concluded that while Dan Jones may not have envisaged that it would have devoted so many of its pages to W. R. Davies and the opposition to Mormonism, the intention to produce a specifically Mormon monthly periodical is clear. During the Conference of March 1846, Jones was appointed president of the Merthyr Tydfil conference, 'in addition to his former presidency over Wales.'[101] Even though this was the month *Y Bedyddiwr* had published the 'forged letters' and the account by 'Quick yn Dwr', there is no report recorded at this Conference of any aggressive opposition to Mormonism, or of Jones' potential role in combating it. Furthermore, nowhere in any of his reports to the *Millennial Star* did Jones name

[98] Jones to T. Bullock, 20 January 1855, LDS Church Archives.
[99] Ronald D. Dennis*, Prophet of the Jubilee,* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Brigham Young University, 1997. Religious Studies Center: Specialized Monograph Series, Vol.10), p. xxv.
[100] *Millennial Star*, (vol.7, no.4, 15 February, 1846), p. 63.
[101] *Millennial Star*, (vol.7, no.7, 1 April, 1846), pp. 104-105.

W. R. Davies in relation to the 'persecution' he was experiencing at Merthyr Tydfil. He used the anonymous generic terms 'reverends' 'priests' 'preachers'.[102] While he claimed the 'persecution' accelerated in the summer and autumn of 1847,[103] he never directly identified the culprits, neither did he mention the role of the Nonconformist periodicals in this connection in his reports published in the *Millennial Star*.

Regarding W. R. Davies' only published pamphlet,[104] Dennis has noted that in dealing with it, Jones devoted over half the twenty-eight pages of the September issue of his periodical 'to counter Davies' offensive',[105] and 'finished this task with an additional dozen pages, spread over the October, November and December issues'.[106] Thus Jones was not without a means of defence. He may have felt aggrieved that the denominational periodicals appeared to be unwilling to publish items in defence of the Latter-day Saints, but he undoubtedly created a vehicle for Latter-day Saint opinions in the form of *Prophwyd y Jubili,* which was published from July 1846 to December 1849*.* Through this periodical Jones consistently reinforced the image of W. R. Davies as 'persecutor' and central figure in the opposition to the Mormons in Wales. Only once did Davies directly respond to defend himself against Jones' sometimes very offensive charges.[107]

Davies' personal correspondence provides an insight into his attitude towards Dan Jones' review of his pamphlet. He maintained that despite Jones' denunciations it had 'done good' and was 'a thorn in the side of the prophet …'[108] Clearly, Davies remained intransigent. His fundamental contention was that, if, as the Latter-day Saints claimed, miracles were occurring in Wales, then they could not assert this without clear evidence of their existence. In the same letter he wrote:

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[102] *Millennial Star*, (vol.9, no.19, 1 October, 1847), pp. 299-301.
[103] *Millennial Star*, (vol.9, no.19, 1 October, 1847), pp. 299-301; *Millennial Star*, (vol.9, no.20, 15 October, 1847), pp. 318-319.
[104] Davies, '*Y Diweddaf*.'
[105] *Prophwyd y Jubili*, (Medi 1846), pp. 70-78.
[106] Dennis, 'The Reverend W. R. Davies vs Captain Dan Jones', p. 61.
[107] *Seren Gomer*, Cyf. XXX1 [XXX], Rhif. 387 (Rhagfyr, 1847), pp. 375-376. Davies occasionally dismissed various Mormon claims about him, for example, that more than one member from Caersalem had been converted to Mormonism E.g. *Y Drysorfa Gynnulleidfaol,* (Mehefin, 1848), p. 169.
[108] W. R. Davies [Recipients name missing], 18 March 1847, 'Nefydd' Autograph Letters, MS 7163D, National Library of Wales.

> the prophet [Captain Dan Jones] becomes terribly angry because I ask, who saw one miracle on the streets of Merthyr or Dowlais but wild men who lose control of themselves and tricksters who play tricks; I challenge him once again, show one … But despite the presumption of the Satanists being a heresy that hundreds of thousands have seen their miracles, and when they are asked if we can see one, they answer in the words of our Lord to the Jews, in thinking that this is reasonable and enough of an answer to the inquirer. 'A wicked and adulterous generation ask for a sign' Matt 12:39. [109]

The suggestion here is that Dan Jones was angry that Mormon claims were being challenged and dismissed by Davies' pamphlet. While we only have Davies' word for this, these private comments provide an insight into his perspective and motivation where he suggests that it was never his intention to persecute the Latter-day Saints:

> Remember … that I do not have any anger for those evil people but I wish in my heart before God for my nation that no one would be deceived again, and if he is willing let him [Dan Jones] repent his arrogant life before he dies.[110]

It appears that Davies commented on the Latter-day Saints, using evidence from local events to support his arguments and express his opinions. He believed there was no evidence that miraculous healings had taken place. In fact the evidence pointed to the contrary. Furthermore, he cited a case where Latter-day Saints had engaged in thoroughly improper conduct. Although *Prophwyd y Jubili* often defended the Latter-day Saints against the reproaches of W. R. Davies, Jones' claim that it was founded as the only resort for Mormon defence can be questioned. Despite Davies' obvious desire to challenge and denounce the claims and activities of the Latter-day Saints, he was not the instigator of a campaign of harsh treatment or persecution. He believed their claims were disingenuous and he sought to expose what he believed was deception.

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[109] W. R. Davies [Recipients name missing], 18 March 1847, 'Nefydd' Autograph Letters, MS 7163D, National Library of Wales.

[110] W. R. Davies [Recipients name missing], 18 March 1847, 'Nefydd' Autograph Letters, MS 7163D, National Library of Wales. It is perhaps surprising to note that even by September 1846, by his own admission, Captain Dan Jones had never met W. R. Davies, despite living within close proximity of him: *Prophwyd y Jubili*, Cyf. 1, Rhif. 3 Medi, 1846), pp. 80-81.

2. Davies and Baptism

Included among the many claims made about W. R. Davies as an opponent of the Latter-day Saints, there are a number about his character and the extremes to which he was prepared to go in order to discredit Mormonism. In referring to his first article written under the pseudonym of 'Tobit ger y Bont', Dennis states that its content is 'indicative of his approach to dealing with the Mormons.'[111]
Davies reiterated remarks he made a year earlier in a letter to a friend. He notes that the Mormons claim to perform 'miracles, prophesy, speak in strange tongues' and do 'everything the apostles did'. Far more controversially, 'Tobit' noted 'They baptize at night, and those being baptized must remove their clothes and go into the water stark naked!'[112]

It is Davies' final sentence that is the most shocking. Dennis maintains that this is an example of the 'heavily biased'[113] nature of Davies' writings and asserts that 'Davies knew perfectly well that Latter-day Saints were not baptized in the nude.' He believes Davies said this in order 'to prejudice the reader's mind' against the Mormons.[114]
Was Davies so consumed with a desire to defame Mormonism that he was prepared to make untrue statements that would knowingly prejudice others about the movement? Possibly. The question is, was this statement about Mormon practice entirely false?

While he is guilty of generalization – as if this were the case in every Mormon baptism – his claims appear to have some basis in fact. Prior to the publication of the article in March 1844, various accounts had appeared in the press of an incident that had taken place the previous November. Newspapers across the whole of Britain[115] reported on

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111 Dennis, 'The Reverend W. R. Davies vs Captain Dan Jones', p. 53.
112 *Y Bedyddiwr,* Cyf. 111, Rhif 27, (Mawrth 1844), p. 99
113 Dennis, *Indefatigable Veteran*, p. 5.
114 Dennis, *Indefatigable Veteran*, p. 5.
115 E.g. *London Standard* (2 December 1843); *The Times* (4 December 1843); *The Morning Post* (4 December 1843); *Yorkshire Gazette* (2 December 1843); *Derby Mercury* (6 December 1843); *Hereford Journal* (6 December 1843); *Worcester Journal* (7 December 1843); *Chester Chronicle* (8 December 1843); *Newcastle Courant* (8 December 1843); *Coventry Standard* (8 December 1843); *Welshman* (8 December 1843); *Cambrian* (9 December 1843); *Glamorgan, Monmouth and Brecon Gazette and Merthyr Guardian* (9 December 1843); *Reading Mercury* (9 December 1843); *Manchester Times* (9 December 1843); *Bristol Times and Mirror* (9 December 1843); *Worcester Herald* (9 December 1843); *North Wales Chronicle* (12 December 1843), etc.

a Mormon baptism that occurred near Crewe. The story spread as far afield as Dublin,[116] and was widely reported in the Welsh press.[117] Given its wide dissemination, it is possible that even if Davies had not read the account himself, those who had read the report might have informed him of the details of this notorious incident.[118]

The reports concerned a woman named Sarah Cartwright who had been cajoled by her Latter-day Saint husband into undertaking full immersion baptism. On the evening of 23 November 1843, at 8 pm, she finally submitted to her husband's request and went to the river at Monks Coppenhall, near Crewe, in 'a state of perfect nudity'.[119] The suggestion that she had completely disrobed was repeated wherever the story was printed. The *North Wales Chronicle,* claimed she was 'undressed to the skin'[120] and the *Cambrian* noted that 'Her clothes were found upon the bank where she had put them prior to her calamitous immersion.' [121] Also present on that fateful night was a Mormon preacher named Jonathan Pugmire (or Pogmore).[122] Unfortunately, during the rite, Sarah slipped from the grasp of Pugmire who held 'her naked arm'[123] and was swept away to her death, her body not being recovered until the following day. She was seven months pregnant at the time, although little was made of this fact in the press. The resultant court case in January 1844 was also reported throughout the British press.[124] Those responsible for the baptism were charged with manslaughter and the case was brought to trial at the Chester Assizes. The case collapsed due to the non-appearance of witnesses, and Pugmire and

[116] *Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* (4 December 1843).
[117] *North Wales Chronicle* (12 December, 1843); *Cambrian* (9 December 1843); *Glamorgan, Monmouth and Brecon Gazette and Merthyr Guardian* (9 December 1843): *Welshman* (8 December 1843); *Silurian* (9 December 1843).
[118] In a letter to *Y Bedyddiwr* in June 1846, Davies refers the reader to an article that had been published in the *Silurian,* which makes it at least possible, that he was a reader of this newspaper; *Silurian* (9 May 1846).
[119] *Bristol Mercury* (9 December 1843); *Sheffield & Rotherham Independent* (9 December, 1843).
[120] *North Wales Chronicle* (12 December, 1843).
[121] *Cambrian (*9 December 1843).
[122] The *Millennial Star,* vol.4, no. 9 (January, 1844), pp.142-143, 1844, recorded his name as Pugmire. As he was a Latter-day Saint preacher this is probably the correct version of his name. Some accounts in the press record his name as Pogmore, especially those reporting the inquest in January 1844.
[123] *Cambrian* (9 December 1843).
[124] E.g. *London Standard* (4 January 1844); *The Times* (4 January 1844); *Morning Post* (4 January 1844); *Chester Chronicle* (5 January 1844); *The Examiner* (6 January 1844); *Wiltshire Independent* (11 January 1844); *Cheltenham Chronicle (*11 January 1844); *Durham County Advertiser (*12 January 1844); *Hereford Journal* (10 January 1844); Worcester *Journal* (11 January 1844); *Westmoreland Gazette* (13 January 1844); *The Cambrian* (13 January 1844) et al.

Cartwright were acquitted. It is at least possible that such a notorious incident, so widely reported, would have become common knowledge.

The unfortunate death of Sarah Cartwright followed shortly after the drowning of Robert Turner in the river Rother at Handsworth Woodhouse, near Sheffield, on 20 November 1843.[125] He was a Mormon preacher who drowned after slipping while baptizing converts. In Turner's case, the inquest was held on 11 December 1843. The court heard that the gathering had taken place 'very early' in the morning, and after being addressed by a Mormon preacher from Sheffield 'several of the disciples at once proceeded to strip off all their clothes'.[126] The jury returned the verdict of accidental death, 'the Coroner joining them in condemning the rash and inconsiderate conduct of the parties.'[127] Once more this incident was widely reported across Britain and well publicised by the Welsh press, and confirmed a view that even if not authorized practice, Cartwright's case was not an isolated incident.[128] While various newspaper reports cannot be used to corroborate the unlikely suggestion that naked, nocturnal baptism was a requirement among the Mormons, their existence suggests that such ideas could have been commonly believed and, it seems, such a practice occurred on at least two occasions that were widely reported at the time. Davies clearly opposed Mormonism, but his claims of indecency appear to have been in the public domain.

Moreover, it is not possible to charge W. R. Davies with the responsibility for alerting readers of the Welsh Nonconformist press to the possibility of nocturnal, naked baptism. *Seren Gomer*[129] had recorded the story of Sarah Cartwright's fatal baptism

[125] *Hereford Journal* (20 December 1843), states the incident occurred on 19 November, but other reports agree that he preached on the evening of the 19 November, but arranged the baptism for the following morning e.g. *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertisers* (23 December 1843); *Sheffield & Rotherham Independent* (16 December 1843).
[126] *Sheffield & Rotherham Independent* (16 December 1843).
[127] *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser* (23 December 1843).
[128] E.g. *Welshman* (8 December 1843); *Glamorgan, Monmouthshire and Brecon Gazette and Merthyr Guardian* (9 & 30 December 1843); *North Wales Chronicle* (12 December 1843); *The Times* (16 December 1843); *London Standard* (16 December 1843); *Yorkshire Gazette* (16 December 1843); *Belfast Newsletter* (8 December 1843); *Hereford Journal* (20 December 1843); *Bath Chronicle and Weekly Advertiser* (21 December 1843); *Worcester Journal* (21 December 1843*); Lincolnshire Chronicle* (22 December 1843); *Westmorland Gazette* (22 December 1843); *Royal Cornwall Gazette* (22 December 1843); *Gloucester Chronicle* (23 December 1843).
[129] *Seren Gomer,* Cyf.XXV11, Rhif.340 (Ionawr, 1844), p. 31.

under the heading 'Strange Superstition' in January 1844, two months before *Y Bedyddiwr* published the letter signed by 'Tobit ger y Bont'.[130] The account in *Seren Gomer* contained all the salient points of the story, including the comment that 'all her under-clothes were taken from her.' *Y Dysgedydd Crefyddol,*[131] the religious periodical serving the Welsh Independents, also included the story of Sarah Cartwright in their January issue, claiming she removed all her clothes 'except her woollen petticoat.' While this is a slightly more cautious statement, a woman appearing in public, dressed in only a petticoat and accompanied by two men would still have been considered improper in 1843. *Y Dysgedydd Crefyddol* also related the story of the death of Robert Turner and noted that it had been deemed necessary for clothes to be removed during the baptism that he had attempted to perform. It asked its readers to ponder whether there was any recorded incident in the Bible of Christ initiating an ordinance that involved danger to life. Shortly after the first letter to *Y Bedyddiwr* by 'Tobit ger y Bont' in March 1844, *Y Dysgedydd Crefyddol*[132] published a satirical article on naked and nocturnal baptism.[133] The notoriety of the Cartwright story, reveals that W. R. Davies was not simply planning to 'prejudice the reader's mind against such "fanatical" people as the Mormons'[134] by claiming the Mormons baptized naked and at night. Many others had written about such things long before him. 'Tobit' could even have first learned of the possibility of naked, nocturnal Mormon baptism from the Nonconformist periodicals, even if he had not already read it in the newspapers of the time.

It is surprising, in his dismissal of Davies' claim, that Ron Dennis makes no mention of the calamitous events of Sarah Cartwright's baptism, given that they were regarded as being serious enough to warrant special attention in the *Millennial Star*.[135]
An article appeared in it discussing the trial of Pugmire and Cartwright, comprising an 'admonition from the presidency' for 'the good of the public'.[136] It addressed the issues surrounding the deaths of Sarah Cartwright and Robert Turner, the 'first

[130] The story also appeared in *Y Drysorfa,* Rhif. 157 (Ionawr, 1844), p. 146; *Y Drysorfa,* Rhif. 158 (Chwefror, 1844), p. 61; *Yr Athraw,* (Ionawr, 1844), p. 32; and the non-denominational periodical *Y Cwmwl,* Cyf.11, Rhif. 13 (Ionawr, 1844), p. 15, which referred to her 'naked arm' – 'braich noeth.'
[131] *Y Dysgedydd Crefyddol*, (Ionawr, 1844), p. 32.
[132] *Y Dysgedydd Crefyddol*, (Ebrill 1844), pp. 116-11.7
[133] *Y Dysgedydd Crefyddol,* (Ebrill, 1844), pp. 116-117.
[134] Dennis, *Indefatigable Veteran,* p. 7.
[135] *Millennial Star*, (vol.4, no.9 January, 1844), p. 142.
[136] *Millennial Star*, (vol.4, no.9 January, 1844), pp.142.

occurrences of the kind'.[137] The editorial warned that candidates should be 'properly clothed on such occasions, for the sake of decency… neglecting nothing with regard to the fitness of time, place or appearance'.[138] The fact that the *Millennial Star* did not take this opportunity to deny that nudity was involved raises the likelihood that lack of clothing had been an issue in the Cartwright case. The appeal for decency further suggests this. Importantly, this admonition indicates that the *Millennial Star* realised the widespread influence this story had on the public perception of the Latter-day Saints.

By February 1844, this story had reached America, being published in a periodical associated with the Calvinistic Methodists.[139] It was also recorded in the *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* for the period covering January 1844.[140] The section refers to the release of Pugmire and Cartwright and gives an account of the incident that led to their trial. It still confirms the lack of clothing, reporting that 'Thomas Cartwright [Sarah's husband] leaped into the creek and seized hold of his wife's petticoat; but the water carried her off, and left the garment in his hand.'[141] The reference to the petticoat suggests that Sarah Cartwright was not completely naked, at least when she went into the water. In this recounting of the fateful baptism of Sarah Cartwright, the fact that the case went to court was attributed to the enemies of Mormonism, in this case it was stated 'It was very evident that the Church of England ministers were at the bottom of the machinations …' The account claims that following the disastrous events of the baptism, when Pugmire arrived home 'a Church of England minister had him arrested and dragged from his family the same evening …'[142] Thus in America the story was retold with an entirely different emphasis to that of the *Millennial Star*, laying the blame for the disrepute the case engendered at the door of 'ministers' who opposed Mormonism, rather than consternation about the tragedy that occurred.

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[137] *Millennial Star*, (vol.4, no.9 January, 1844), pp.142.
[138] *Millennial Star*, (vol.4, no.9 January, 1844), pp.142.
[139] *Y Cyfaill o'r Hen Wlad yn America*, Cyf., V11, Rhif. 2 (Chwefror, 1844), p. 31.
[140] This work is collection of the events in the life of Joseph Smith and the developing LDS church written by scribes. Willard Richards was Smith's scribe for the period 1841-1854. https://byustudies.byu.edu/hc/hcpgs/hc.aspx accessed 29 January 2015.
[141] Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, *of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, *(January 1844),* Vol.6, Chapter 7, (Salt Lake City, Deseret News, 1912), pp. 161-162.
[142] Smith, *History of the Church*, Vol.6, Chapter 7, p. 162.

It remains possible that W. R. Davies simply took the opportunity to exploit popular notions regarding the Latter-day Saints, although it is clear he had no reason to doubt the truth about what was a much-publicised event. The reports to the press and in Nonconformist periodicals that pre-date the comment of 'Tobit ger y Bont' at least offer an explanation for his claims and locates them within a wider scepticism about Mormon practices rather than in a personal desire to 'prejudice the minds' of people against Mormonism.

In both his private letter to a friend and in his first article in *Y Bedyddiwr* in 1844, 'Tobit' noted that Latter-day Saint baptism was a nocturnal activity, a practice he considered worthy of comment, although without elaboration. The fact that Captain Dan Jones had to explain two years later that this was done due to expediency for fear of disruption of the rite, ridicule, or even possible physical harm,[143] suggests that there was a public suspicion and distrust of night-time baptism. Newspaper reports from across the length and breadth of Britain provide abundant evidence that between 1840 and 1849 the Latter-day Saints frequently engaged in nocturnal baptism.[144] It is clear that the earliest Mormon missionaries in south Wales such as James Palmer had no issue with this nocturnal practice.[145] He did not explain why he chose to baptize at night, but it was clearly a well-established practice long before W. R. Davies drew it to the attention of the readers of *Y Bedyddiwr.* As other reports record daytime baptism, it is clear that nocturnal baptism was not specifically required by Latter-day Saint doctrine.[146] Thus, Davies' remark that the Latter-day Saints baptized at night may simply reflect the situation he had observed or had heard about in Dowlais, or simply read about in the press. He did not take the

[143] *'Atebydd y Gwrthddadleuon'*, p. 23.
[144] E.g. *Welshman* (8 December 1843); *Wiltshire Independent* (29 May 1845); *Bradford Observer* (5 February 1846); *Liverpool Mercury* (19 March 1847); *The Examiner* (23 December 1848); *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser* (7 February 1849); *Morning Post* (9 November 1849); *Western Times* (17 November 1849); *Chester Chronicle* (30 November 1849); *North Wales Chronicle* (4 December 1849); *Hereford Journal* (5 December 1849).
[145] He recorded in his journal that while at Monmouth in April 1841, he baptized one convert at about 3am Palmer, and others between the hours of midnight and 1 am: *Travels and Ministry in the Gospel*, pp. 35-37.
[146] E.g. *Hereford Journal* (10 February 1841); *Hereford Journal* (5 May 1841); *Pembrokeshire Herald and General Advertiser* (12 October 1849). Although, in some cases these baptisms occurred early in the morning, which considering the time of year would have meant that they were performed in darkness, as in the case of the death of Robert Turner, *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent* (16 November 1843).

opportunity to exploit the well-documented unorthodox elements of Latter-day Saint baptism and in fact never mentioned them again.

Regarding other issues concerning baptism, Davies made it clear that he disapproved of the re-baptism of people who had become Latter-day Saints. He expressed surprise that converts to the Latter-day Saints underwent a second baptism, a practice he felt was contrary to the teaching of Christ.[147] One of his first remarks on the subject was that the Latter-day Saints had baptized 'a woman from the Llanidloes area, now known as "Martha two baptisms"'.[148] In *Y Bedyddiwr* in June 1848, Davies commented that a Mormon couple in Dowlais who had been convicted and imprisoned for theft, were re-baptized upon their release from prison, this being the third baptism for one of them. Regarding the issue of the Mormon belief in baptism by proxy for the dead, Davies has little to say, other than to relate a local incident where a recently bereaved widow was pestered, to no avail, by her Latter-day Saint son–in-law to observe this practice for her dead husband. While Davies' writings express disapproval of these practices, there is little on this subject that could be described as offensive or incendiary in its observations. While these comments can be categorized as opposition to Mormon practices, this opposition does not appear to be expressed in a manner that would constitute, or indeed incite, persecution.

3. The 'forged Letters'

Dennis claims that in March 1846, 'the Reverend W. R. Davies also had printed two forged letters, both intended to discredit Mormonism.'[149] It is not suggested that the first of these letters, by Emma Smith, was actually 'forged' by Davies, but that he may have sent a copy of this 'forged' letter to *Y Bedyddiwr* [150] in an attempt to 'discredit Mormonism'.

[147] W. R. Davies to William Jones, 6 May 1843, Cwrtmawr Collection, National Library of Wales.
[148] *Y Bedyddiwr,* Cyf. 111, Rhif 27, (Mawrth 1844), p. 99.
[149] Dennis*, Indefatigable Veteran*, p. 32.
[150] *Y Bedyddiwr*, Cyf. V, Rhif. 51(Mawrth 1846), p. 90.

However, there is no evidence that Davies sent this letter to *Y Bedyddiwr* for publication. Dennis' suggestion is based on the fact that its inclusion occurs immediately prior to a letter that Davies had submitted concerning the Latter-day Saints.[151] The fact remains that no name is appended to it. It was accompanied by the brief comment that it was hoped that the opinions expressed by Joseph Smith's widow would expose 'these fanatics'. The link with W. R. Davies is therefore somewhat speculative and it is not possible to determine precisely how the periodical obtained it. Indeed, this letter was already in the public domain having appeared in the national press weeks prior to its inclusion in *Y Bedyddiwr.*[152] Admittedly, the Welsh press had not printed it, but in January 1846 the *Hereford Journal*, published and widely available in Wales, printed that Joseph Smith's widow has 'declared that she is not a believer in the faith professed by her late husband and his followers, and has positively refused to accompany the "brethren" in their intended migration next Spring from Nauvoo to California.'[153] That Mrs Smith made the decision not to travel with the Latter-day Saints to the Salt Lake Valley, is indisputable.[154] Despite its controversial content, *Y Bedyddiwr* appears to be the only Nonconformist periodical to make any reference to the letter. By the time it was published, this story was already old news and, more importantly, it had been exposed as fake. Dennis himself admits that the publication of this letter in *Y Bedyddiwr* had little effect.[155]

However, W. R. Davies did provide the second 'forged letter' purportedly sent to him by Abel Evans and William Henshaw, both of whom stringently denied sending it.[156] It had invited Davies to a public debate with Captain Dan Jones. Davies responded in the following issue, claiming he had witnesses who had been present when he received the letter in the post,[157] thus publically denying that he had forged it, although this in itself does not prove who sent it. More importantly, the perceived

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[151] *Y Bedyddiwr*, Cyf. V, Rhif. 51(Mawrth 1846), p. 90-91
[152] E.g. *Morning Advertiser* (13 January 1846); *Dumfries and Galloway Standard* (21 January 1846); *Stirling Observer* (22 January 1846); *Bell's Weekly Messenger* (26 January 1846); *Leamington Spa Courier* (31 January 1846); *Liverpool Mail* (31 January 1846); *Bath Chronicle and Weekly Gazette* (05 February 1846); *Berkshire Chronicle* (07 February 1846); *Bolton Chronicle* (07 February 1846); *Western Courier, West of England Conservative, Plymouth and Devonport Advertiser* (11 February 1846); *Maidstone Journal and Kentish Advertiser* (17 February 1846); *Coventry Herald* (20 February 1846); *West Kent Guardian* (21 February 1846).
[153] *Hereford Journal* (14 January 1846); *Cheltenham Chronicle* (22 January 1846).
[154] *Encyclopedia of Mormonism, http://eom.byu.edu/index.php/Smith,_Emma_Hale* accessed 26 November 2016.
[155] Dennis, 'Reverend W. R. Davies vs Captain Dan Jones', *BYU Studies*, vol.27, no.2, (1987), pp. 58- 59.
[156] *Y Bedyddiwr*, Cyf. V, Rhif. 53 (Mai, 1846), pp. 193-94.
[157] *Y Bedyddiwr*, Cyf. V, Rhif. 54 (Mehefin, 1846), p. 232.

reason for Davies sending Evans and Henshaw's letter, namely the rather tortuous suggestion that the letter was 'forged' as part of a cleverly devised plan to allow Davies to publish his views on the Latter-day Saints in *Y Bedyddiwr*, seems implausible for a number of reasons.

First, Dennis asserts that the 'supposed letter' by Evans and Henshaw demonstrated a poor standard of literacy which 'together with the belligerent tone of the letter, suggest that it was written by men of limited education and intelligence.'[158]
The implication is that someone, possibly Davies himself, made it appear this way as an 'excuse to issue his arrogant and extremely sarcastic reply, printed immediately following the letter.'[159] This theory evidently emanates from Dan Jones' comment in *Prophwyd y Jubili,* the following September. Here Jones claims:

> Mr. Davies of Dowlais accused William Henshaw and another brother [Abel Evans] of issuing a challenge to him to come out to a debate, which was a complete lie, worded and devised in such a way as to give the said Mr. Davies a reason to laugh at us.[160]

While this could be true, it suggests what appears to be a rather elaborate contrivance, especially when *Y Bedyddiwr* had already published many articles by W. R. Davies, some demonstrating opposition to the Latter-day Saints.

Secondly, in defence of Evans and Henshaw, Dennis has concluded that the poor literacy suggested that Evans could have written it, but as Henshaw could not speak Welsh, this is evidence that he did not. Of course, conversely, this argument could also be used in W. R. Davies' defence. He knew that Henshaw could not speak Welsh,[161] therefore it is unlikely he would have added Henshaw's name to a letter written in the language, however poorly written. The conclusion that he forged the letter appears to rest on the perception of the lengths Davies was prepared to go to as an enemy of Mormonism, as well as Dan Jones' comments, rather than on any firm evidence about his actions.

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[158] Dennis, *Indefatigable Veteran*, p. 33.
[159] Dennis, *Indefatigable Veteran*, p. 33.
[160] *Prophwyd y Jubili*, Cyf.1, Rhif. 3 (Medi, 1846), pp. 78-84.
[161] W. R. Davies to William Jones, 6 May 1843, Cwrtmawr Collection, National Library of Wales; W. R. Davies, *'Y Seintiau Diweddaf,'* p. 8, p.17.

Thirdly, evidence from Davies' private correspondence suggests that he believed that the letter was genuine. In a letter to a friend, dated 19 January 1846, Davies, referring to Revd John Jones (Dan Jones' brother), as 'Quick',[162] the common appellation given him in the religious periodicals, wrote:

> Quick's brother [Dan Jones] gave me a challenge to go to debate with him in a tavern in Merthyr last week. You will see both letters in the next Bedyddiwr, perhaps – he is a Saint, (Satan) they are two dear brothers.[163]

If Davies had known the letter of invitation to a debate with Dan Jones was a forgery, or had been complicit in its composition, there would have been no reason to continue the deception in a personal letter to a friend living in north Wales.

Fourthly, it is puzzling why an invitation to a public debate should have caused such a vehement reaction. Since the arrival of Mormonism in Preston, Lancashire in 1837, British newspapers reveal that this was a *modus operandi* of Mormon missionary practice.[164] In Wales the practice continued, for example, with John Needham recording in his journal that he had attempted to arrange a public debate at the Temperance Hall in Abergavenny on 23 September 1842. Davies' reply to the supposedly forged invitation to debate comprised a list of, admittedly strongly expressed, reasons explaining why he was disinterested in a public debate with the Latter-day Saints. He reiterated his repugnance at the events surrounding the woman with the stillborn child, and the impropriety of the presence of male Latter-day Saints. He took exception to the fact that her lack of faith had been blamed, and to claims by others that they could heal all the sick children in Dowlais. In the case of the latter, when the children of the man who had claimed this died, he asserted that he did not raise them from the dead because it was a pity to take them out of heaven. Given his other published letters of opposition, it is at least possible that W. R. Davies would

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[162] Revd John Jones appears to have been known by the sobriquet 'Quick'. Whether this originated with W. R. Davies is difficult to determine. When 'Tobit ger y Bont' refers to the debates between the Baptists, Independents and the Later-day Saints in the Merthyr area, he refers to a 'knowledgeable' young man from among the Independents, who it had been hoped would one-day be as prominent in the cause as 'Quick.' *Y Bedyddiwr,* Cyf.111, Rhif. 28 (Ebrill, 1844), p. 124. W. R. Davies describes John Jones as a prominent '*member ffair fedydd Rymni'*, from where this soubriquet appears to have originated*. Y Bedyddiwr,* Cyf, Rhif. 51 (Mawrth, 1846), p. 111.

[163] W. R. Davies to William Jones, 19 January 1846, Cwrtmawr Collection, National Library of Wales.

[164] E.g. *Welshman* (7 October 1842); *Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette* (29 May 1845); *Pembrokeshire Herald and General Advertiser* (18 July 1845).

have written to *Y Bedyddiwr* about such things, without requiring a 'forged letter' to initiate their publication.

Fifthly, this accusation relies on Dan Jones' assessment of the situation, and Evans and Henshaw's denial that they were the authors. They claimed in their defence, printed in *Y Bedyddiwr* in May 1846, that they had heard tell that W. R. Davies had brandished a similar letter some months before, and that Jones had publically announced that if such a letter appeared it was an obvious forgery. However, if Davies had brandished such a 'forged' letter in front of witnesses it seems unlikely that he would have continued with a plan to see it printed.

Finally, It is also perplexing that the Independent minister and printer John Jones stepped into the argument to rebuke W. R. Davies for sending the letter to *Y Bedyddiwr,* and accuse him of persecution. As a non-Mormon, he had no obvious reason for his comments in *Y Golygydd*, of which he was editor.[165] Nevertheless, it is possible to suggest that his motive may have been personal. He had been the leading exponent of paedobaptism during the recent debates on the topic of baptism at Rhymney.[166] According to T. M. Bassett:

> These debates reached a pinnacle of uncouthness and folly in the so called Rhymni baptismal fair when John Jones of Llangollen attained the peak of his silly crusade. The Baptist ministers of Merthyr had enough sense to refuse to meet him.[167]

There is evidence that W. R. Davies attended the baptismal fair in Rhymney,[168] but he clearly had no wish to repeat the experience in Merthyr. He had been one of the Baptist ministers who had signed an open letter to John Jones,[169] declining to enter into a public debate with him, while noting their preparedness to engage in debate

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[165] *Y Golygydd*, (Ebrill, 1846), pp. 89-90.
[166] Revd John Jones had become well known for his stance on baptism. In its article on the emigration of the Latter-day Saints to Amercia in February 1849, Captain Dan Jones is described as 'a brother of the well known John Jones, Llangollen, the able disputant on the subject of baptism', (*Cambrian*, 16 February, 1849).
[167] T. M. Basset, *The Welsh Baptists,* (Llandysul: Gomer Press, 1977), p. 228. The debate at Rhymney had taken place 1-2 November 1841.
[168] Thomas Gabriel Jones, and John Jones, *Adroddiad o'r ddadl ar fedydd a fu yn Rumney, Swydd Fynwy, Tachwedd 1af a'r 2il, 1841, rhwng y Parch. T. G. Jones, o Beula (athraw ieithyddol yn Ngholeg y Bedyddwyr, Hwlffordd) a Mr. John Jones, o Langollen,* (Llanelli: Rees a Thomas, 1841).
[169] This was published in *Y Gwir Fedyddiwr,* Cyf. 1, Rhif. 2 (Chwefror, 1842), pp. 57-58.

with someone of greater skill and competency. This suggests that there may have been some antipathy between the two men. If we accept, as Dennis does, that Davies was 'Quick yn Dwr', the article that followed the 'forged' letter commented on John Jones and his relationship with his brother Dan:

> Isn't it amazing that the same womb conceived two brothers, and that the two brothers were endowed with the extremes of conceit and arrogance, that is the apostle David Jones [sic] and the commentator John Jones, Rhydybont, formerly Llangollen, (remember that they are two natural brothers) and there is not a Welshman or an Englishman who could say, on oath, which one is more cursed or arrogant. The Welsh must be more foolish than fools, before reading, let alone purchasing, the works of these two men.[170]

Perhaps it is unsurprising that this was published in March 1846, and that John Jones' response appeared the following month. While Jones, stopped short of openly defending the Latter-day Saints against Davies, it remains true that he printed most of the literature produced by his brother Dan, including all the editions of *Prophwyd y Jubili,* with the exception of the last two issues.[171]

Therefore, regarding the 'forged letter' sent by Davies to *Y Bedyddiwr,* it is clear that accusations of lies and forgery fuelled the dispute in this case. It is not possible to know exactly what happened, and while Evans and Henshaw may not have written the letter, the argument that W. R. Davies sent *Y Bedyddiwr* a letter he knew to be 'forged' simply as a pretext to present his opinions about the Latter-day Saints, remains unconvincing. It remains a further claim regarding Davies' character and his burning desire to discredit the Mormons. But, on reflection, there is little evidence to substantiate it.

4. W. R. Davies and the term 'Satanists'

Little can be said in Davies' defence regarding the pejorative term 'Satanists' that he applied liberally to the Latter-day Saints. It was clearly provocative and antagonistic and elicited a ferocious response from Dan Jones in *Prophwyd y Jubili.*[172] In Davies'

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[170] *Y Bedyddiwr*, Cyf. V, Rhif. 51 (Mawrth, 1846), p.112.
[171] *Seren Gomer* referred to Jones' press at Rhydybont as the 'prostitute press' due to his willingness to publish Mormon literature. *Seren Gomer,* Cyf. XXX1, Rhif. 387 (Rhagfyr, 1847), p. 375.
[172] E.g. *Prophwyd y Jubili*, Cyf.1, Rhif. 1 (Gorffennaf, 1846), pp. 24-25.

article defending the use of the term, in *Y Tyst Apostolaidd,*[173] he took issue with many of the claims of the Mormons, including their 'arrogance' in referring to themselves by the name 'Saints', a term used by the Puritan and Dissenting forebears of Nonconformity for Christians. He also argued that their willingness to answer the call to arms against their enemies during recent conflicts at Nauvoo, revealed their wickedness.[174] It was for these reasons that he addressed them as 'Satanists'.

However, it might also be noted that referring to the opposition as the servants of Satan was not the sole prerogative of the enemies of the Latter-day Saints. In a letter to Joseph Smith from Alfred Cordon reporting 'affairs in England', Cordon noted 'Many tracts have been published against us, containing all manner of lies, but in the end good will result … Some of the tools of Satan are doing more in spreading the truth than we are able to do …'[175] Latter-day Saints viewed the world around them as evil, referring to it as 'Babylon', the Biblical symbol (Revelation 17) of all that stood in opposition to the righteousness of God. Dan Jones frequently employed this term for the non-Mormon world around him and longed for 'deliverance out of Babylon' to the 'New Jerusalem'.[176] Furthermore, the language and style of debate in the mid-nineteenth century was very different from those of the late twentieth century (when Dennis was writing), and a provocative style of writing was not uncommon. This was as true of the writing of Dan Jones as it was of W. R. Davies.

It is impossible to tell whether W. R. Davies was the originator of the pejorative term 'Satanists', which Dennis regards as 'the label which really caused the Mormons to breathe fire'. [177] However, there appears to be no evidence from the religious periodicals that it was used in other circumstances prior to Davies' application of the

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[173] *Y Tyst Apostolaidd*, Cyf.11 (Ionawr, 1847), pp. 16-17.
[174] During the mid-1840s, a state-sanctioned Nauvoo Legion, a militia composed predominantly of Mormons, existed to defend Nauvoo. Following Smith's death, tensions increased and the mainly Mormon militia sought to defend itself, until its charter was revoked. Reports of hostilities often appeared in the British press e.g. *Pembrokeshire Herald and General Advertiser* (23 August 1844); *Pembrokeshire Herald and General Advertiser* (1 November 1844); *Cambrian* (16 October 1846); *Welshman* (16 October 1846).
[175] Joseph Smith, *'History of the Church'*, p. 516.
[176] E.g. *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Rhif. 28, (Hydref, 1848), pp. 120-23; Douglas J. Davies, *An Introduction to Mormonism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 30-31.
[177] Ronald D. Dennis, *The Call of Zion: The Story of the First Welsh Mormon Emigration,* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Brigham Young University, 1987. Religious Studies Center: Specialized Monograph Series, Vol.2), p. 12.

term for Latter-day Saints.[178] Thus, it must be conceded that there is a strong possibility that Davies was the originator of the term 'Satanists' for the Latter-day Saints, and that this term was considered unpleasant and offensive as, indeed, it was intended to be. Whether he was its creator or not, he certainly made regular use of it, as it can be found in twelve of the seventeen 'anti-Mormon writings' attributed to him.

Its use reinforces a view of Davies as the 'archenemy'[179] of Mormonism. However, if the language of the debate is to be taken into account, then we must also examine Dan Jones' literary assaults on W. R. Davies. After examining the contents of Davies' articles to the religious periodicals we are left with a clear understanding of the issues on which he felt compelled to comment. When we look at these issues it is difficult to support the view that Davies' literary contribution constitutes a form of persecution. His language and the forcefulness of his opinions raise the difficult question of when opposition becomes persecution, although it might be possible to argue that the latter term involves direct harm, something that W. R. Davies never advocated. It seems evident that the use of the term 'Satanists' was intended to provoke and antagonise the Latter-day Saints. In a private letter in 1847 he acknowledged that he was 'a thorn in the side of the prophet …'[180] However, there remains a significant difference between being an antagonist however vociferous, and being a persecutor.

5. 'Predictions about the Mormons' and *'A warning to the Welsh about the Mormons.'*

The 'anti-Mormon' writing of Davies' that Ron Dennis has classified as 'predictions about the Mormons' was written to *Seren Gomer* and published in December 1847.[181] Dennis does not deal with its content, which expressed the view that the time was approaching when many who had joined the Latter-day Saints would wish to return

[178] The title appears to have lingered after Davies' time, appearing in the secular press. E.g. *Tarian y Gweithiwr* (25 June 1875).
[179] Dennis, *Indefatigable Veteran,* p. 126.
[180] W. R. Davies [Recipients name missing], 18 March 1847, 'Nefydd' Autograph Letters, MS 7163D, National Library of Wales.
[181] *Seren Gomer*, Cyf. XXX1 [XXX], Rhif. 387 (Rhagfyr, 1847), p. 368.

to their previous affiliations. Davies posed the question whether they should be allowed to do so. As a piece of 'anti-Mormon' writing we may conclude that while it predicted the ultimate failure of Mormonism, and it denounced the Latter-day Saints as 'ungodly, lying, arrogant men' who tried to 'deceive' the 'unlearned and fickle-minded' it expressed the condemnation of a Baptist minister for what he defined as heresy. Its purpose was to raise issues Davies expected to be faced by Baptist ministers, and again no desire to harm the Latter-day Saints is expressed.

It needs to be borne in mind that W. R. Davies did not remain unchallenged. He was met with a forceful response from Dan Jones, and it was Jones, not Davies, who made the debate personal. Davies eventually responded in *Seren Gomer* in December 1847,[182] in an article Dennis defines as 'A warning to the Welsh about the Mormons.' Again, Dennis does not comment on its content, but it is clear that Davies warns the Welsh about the Latter-day Saints using his usual forceful language. He claimed that they were idle and disreputable men, travelling the country selling 'worthless' books and pamphlets, 'full of lies.' However, most of the article represents Davies taking the unusual step of defending himself against the accusations made about him by Dan Jones. The language used by Jones and the intense level of criticism Jones aimed at Davies has received little attention by Dennis. Even a cursory glance through the pages of *Prophwyd y Jubili* reveals that Davies received regular attention, being addressed or mentioned in just under half of the thirty editions of the periodical. Despite recurring criticism W. R. Davies only responded in depth to these accusations on this one occasion.[183]

It may be argued that the style of highly personal derogatory language used by Captain Dan Jones to describe Davies was itself indefensible. While sometimes making derogatory comments about Jones, Davies never employed similar personal language to describe him. There is no comparison between the colourful, coarse and defamatory language used by Jones to describe Davies and any article or letter in which Davies referred to Jones.

[182] *Seren Gomer*, Cyf. XXX1 [XXX], Rhif. 387 (Rhagfyr, 1847), pp. 375-376.
[183] *Seren Gomer*, Cyf. XXX1 [XXX], Rhif. 387 (Rhagfyr, 1847), p. 376.

It was an article in *Prophwyd y Jubili* during August 1847 that elicited the personal defence from Davies.[184] This article was entitled 'The Rev. W. R. Davies, from Dowlais, and his cruel and shameful persecution again! – Again!' It is this article, more than any other, that appears to have provided Dennis with the evidence that Davies was a tireless persecutor of the Latter-day Saints.[185] Jones began his response by comparing Davies to the active volcanoes of 'Etna and Stombulo' [sic]:

> But never (to this extent) have we seen more detailed imitation of the above phenomena [Etna and Stombulo] than the overflowing of the unclean bowels of the above man [Davies] now and again through the press and over the pulpit, against his innocent neighbours, because of their religion! ... By now the people of Dowlais can tell when he is about to burst, and spew his filth over the town from his aches and pangs, as those who live near *Etna and Vesuvius* know, from their *grumbling* and their thundering ... He who doubts the accuracy of the above comparisons, and their aptness, let him read the endless feats of libel, filthy stories, fabricated, immoral, harmful, and persecuting false accusations of this man in the columns of the *'Baptist'*, &c.[186]

Jones asserted that Davies had continued his opposition 'since the Saints first came to Wales, and their first preacher refused to be hired as a preaching servant to him', an allusion to the claim that Davies had attempted to hire William Henshaw as an assistant.[187] Jones used this article to respond to Davies' charge that the Latter-day Saints 'Entice the uneducated and the unbalanced, for the purpose of attracting their money, and living in idleness at the expense of the weak-headed ones who believe them …'[188] First, Jones retorted 'From how many chapels does he himself receive his salary, I wonder? ... who attracts the money of the weak-headed of Dowlais to his shop?'[189] Jones then gave an account of a man who entered the pulpit in a frenzy searching his pockets for his sermon, only to pull out 'fistfuls of *tickets* of the "*New debts act,"* ready to sue his customers who could not pay their old *accounts*!'[190]

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[184] *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Rhif. 14, (Awst, 1847), pp. 120-23.
[185] Dennis, 'Reverend W. R. Davies vs Captain Dan Jones', Table 2, p. 56. Since Davies' re-working of his original pamphlet is no longer extant, our knowledge of its content must come from Captain Dan Jones' response. This response conveys a sense of outrage at Davies' decision to rework the same theme, rather than taking issue with any new content.
[186] *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Rhif. 14, (Awst, 1847), p. 120.
[187] *Prophwyd y Jubili*, Cyf. 1, Rhif 3, (Medi 1846), p. 79. Jones' description of Henshaw as the 'first preacher' of the Latter-day Saints in Wales is inaccurate. He appears to have forgotten the earlier missionaries in Flintshire and Monmouthshire, such as Cooke, Royle, Palmer and Needham.
[188] *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Rhif. 14, (Awst, 1847), p. 121.
[189] *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Rhif. 14, (Awst, 1847), p. 122.
[190] *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Rhif. 14, (Awst, 1847), p. 122.

He accused Davies of making money by any means possible and claimed that all the itinerant Mormon missionaries in Wales had not received as much money as Davies demanded in Dowlais. Secondly, Jones accused Davies of being absent from his three chapels for three months, but on return received £50 from his congregation.

Jones might well have been relaying true stories, but they demonstrate his willingness to attempt to bring Davies' reputation into disrepute. Dennis has not commented on any of these accusations, but they require further investigation. Davies challenged Jones' claims.

Davies wrote that he has 'for once' to draw attention to claims that have been made, and he utterly denied that he was the man who had pulled out evidence of local debtors in the pulpit, neither did he know of any such man or any such incident, 'unless he is a *Captain*, and that he had some money to buy a ship to go to – .' [191]

There is, of course, something distasteful to the modern ear in these attacks and counter-attacks. But if Davies was content to repeat what were considered to be far-fetched accusations about the Mormons, then Dan Jones was content to do the same about him. While Davies was often uncompromising in his criticism of the Latter-day Saints, and used strong language to denounce them, Dan Jones censured Davies in an equally scathing manner. While Davies occasionally mentioned Jones, and while his comments are scornful and sarcastic they are more pithy and far less dramatic and colourful than Jones' comments on him. Davies referred to Jones as the 'praiseworthy apostle' in his pamphlet,[192] claimed that he was 'endowed with the extremes of deceit and arrogance'[193] and on one occasion advised Jones to return to work on his 'ship or fishing boat'.[194] However, the caustic verbosity of Jones' literary attacks on Davies, and his allegorical caricatures of the man might even be considered in themselves 'a cruel and shameless persecution' if we consider, as Jones clearly did, that persecution

[191] *Seren Gomer*, Cyf. XXX1 [XXX], Rhif. 387 (Rhagfyr, 1847), pp. 375-376.
[192] Davies, *Y Seintiau Diweddaf,* p. 16.
[193] *Y Bedyddiwr,* Cyf. V, Rhif. 51 (Mawrth, 1846), p. 112.
[194] Jones had been the owner of the Mississippi steamboat 'Maid of Iowa'. It was while working on this vessel that he first heard the Mormon message in 1843. The vessel transported many British Mormon immigrants from St. Louis to Nauvoo. See: Donald L. Enders, "The Steamboat 'Maid of Iowa': Mormon Mistress of the Mississippi." *Brigham Young University Studies*, vol. 19, no. 3, 1979, pp. 321–335; Dennis, *The Call of Zion,* p. 2.

could take the form of strident opposition expressed in print. Of course, the focus of Jones' comments was Davies himself, while Davies' comments were focused on Mormon claims

It has also to be said that the image of W. R. Davies pressurizing his flock to pay their debts to him in order to make money is rather fanciful and certainly at odds with comments by his biographer 'Mathetes'. While these are clearly hagiographic, they are not entirely unreliable. 'Mathetes' makes a number of observations about W. R. Davies' character that are at odds with Dan Jones' depiction. The biography suggests that a view of W. R. Davies as lover of money cannot be sustained.

First, during the slump in the iron trade that made so many people anxious in Dowlais during the 1840s, Davies 'decided to serve them for a pound less every month than he usually had from them.'[195] Not long before he died a neighbour came to him in reduced circumstances and Davies 'gave him ten shillings worth of food … saying he would never want a penny for those mercies; soon afterwards, he made a similar favour to a man in similar circumstances to the other man: they were both sworn to say nothing about the kindness they had received.'[196] Secondly, Davies' biographer wrote that while he was minister at Ebenezer Chapel, Eglwyswrw, he was offered some of the annual money called the Regium Donum, but resolutely refused to take it because he did not agree with state religion. Furthermore, his biographer continued, 'at this time he received 26p [£26?] a year from his ministry. A great deal of sincerity and love of good principles is necessary to enable a man to refuse money he needed, that he could have taken on the sly.'[197] Furthermore, Davies in his defence added that while he realised the reference to the man who had neglected his ministry for three months was an allusion to himself, the truth was that he had been absent for six weeks and three days visiting relatives.[198] As for the charge that he had received £50 upon his return, he denied this, wryly suggesting that they may as well have claimed

[195] *Y Bedyddiwr,* Cyf. X, Rhif 111 (Mawrth, 1851), p. 72.
[196] *Y Bedyddiwr,* Cyf. X, Rhif 111 (Mawrth, 1851), p. 72.
[197] *Y Bedyddiwr,* Cyf. X, Rhif 110 (Chwefror, 1851), p. 44.
[198] Davies was originally from north Wales, having been born in Ynysgain-fawr, Criccieth in 1798 (*Y Bedyddiwr,* Cyf. X, Rhif 109 (Ionawr, 1851), p. 5.). Considering the rigors of travel in the nineteenth century, if Davies had been visiting his relatives in north Wales, his absence from Dowlais for a number of weeks may be understandable. It is not suggested that this was in any way a regular occurrence.

it was £500. He concluded that these claims were further evidence of the untruthful nature of the Latter-day Saints.[199] If Davies' accusations against the Mormons were based on forgeries and at best half-truths in an obsessive desire to persecute them, then it is at least possible that the same is true of the Latter-day Saints' assessment of him mediated by Dan Jones.

Evidence that W. R. Davies was a cruel and relentless persecutor rests on Jones' writings in *Prophwyd y Jubili.* Jones makes frequent mention of Davies' sermons against the Mormons.[200] This, of course, cannot be corroborated due to the lack of any external references to his sermons or indeed to the existence of any archive containing his sermons.[201] An example of the Latter-day Saint characterization of W. R. Davies' preaching can be seen in a satirical story published in *Prophwyd y Jubili* in February 1848. This was entitled 'A Peek at the Slugger and the Dowlais Shopkeeper', written, as were most articles in the periodical, by Captain Dan Jones.[202]

The imaginary scene is that of the two protagonists, W. R. Davies and an unnamed Independent minister, discussing various methods of persecuting the Latter-day Saints. Jones placed these words into the mouth of the 'Dowlais shopkeeper' (i.e., Davies):

> You see that every child who persecutes these Satanists wins respect through the publications, and soon earns a *living.* That is how I have climbed up to a pulpit anywhere, but I can operate more successfully from behind the *screen,* you know, and I have the occasional lecture in the chapels, and the publications against them, for in that way they will never be able to answer back … do you not know that the title reverend at the end of the story

[199] *Seren Gomer*, Cyf. XXX1 [XXX], Rhif. 387 (Rhagfyr, 1847), p. 376.
[200] E.g. *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Rhif.14 (Awst1847), pp. 120-123; *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Rhif.15 (Medi1847), pp. 134-137; *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Rhif.24 (Mehefin 1848), pp. 85-86; *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Rhif.27 (Medi1848), p. 131 Ronald D. Dennis, 'Reverend W. R. Davies vs Captain Dan Jones', *BYU Studies*, vol.27, no.2, (1987), p. 53 https://ojs.lib.byu.edu/spc/index.php/BYUStudies/article/view/5664/5314 accessed 13 September 2016.
[201] Davies, *Y Seintiau Diweddaf.*
[202] It is not possible identify the figure represented as the 'slugger'. He is referred to as the 'slugger of Independia', therefore he is clearly an opponent from among the Independents. The 'Dowlais Shopkeeper' also referred to as 'a certain 'Reverend Shopkeeper' was described as 'red and corpulent', living 'near the bridge' and 'striding as fast as *Tobit.'* Leaving readers in little doubt about that he represented W. R. Davies. *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Rhif. 20, (Chwefror, 1848), pp. 21- 23.

> sanctifies it in the eyes of the people, whatever it may be … what does it matter if it is lies, if it serves a good purpose.[203]

The story makes reference to Davies' writings in the denominational periodicals,[204] although it may be noted that in none of his published work did W. R. Davies use the title 'Reverend'. It clearly alleges an ulterior motive behind opposition to the Latter-day Saints' mission without engaging directly with the content of that opposition. While Davies might have gained financially from his opposition (though that seems unlikely), in fact he opposed what Mormons claimed because he found no evidence to support it. It is intriguing, then, that Dan Jones chose to try to discredit the opponents of Mormonism rather that respond to the criticism.

Evidently, Dan Jones felt aggrieved that the denominational press had not allowed the Latter-day Saints a sustained right of reply. However, in his own publication, published for two and a half years, in addition to his apologetic pamphlets, he regularly wrote condemnations of the 'reverends', in particular W. R. Davies. Its condemnation of the religious periodicals was also unsparing, referring, for example, to the 'filthy tongue' of *Y Tyst Apostolaidd,* [205] 'the thousand forked and slanderous tongues' of *Seren Gomer,*[206] and the 'filthy' *Y Bedyddiwr.*[207] Thus, in *Prophwyd y Jubili,* the Latter-day Saints found a platform from which to launch a defence. However, the result was not simply an opportunity to defend their cause it allowed the Mormons to go on the offensive. Not just W. R. Davies, but other ministers, editors, contributors to the religious periodicals, anyone who challenged Mormonism was taken to task in the strongest possible terms. In its pages it would seem that the victim had become the aggressor.

However, the abiding impression is that this was a 'war of words'. Despite claims that some Latter-day Saints were refused work because of their religion,[208] unjustly

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[203] *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Rhif. 20, (Chwefror, 1848), pp. 21-22.
[204] E.g. 'the stories of those women from Penydarren…the tale of the man who broke his leg…' *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Rhif. 20, (Chwefror, 1848), p. 23.
[205] *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Rhif. 21, (March, 1848), p. 39.
[206] *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Rhif. 21, (March, 1848), p. 38.
[207] *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Rhif. 21, (March, 1848), p. 47.
[208] *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Rhif. 26, (Awst, 1848), pp. 115-117. This type of discrimination did not apply solely to Latter-day Saints. Claims were made that members of the 'wrong' chapel might not be given work in the iron works or coal mines as well.

depicted as Chartists[209] and that some had been unfairly rejected from the 'Ivorites',[210] there is nothing in *Prophwyd y Jubili* to suggest the physical hardship and violence normally associated with persecution. Jones wrote to the *Millennial Star* reporting 'the priests of the various sects hereabouts hold secret committees, purposely to devise plans to oppose the Saints'. He claimed that thirty people from various chapels had been bribed 'to interrupt, harass, and oppose' the Latter-day Saints' and that on one occasion crowds of people had gathered to oppose him and have him imprisoned,[211] reports which depicted an atmosphere of persecution, but were not reproduced or elaborated on in *Prophwyd y Jubili,* or perhaps more importantly, ever found their way into the secular press.

Davies and the Growth of Mormonism: 1847-48

Having reviewed the five themes that constitute the case against W. R. Davies as the arch-persecutor of Latter-day Saints, it is worth turning now to consider his response to the rise in Mormon conversions.

Dennis has noted that the bulk of 'convert baptisms' during 1845 and 1846 were in south Wales, mainly in the Merthyr Tydfil area. Between twenty and forty baptisms had taken place each month, and the growth rate nearly doubled in May and June of 1847, during which time 'some longstanding members of W. R. Davies's congregation in Dowlais became Mormons'.[212] Dennis asserts that this growth led to Davies inviting Revd Edward Roberts, to lecture at Caersalem Chapel in Dowlais and that 'together they planned to give the "home stroke" … to Mormonism.'[213] It is claimed that Roberts 'eagerly joined forces with Davies in the campaign' because of the loss of

[209] *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Rhif. 14, (Awst, 1847), p. 121.
[210] *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Rhif. 9, (Mawrth, 1847), pp. 49-51.
[211] *Millennial Star*, Vol. 9, No. 19 (October, 1847), pp. 209-210.
[212] No information is provided here regarding the identity of these members, but presumably one of them was 'Magws fach' who had been a member of Caersalem for forty years.
[213] This term was used in *Seren Gomer*, Cyf. XXX1 [XXX], Rhif. 385 (Hydref, 1847), p. 318. Dennis defines this as a 'coup de grace'. Ronald D. Dennis, *Welsh Mormon Writings: From 1844-1862. A Historical Bibliography,* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Brigham Young University, 1988. Religious Studies Center: Specialized Monograph Series, vol.4), p. 58.

his own members to the Latter-day Saints.[214] Unsurprisingly, once again, loss of members of his congregation is the motive attributed to Roberts for undertaking this lecture, rather than any concern about Mormon claims themselves. However, the term 'campaign' needs to be considered carefully, and the extent to which Davies and Roberts were prepared to act to destroy Mormonism needs to be reassessed.

While it is clear that organizing a lecture against Mormonism was motivated by a desire to oppose the movement, it is difficult to view what ultimately resulted in three lectures in the Merthyr area as a campaign, or to believe that they led to an atmosphere of intense persecution. These lectures were designed to raise awareness of the frequently repeated charges against Mormonism. It is possible that they led to an increased antipathy as more people heard these claims. But there was nothing new in their content. The main charges brought against Mormonism had become well-established in the secular press over the ten years since the religion had first arrived in Britain.

However, it was Revd Edward Roberts (Iorwerth Glan Aled), a well-known and respected cleric and poet at the time that was chosen to deliver these lectures. It is evident from Roberts' pamphlet on 'The Deceit of Mormonism', [215] based on his lecture, that this was an intellectual *tour de force* evaluating all the available evidence concerning Joseph Smith and the origins of Mormonism, including not only the writings of E. D. Howe and Henry Caswall, but sworn testimonies and witness statements. It was not a meeting intent on rabble-rousing but on airing concerns which had come to light as Mormonism had grown in strength. On at least one occasion Roberts delivered this lecture elsewhere in Wales.[216] While there appears to have been considerable interest in this event locally,[217] it was not considered worthy of mention in any newspaper, which suggests that it may have been of far less significance than that assigned it by Dan Jones. Anti-Mormon lectures had been

[214] Dennis, *Welsh Mormon Writings*, p. 58: Dennis, 'Reverend W. R. Davies vs Captain Dan Jones', p. 63
[215] Parch. E. Roberts, *'Twyll Mormoniaeth; Darlith a Draddodwyd Gan y Parch. E. Roberts, Gweinidog y Bedyddwyr, Rumney'* (Merthyr Tydfil, David Jones, 1848).
[216] This was at a Baptist chapel in Denbigh. See: *Carnarvon and Denbigh Herald and North and South Wales Independent* (4 December 1847). Denbigh was Robert's home town.
[217] *Seren Gomer*, Cyf. XXX1 [XXX], Rhif. 385 (Hydref, 1847), p. 318.

reported in the press from the arrival of the movement in Britain.[218] Indeed, a newspaper report reveals that two Wesleyan Methodists had given 'two lectures in the open air, on the origin, rise, and progress of Mormonism, with an account of their founder and leader, Joseph Smith' at Pembroke Dock in June 1847, three months prior to Roberts' lectures at Dowlais.[219] Newspaper reports indicate that lectures on a wide variety of subjects were often held in chapels.[220] Such events were not unusual and were often widely reported. There is no apparent reason why such an event would have needed to be planned in secret.

Furthermore, the giving of lectures was not the sole prerogative of the anti-Mormon camp. Dan Jones claimed that when he attended Roberts' first lecture, his request that his planned rebuttal the following night be advertised to the congregation, was met with threatening behaviour,[221] suggesting once again that he was denied a right of reply. However, the *Millennial Star* reveals that Jones had been lecturing on Mormonism prior to Roberts' lecture. In a letter dated 22 August 1847, Jones referred to the forthcoming addresses to be delivered by Edwards, implying that the event was far more widely known than his accusation of clandestine planning suggests:

> I commenced my lectures … in Dowlais, yesterday, on the Book of Mormon. I am to be there this evening, and will continue until I forestall my short-sighted antagonist, and will have refuted his charges before his lecture comes on; and I intend to correct his mistakes afterwards …[222]

The act of collusion between Davies and Roberts depicted by Dan Jones does not appear to have been the impression of events acquired by at least two of the ministers who attended Roberts' lecture on Mormonism on 2 September 1847. In a letter to *Seren Gomer*[223] in October, 'Gwrandawwr',[224] writing from Merthyr and thus familiar with recent events, wrote a review of Roberts' lecture and stated:

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[218] E.g. *Preston Chronicle* (20 January 1838); *Pembrokeshire Herald and General Advertiser* (24 January 1845); *Wiltshire Independent* (29 May 1845); *Principality* (16 March 1849); *Cambrian* (16 February 1849).
[219] *Welshman* (11 June 1847).
[220] E.g. lectures on the 'Anti-Church and State Association', *Monmouthshire Merlin* (10 July 1847).
[221] *Millennial Star*, vol. 9, no.20 (15 October 1847), p. 318.
[222] *Millennial Star*, vol. 9, no.19 (1 October 1847), p. 299.
[223] *Seren Gomer*, Cyf. XXX1 [XXX], Rhif. 385 (Hydref, 1847), p. 318.

> Revd W. R. Davies, Dowlais, has tried hard to explain to his congregation the deceit and terrible danger involved in this superstition; but seeing one or two now and then turning towards them, he decided, in union with respected ministers of other religious denominations in Dowlais, to have a public meeting or meetings, in order to discuss and listen to the lectures.[225]

Although this writer confirmed that Davies had occasionally lost 'one or two' members of his flock to the Latter-day Saints, he noted that the decision to hold a public lecture on the topic of Mormonism had involved a number of ministers from the different Nonconformist groups in the area. Thus, while it may well have been an initiative planned by Davies and Roberts,[226] they did so with far wider support and there is no evidence to suggest that it had been planned in secret, as suggested by Dan Jones.[227]

'Gwrandawwr' maintained that as soon as handbills were distributed advertising Roberts' lecture on 2 September 1847, the Latter-day Saints announced that a lecture would be given to review Roberts' claims on the following night. However, he claimed that the effect of this Mormon counter-attack was to benefit Roberts' lecture by exciting local interest even more. He wrote:

> In the face of this there was not a little excitement among the people of the area before the meeting took place; and from Hirwaun to Tredegar, through all the works, you would hardly hear anything except for discussions on Mormonism.[228]

People had travelled 'for miles' to attend, including Revd W. Jones, from Llansanan, who opened the meeting. This mention of the intense interest in the event confirms Dan Jones' similar statement. After speaking for almost two hours on 'the Deceit of Mormonism', 'everyone among the listeners, unanimously agreed that he [Roberts] had given a *home stroke* forever in this area.' Thus, according to this source the effect of Roberts' lecture was significant:

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[224] 'Gwrandawwr' was for many years a regular contributor on various topics, to both the Nonconformist and secular press. E.g. *Lleuad Yr Oes*, Cyf.1, Rhan.8, (Awst, 1827), p. 413; *Seren Gomer*, Cyf. XL, Rhif. 498 (Mawrth, 1857), p.135); *Amserau* (8 February 1849).
[225] *Seren Gomer*, Cyf. XXX1 [XXX], Rhif. 385 (Hydref, 1847), p. 318.
[226] Dennis, *Welsh Mormon Writings*, p. 58.
[227] *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Rhif XV11 (Tachwedd, 1847), p. 172.
[228] *Seren Gomer*, Cyf. XXX1 [XXX], Rhif. 385 (Hydref, 1847), p. 318.

> Two of the main Mormon leaders left the following week, one who spoke in foreign tongues, and others with them; and these two leaders, along with others, now hold public meetings in the most convenient places on the streets, in order to relate their deceit and tricks of their associates.[229]

Dan Jones fiercely repudiated this claim[230] and proceeded to publish a pamphlet disputing Roberts' account of Mormonism and its origins.[231]

The significance of Roberts' lecture may be deduced from the fact that yet another account of it was sent to the religious periodicals, this time to *Y Tyst Apostolaidd.*[232] The author was W. Jones, Llansanan, who had opened the meeting. Although much of the content is the same as that of 'Gwrandawwr', he makes some important observations that are worthy of consideration because they contextualize this event. Jones' account suggests that W. R. Davies' involvement in the matter of Mormonism was probably inevitable, as his ministry was in the centre of Mormon activity in Wales and he had been able to observe the movement at close quarters. It may be argued, therefore, that in attempting to understand Davies and his response to Mormonism this very fact may well be seen as the heart of the matter. Jones began his account by explaining why the lecture had taken place in Dowlais:

> It is unnecessary to tell the Welsh about the existence of the people who call themselves Mormons, or latter-day Saints; but perhaps they do not know that their headquarters is in Merthyr; it is mainly from here that the beings who call themselves apostles are sent out to preach the gospel, and they say, to wash their hands of everyone's' blood.[233]

Furthermore he proceeded to offer an explanation for Davies' interest and involvement in the debate against the Latter-day Saints:

> ... ideally placed to learn all about them and the character of their father Joe Smith, Mr. W. R. Davies, Dowlais was agitated like Paul in Athens, for the purity of the religion of Jesus Christ and by his concern for the people of the area who were being enticed and seduced by these deceivers, he made an attempt as many of the readers of the Welsh Publications know, to expose their deceit in a skilful and able way for the Welsh people. After that some of the local

[229] *Seren Gomer*, Cyf. XXX1 [XXX], Rhif. 385 (Hydref, 1847), p. 318.
[230] *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Rhif.17, (Tachwedd, 1847), p. 172.
[231] Capt. Jones *'Adolygiad ar ddarlithoedd y Parch. E. Roberts, (Gweinidog y Bedyddwyr yn Rymni,) yn erbyn Mormoniaeth, pa rai a draddododd yn Nghaersalem, Medi yr Ail, ac yn Bethania (Capel yr Annibynwyr,) Medi y Trydydd, yn Nowlais',* (John Jones, Rhydybont, 1847).
[232] *Y Tyst Apostolaidd*, (Hydref, 1847), p. 224.
[233] *Y Tyst Apostolaidd*, (Hydref, 1847), p. 224.

> ministers decided to hold a meeting or two with the aim of lecturing about their existence; and they were blessed in their work in choosing someone suitable for the work, that is Mr. E. Roberts, Rhymney, (Iorwerth Glan Aled).[234]

The letter indicates that Davies was known to be a regular contributor to the 'Welsh Publications' on the issue of the Latter-day Saints. Most importantly, it confirms the fact that the decision to hold a public meeting about Mormonism was made by a number of local ministers, and it was a corporate decision to choose Roberts from nearby Rhymney as speaker. Clearly, W. R. Davies did not feel himself, or was not considered by others, to be the most obvious candidate for this particular task, possibly because the more renowned Roberts was so near at hand.

Roberts gave another lecture on the same topic on 2 November 1847, this time at Ebenezer Baptist chapel, Merthyr. This occasion was reviewed in a letter sent to *Seren Gomer*[235] by Dafydd Lewis, Merthyr. There is no mention of W. R. Davies on this occasion, but Lewis asserts:

> Ebenezer chapel was too small to hold the listeners who wished to be present; and in the congregation inside we found the most respectful members of our town amongst them from all the religious denominations – Calvinist, Wesleyans, Independents, Baptists and the Church of England.[236]

This evidence reveals that although Davies was obviously not alone in his concern and neither was this concern confined to members among the Baptists in Wales. According to Lewis' report, Roberts poured scorn on Dan Jones' review of his previous lectures in Dowlais. With vehemence equal to that of Davies, he drew the congregation's attention to the fact that this pamphlet had been printed on the Rhydybont press, as 'no other press was willing to prostitute itself to give birth to such a monster.'[237] Evidently, even in local opposition to the Latter-day Saints, the role of W. R. Davies was not always as central as described by Dennis.

Dan Jones alleged that Roberts' lectures of September 1847 had stirred up persecution for the Latter-day Saints and created an atmosphere of potential threat

[234] *Y Tyst Apostolaidd*, (Hydref, 1847), p. 224.
[235] *Seren Gomer*, Cyf. XXX1 [XXX], Rhif. 387 (Rhagfyr, 1847), pp. 374-375.
[236] *Seren Gomer*, Cyf. XXX1 [XXX], Rhif. 387 (Rhagfyr, 1847), p. 375.
[237] *Seren Gomer*, Cyf. XXX1 [XXX], Rhif. 387 (Rhagfyr, 1847), p. 375.

and violence. While it is entirely possible that talk about 'deception' and 'deceit' contributed to bad feeling towards the Latter-day Saints, it is difficult to find any independent evidence for these claims. It would be reasonable to suggest that some comment on this situation would have found its way into the secular press. Significantly, while there is no mention of Roberts' lectures at Merthyr, equally there is no evidence in the secular press of any tension or atmosphere of menace at Dowlais or any of the environs of Merthyr Tydfil. Neither is there any mention in reports in the Nonconformist periodicals that the lectures resulted in increased tension.

This absence of comment is puzzling, especially when we consider that Dan Jones claimed that the conflict reached dangerous levels. In the October edition of the *Millennial Star,* [238] Jones warned the readers: 'You need not be surprised should you hear of Carthage tragedies in Wales, ere long',[239] suggesting that, like Smith, his own life was at risk. He claimed at Dowlais at this time, there were 'thousands of the rabble reiterating the foul epithets of the clergy' and 'the whole towns [sic] and works hereabouts, containing over 60,000 people, are actually drunken with infatuation, and rage for or against Mormonism'.[240] Jones' claim was that Mormon supporters were as fired up as their opponents, suggesting that any tension that existed was not the result of feelings on one side of the debate. Such rhetoric might well have supported the Mormon call to emigrate, but if it contained an accurate reflection of public response, then it remains a mystery why no mention of tensions in Merthyr reached the newspapers if the situation had reached such a dramatic level.

Jones supported his view of the situation with reference to the testimonies of two former members of W. R. Davies' congregation. These appear to confirm Davies' hostile attitude and rigorous and frequent condemnation of the Latter-day Saints.

[238] *Millennial Star*, vol. 9, no.20 (15 October 1847), p. 318.
[239] *Millennial Star*, vol. 9, no.20 (15 October 1847), p. 319.
[240] *Millennial Star*, vol. 9, no.20 (15 October 1847), p. 318. Jones also asserts that the clergy conspired to prevent Mormon converts obtaining work from the ironmasters, by claiming that Mormonism could be linked with Chartism.

The first case in question is that of Job Rowland, whose claims about his former minister were printed in *Prophwyd y Jubili* in 1848.[241] Despite his voluble vocabulary, Davies never made any reference to wishing harm to the Latter-day Saints in any of his writings, yet Job Rowland claimed that while the minister was in his house he announced that he desired to do the same to the Mormon elders 'as was done to Joseph Smith, that is to kill them'.[242] According to Rowland, it was Davies' attitude and manner which ultimately led him to convert to Mormonism.[243] If it is true that Davies made this remark, it was certainly unguarded and ill considered. It was allegedly made during a private conversation with a member of his chapel, and he would probably not have expected it to be repeated. While it is not impossible that Davies, a Baptist minister, made this remark to a member of his congregation, it is worth remembering that the remark was not specifically attributed to W. R. Davies until December 1848. Dan Jones wrote a letter to the *Millennial Star,* dated 29 September 1847, in which he described the increasing conflict in Merthyr.
He maintained 'reverends, out of the pulpits, have actually declared that we should be treated as Joe Smith was.'[244] Between September 1847 and December 1848, the claim moves from being a remark made by nameless 'reverends' publically from their pulpits, to being the confided desire of one man, namely W. R. Davies. It was one of the numerous charges levelled against Davies to which he did not respond.

A more significant claim was that Davies' 'right-hand man' Rees Price converted to Mormonism, again for the same reasons as Job Rowland. In the case of Price, it was Edward Roberts' lecture on Mormonism at Caersalem in September 1847 that had been the final spur in his decision to leave the Baptists and join the Latter-day Saints. While Price's conversion is not in doubt, the claim that Price was in a position of such prominence in Davies' chapel is open to question.

[241] *Prophwyd y Jubili*, Rhif. 30(Rhagfyr, 1848), pp. 187-188.
[242] Dennis, 'The Reverend W. R. Davies vs Captain Dan Jones', p. 64: See also *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Rhif. 30 (Rhagfyr, 1848), p. 187.
[243] There were a couple of exceptions to this stance: *Y Bedyddiwr*, Cyf. V, Rhif. 54 (Mehefin, 1846), p. 232; *Seren Gomer*, Cyf. XXX1 [XXX], Rhif. 387 (Rhagfyr, 1847), pp. 375-376.
[244] *Millennial Star*, vol. 9, no.20 (15 October 1847), p. 319.

For Dennis, Rees Price's decision to join the Latter-day Saints was 'The most triumphant conversion story of the time.'[245] Again, he bases his account on information given by Dan Jones:

> Nine have been baptized there since the beginning of last January, one of which was the *right hand man* to the Rev. W. R. Davies! He was a secretary in his meeting house, one of the *trustees*, &c., and very staunch in their sight … Two others of Mr. Davies's members were baptized after him, and several before that, despite Mr. Davies's assertion that only one old woman left him for the Saints.[246]

Rees Price's own testimony was published in *Prophwyd y Jubili* in September 1848.[247] He had been at Caersalem for nine years and claimed that he had frequently heard Davies' 'persecution and false accusations' and listened to him 'in the meetings, from the pulpits, through the publications, and about the houses', but eventually came to believe Davies' arguments were baseless and were motivated by 'bad principle.'[248] The significance of his conversion lies in the claim that he held an important position at the chapel.

However, Eira M. Smith has observed 'There is no evidence to prove that he [i.e., Rees Price] had been a trustee and secretary of Caersalem as Jones had claimed, but he had been a faithful member there for nine years.'[249] W. R. Davies vehemently contested the claim that Price was his 'right-hand man' and denied that he had ever held any office of any significance at Caersalem. He asserted that Price had in fact been excommunicated prior to his conversion to Mormonism though he gave no indication of why this had occurred. He attempted to set the record straight about Rees Price in an article printed in *Y Bedyddiwr* in June 1848,[250] repeated in *Y Drysorfa Gynnulleidfaol* the same month. Davies claimed that Price had never held the office of trustee or 'kept all the accounts' at Dowlais, as Dan Jones had claimed. He maintained that Price did not possess the literary skills for such responsibilities, and observed wryly that Price was 'as suitable to fill "the Archbishop's chair" as he is to keep any

[245] Dennis, 'The Welsh and the Gospel', p. 258.
[246] *Prophwyd y Jubili*, Rhif. 21 (Mawrth, 1848), p. 45.
[247] *Prophwyd y Jubili*, Rhif. 27 (Medi, 1848), pp. 131-133.
[248] *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Rhif. 27 (Medi, 1848), p. 131.
[249] Eira M. Smith 'Mormonism in Merthyr Tydfil' in *Merthyr Tydfil 1500 Years*, ed.by Huw Williams (Mountain Ash: D. J. Price and Son, Merthyr Local History Group, 1980), p. 41.
[250] *Y Bedyddiwr* Cyf. V11, Rhif. 78 (Mehefin, 1848), p. 210; See also *Y Drysorfa Gynnulleidfaol,* (Mehefin, 1848), p. 169.

sort of accounts, be he an officer or *trustee.* They may as well claim, that he is the owner of Dowlais works.'[251] Regarding Jones' claim that two other members of the chapel were baptized after Price, and several before that,[252] Davies responded 'Why not say that hundreds left; that would be just as accurate.'[253] He confirmed, however, that Rees Price's wife had left Elim.

It may therefore be concluded, that while Price had been a member of Caersalem and subsequently became a Latter-day Saint, evidence that he had held important office is questionable. While it is difficult to account for Dan Jones' view that Price was a significant figure at Caersalem, it seems particularly unlikely that W. R. Davies would have written to two periodicals denying the claim that Price was his right-hand man given that such denial could easily have been shown to be false by others who would have been able to verify Price's claim. Furthermore, when Davies applied for a preaching licence in February 1847 for the new sister chapels Elim, Penydarren, and Hebron, Caeharris, two others signed with him. Presumably these were regarded as Davies' 'right-hand' men, but Rees Price was not among them.[254]

A Note on W. R. Davies in a time of Cholera

Many of the assertions made about W. R. Davies suggest that his determination to counter Mormonism led to a willingness to employ underhand strategies to achieve this aim. These allegations contribute to an assessment of Davies' character that influences the way his activity is perceived. They have contributed to the creation of an image of the man as a merciless opponent of the Latter-day Saints. It is this impression that has become accepted fact in Mormon history of the period. As we have seen many of the conclusions about Davies are questionable. Even at the time of his death, a judgement was made on the character of the man, a judgement that on closer analysis also proves to be unsustainable.

[251] *Y Drysorfa Gynnulleidfaol,* (Mehefin, 1848), p. 169-170.
[252] *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Rhif. 21 (Mawrth, 1848), p. 45.
[253] *Y Drysorfa Gynnulleidfaol*, (Mehefin, 1848), p. 170. He claimed that one old lady left Caersalem, and another woman, namely Rees Price's wife, left Elim.
[254] Williams and Williams, *History of Caersalem, Dowlais,* pp. 135-136.

On the cover page of *Udgorn Seion* for September 1849, its editor John Davis replied to a query by 'T. H.'[255] He confirmed that Revd W. R. Davies was among the recent deaths from cholera at Dowlais, adding 'He died soon after returning home at a time when it was thought that the disease had left the place'.[256] The previous edition of the periodical had claimed that 'W. R. Davies and others' had fled from Dowlais.[257] Dennis maintains that Davis 'exercised admirable restraint at the notice he placed in the issue of *Udgorn Seion* for September 1849.'[258] However, 'T. H.' had showed little restraint in an article in the previous edition. He posed the question:

> The famous man of all famous men, and the great giant of all giants, the Rev. W. R. Davies of Dowlais, whose voice before was like the thunders of Sinai and terrified almost all the pagan believers in Dowlais, with his door closed, and boards covering the windows of his house. Well, where has he gone? ... there will not be any minister to baptize soon, except with the Saints; because the chief shepherd of Dowlais has fled already.[259]

'T. H.' concluded that W. R. Davies had shown himself to be a 'fair weather' shepherd of his flock. Even after Dan Jones had left Wales for the Valley of the Salt Lake in February 1849, attacks on Davies still appeared in the Mormon press. Davies died from cholera on 1 September 1849. However, there is evidence to challenge the assertion that he deserted his congregation from a sense of self-preservation.

During the long hot summer of 1849, cholera had raged throughout Britain,[260] arriving in Cardiff in May.[261] In June there were 349 deaths in Merthyr with the Caedraw, 'China', and Penydarren districts worst affected. An additional 530 people died in the Merthyr district in July. The epidemic reached its peak in August, and by the second of that month, thirty-six more deaths had been added.[262] The Dowlais and Penydarren districts were badly affected, and 'scores of people were now locking up

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[255] Dennis identifies 'T. H.' as Thomas Harris, although no further information is provided about him. *Zion's Trumpet*, (BYU, Religious Studies Center, Provo, Utah, 2001), p. xli
[256] *Udgorn Seion*, Cyf. 1, Rhif.9 (Medi, 1849), cover, p. 3.
[257] *Udgorn Seion*, Cyf. 1, Rhif.8 (Awst, 1849), p. 119.
[258] Dennis, *Indefatigable Veteran*, p. 126.
[259] *Udgorn Seion*, Cyf. 1, Rhif.8 (Awst, 1849), p. 119.
[260] It arrived in Edinburgh in October 1848, and reached its peak in the summer of 1849, by which point there had been 53, 292 deaths in Britain. See: G. Penrhyn Jones, 'Cholera in Wales', *National Library of Wales Journal,* Vol. X, no.3 (Summer 1958), p. 290.
[261] D. C. James 'The Cholera Epidemic of 1849 in Cardiff', *Glamorgan Local History Society*, Vol.25 (1981), p. 168.
[262] The final death toll for the Merthyr district was 1682 deaths. It registered the highest mortality rate for the 1849 cholera outbreak in Wales. The second highest numbers of deaths were recorded in Cardiff, with total of 396 deaths. G. Penrhyn Jones, 'Cholera in Wales', p. 295.

their houses and leaving the district.'[263] Thus while the Mormon claims are plausible, there are a number of reasons to treat this final condemnation of Davies with caution.

The claim that he left the area appeared in the August publication of *Udgorn Seion.* This would suggest that he had disappeared from Dowlais, during the June to July period. However, Davies wrote from Dowlais to a friend in north Wales in a letter dated 12 July 1849. In this poignant letter he described the dire situation at Dowlais, and its impact on the people around him:

> You see me and my family are healthy amongst the dead, unless you have not heard about the terrible devastation which has been done in Dowlais and Merthyr by the cholera. It started on the 25th of May. The tally stands like this at the moment – Cases 1117, Deaths – 468. A large number, don't you agree? It is a sobering time, and we are very busy here because of it; and there is no news of it leaving. It was judged to be lessening at the end of last week, but we were wrong; they are dying yesterday and today as many if not more than any day. Some have died in the houses next to us. This is how they are buried, after they have died, some sort of hearse comes, belonging to the parish with coffins in them, then the bodies are put into the coffins and they then place them into the hearses; and away they go like dogs, without a loved one or friend there, and to the grave like dogs. This hearse passes our door sometimes, 4 or 5 times a day, sometimes with 2 or 3 bodies in it at a time. This is the kind of situation we have – truly we do not know when we will die, but that is the way it is now in a particular way, although it is not important; if we are ready, our comfort is that it is the Lord who reigns; and as a result 'let the earth rejoice'. Our souls are in his hands. And we hope that we have entrusted our bodies and souls to him …[264]

Davies' words reveal the extremity of the situation, but his apparent acceptance of the very real possibility of death, does not suggest that he was preparing to board up his premises and leave Dowlais. In a letter to a friend, such an intention might have been confided and defended, especially as Davies had a wife and three young daughters. In this final letter, Davies wrote that he was forced to break off his writing due to the pressure of work caused by the cholera. He resumed with the words: 'I have written the above yesterday, but no time to finish it – was obliged to attend different funerals - great many died last night, men, women and children. We are in the midst of death,

[263] G. Penrhyn Jones, 'Cholera in Wales', p. 292.
[264] W. R. Davies to John Evans, 12 July 1849, Cwrtmawr Collection, National Library of Wales.

but through the kindness of God, we are well thus far'. Thus far from Mormon claims that he was shirking his responsibilities, he was exhausted from the pressure of them.

While it is not impossible that W. R. Davies left Dowlais at this time, the impression given in this letter is that he was working hard to fulfill his role as a minister by attending funerals. If it is true that he left Dowlais, it could not have been for long. On the 2 August 1849 his thirteen year old daughter fell ill with cholera and died two days later.[265] Undoubtedly, Davies would have been home at Dowlais at this point. Barely a month later, Davies himself was struck down with the disease at nine in the morning and died at seven o'clock the same evening.[266] During the last two weeks of August, prior to his death, Davies baptized 150 people.[267] Furthermore, if Davies had fled the area, it is difficult to understand what would have given him the impression that the cholera was abating and that it was safe to return home. Statistics are clear that the disease did not abate until November, and that although August, when his daughter died, was the worst month for mortality from the disease in Merthyr, the disease had raged there since May.[268]

Therefore, some of the Latter-day Saints' criticisms and claims regarding his actions are at the very least open to question. The conclusion that W. R. Davies was a man of strong opinions that he expressed freely can hardly be disputed. However, that he was capable of deliberately inventing falsehoods, forgery and ultimately cowardice, are open to question.

When Davies died from cholera in September 1849, *Y Bedyddiwr* printed a brief obituary the following month. It stated:

> Perhaps the *Satanists*, as he called them (if any of the refuse in Merthyr, etc., have outlived him,) rejoice, but they can stop, their cause is nothing but deceit and lies, but he has died still uttering, his Sermon and School Topic on the

[265] Williams and Williams, *History of Caersalem*, *Dowlais*, p. 35.
[266] Williams and Williams, *History of Caersalem*, *Dowlais*, p. 35.
[267] Williams and Williams, *History of Caersalem, Dowlais,* p. 35.
[268] G. Penrhyn Jones, 'Cholera in Wales', p. 295.

> Miracles will be the definitive answer for them for as long as the world exists.[269]

This suggests that Davies' conflict with Mormonism was well-known, and that his pamphlet on miracles[270] was regarded as an important treatise, at least among the readership of *Y Bedyddiwr.* However, *Y Bedyddiwr* proceeded to print a three-part biography of Revd W. R. Davies in 1851.[271] The lack of any substantial reference to his 'anti-Mormon' activity by his biographers, may suggest that his colleagues did not regard his contribution to this subject to be his defining achievement.[272] Despite the lengthy nature of these biographies, Davies' encounter with the Mormons receives only one fleeting reference:

> The last time I had the honour of meeting him, he was so amusing when relating the tricks of the Mormon people; he was so droll when relating the story of the uproar caused by the Mormons of Penydaren [sic], how a saint called '*Twm*', stole the wife, (a *very, very* godly sister), of another Mormon, who was known as 'the Little Rockman, a priest in the order of Melchisedek. His *wit* wasn't as refined as that of Sheridan, or as low as the sharp-tongued *Dean Swift;* … his *wit* didn't belong to just one class, but to everyone …[273]

One of his biographers also noted 'His wit saved him on many occasions from being punished for his lack of tact. It was almost impossible to take offence at him on any matter.'[274] This makes the depiction of Davies as a man obsessed with the destruction of Mormonism, prepared to go to great lengths to achieve this goal, difficult to sustain. Of course, his biography was written by friends and colleagues who doubtless shared his views. But they at least offer an alternative view of the man, suggesting that much of his reputation as the 'archenemy' and persecutor of the Latter-day Saints has been built on Captain Dan Jones' assertions, and that these need to be read as the response of one who held alternative views to those of W. R. Davies.

This analysis of the evidence regarding claims made about W. R. Davies reveals that alternative explanations are possible that widen our understanding of him and of the response to the Mormon mission in Wales. Basing a discussion on the evidence of

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[269] *Y Bedyddiwr,* Cyf. V111, Rhif 94 (Hydref, 1849), p. 323.
[270] Davies, *Y Seintiau Diweddaf*.
[271] *Y Bedyddiwr,* Cyf. X, Rhif 109 (Ionawr, 1851), pp.5-8; *Y Bedyddiwr,* Cyf. X, Rhif 110 (Chwefror, 1851), pp.37-44; *Y Bedyddiwr,* Cyf. X, Rhif 111 (Mawrth, 1851), pp.69-75. *Seren Gomer* printed the same articles over the same period. The contributors were R.D. Roberts, Merthyr, John Pritchard, Llangollen and John Jones (Mathetes).
[272] Mathetes, *Y Bedyddiwr*, Cyf. X, Rhif 110 (Chwefror, 1851), p. 43.
[273] *Y Bedyddiwr,* Cyf. X, Rhif 111 (Mawrth, 1851), p. 72
[274] *Y Bedyddiwr,* Cyf. X, Rhif 110 (Chwefror, 1851), p. 43

Captain Dan Jones alone leaves us with an imbalanced and incomplete picture of Davies. That he was a leading opponent of Mormonism is beyond question. However, his opposition was not based simply on a relentless desire to persecute Latter-day Saints in his locality. He provoked and challenged them to defend their claims. Over a period of four years, between 1844-48 we can say with certainty that he can be identified with 'Tobit ger y Bont', that he wrote on twelve occasions to the religious periodicals, and published one pamphlet. If he is to be identified with 'Quick yn Dwr' and 'Gwcw y Don' then two more articles may be added to this list. This indicates that excluding his pamphlet, he wrote an average of three and a half articles a year. Between April 1844 and March 1846 he wrote nothing at all on the topic of the Latter-day Saints, even though this was a period of considerable growth for the movement.

On the other hand, Captain Dan Jones produced nineteen pamphlets between 1845-48 and published *Prophwyd y Jubili*, dedicated solely to the defence of Mormonism, monthly from July 1846 to December 1848. Despite Jones' complaint that the religious periodicals would not print any Mormon defence, the weight of literature ultimately appeared on the Mormon side of the debate. It is worth noting that on no occasion did Jones ever name Davies or his writing in his letters to the *Millennial Star.* This suggests that it was a localised conflict that appears, particularly in Jones' writing, to have become very personalised. In fact, Davies had very little to say about the fundamental beliefs of this religion. He never expounded the frequently repeated accusations about Joseph Smith's character, or claims that the *Book of Mormon* was based on Spaulding's fiction. It was the claim to practise spiritual gifts, and above all miracles, for which he had seen no satisfactory evidence, which incensed Davies and motivated him to produce his pamphlet on the topic. Even if we conclude that Davies was Mormonism's 'most vociferous opponent in Wales until his death in 1849'[275] he was not alone.

[275] Dennis, 'The Welsh and the Gospel', p. 242.

The Nonconformist press reveals that other writers, such as 'Sylwedydd O'r Gogledd'[276] also attempted to engage in theological debate regarding the claims of the Latter-day Saints. Figures such as Revd Edward Roberts and Revd D. Evans gave public lectures on the 'deceit' of Mormonism, and yet others published pamphlets, although these in Wales never matched the output of Captain Dan Jones. The Revd W. R. Davies, Dowlais is the focus of criticism by Captain Dan Jones in almost half of the editions of *Prophwyd y Jubili.* His place as an opponent of Mormonism cannot be doubted, but had he not been presented as the key opponent of the Latter-day Saints in *Prophwyd y Jubili*, we may ponder the question whether he would have emerged as any more significant an opponent than the other figures who engaged in a debate with Mormonism.

Other Opponents of Mormonism in Wales

In his concluding assessment of Davies' opposition to Mormonism, Ron Dennis notes:

> His pen fell silent after June 1848, and he died of cholera in September 1849. Others would oppose Mormonism in Wales over the years, but none with quite the same vehemence or constancy as did the Reverend W. R. Davies.[277]

Thus, although Dennis acknowledges that Davies was not alone in his opposition to the Latter-day Saints, he has given little attention to other writers who engaged in debate about Mormonism. A number of writers wrote to the religious press on the topic of the Latter-day Saints during the years 1844 to 1849. It could even be said that they wrote with a conviction and vehemence at least equal to that of Davies.

To consider whether W. R. Davies wrote in a singularly vehement style it is evidently necessary to consider the others who contributed to the written opposition to the Latter-day Saints during the 1840s. While it is acknowledged that there were other

[276] *Seren Gomer*, Cyf. XXXI, Rhif. 397 (Hydref, 1848), pp. 293-296*; Seren Gomer*, Cyf. XXXI, Rhif. 398 (Tachwedd, 1848), pp. 327-329; *Seren Gomer*, Cyf. XXXI, Rhif. 399, (Rhagfyr, 1848), pp.362-366; *Seren Gomer*, Cyf. XXXII, Rhif. 401 (Chwefror, 1849), pp. 42-46.
[277] Ronald D. Dennis, 'Reverend W. R. Davies vs Captain Dan Jones', *BYU Studies*, vol.27, no.2, (1987), p. 65 https://ojs.lib.byu.edu/spc/index.php/BYUStudies/article/view/5664/5314 accessed 13 September 2016.

opponents, they have received little attention and have been merged into a group of nameless 'reverends' who exerted 'pernicious influences.''[278]

As early as 1844, shortly after the first two articles by 'Tobit ger y Bont' Dennis has noted that other criticisms of the Latter-day Saints were published. He states: '*Y Bedyddiwr* was silent about the LDS Church for two years following Mr Davies's article. *Y Diwygiwr*, however, took up the attack in July 1844 …'

In fact*, Y Bedyddiwr* was not silent, having published the same article as *Y Diwygiwr* in a virtually verbatim account the previous month.[279] It also published an article from the *St Louis Republican,* describing a court case in which Joseph Smith's character came into question,[280] and it gave an account of Smith's death,[281] adding, perhaps unkindly, that 'Ungodliness will kill its owner.' The unidentified author ended this brief article by posing the question, 'What will the saints (or rather the Satanists) say about this?'[282]

The article in *Y Diwygiwr* that Dennis asserts 'took up the attack', was in the form of a letter written by Thomas Williams, originally from the Merthyr area, but then living in Ohio. He had encountered Mormonism on his travels and had written to friends in Wales, warning them about the new religion. He provided a brief history of the movement, with reference to Solomon Spaulding and the increasing power and influence of Joseph Smith at Nauvoo. A certain unidentifiable 'R. P. D. Merthyr' sent it to both periodicals*.* He claimed that he wished to 'reveal the deceit and arrogance of those wretches who wrongly name themselves the Latter-day Saints, or Mormons.' He added:

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[278] Dennis, *The Call of Zion,* p. 12.
[279] *Y Bedyddiwr,* Cyf. 111, Rhif 30 (Mehefin, 1844), p. 192: *Y Diwygiwr*, (Gorphenaf, 1844), pp. 213-215.
[280] Full accounts of the incident can also be found in *The Whig Standard* (15 May 1844) Washington, D.C.; *The Evansville Journal* (30 May 1844), *Evansville, Indiana*. The story had been published in the British press: *Bell's Weekly Messenger* (10 June 1844) *Morning Advertiser* (10 June 1844); *Dundee Courier* (11 June 1844); Devizes *and Wiltshire Gazette* (13 June 1844); *Durham County Advertiser* (14 June 1844); *Hereford Times* (15 June 1844). *Hull Packet* (14 June 1844); *Morning Post* (19 June 1844); *Leamington Spa Courier* (22 June 1844).
[281] *Y Bedyddiwr,* Cyf. 111, Rhif 33 (Medi, 1844), pp. 293-94.
[282] *Y Bedyddiwr,* Cyf. 111, Rhif 33 (Medi, 1844), p. 294.

> It is so easy to sow and set up errors … I was persuaded to put them before the public, through your commendable publication, with a respectable zeal for the truth, and because this destructive and damnable heresy has arrived in many parts of the south of Gwalia, and that some cabbage-faced dwarves, have with great effort, sown these destructive tares in the community where I live.[283]

It may be argued that the description of Latter-day Saints as 'cabbage-faced dwarves', published in both periodicals, is an example of style and language equal to that of W. R. Davies, and the content of such articles were as damaging to perceptions of Mormonism as anything written by him. Furthermore, *Y Diwygiwr* had a year earlier, in 1843, published an article on Joseph Smith's attempt to walk on water.[284]

Seren Gomer[285] published a paragraph about Joseph Smith's assassination, promising to give a broader account of this 'deceiver' and his sect in a later edition, which appeared as a seven-column history of Joseph Smith in the November issue.[286] *Y Dysgedydd Crefyddol* [287] also published a letter from an unnamed contributor whose expressed intention was to outline for readers the origins of the movement and the deception of its claims, especially with regard to the *Book of Mormon.* In March 1846 the same periodical provided its readers with yet another history of Joseph Smith.[288] This narrative is interspersed with words such as 'deception' and 'deceit', and similar accounts were also provided for a young readership in *Tywysydd yr Ieuainc* under the title 'Religious Deceiver'.[289] Thus, even by 1846, the religious periodicals had published a number of articles that questioned the validity of Mormonism, in addition to the criticisms of the movement found in the secular press since 1837.
It was a trend that continued throughout the 1840s,[290] although as we have seen, the religious periodicals repeated stories found in the newspapers, often after a period of some weeks or months.

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[283] *Y Bedyddiwr*, Cyf. 111, Rhif 30 (Mehefin, 1844), pp. 192-93.
[284] *Y Diwygiwr* (Rhagfyr 1843), pp. 370-71.
[285] *Seren Gomer* (Medi, 1844), p. 287.
[286] *Seren Gomer* (Tachwedd, 1844), p. 327.
[287] *Y Dysgedydd Crefyddol*, (Tachwedd, 1844), pp. 339-340.
[288] *Y Dysgedydd Crefyddol* (Mawrth, 1846), pp.79-81.
[289] 'Twyllwyr Crefyddol', *Twysydd yr Ieuainc,* Rhif.32 cyf.111, (Medi, 1849), pp. 133-35; *Twysydd yr Ieuainc,* Rhif.33 cyf.111 (Hydref, 1849), pp.149-152.
[290] E.g. Y *Dysgedydd Crefyddol,* (Mawrth, 1846), pp.79-81; *Y Tyst Apostolaidd*, Cyf. 11, (Ionawr, 1847), pp. 16-17; *Y Dysgedydd Crefyddol*, (Hydref, 1848), pp. 289-290. In this edition the article involved a letter from America about the origins of Mormonism by the widow of Benjamin Job Davies, '*Gynt o'r Pant-teg, near Carmarthen.'*

We must concede that W. R. Davies added to this propagating of information with reports and comments from his locality, at the heart of the Mormon mission, but he did not create the antagonism to the Latter-day Saints. Clearly, Davies was not alone in his vehement expressions regarding Mormonism.

Other writers in the Nonconformist press also implored the Welsh not to be enticed by Mormonism. In February 1846, in *Seren Gomer* 'Llydaw,' appealed 'to the Welsh working class' and cautioned them, in words that echo W. R. Davies, not to be misled by the 'monster deceiver Joe Smith, the impudent Mormon prophet and father of the devilish Latter-day Saints, who established his deception and kept up his enticement in America and who spread his wild dreams to Britain'.[291] However, apart from one brief mention, Davies did not discuss Joseph Smith and the origins of Mormonism,[292] but allowed others to make judgements regarding these topics.

There is, however, evidence that a new level of theological discussion pertaining to the teachings and practices of the Latter-day Saints emerged in April 1846, a month after Davies had published his pamphlet on miracles. It is not possible to state with certainty that it was Davies' pamphlet that opened up this area of theological discussion, as this may have resulted from the fact that the teachings of Mormonism were becoming more widely known due to the spread of the movement.

There is clear evidence that some contributors to the religious periodicals expressed equally fervent views on Mormonism. *Seren Gome*r published an article by 'Ieuan, Glan Cynon'[293] that contained a doctrinal argument on the place of miracles and the work of the Holy Spirit in the church. He concluded that these experiences were available only during New Testament times, in contrast to the erroneous beliefs of groups such as the Mormons. The topic of miracle working was continued some months later by 'Gwilym ab Dewi, Talywaen'.[294] He categorised Joseph Smith as 'evil and deceitful' with a 'corrupt mind.' He drew on biblical injunctions (specifically 1Timothy 1:19-20; 4:1, 3) to warn against deception by such people.

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[291] *Seren Gomer*, Cyf. XXIX, Rhif. 365 (Chwefror, 1846), pp. 45-46.
[292] *Y Bedyddiwr*, Cyf. V, Rhif 51 (Mawrth, 1846), pp. 91-93; *Y Bedyddiwr*, Cyf. V11, Rhif 78 (Mehefin, 1848), pp. 209-210.
[293] *Seren Gomer*, Cyf. XXIX, Rhif. 367 (Ebrill, 1846), pp. 97-99.
[294] *Seren Gomer*, Cyf. XXIX, Rhif. 371 (Awst, 1846), pp. 234- 235. Talywaen is near Dolgellau.

Although Dan Jones claimed that the periodicals were closed to any defence of Latter-day Saint actions or beliefs, there is evidence that this was not always the case. *Seren Gomer* published a response to 'Gwilym ab Dewi' that defended the Latter-day Saint position regarding the nature of miracles.[295] This response took the approach of well-defined theological argument. Its author 'I. M. Glan Teifi' called on 'Gwilym ab Dewi' to acknowledge that the Latter-day Saints preached the same teachings as Christ himself. The significance of this article increases when we realize that 'I. M. Glan Teifi' was, in fact, a Latter-day Saint. His articles were considered so important that they were reprinted in 1851 in *Udgorn Seion*, whose editor, John Davis, stated 'The foregoing article of ours was published in *Seren Gomer*, for January, 1847.'[296] Davis justified his decision to reprint these articles in 1851 by stating 'Since only a few of the Saints have seen the foregoing article of ours in the *Seren Gomer*, we thought that its publication in *Udgorn* would be useful.'[297] Of course, this being the case, few would have been aware that *Seren Gomer* had published an article by a Latter-day Saint, entrenching the view that they had been treated with unwarranted prejudice. A reply to 'I. M. Glan Teifi', was published by a contributor named 'Meurig Glan yr un Teifi'. [298] However, *Seren Gomer*[299] also allowed 'I. M. Glan Teifi' the right of reply to these arguments. It is not the case, then, that the Mormons were in every instance denied the right of reply by the Nonconformist press.

The debate on miracles continued in February 1847. 'Ioan Ddu O Lan Taf' wrote to *Seren Gomer* on the 'Truth of Christianity', arguing that the miracles recorded in the New Testament were performed in public view, unlike those claimed by the 'foolish madmen' called Latter-day Saints. Again the language is reminiscent of W. R. Davies.[300] This time the writer called on the Mormons to repent of their deceitful mockery and declared them to be 'sinners of the worst sort', even worse than people like Southcott, to the extent that 'their name on the tongue is scornful.'[301]

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[295] *Seren Gomer*, Cyf. XXIX, Rhif. 373 (Hydref 1846), pp. 301-303.
[296] *Udgorn Seion*, Rhif. 2, (25, Ionawr, 1851), pp. 32-35. This was the second of a series of three articles published at the start of 1851on the subject of the nature of miracles. It was a re-printing of the discussion in *Seren Gomer,* four years previously. See also: *Udgorn Seion* Rhif. 1 (11, Ionawr, 1851), pp. 14-17; *Udgorn Seion*, Rhif. 3 (8, Chwefror, 1851), pp. 48-50.
[297] *Udgorn Seion,* Rhif. 2, (25, Ionawr, 1851), p. 35.
[298] *Seren Gomer,* Cyf. XXIX , Rhif. 375 (Rhagfyr, 1846), p. 378
[299] *Seren Gomer,* Cyf. XXX, Rhif. 376, (Ionawr, 1847), p. 16.
[300] *Y Bedyddiwr,* Cyf. 111, Rhif 27, (Mawrth, 1844), p. 99.
[301] *Seren Gomer*, Cyf. XXX, Rhif. 377(Chwefror, 1847), pp. 33-36.

Writers such as 'Gwilym ab Dewi' continued to contribute in a vehement manner to the debate on Mormonism. In the October 1847 edition of *Y Bedyddiwr*[302] he compared Mormon claims that they could cast out demons with witchcraft, conjuring and magic, and argued that these were based on fakery and dishonesty. Others, such as 'H.T.' drew a comparison between the public character of Christ's miracles and the miracles the Latter-day Saints that were done within their own circle.[303] In December 1847, *Y Dysgedydd Crefyddol* printed an article by 'Eta Elta, Ty Wynne' that listed Mormon beliefs, and once again raised the issue of the practice of spiritual gifts and the performance of miracles.[304] The author described the Latter-day Saints as having a narrow, low and heretical view of the Bible, and stated that he had seen no evidence of the spiritual gifts among them. He concluded that they were famous for their assertions, their challenges and daring, but they condemned those who disagreed with their views.[305] Once more, although these articles have received little attention, they evidently argue in the same style and manner of W. R. Davies and support his view of miracles and spiritual gifts. Davies was simply the first to publish on this issue.

'I. M. Glan Teifi' was not the only Latter-day Saint allowed to make his case in the denominational periodicals. In June 1847, 'J. D.' wrote a letter to *Seren Gomer*, on the practice of 'speaking in tongues', defending its usage among the Latter-day Saints.[306] Significantly, J. D. can be identified with John Davis, the Latter-day Saint printer and later editor of *Udgorn Seion*. Evidence for this can be found in *Prophwyd y Jubili*[307] where Dan Jones refers to the article in *Seren Gomer.* Davis often signed articles simply as J. D. The publication of this article in *Seren Gomer* did not satisfy Jones, who claimed that when Davis sought to add to the debate with another letter, this was not published by the periodical, and he accused its editor of publishing the first letter only to create a false impression of fair play.[308] Nevertheless, they had published the Mormon point of view, and this was not the first time for them to do so.

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[302] *Y Bedyddiwr,* Cyf. VI, Rhif. 70 (Hydref, 1847), pp. 375-377.
[303] *Seren Gomer*, Cyf. XXXI [XXX], Rhif. 384 (Medi, 1847), p. 258.
[304] *Y Dysgedydd Crefyddol*, (Rhagfyr, 1847), pp. 365-366.
[305] *Y Dysgedydd Crefyddol*, (Rhagfyr, 1847), p. 366.
[306] *Seren Gomer*, Cyf. XXXI [XXX], Rhif. 381 (Mehefin, 1847), pp. 173-174.
[307] *Prophwyd y Jubili*, Rhif. 18 (Rhagfyr, 1847), p. 181.
[308] *Prophwyd y Jubili*, Rhif. 18 (Rhagfyr, 1847), p. 181.

Other writers entered the debate on miracles, with a response that was stronger than the writings of W. R. Davies. Although 'Iago Silin' was not a regular contributor to the Nonconformist periodicals in the same manner as Davies, his direct approach and language undoubtedly matched the Caersalem minister in its forcefulness. 'Iago Silin' in his article in *Seren Gomer* on the subject of miracles[309] also used the term 'Satanists' to describe the Latter-day Saints. He warned the readers that in every age people appeared like angels of light but deceived others, and compared these to the Devil. In strong and vehement language, 'Iago Silin' referred to these 'deceivers' as 'evil spirits' and warned the Welsh to test their claims, rather than accept everything they heard. According to 'Iago Silin', Dan Jones 'goes round like a roaring lion, seeking out anyone he can swallow up'. He warned people not to get too close to 'the trunk of this elephant' and to take little notice of the doctrines of the 'arch-deceiver of the age.'

The most extensive theological discussion on the issue was provided by 'Sylwedydd O'r Gogledd', who wrote four long articles to *Seren Gomer* on the topic of spiritual gifts between October 1848 and February 1849.[310] His first article began:

> when we consider that there is great heresy attached to the above topic [Mormonism] which has spread throughout south and north Wales; that two and a half thousand of our fellow countrymen, yes, from our Welsh nation, believe (or profess to believe) that the spiritual gifts are now being enjoyed in the church of the *'Latter-day Saints',* as they were in the churches during the Apostolic age. They deserve serious consideration.[311]

The key words here are 'serious consideration' for they suggest that the author's intention was to engage in a thought-provoking theological debate regarding these issues. This was not an attempt to persecute or make life difficult for the Latter-day Saints, but to analyse the truth of their claims. He proceeded to discuss the spiritual gifts in the light of the teaching of 1 Corinthians 12-14, and the part they played in the body of Christ. As part of his series of articles 'Sylwedydd' responded directly to arguments regarding the belief in miracles that Captain Dan Jones had put forward in

[309] *Seren Gomer,* Cyf. XXXI, Rhif. 396 (Medi, 1848), pp. 264-265.
[310] *Seren Gomer*, Cyf. XXXI, Rhif. 397 (Hydref, 1848), pp. 293-296*; Seren Gomer*, Cyf. XXXI, Rhif. 398 (Tachwedd, 1848), pp. 327-329; *Seren Gomer*, Cyf. XXXI, Rhif. 399, (Rhagfyr, 1848), pp.362-366; *Seren Gomer*, Cyf. XXXII, Rhif. 401 (Chwefror, 1849), pp. 42-46.
[311] *Seren Gomer*, Cyf. XXXI, Rhif. 397 (Hydref, 1848), p. 293.

his pamphlet *Eurgrawn Ysgrythyrol.*[312] In order to strengthen his argument 'Sylwedydd' provided evidence of a number of individual cases known to him personally, just as W. R. Davies had done, where claims of healing by the Latter-day Saints were questionable.[313] He invited anyone to check the facts surrounding the incidents of failed healing that he had cited, again as Davies had done in the case of William Hughes' leg. Yet, 'Sylwedydd O'r Gogledd' has received no consideration by Dennis in his analysis of the opposition to Mormon teaching.

The final article on the spiritual gifts by 'Sylwedydd O'r Gogledd' was printed in *Seren Gomer* in February 1849.[314] Again, it challenged the views of Dan Jones, as printed in *Eurgrawn Ysgrythyrol,* this time in relation to prophecy. As usual, the article was written in an informed manner, citing the opinions of other respected authors of the time.[315] As W. R. Davies had done, 'Sylwedydd O'r Gogledd' cited a case where a Latter-day Saint had been involved in criminal behaviour.[316] Most notably, it was a case that had been widely reported in the British press the previous year and involved one Thomas Harries, a Mormon preacher, who was accused of stealing a dictionary.[317] In December 1847, the *Pembrokeshire Herald and General Advertiser* reported that a theft had taken place in Llandewi-Aberarth near Aberaeron.[318] Harries was sentenced to two months' imprisonment without hard labour. A full and detailed account of the incident was given when the press recorded the court case that followed in January 1848.[319] Such was the notoriety of the case that *Prophwyd y*

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[312] Captain Dan Jones, *Eurgrawn Ysgrythyrol* (Rhydybont; John Jones), 1848.
[313] *Seren Gomer*, Cyf. XXXI, Rhif. 399 (Rhagfyr, 1848), p. 365.
[314] *Seren Gomer*, Cyf. XXXII, Rhif. 401 (Chwefror, 1849), pp. 42-46. Although at the end of this fourth article on 'Doniau Ysbrydol' by 'Sylwedydd O'r Gogledd' ends with a note that it will be continued, *Seren Gomer* did not publish any further articles in this series.
[315] Among the scholars he references are Thomas Wemyss 'A Key to the Symbolical Language of Scripture', (Thomas Clark, Edinburgh), 1840 and John Leonard Hug, 'Introduction to the Writings of New Testament', (C & J. Rivington), 1827.
[316] *Y Bedyddiwr* Cyf. V11, Rhif. 78 (Mehefin, 1848), p. 209-210.
[317] E.g. *Daily News* (27 December 1848); *Stamford Mercury* (31 December 1847); *Hereford Journal* (29 December 1847); *Bolton Chronicle* (1 January 1848); *Hampshire Advertiser* (1 January 1848); *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General* (1 January 1848); *Monmouthshire Merlin* (1 January 1848); *Leeds Intelligencer* (1 January 1848); *Newcastle Courant* (7 January 1848); *Lincolnshire Chronicle* (7 January 1848); *Bristol Times and Mirror* (8 January 1848) etc.
[318] *Pembrokeshire Herald and General Advertiser* (24 December 1847). Also published in the *Welshman* (24 December 1847).
[319] *Welshman* (7 January 1848); *Daily News* (10 January 1848); *Hereford Journal* (12 January 1848); *Bolton Chronicle* (15 January 1848); *Carnarvon and Denbigh Herald and North and South Wales Independent* (15 January 1848); *Pembrokeshire Herald and General Advertiser* (14 January 1848); *Northern Star and Leeds General Advertiser* (15 January 1848); *The Northern Star and Trades' Journal (*15 January 1848); *Stamford Mercury* (14 January1848) etc.

Jubili had felt the need to comment on it.[320] The editorial comment by Dan Jones noted that the 'Sectarian and slanderous Editors of our country' had published 'barefaced lies' regarding the Thomas Harries incident and the 'filthy' *Y Bedyddiwr* was particularly culpable.[321] However, this is to disregard the fact that *Y Bedyddiwr* printed its account in February 1848,[322] while the initial story and ensuing court case had appeared in the press between December 1847 and January 1848.[323]
The *Welshman* had commented that 'In the ancient Sparta code, stealing was not forbidden, no more is it, as it would seem by the modern religion called the "Latter-Day Saints."'[324] Thus, a number of writers determinedly argued against the teachings and conduct of the Latter-day Saints, and that the religious periodicals printed items that had appeared in the secular press, often sometime after their initial coverage. Furthermore, Dan Jones criticized the denominational periodicals for printing items that were often in the public domain.

The length and content of the series of articles contributed by 'Sylwedydd O'r Gogledd' places him as one of the leading contributors in the Nonconformist press on the debate about Mormon practices and beliefs. However, there is no sense in which this contribution could be described as a form of persecution or 'pernicious'. Jones never addressed a response in *Prophwyd y Jubili* to this anonymous contributor to *Seren Gomer*, despite the fact that he had constantly directed responses to W. R. Davies. However, a reply came from John Davis in the form of a pamphlet dedicated to addressing the issues surrounding the spiritual gifts raised by 'Sylwedydd O'r Gogledd'.[325] Davis claimed the pamphlet was necessary because *Seren Gomer* had not permitted the Latter-day Saints a right of reply.[326]

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[320] *Prophwyd y Jubili*, Rhif. 19 (Ionawr, 1848), pp. 14-16. It announced that Thomas Harries had been excommunicated, not for intentional theft, but for not turning back immediately when he discovered the book was in his possession, thus ultimately bringing dishonour on his religion. He was later restored to the Mormon Church and his defence printed in the May edition of *Prophwyd y Jubili,* Rhif. 23 (Mai, 1848), pp. 72-74.
[321] *Prophwyd y Jubili*, Rhif. 23 (Mai, 1848), p. 74.
[322] *Y Bedyddiwr,* Cyf. V11, Rhif. 74 (Chwefror, 1848), pp. 75-76.
[323] See also: *Y Drysorfa,* Rhif XIV (Chwefror, 1848), p. 68.
[324] *Welshman* (24 December 1847).
[325] John Davis*, 'Y doniau ysbrydol yn mrawdlys y gelyn : yn cynnwys sylwadau ar ysgrifau "Sylwedydd o'r Gogledd," yn Seren Gomer (o Hydref, 1848, hyd Chwefror, 1849), ynghlych y "doniau ysbrydol"'*, (Merthyr Tydfil: Argraffwyd John Davis), 1849.
[326] John Davis, *'Y doniau ysbrydol yn mrawdlys y gelyn:',* p. 3

While W. R. Davies may have been the first to write on these concerns, articles by writers such as 'Sylwedydd O'r Gogledd need to be taken into account when assessing the place ascribed to Davies by Ron Dennis as the most vehement and relentless opponent of Mormonism during this period. To single Davies out, without refence to or consideration of the other opponents of Mormonism, is to take Dan Jones' portrayal of Davies simply at face value. The danger of this approach is that it removes the man from the wider context of a reaction that emerged from the increasing presence of the Latter-day Saints in Wales.

Conversely, there were those in the religious periodicals that argued for a reasonable approach to the Latter-day Saints. In May 1849, a letter appeared in *Y Tyst Apostolaidd* by 'Tychicus' who challenged the use of the term 'Satanists' when referring to Mormons, and claimed that it was unfair to refer to the Latter-day Saints as 'sorcerers, gypsies, and fortune-tellers and other wicked names'. He cautioned that the wide circulation of *Y Tyst Apostolaidd* meant that it had the power to influence opinion regarding the Mormons and thus the potential to encourage their persecution.

Therefore many articles appeared in the religious press that attempted to engage the claims of Mormonism in a framework of theological debate. We may accept that the views expressed, though not encouraging persecution, were stringent. On some occasions, such contributions initiated academic and sophisticated theological debate, a stratagem well within the remit of these periodicals that encouraged the sharing of views on a wide variety of topics. Inevitably, such articles would have informed the opinions of those ministers and church leaders who received and read the denominational periodicals while also ultimately exercising influence over the views of their congregations. The publication of such views, however contrary to the beliefs of the Latter-day day Saints, can be interpreted as theological comment and debate rather than an attempt to persecute a minority group with whom they simply disagreed. The fact that they disputed claims made by Latter-day Saints, and included forceful language in itself does not mean they should be equated with persecution.

Pamphlets

Evidently, W. R. Davies was not the only one to publish articles in the Nonconformist periodicals that challenged Mormon teaching and practices. His reputation as an antagonist towards Mormonism must be viewed in context of the other contributors to the debate that produced pamphlets.

Since the arrival of Mormonism in England in 1837, numerous anti-Mormon pamphlets had been printed.[327] The production of pamphlets was clearly considered valuable in influencing public opinion on both sides of the argument. Unquestionably, the most copious flow of pamphleteering emanated from Dan Jones himself, who during the period 1845 to 1848 published nineteen. Although W. R. Davies has been charged with writing with an unparalleled vehemence and constancy for the anti-Mormon side of the argument,[328] it may be suggested that Dan Jones wrote with an equivalent passion and frequency. He undoubtedly produced more literature to defend and propagate his cause.

As discussed in Chapter 3, David Williams, Abercanaid, wrote the first anti-Mormon pamphlet in Welsh in 1845.[329] It was published as a rebuttal to Dan Jones' two pamphlets, published by Jones since his return to Wales.[330] Jones responded by

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[327] E.g. Richard Livesey, *An Exposure of Mormonism, being a Statement of Facts relating to the Self-Styled "Latter Day Saints," and the Origin of the Book of Mormon*, (Preston: Printed by J. Livesey, 1938), the first anti-Mormon book to be published in Great Britain; David Latimer St. Clair, *To the Followers of the Latter-day Saints,* (Cheltenham: Willey, 1840). For a complete list of anti-Mormon tracts at this time see: Craig L. Foster, *Penny Tracts and Polemics: A Critical Analysis of Anti-Mormon Pamphleteering in Great Britain* (1837-1860), (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2002). Revd John Simons, *A Few more Facts Relating to the Self-styled "Latter-day Saints",* (Ledbury: Printed by J. Gibbs, 1840); W. J. Morrish, *The Latter- Day Saints and the Book of Mormon, a Warning from a Minister to his Flock* (Ledbury: Printed by J. Gibbs, 1840); Morrish*, A Second Warning from a Minister To his Flock* (Ledbury: Printed by J. Gibbs, 1840).

[328] Dennis, 'Reverend W. R. Davies vs Captain Dan Jones', *BYU Studies*, vol.27, no.2, (1987), p. 65.

[329] David Williams, *'Twyll y Seintiau Diweddaf yn cael ei ddynoethi mewn nodiadau byr ar draethawd a ysgrifenwyd yn diweddar gan Capt. D. Jones, dan yr enw, "Traethawd ar anghyfnewidioldeb teyrnes Duw."'* (Merthyr, D. Jones), 1845.

[330] Captain Dan Jones, '*Y Farw wedi ei chyfodi yn fyw: neu'r hen grefydd newydd. Traethawd yn dangos anghyfnewidioldeb teyrnas Dduw'*, (Wrexham, William Bayley), 1845: Jones, '*Annerchiad y deuddeg apostol yn Eglwys Iesu Grist, Saint y Dyddiau Diweddaf at holl frenhinoedd y ddaear, at Raglaw, ac at lywiawdwyr Unol Daleithiau yr Amerig, ac at lywyddion, a holl bobl y byd.',* (John Jones, Rhydybont, 1845). Ronald D. Dennis, *Welsh Mormon Writings: From 1844-1862. A Historical Bibliography,* (Salt

publishing a third pamphlet directed against Williams.[331] Undoubtedly, Williams' criticism of Mormonism was uncompromising and his language forceful. However, Jones also employed a literary style that was uncompromising. Dennis notes that 'Jones simply follows the standard, mid-nineteenth-century techniques of the polemic'.[332] Strangely, Dennis does not credit Williams, or indeed W. R. Davies, as applying the same technique. He adds that Williams replied to Dan Jones' pamphlet with a reprint of his own pamphlet and then 'went to *Y Bedyddiwr* … in an effort to scandalize the Mormons'.[333]

Williams' article appeared in the July 1846 edition of *Y Bedyddiwr.*[334] Dan Jones responded to this in a pamphlet entitled *Defence of the Saints versus the accusations of Thomas Jones, Merthyr, and others.*[335] It may be suggested that Williams' article is significant when appraising the place of Davies as the central anti-Mormon activist of the 1840s. While Dennis has recognized that Williams was a notable opponent, the question remains why Davies' literary opposition should be considered to have been more destructive, especially when, in this case Thomas Jones' claims about the Latter-day Saints were potentially very damaging.

Thomas Jones had been a Mormon. He had joined the Latter-day Saints in April 1843. Three years later, shortly after being excommunicated for immoral conduct, Jones was interviewed by David Williams, Abercanaid. It was this interview, dated 4 June 1846, Williams sent to the editor of Y *Bedyddiwr.*[336] He had questioned Thomas Jones on many issues and made the point that Jones was no ordinary member of the Latter-day Saints, but a man who had held important office and had been a significant

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Lake City, Utah: Brigham Young University, 1988. Religious Studies Center: Specialized Monograph Series, Vol.4), p. 24.

[331] Captain Dan Jones, *'Y glorian, yn y hon gwelir David yn pwyso Williams, Williams yn pwyso David: neu David Williams, o Abercanaid yn gwrthddweyd ei hun, wedi ei ddal yn ei dwyll, a'i brofi yn ddeistaidd',* (Rhydybont, J. Jones, 1846).

[332] Dennis, *Welsh Mormon Writings*, p. 25.

[333] Dennis, *Welsh Mormon Writings*, p. 27.

[334] *Y Bedyddiwr*, Cyf. V, Rhif. 55 (Gorphenaf, 1846), pp. 250- 251.

[335] Captain Dan Jones, *'Amddiffyniad y Saint versus cyhuddiadau Thomas Jones, Merthyr, ac ereill.'* (Rhydybont: John Jones), 1846 (?) The entire contents of this pamphlet were printed in the December 1846 edition of *Prophwyd y Jubili* (pp. 148–56), but the pamphlet was not advertised in this publication as being available, until the July 1847 issue, thus putting the publication date of the pamphlet sometime between December 1846 and July 1847.

[336] *Y Bedyddiwr*, Cyf. V, Rhif. 55 (Gorphenaf, 1846), pp. 250-251.

preacher among them. An interview containing such disquieting confessions from someone who had played an important part among the Latter-day Saints might naturally have been viewed as extremely harmful to the movement.

Shortly after the publication of the interview, Thomas Jones retracted his claims. More information appeared during the following September 1846 when *Y Bedyddiwr* published a letter to the editor written by 'Meiriadog',[337] who had approached some Mormon missionaries in Llanfaircaereinion, quoting the case of Thomas Jones. One of the missionaries, Robert Evans produced his personal journal in which he had recorded Jones' remorseful comments regarding the things he had told Williams. [338]

The following month David Williams, Abercanaid, sent another letter to the editor of *Y Bedyddiwr.* Dennis asserts that 'Williams carefully worded his letter to make it appear that Thomas Jones had made yet another about-face since his comments recorded in Evans' journal,[339] the conclusion apparently is based exclusively on comments by Dan Jones.[340] Nevertheless, on this occasion the revelations by Williams in *Y Bedyddiwr* were particularly serious. Williams claimed that when asked if the Latter-day Saints' activities had any scriptural basis or direction from God, Thomas Jones had replied that they did not seek approval in Biblical scripture because they claimed to receive direct revelation from God, although they were aware that this was complete deception. When Williams asked for an example of such deception, Thomas Jones made a startling revelation. He claimed that he and some others felt that, because Dan Jones was a Welshman, he would be a better choice as president of the Merthyr church than the existing president, William Henshaw, who was English. According to Thomas Jones this was also thought to be expedient because there had been 'some warring' between the two figures. Thomas Jones and his collaborators were unsure of how to accomplish this, but a friend suggested a plan. They decided to claim false revelations from God, and implicate the present

[337] 'Meiriadog' was John Edwards, (1813 – 1906), Baptist and poet. He lived in Llanfaircaereinion, in 1844. See NLW Welsh biography http://yba.llgc.org.uk/en/s-EDWA-JOH-1813.html?query=meiriadog&field=name accessed 19 December 2016.
[338] Dennis, *Welsh Mormon Writings*, p. 40. His declaration, according to an affidavit signed by eight witnesses and printed on the last page of Captain Dan Jones' '*Defence of the Saints'*.
[339] Dennis, *Welsh Mormon Writings*, p. 40.
[340] Captain Dan Jones, *'Amddiffyniad y Saint versus cyhuddiadau Thomas Jones, Merthyr'*, p.7.

leadership in adulterous conduct.[341]

The claim that there had been such a devious plan to engineer Captain Dan Jones into the position of president of the Merthyr Tydfil conference was serious, despite the fact there was no suggestion that Jones was in any way complicit in the plot. There is no evidence to support this claim, but it remains true that Dan Jones became president of the Merthyr conference just over a year after his arrival in Wales, following an unsuccessful ministry in north Wales. No defence appears to have been made in the Mormon press regarding this specific claim, and Henshaw, after a successful three years at Merthyr, left to preside at the Garway conference in Herefordshire,[342] an unlikely move had there been any genuine suspicion of immoral conduct. He continued to play an active leadership role, speaking at a number of Latter-day Saint gatherings.[343]

Captain Dan Jones was convinced that some ministers intended to destroy Mormonism, a policy that went beyond the publication of anti-Mormon articles. The depiction of the 'reverends' in Wales, plotting against the Latter-day Saints in an attempt to destroy them at any cost appears to come entirely from his assessment of the situation.

One figure Jones implicated in a plan to discredit the Latter-day Saints was Revd Josiah Thomas Jones, the editor of *Y Drysorfa Gynnulleidfaol,* which Jones described a 'his foul Treasury'.[344] According to Jones, in an account he sent to the *Millennial Star*,[345] a blind man known locally as 'Blind Daniel' confessed conversion to Mormonism and requested baptism and healing. Following his immersion and return home, the blind man, according to Jones claimed that he had received a partial return of his sight. However, the man, Daniel Jones, attended only two Church meetings, and

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[341] *Y Bedyddiwr*, Cyf. V Rhif. 58 (Hydref, 1846), pp. 369-370.
[342] *Prophwyd y Jubili*, Rhif.9 (Chwefror, 1847), p. 36.
[343] E.g. At the Glamorgan Conference held in Merthyr Tydfil on 11 July 1847, *Prophwyd y Jubili*, Rhif.14 (Awst, 1847), p. 130; on 18 July 1847, Henshaw presided over the Garway Conference of nine branches held at Orcop, *Prophwyd y Jubili*, Rhif.15 (Medi, 1847), p. 144.
[344] Captain Dan Jones, *' "Haman" yn hongian ar ei grogbren ei hun! Neu Daniel Jones (ddall) a'i lyfr yn profi gwirionedd Mormoniaeth!!'* (John Jones, Rhydybont),1847, p. 1
[345] *Millennial Star,* vol.8, no. 3 (15 August, 1846), pp. 81-88.

then proceeded to malign the Church. A short time afterwards, he met Dan Jones and Thomas Jeremy while travelling on the road to Llanybydder. Jones warned him that if he did not stop his campaign against the Mormons his fate would be worse than Kora, Dathan and Abiram who were swallowed up in the earth after turning against Moses.[346] Daniel did not heed the warning. Dennis notes:

> One of his 'backers,' according to Elder Jones, was the Rev. Josiah Thomas Jones, editor of *Y Drysorfa Gynnulleidfaol* (The Congregationalist [sic] Treasury), and one of the results of Daniel's faithlessness was a vicious 12-page pamphlet, the publication of an interview between Daniel and the Rev. Josiah Thomas Jones.[347]

This pamphlet[348] presented an interview between Daniel Jones and a 'friend'. The Independent minister, Revd Josiah Thomas Jones was not named in the pamphlet, and Captain Jones did not explain how he became aware that he was involved. Daniel Jones stated that he had felt that it was his duty to expose the deception of the Latter-day Saints because of the growth of their numbers in his area. He claimed he had joined the Latter-day Saints because he had genuinely been seeking a more satisfying experience of Christianity, and although encouraged to believe he would receive his sight at his baptism, this had not happened. In a subsequent meeting, Captain Dan Jones anointed him with oil, but his failure to experience what had been promised led to his disillusionment with the movement, and to his conviction that the leaders were 'lying deceivers.'[349] This pamphlet denounced the practices of the Latter-day Saints as deception, and pronounced its leaders as most culpable, which may explain why Dennis has described it as 'vicious', although the interview style of the pamphlet, and the tone of the language, while negative and condemning, do not appear especially vitriolic.

Dan Jones responded by publishing a pamphlet against Daniel Jones,[350] claiming that witnesses had confirmed they had heard Daniel Jones declare that he had joined the

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[346] Numbers 16:1-35.
[347] Dennis, 'The Welsh and the Gospel', p. 253.
[348] Daniel Jones, *'Y Drych Cywir, Lle y Gwelir Canfod yn Eglur Twyll y Mormoniaid, neu "Seintiau y Dyddiau Diweddaf" mewn dull o holiadau ac atebion, rhwng Daniel a'i gyfaill.'* (Llandovery: E. Morris, 1847 & 1848).
[349] Jones, *'Y Drych Cywir'*, p. 12.
[350] Jones,*' "Haman" yn hongian'.*

Mormons as a 'Judas' in order to infiltrate, and then betray them.[351] Captain Jones wrote to the *Millennial Star* the following year to state that his prophetic warning to Daniel Jones had been fulfilled. The blind man had died an agonising death, and thus became 'a monument of the displeasure of a just God for hypocrisy,'[352] a comment that might be considered quite 'vicious', further revealing that W. R. Davies was not alone in his use of powerful language.

Clearly, opposition to Mormonism in the 1840s came from many sources, and the designation of W. R. Davies as the most significant opponent to this opposition seems disproportionate when the claims and language of others is taken into consideration. It is true that he was a frequent contributor to the religious periodicals on the subject of the Latter-day Saints, but his contribution needs to be evaluated in the context of others who also entered the debate. As we have seen, the anti-Mormon writing evidenced in the pamphlets contained some extremely shocking revelations, and although it is difficult to judge the impact of such stories, it would probably be fair to conclude that they had an effect at least equivalent to that of the writings of W. R. Davies.

Public Lectures and Debates

When attempting to assess the significance of W. R. Davies' opposition to Mormonism, it is important to remember that as Mormonism began to spread throughout Wales, opposition sometimes took the form of a public lecture or debate. As noted, this was a fairly common practice from the earliest arrival of Mormonism not only in Wales, but also in England.[353] While Dennis, reliant on Dan Jones' assessment, has attributed a great deal of importance to the lectures by Revd Edward Roberts (Iorwerth Glan Aled), in September and November 1847, there is evidence that other lectures and debates were taking place in Wales.

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[351] Jones,' *"Haman" yn hongian',* p. 6
[352] *Millennial Star,* vol.9, no. 14 (15 July, 1847), p. 219.
[353] James Palmer, *Travels and Ministry in the Gospel*, p. 23-24; John Needham, *Autobiography and Journal*, p. 210; *Monmouthshire Merlin*, (1 October 1842); *Northern Star and Leeds General Advertiser* (17 October 1840); *Hertford Mercury and Reformer* (15 May 1841).

There is clear evidence that public debate on Mormonism did not just occur at Dowlais as a result of a campaign by local ministers to destroy Mormonism. It followed a pattern begun in England, that as the number of converts increased and Mormonism spread, there was some public address of the issues. Reports of some of these public meetings appeared in the Nonconformist periodicals, the first such report appearing in *Seren Gomer* in October 1846.[354] This article had been sent to the periodical by 'D. W. P.' and concerned a public debate at Towyn, Meirionnydd, between a certain G. Evans, Maesypandy, and an unnamed Mormon. The topic under discussion was 'spiritual gifts' and the assertion by the Latter-day Saints that these gifts were available to followers of Christ as they had been in the early church. 'D. W. P.' claimed that Evans won the debate and was applauded by the audience.

A year after Roberts' lecture at Caersalem, Dowlais, others followed his example and addressed the issue of Mormonism publically. 'Anti-Humbug' of 'Glanyrafon' wrote to *Seren Gomer*[355] to describe events in Llangynog, near Carmarthen.[356] The Latter-day Saints had been active in the area and this encouraged Revd Thomas Williams, minister of Ebenezer Baptist chapel, to give a lecture on the 'deceit of the Latter-day Saints' on 2 July 1848. Many had attended this lecture, including members of the Latter-day Saints and Williams was unremitting in his attack on Mormonism. A few days following the sermon, the Latter-day Saint, John Davis, wrote a letter to Williams and outlined his objections to a number of Williams' claims.[357] 'Anti-Humbug' called Davis 'a protecting angel of the tribe of Joe Smith.' He accused the Latter-day Saints of various forms of deception in their writings and teachings on baptism, miracles, prophecy, and visions.[358] Again, the language was strong and uncompromising.

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[354] *Seren Gomer,* Cyf. XXIX, Rhif. 373 (Hydref, 1846), p. 309.
[355] *Seren Gomer*, Cyf. XXXI ,Rhif. 397 (Hydref, 1848), pp. 304-305.
[356] John Davis later identified 'Anti-Humbug' as H. W. Jones, the publisher of *Seren Gomer*, and Davis' former employer. John S. Davis, '*Hanes ymfudiad y Saint i Califfornia: yn gynnwysedig mewn dau lythyr o New Orleans, America, un oddiwrth Capt. D. Jones, a'r llall oddiwrth Mr. Thos. Jeremy, (gynt o Lanybydder), at olygydd "Udgorn Seion."*' (Merthyr-Tydfil: Argraffwyd ac ar werth gan J. Davis, 1849), p. 16.
[357] Davis' s letter, dated 6 July 1848, was printed in *Prophwyd y Jubili*, Rhif. 26 (Awst, 1848), pp. 118–22. It was also published as a separate pamphlet, namely, John Davis, *Pregeth gwrth-Formonaidd. At y Parch. T. Williams, Ebenezer, ger Caerfyrddin*. (Rhydybont: Printed by John Jones),1848.
[358] Despite this condemnation, Davis became a prolific author of Latter-day Saint publications. Between January 1849 and December 1853, Davis produced twenty-five pamphlets and 129 issues of

In January 1849, *Seren Gomer* published a piece by 'Casawr Twyll, Glyn Teifi.'[359] The author referred to a sermon given by Revd D. Evans, curate of St David's Church, Carmarthen, in order to demonstrate the deceit of the Latter-day Saints. According to 'Casawr Twyll, Glyn Teifi' this sermon triggered agitation among the Mormons and was printed at the request of those who heard it, by William Spurrell, a Carmarthen printer.[360] Dennis, who refers to Evans as a 'widely respected Anglican priest', notes that Evans' pamphlet on the Latter-day Saints and miraculous gifts 'lacks the vicious language that other antagonists were then using whenever they mentioned 'The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints"'[361] although he adds that 'Evans does, however, severely criticize the defense that the Church offered for a continuation of miracles from the time of Jesus Christ … and concludes that the members of the Church are false prophets and heretics.' Davis claimed Evans used the same arguments about miracles and spiritual gifts that had been used by W. R. Davies in his pamphlet, and thus brought nothing new to the debate.

By 1849, it is clear that many others had written articles, pamphlets and conducted debates and lectures on Mormonism. Figures such as the Baptist minister, Revd John Rhys Morgan (Lleurwg) in Aberavon, became notable opponents of the movement. On 14 March that year, he lectured to 1,500 people at the Baptist chapel Aberavon,[362] and the event caught the attention of the newspapers.[363] In April 1849 in Neath town Hall, Revd Morgan traced 'the rise and progress of Mormonism' in 'a long eloquent speech delivered in Welsh, which was listened to with the greatest attention, and repeatedly cheered by the assembled hundreds …'[364] He appears to have continued with this practice, lecturing on the errors of Mormonism in Cwmtwrch in 1851,[365] making it difficult to sustain the claim that when Davies 'pen fell silent after June

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the periodical *Udgorn Seion,* in to hymnals and poems and the translation of various Mormon literature into Welsh.

[359] *Seren Gomer,* Cyf. XXXII, Rhif. 400 (Ionawr, 1849), pp. 16- 17.

[360] Revd D Evans, *Saint y Dyddiau Diweddaf a Doniau Gwyrthiol*, (William Spurrell, Carmarthen), 1848.

[361] Dennis, *Welsh Mormon Writings*, p. 72.

[362] *Seren Gomer,* Cyf. XXXII, Rhif. 403 (Ebrill, 1849), p.120. Revd J. R. Morgan (Lleurwg) (1822-1900), Baptist minister, lecturer and poet. Moved to Aberavon in 1848, and on to Zion Llanelli in 1855. He was a renowned public speaker and writer.

[363] *Principality* (16 March 1849).

[364] *Cambrian* (6 April 1849).

[365] *Cambrian* (21 November 1851).

1848 … Others would oppose Mormonism in Wales over the years, but none with quite the same vehemence or constancy, as did the Reverend W. R. Davies'.[366]

Conclusions

This foregoing detailed rebuttal of the main arguments for proclaiming W. R. Davies Mormonism's greatest foe in Wales in the 1840s allows a straightforward conclusion.

It has become clear that the evidence used to support the view of Davies as the archenemy of Mormonism is open to question. Its weakness has been its dependency on the characterization of Davies by Dan Jones published in *Prophwyd y Jubili.* It has allowed the depiction of Davies as a man prepared to disseminate falsehoods under the cover of pseudonyms and oppose Mormonism using underhand means, to become the accepted version. However, this chapter has provided evidence that when research methods are broadened an alternative view of Davies is possible.

Evidence now suggests that we may question Dennis' assertions regarding Davies' motivation for entering the debate on the Latter-day Saints. It appears unlikely that he was motivated by concerns about losing his congregation, or because he was angered by Henshaw's refusal of the post of his assistant. Considering his literary presence in the denominational periodicals, we may question that he intended to hide behind pseudonyms or provided forged letters as a pretext to get his comments published. Furthermore, no conclusive evidence exists that he was the person behind any pseudonym other than 'Tobit ger y bont', which we can now conclude was Davies with relative certainty. Davies was no prolific pamphlet writer, producing only one pamphlet on the Latter-day Saints, and that based on a sermon. His articles and letters to the periodicals express his disapproval of some of the activities of the local Latter-day Saints, and condemn their claims that miracles were occurring in his locality. He fiercely opposed such claims, and where he was most vehement it was in connection with claims of the miraculous and the practice of spiritual gifts. This does not make him a persecutor, but rather a concerned commentator. Dan Jones,

[366] Ronald D. Dennis, 'Reverend W. R. Davies vs Captain Dan Jones', *BYU Studies*, vol.27, no.2, (1987), p. 65 https://ojs.lib.byu.edu/spc/index.php/BYUStudies/article/view/5664/5314 accessed 13 September 2016.

sometimes writing in a style that was strident and offensive, met Davies concerns with an equal vehemence.

It may be agreed that he wrote more articles on the Latter-day Saints to the religious press than any other contributor on the topic of the 'Latter-day Saints'. However, the title of the most 'vehement' opponent is open to debate, as many other writers contributed to the opposition towards the Mormons, often presenting similar arguments to Davies. Writers such as 'Sylwedydd O'r Gogledd' took the debate a stage further and wrote extensively on the subject of the Latter-day Saints and spiritual gifts in a series of articles in *Seren Gomer.* Despite claims that the Latter-day Saints had no right of reply there were occasions when their response was published as in the case of I. M. Glan Teifi.

That Davies was a vigorous and significant opponent of the Latter-day Saints is not disputed, but the present depiction of his role is open to question. Ultimately it appears to be his use of the term 'Satanists' and Captain Dan Jones' characterization of Davies in *Prophwyd y Jubili* that has established him as a relentless foe and persecutor of Mormonism. We may reflect that had he not been the focus of Jones' attention, his contribution would have been viewed in a wider context as one, albeit forceful, opponent of Mormonism, in Wales where this movement was opposed wherever it emerged.

Chapter 6

Newspapers and the Latter-day Saints

Having challenged Ron Dennis' conclusions regarding W. R. Davies' status as a relentless foe and arch-persecutor of the Latter-day Saints, this study now turns to accounts in secular newspapers in order to assess the general reaction to the Mormon mission and to see whether or not Davies' contribution offered a unique take on Mormon activity or belonged to a more general reaction to it.

Newspaper articles provide important primary sources for historical research. They reflect the mores of the period in which they were written and provide valuable information about the contemporary *Zeitgeist*. While newspapers are not without their own political or religious bias, they enable us to interpret the opposition to Mormonism expressed by W. R. Davies and others within the context of the time. They potentially offer a wider view of the movement rather than what might be construed as the more narrow view provided by the Nonconformist or Mormon periodicals. It is probably fair to say that reports found in newspapers during the Victorian period, possessed, as newspapers do today, the potential to influence their readers' perceptions by disseminating information and keeping it in the public domain. It is noteworthy that when James Palmer began preaching the Mormon message in Skenfrith in 1840, he was opposed by a Roman Catholic 'who brought others with him and a newspaper and read therein a tissue of falsehood against our principles'.[1] This incident suggests that newspaper articles were important because they clearly contained reports about Latter-day Saint activity and, when they came to the attention of Mormon leaders, their accounts were, at least on occasion, discussed as untrue. Their veracity or otherwise cannot be entirely established. But what these reports contained is significant in building a picture of what Latter-day Saints were accused of and the extent to which these accusations were in the public domain.

[1] Although it is impossible to know which newspaper the Roman Catholic brought with him, by November 1840 there had been many comments and articles in newspapers denouncing Mormonism as a fanatical superstition, and casting doubt on its origins and motivation. In the area of Skenfrith it would certainly have been possible to have access to such accounts in *Hereford Times* (24 October 1840), *Worcestershire Chronicle* (28 October 1840), *The Times* (31 October 1840), *Gloucester Journal* (7 November 1840) and *Gloucester Journal* (21 November 1840).

Less than a year after the establishment of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in April 1830, information about this new religious movement appeared in the British press. The *Morning Advertiser* printed three reports about the 'Mormonites' in 1831.[2] The reports were attributed to the American press[3] and briefly recounted Joseph Smith's claims regarding the origin of the *Book of Mormon* and the spread of the movement in Ohio. From the second of these reports it is clear that it was not simply the origins of the movement that caused interest, but also the claim that Latter-day Saints could perform miracles and practise spiritual gifts. It was reported that:

> They still persist in their power to work miracles. They say they have often seen them done; the sick are healed, the lame walk, devils are cast out; and these assertions are made by men heretofore considered rational men and men of truth. [4]

The article concluded that 'the leaders of this sect are gross imposters' and their followers, despite being 'honest' and 'sincere' were 'deluded and insane enthusiasts.'[5] While reports on Mormonism were infrequent during the early 1830s, following the arrival of the Latter-day Saints in Britain in 1837, such accounts increased. It is apparent that from a very early stage of the movement, the secular press repeated stories about the Latter-day Saints, and passed judgements on them that, in general, were negative in tone.

A study of a range of British newspapers from 1837 to the end of 1849 reveals there were a number of recurrent themes in reports concerning the Latter-day Saints. This chapter will examine these subjects in an attempt to understand and contextualize the opposition experienced by Latter-day Saints in Wales. It will attempt to look at the issues that engaged W. R. Davies in his writings, and examine whether these matters received attention in the wider society. Clearly, if they were regularly reported and commented on in the press this suggests that were generally regarded as out of step with the norms of society, or at the very least worthy of comment. Even

[2] *Morning Advertiser* (10 March 1831); (27 October 1831); (8 November 1831).
[3] *Painesville Gazette and St Louis Republican.*
[4] *Morning Advertiser* (27 October 1831).
[5] *Morning Advertiser* (27 October 1831).

in the case of English newspapers, and some of these, such as the *Hereford Journal* were widely available in Wales,[6] the inclusion of articles about Mormon activity reveal a wider disquiet, rather than the local concerns of Davies' writings.

Thus this chapter will focus on the most frequently reported and controversial aspects of the movement, namely:

1. The person and character of Joseph Smith and the origins of Mormonism.
2. Latter-day Saints and Spiritual Gifts
3. Latter-day Saints and Non-medical Intervention.
4. Reports on Mormon Baptism.

With the exception of the first category they were all subjects that W. R. Davies considered worthy of comment. As noted in Chapter 4, the Nonconformist periodicals published articles on the origins of the movement and its founder.

1. The person and character of Joseph Smith: The origins of Mormonism.

Perhaps not unnaturally, the founder of this new religion frequently received attention in the press, as did his claims regarding of the origins of the movement.

Throughout the 1840s it is clear that Joseph Smith received a less than sympathetic hearing in British newspapers. A tarnished reputation, established by the press in the United States, pursued the Latter-day Saints in Britain wherever they went, and stories about Smith, his motives and the origins of the religion he founded, were widely published. For those who opposed Mormonism, there was abundant information contained in the press to support their suspicions. Nevertheless, despite the negative information on the movement touted in the newspapers, by the end of 1849 Mormonism had made thousands of British converts. While reasons for this success cannot be discussed here, it suggests that in spite of opposition and criticism, Mormonism continued to have a powerful appeal for some members of the population.

[6] Although an English newspaper, the *Hereford Journal*, founded in 1773, had an 'unrivalled area of distribution' and 'much of its circulation depended on its Welsh sales'. The paper's list of advertising agents includes Narberth, Tenby, Brecon, Llandovery, Llandeilo and Carmarthen. See: Hannah Baker, *Newspaper, Politics, and Public Opinion in Late Eighteenth-Century England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1998), pp. 123-124.

The most frequent and persistent claims that appeared in reports about Mormonism involved the character of Joseph Smith and his extraordinary account of the origins of the religion. As early as 1838, the *Morning Chronicle*[7] published an article from its correspondent in Philadelphia. The article was widely reproduced in newspapers throughout Britain[8] and appeared in the Monmouthshire newspaper, the *Silurian*, on 24 November 1838. It consisted of a brief report of the conflict that had arisen between the Mormons in Missouri and the government of the state.[9]
The *Morning Chronicle* described the Mormons as 'a strange set of fanatics',[10] their origin deriving from the questionable claims of Joseph Smith. At a time when the Latter-day Saints had been in Britain for just over a year, the press was presenting an image of Smith as a religious imposter willing to deceive and manipulate the credulous.

The article gave a brief outline of the Latter-day Saints' distinctive history of the American continent and concluded with two stories allegedly revealing Smith's deceitful nature. It was claimed that, on one occasion, Smith had told a young man that he would be baptized by an angel, then disguised himself in angelic apparel in order to perform the rite. At this stage of the deception, he was apprehended by some young men 'bent on frolic', unceremoniously disrobed, and revealed as a deceiver. The second article described an attempt by Smith to walk on water.
The correspondent for the *Morning Chronicle* admitted 'These are tales which are told of this modern imposter, I know not how truly.' It noted that 'Mormonism is a superstition worthy to be classed with that of Johanna Southcott, or the "strange tongues" of the late Rev. Mr Irving.'[11] The account appeared in the Monmouthshire paper two years before Mormonism arrived in Wales.

[7] *Morning Chronicle* (19 October 1838).
[8] E.g. *Reading Mercury* (27 October 1838); *Liverpool Mercury* (2 November 1838); *Fife Herald* (8 November 1838); *Worcestershire Chronicle* (8 November 1838); *Newcastle Courant* (9 November 1838).
[9] Conflict between Latter-day Saints and their neighbours in Missouri from 1831 to 1839 is sometimes referred to as the Missouri War.
[10] 'Fanatics' and 'Fanaticism' became a commonplace description of Mormons and Mormonism in the press. E.g. *Carnarvon and Denbigh Herald and North and South Wales Independent* (15 December 1838) referred to them as 'miserable fanatics' when reporting events in Missouri.
[11] *Silurian* (24 November 1838).

Within two weeks of the Latter-day Saints beginning their mission to north Wales in October 1840, the *North Wales Chronicle* published an article entitled 'Mormonism'. It directed its readers to E. D. Howe's *Mormonism Unvailed* [sic],[12] thus introducing the Spaulding theory to explain the origins of the movement to its Welsh readership. It claimed Joseph Smith, 'pretended to have discovered the book of Mormon', and that Smith and his family were 'known as fortune tellers and money diggers'.[13] Smith and his companions were described as wicked men who had invented the religion as an elaborate money-making venture. Newspapers throughout the 1840s reiterated the connection between Smith's account of the origins of Mormonism and the fictional story created by Spaulding. It had appeared in works published on the borders with Wales by 1840.[14] It would seem that whenever an explanation and description of the origin of the Latter-day Saints was required the 'Spaulding theory' was repeated all over again. For example, the Welsh Newspaper *Amserau* published it once more in December 1850.[15]

It seems clear that, whatever the religious periodicals wrote about Mormonism, they simply followed a pattern set by the secular press. As we have seen (in Chapter 4), the first two articles on the subject of Mormonism in *Seren Gomer* had been translated verbatim from the English press.[16] The image of Smith as an 'imposter' was regularly reinforced by the newspapers. Perhaps one of the most significant articles was the review of the publications of Henry Caswall. Not only did these articles inform the reader of Caswall's findings, they advertised the sale of his publications for those who wished to read more. In September 1842 *The Times*[17] reviewed Caswall's book *The City of the Mormons: Or Three Days at Nauvoo.*[18] Caswall had taken it upon himself to investigate Joseph Smith and the Latter-day Saints by visiting the Mormon settlement

[12] E. D. Howe, *Mormonism Unvailed* [sic], (Painesville: printed and published by the author, 1834).
[13] *North Wales Chronicle* (20 October 1840).
[14] *Gloucester Journal* (19 December 1840); *Gloucester Chronicle* (19 December 1840); *Hereford Journal* (20 December 1843); *Worcester Journal* (28 January 1841).
[15] *Amserau* (4 December 1850); *Pembrokeshire Herald and General Advertiser* (7 June 1850).
[16] *Seren Gomer,* Cyf. XXIV, Rhif. 304 (Ionawr, 1841), pp. 6-8; Cyf. XXIV, Rhif. 315 (Rhagfyr, 1841), p. 374.
[17] 'The City of the Mormons or, Three Days at Nauvoo in 1842, by the Rev. Henry Caswall', *The Times* (2 September 1842): (6 September 1842).
[18] Henry Caswall, *The City of the Mormons: Or Three Days at Nauvoo* (London: J.G.F. & J. Rivington, 1842). Caswall was born in England in 1810. He left England in 1828 to study divinity at the newly founded Kenyon College in Ohio. He became professor of sacred literature at the Lexington theological seminary Kentucky between1834 and 1837. He was ordained into the Episcopal Church in Madison, Ohio in 1837. By 1841 he took up the post of professor of Hebrew and sacred literature at Kemper College, near St Louis, Missouri.

and subsequently writing and publishing his findings. In this book, Caswall described his encounter with Joseph Smith. He had gained Smith's interest by showing him an ancient manuscript that was in fact an ancient Greek Psalter.[19] This was an attempt to entrap Smith and reveal his inability to recognise the manuscript. According to Caswall's account the ploy was successful. Smith had identified the letters as 'Egyptian hieroglyphics' and confirmed 'Them characters is like the letters that was engraved on the golden plates.'[20] *The Times*' review of Caswall's book included Caswall's rather dismissive description of Smith:

> He is a coarse, plebeian person in aspect, and his countenance exhibits a curious mixture of the knave and the clown. His hands are large and fat, and on one of his fingers he wears a massive gold ring, upon which I saw an inscription. His dress was of coarse country manufacture … I had not an opportunity of observing his eyes, as he appears deficient in that open, straightforward look which characterizes an honest man.[21]

Whatever the reality of the encounter, or the level of Caswall's personal bias, his comments were printed in a national newspaper and published in a book. The extent of their influence can be seen in the fact that Revd Edward Roberts cited this evidence in his lecture on the 'deceit of Mormonism', at Dowlais in 1847. Furthermore, Captain Dan Jones in his pamphlet on this lecture warned the men of Dowlais to keep their hands hidden from Roberts,[22] whose lecture had based his assessment of Smith on 'that lying Casswell [sic].'

The second part of *The Times*' review of Caswall's book dealt with the general character of the community of Latter-day Saints at Nauvoo. In particular it catalogued a series of crimes linked to the theft of property and possessions, actions that it claimed Smith at first condoned, but a stance he later publically retracted.[23]
The Times also reviewed Caswall's book *Prophet of the Nineteenth Century or, The Rise,*

[19] Caswall estimated that it was probably about six hundred years old. Caswall, *The City of the Mormons*, p. 5.
[20] Caswall, *The City of the Mormons*, pp. 35-36: *The Times* (2 September 1842).
[21] *The Times* (2 September 1842).
[22] Captain Dan Jones, *Adolygiad ar ddarlithioedd y Parch. E. Roberts, (Gweinidog y Bedyddwyr yn Rymni,) yn erbyn Mormoniaeth, pa rai a draddododd yn Nghaersalem, Medi yr Ail, ac yn Bethania (Capel yr Annibynwyr,) Medi y Trydydd, yn Nowlais.* (Rhydybont: John Jones, 1847), p. 5.
[23] Caswall, *The City of the Mormons*, pp. 50-53: *The Times* (2 September 1842).

Progress, and Present State of the Mormons, or Latter-Day Saints.[24] This time Caswall's work focused on the unreliability of the basis of Mormonism. He confirmed that Smith had been involved in money-making schemes in his youth and asserted that Spaulding's fictitious tale was the basis for the *Book of Mormon.* Thus, even those who had not read Caswall's works were apprised of their content through the secular press. The dissemination of Caswall's view by British newspapers, allowed his evidence against Mormonism to become widely known throughout Britain.

It may therefore be argued that the dissemination of Caswall's findings through the British press between 1842-43 would have had far more influence than anything that local ministers such as W. R. Davies wrote to the religious periodicals. The issues were already widely known, and Caswall became a 'set-text' for those who questioned the authenticity of the movement.

Indeed, Mormon scholars themselves have acknowledged the impact of Caswall's work. Hugh Nibley has described Caswall's report of the meeting with Joseph Smith and the Greek Psalter as 'the most effective single contribution to anti-Mormon literature.'[25] In an article entitled 'Henry Caswall: Anti-Mormon Extraordinaire',[26] Craig L. Foster, while questioning the accuracy of Caswall's account, has noted that this incident became 'one of the most common arguments by British anti-Mormons.'[27] Foster assesses the significance of Caswall's writing thus:

> Before Henry Caswall's publication, English writers had to depend upon the newspaper articles and other anti-Mormon materials that they could obtain. However, with the publication of Caswall's tract, they had an Englishman who claimed to have personally seen and talked with the Mormon Prophet. Better

[24] *The Times* also reviewed Caswall's book *Prophet of the Nineteenth Century or, The Rise, Progress, and Present State of the Mormons, or Latter-Day Saints* (London: J. G. F. and J. Rivington, 1843). *The Times* (19, January, 27 January 1843).
[25] Hugh Nibley, *The Myth Makers* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1961), p. 193. That this incident actually occurred is corroborated by the Latter-day Saints' publication *Times and Seasons*, Vol.4, no.23 (October 15, 1843), pp. 364-365.
[26] Craig L. Foster 'Henry Caswall: Anti-Mormon Extraordinaire', *BYU Studies* (vol. 35, no.4), pp. 144-159, 1995.
[27] Foster 'Henry Caswall' p. 150. Caswall repeated the story in a number of publications: *America and the American Church* (2nd edition) (London: John and Charles Mozley, 1851); *Mormonism and Its Author; or, A Statement of the doctrines of the 'Latter-Day Saints'* (London: S.P.C.K.. 1851). The enduring nature of the story can be attested by its reiteration in the twentieth century e.g. Fawn M. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith the Mormon Prophet,* (2nd edition, revised and enlarged) (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1979, pp. 290-291).

> yet, he claimed to have not only visited the Prophet, but also proven that he was a fraud. For the opponents of Mormonism, this was, indeed, a coup.[28]

Caswall's books were widely advertised and reviewed in the British press,[29] as well as in some of the well-known periodicals of the time.[30] Some of the Welsh Nonconformist periodicals also cited Caswall's evidence in articles opposing Mormonism.[31]

In addition to the anti-Mormon accusations of Henry Caswall, newspapers frequently published comments that threw suspicion on Smith's motivation in founding this new religion. The accusation that Mormonism had been invented as a money-making enterprise was published in Britain from the earliest days of the Mormon mission, and it refused to go away. The *North Wales Chronicle* of 20 October 1840 said of Smith:

> The purport of Mormonite preaching is, to induce the credulous to leave this country and go to America … Under the influence of this notion not a few have been weak enough to sell their little property and go. That some worldly scheme is at the bottom of this is more than probable, because *money transactions* are essential to the enterprise …

The salutary tale of Thomas Margretts' emigration and attempt to settle in Nauvoo, discussed in Chapter 4, was widely published throughout Britain.[32] It appeared in Wales in the *Monmouthshire Beacon*[33] and the *Cambrian.* These newspapers commented on 'this new-fangled swindle' by relating that Margretts and his companions:

> had frequent communications while on the banks of the Mississippi with the renowned prophet, Joe Smith, and his brother imposters, who took every means in their power to get hold of our informants' money, by offering to sell them large plots of land, take them into partnership &c.; … What most staggered the faith of the party was, that this great prophet, Mr. Joseph Smith,

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[28] Foster, 'Henry Caswall', p. 152.
[29] E.g. *London Standard* (28 November 1842); *Gloucester Chronicle* (10 September 1842)*; Oxford University and City Herald* (7 January 1843).
[30] *The British Critic, and Quarterly Theological Review*, Vol. 32, no. 64 (October, 1842), pp. 506-515; *The Gentleman's Magazine*, (May, 1843), pp. 503-504.
[31] *Y Dysgedydd Crefyddol,* (Mawrth, 1846), pp. 79-80; *Y Diwygiwr*, (Awst, 1846), pp. 137-143; *Tywysydd yr Ieuainc,* Cyf. 111, Rhif. 33 (Hydref, 1849), pp. 149-152.
[32] E.g. *Worcester Journal* (26 August 1841); *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette* (28 August 1841); *Bath Chronicle and Weekly Gazette* (2 September 1841); *Bristol Mercury* (4 September 1841; *Hereford Times* (11 September 1841); *Preston Chronicle* (18 September 1841).
[33] *Monmouthshire Beacon* (28 August 1841).

> could not show the 'plates of gold,' on which was pretended the 'Book of Mormon' was written; Joey evaded the question by saying the angel merely showed them to him, and after he had a fair copy, took them back again.[34]

Applying the diminutive names 'Joe' and 'Joey' for Smith was a frequent practice in press reports, indirectly conveying an element of contempt for the founder of the Mormonism, while also publishing the accusation that his intentions were dishonest.

The characterization of Mormonism as an elaborate money-making scheme was intensified by the central place of emigration in its teaching. The emigration of converts provided the press with an opportunity to comment on their gullibility and to speculate on their fate upon arrival in America. In May 1841 the *Gloucester Journal* (itself widely available in Wales), printed an article that was reproduced verbatim in a number of newspapers,[35] including the *Cambrian.* The report described the sighting of a stage waggon travelling through the streets of Gloucester 'heavily laden with the goods of a party about to emigrate from the land of their birth to the "New Jerusalem" on the banks of the Ohio.' It commented:

> In Herefordshire, several converts seem to have been made latterly, who have surrendered many pounds of hard cash into the hands of the travelling vagabonds who call themselves 'elders' of the 'latter-day Saints,' and who no doubt will take such care of the property they thus acquire that their followers will never again find themselves vexed with the custody of their 'mammon of unrighteousness.' It is pitiable to think that many enthusiasts, hoary with age, are thus deluded away to a strange country, where, on their arrival, they will find themselves deserted by the swindlers who have seduced them away, and will have nothing left but to die in poverty and lay their bones in a foreign and neglected grave.[36]

The assessment of Mormonism as a 'money-making' deception could not be clearer. In an article describing the emigration of some Latter-day Saints from Gloucestershire later that year, the *Cambrian* and the *Monmouthshire Merlin* described the emigrants as 'ignorant fanatics' and referred to Joseph Smith as 'the arch imposter Smith, the originator of this extraordinary delusion'.[37]

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[34] *Cambrian* (28 August 1841).
[35] E.g. *Bath Chronicle and Weekly Gazette* (13 May 1841); *Bristol Mercury* (15 May 1841).
[36] *Gloucester Journal* (8 May 1841): *Cambrian* (15 May 1841).
[37] *Cambrian* (14 August 1841); *Monmouthshire Merlin* (14 August 1841).

It is clear that the press was promoting the perception that the Latter-day Saints were determined to prey on the weak and ignorant in order to gain financially. As the Latter-day Saints' mission spread to West Wales the *Pembrokeshire Herald and General Advertiser* reviewing their activities in Carmarthen in 1845 commented:

> It is astonishing that in this enlightened age, men apparently well educated can be found so credulous as to put any faith in such absurd and ridiculous statements, undoubtedly made for the purpose of defrauding the ignorant and weak-minded of their money.[38]

When *Amserau*[39] outlined the origins of Mormonism for its readers in 1848, in an allusion to the Spaulding theory it claimed that Smith had taken the existing story to fill a 'pwrs gwag'.

It is clear, from these examples from the English and Welsh press, that during the 1840s Joseph Smith and the religion he founded were treated with considerable suspicion. Newspapers consistently repeated stories that questioned his honesty and his claims concerning the origins of the movement. They treated the claims, originally made in 1834 by E. D. Howe, regarding Spaulding's fiction, as proven truth, and Smith as an imposter. The perception that Mormonism was a money-making enterprise to which foolish and ignorant people were attracted was cemented in the minds of British people by the press. When the religious periodicals commented on the Latter-day Saints, their articles frequently contained information that had appeared in British newspapers many months before. While they may be charged with disseminating the negative claims about Mormonism, these claims did not originate with them, and in fact had not originated in the British newspapers either. Figures such as W. R. Davies merely added to common perceptions, with descriptions of local experiences of incidents involving Latter-day Saints that concerned him as a Baptist minister. However, the fundamental damage to the movement's credibility had already been done. Furthermore, it had been done in America.

[38] *Pembrokeshire Herald and General Advertiser* (18 July 1845).
[39] *Amserau* (4 August 1848).

2. Newspaper Reports on Latter-day Saints' and Spiritual Gifts

A study of the newspapers reveals that when W. R. Davies wrote to the religious periodicals he was not writing in isolation, but within a wider context where the issues he discussed had already arisen as Mormonism spread throughout Britain. Davies' comments and contribution to the opposition of the Latter-day Saints has not been viewed against the backdrop of the reporting in the secular press, but this strategy places him in context and enables us to evaluate his contribution more accurately.

When W. R. Davies wrote his first article to *Y Bedyddiwr*, in March 1844, he began by citing the teachings of the Mormons. Writing as 'Tobit ger y Bont' he wrote that the 'mad and foolish men, who call themselves the "Latter-day Saints" … profess to perform miracles, prophesy, speak in strange tongues, yes, in a word everything the apostles did,' adding that they claimed that they alone possessed the truth.[40] Dennis has stated that this 'diatribe' is indicative of the entire approach taken by Davies until his death in 1849.[41] However, there is a remarkable similarity to an article that appeared in *The Times*, four years earlier, which commented on 'one of the most recent developments of fanaticism'. This is not to suggest that Davies had read this article, although he may well have done. Instead, this article reveals the existing widespread knowledge about Mormon practices and the disquiet that already existed regarding them. Davies' experiences of Mormonism in 1844 were evidently the same as those that had been expressed in the newspaper in 1840. It noted:

> The Latter Day Saints assume to do many extraordinary things. Among other accomplishments peculiar to those who believe in the new doctrines, they are declared to possess the power of casting out devils, or curing the sick by laying hands on them, of resisting the operations of the deadliest poisons, of speaking with new tongues, and of working miracles of various kinds. They state that no ministers now upon the earth preach the gospel but themselves, and that only to them have the supernatural gifts of the church been vouchsafed.[42]

[40] *Y Bedyddiwr,* Cyf. 111, Rhif 27, (Mawrth 1844), p. 99.
[41] Ronald D. Dennis, 'The Reverend W. R. Davies vs. Captain Dan Jones', *BYU Studies,* 27, no.2 (1987), p. 53, or https://byustudies.byu.edu/PDFViewer.aspx?title=5818&linkURL=27.2DennisReverend-74fb8b35-8bfc-42b7-b2d9-a8a70561fd81.pdf accessed 17 April 2014.
[42] *The Times* (31 October 1840).

Other newspaper reports confirmed this view of Latter-day Saint practices, prior to W. R. Davies' comments on them. In 1842 the *Welshman*[43] and the *Monmouthshire Merlin*[44] reported on the preaching of a Latter-day Saint at the Carpenters' Hall, Manchester. On this occasion the speaker had claimed that there were around six hundred different creeds in the world, but only the Latter-day Saints possessed the truth. He further asserted that they could take poison without harm, heal by the laying on of hands, handle serpents without danger, speak in tongues and interpret the message. It was claimed that these phenomena had been witnessed at the Carpenters' Hall and that a surgeon present had recently converted to Mormonism and had given up administering drugs to the sick. The preacher concluded that there 'were some persons amongst their society who yet took physic when sick, but they were not properly converted.' This report was widely published across Britain,[45] including in the *Welshman* and the *Monmouthshire Merlin.*[46] There exists the possibility that when Davies wrote of these claims from Dowlais, many readers were already aware that these beliefs were associated with the Latter-day Saints. He was certainly not the first to raise the issue or to be concerned by such claims. He simply commented on his local experience of such things, and evidence regarding his opposition to the movement must be viewed within this context.

Newspaper reports also occasionally published stories of incidents that demonstrated the application of spiritual gifts among the Latter-day Saints.

An example of an account regarding speaking in tongues can be found in the *Hereford Journal,*[47] a newspaper that was available as far west as Pembrokeshire. Shortly after the arrival of Mormonism in Herefordshire in 1840, this account described the visit of a party of Hereford tradesmen to the village of Lugwardine. They intended to investigate the claims of the movement, and entered a cottage where about forty Latter-day Saints had gathered for a meeting. One of the three speakers present proclaimed that he had seen 'eight persons in his district upon whom the miraculous

[43] *Welshman* (4 March 1842).
[44] *Welshman* (4 March 1842); *Monmouthshire Merlin* (5 March 1842).
[45] Many other newspapers that carried this report, including the Irish and Scottish press: E.g. *Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser* (25 February 1842); *The Examiner* (26 February 1842); *Morning Chronicle* (23 February 1842); *Caledonian Mercury* (28 February 1842); *Scotsman* (2 March 1842); *Cheltenham Chronicle* (3 March 1842); *Staffordshire Gazette* (3 March 1842); *Royal Cornwall Gazette* (4 March 1842); *The Belfast News-Letter* (4 March 1842).
[46] *Monmouthshire Merlin* (5 march 1842).
[47] *Hereford Journal* (16 December 1840).

gift of tongues had been instantaneously conferred' including a female who had been empowered to speak Italian and Hebrew as fluently as she spoke English. One of the tradesmen knew the speaker and realised that he would be unable to identify the difference between Italian and Hebrew, a point the speaker in fact conceded. The speaker refused to provide proof of these things on the grounds that the enquirer was not a believer and was possessed by the devil. In addition to the gift of tongues, one of the speakers claimed he and his assistant also had the power of casting out devils. The visiting tradesman then suggested that he exercise this power by casting out the devil that had allegedly possessed him. The Mormon speaker refused to oblige. Clearly, the recounting of this story had an element of amusement, but its inclusion in newspaper reports inevitably strengthened the impression of the unusual and unsubstantiated nature of Mormon beliefs and claims. Thus, when Davies commented on the gift of tongues in his pamphlet, he was not the first to question Mormon claims regarding the apparent manifestation of this spiritual gift.

Periodically the press reminded its readers of Mormon claims about the practice of spiritual gifts. In 1845 for example, the *Pembrokeshire Herald and General Advertiser*[48] and the *North Wales Chronicle*[49] reported a lecture by a Mormon Elder named E. H. Davis at Theobald Road, London. Davis had extolled the doctrines of the gift of tongues, prophecy, healing and inspiration. This brief article was again reproduced in newspapers across Britain,[50] and the diverse geographical area these covered would seem to indicate how ideas about Mormon beliefs spread. By 1845 many people were aware that teachings about spiritual gifts and miraculous healing were central to Mormon doctrine.

Other press reports concerned exorcism. Regarding the Latter-day Saints' belief in this practice one tantalizingly brief report occurred in the press in 1847, namely that 'The Mormonites at Llanfoist lately baptized a woman in the canal, out of whom they

[48] *Pembrokeshire Herald and General Advertiser* (24 January 1845).
[49] *North Wales Chronicle* (4 February 1845).
[50] E.g. *Morning Post* (21 January 1845); *Chelmsford Chronicle* (24 January 1845); *Coventry Herald* (24 January 1845); *Lincolnshire Chronicle* (24 January 1845); *Leicestershire Mercury* (25 January 1845); *Salisbury and Winchester Journal* (25 January 1845); *Reading Mercury* (25 January 1845); *Worcestershire Chronicle* (29 January 1845); *Perthshire Advertiser* (30 January 1845); *Bradford Observer* (30 January 1845); *Stamford Mercury* (31 January 1845).

say that three devils were cast'.[51] This simple sentence was considered to be newsworthy enough to be reprinted in newspapers across Britain,[52] which is somewhat surprising considering the relative obscurity of Llanfoist. In the same year the *Cambrian*[53] published a letter that recounted a story of an attempted exorcism in Ystradgynlais in the Swansea valley. According to the author of the letter, following a visit to the village by some Latter-day Saint preachers some of the most 'superstitious people' joined their ranks. They had asserted that 'they possessed gifts to heal, cast out devils and speak with new tongues'. Although some attempted to dispute with these preachers, they had no success and it was decided to leave them alone on the grounds that if this new movement were of man it would ultimately come to nothing. However, the writer stated that 'scores of persons in this neighbourhood' were now willing to testify to the 'deceit' of the Mormons. Scepticism about Mormon claims and challenges to them were not, then, the prerogative of writers to the religious periodicals such as W. R. Davies. Others in the wider community also challenged Mormon assertions.

The next question, perhaps, is whether the press recorded any instances of Latter-day Saints taking deadly substances, thus testing their claim that this could be achieved without harm. Unsurprisingly, there appear to be no recorded instances of this occurring, but one report seems to indicate that it was fairly common knowledge that they held this doctrine of faith. At the end of the 1840s, the *Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian Glamorgan, Monmouth, and Brecon Gazette*[54] reported that a Mormon orator, while haranguing a crowd at Montrose, alleged that the 'blessings of his creed' were so great that a true believer might swallow poison with impunity. According to this report, which was again widely reported across Britain,

[51] *Monmouthshire Merlin* (17 April 1847).
[52] E.g. *Pembrokeshire Herald and General Advertiser* (16 April 1847); *North Wales Chronicle* (20 April 1847); *Lincolnshire Chronicle* (16 April 1847); *Liverpool Mercury* (16 April 1847).
[53] *Cambrian* (24 December 1847).
[54] *Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian Glamorgan, Monmouth, and Brecon Gazette* (21 July 1849).

> The mob took him at his word, or rather resolved to test it; and some prussic acid having been produced, he was strongly pressed to swallow a little. A policeman rescued the disconcerted boaster from his persecutors.[55]

While this may appear to be an extreme instance of a mob having some, albeit dangerous, fun at the expense of a Mormon preacher, it is worth remembering here, that by his own admission, the Revd W.R. Davies had attempted something similar.[56] This newspaper account reveals how well-known this Latter-day Saint belief had become by the end of the decade, and the general scepticism that accompanied Mormon claims.

Taking just a few examples from widespread newspaper reports**,** it would seem feasible to propose that by the end of the 1840s it was widely understood that members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints held these views regarding the miraculous and spiritual gifts, and that these beliefs marked them out as being inherently different to the teaching and practices of mainstream Christianity. Furthermore, many of these beliefs had become well-known prior to W. R. Davies first writing on the topic to *Y Bedyddiwr.* There appears to be nothing about Davies' comments, in the light of widely available newspaper reports, that suggests he wrote in a manner that was more inflammatory or aggressive. Noteworthy, perhaps, is the fact that for both Davies and the secular press, it was specifically the Latter-day Saints' belief in the possibility of healing miracles that attracted the greatest amount of attention.

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[55] E.g. *Worcestershire Chronicle* (11 July 1849); *Bradford Observer* (12 July 1849); *Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette* (12 July 1849); *Durham County Advertiser* (13 July 1849); *Elgin Courier* (13 July 1849); *Bristol Times and Mirror* (14 July 1849); *Staffordshire Advertiser* (14 July 1849); *Reading Mercury* (14 July 1849); *Hampshire Advertiser* (14 July 1849); *Derbyshire Courier* (14 July 1849); *Monmouthshire Merlin* (21 July 1849); *Hereford Times* (21 July 1849).

[56] Revd W. R. Davies, *Y Seintiau Diweddaf: Sylwedd pregeth a dradoddwyd ar y gwyrthiau, er mwyn goleuo y cyffredin, a dangos twyll y creaduriaid a alwant eu hunain yn 'Seintiau y Dyddiau Diweddaf'* (Merthyr Tydfil: Argraffwyd David Jones, 1846), p. 17.

3. Latter-day Saints and Non-medical Intervention

In the case of Latter-day Saint teaching about prayer for the sick and their faith in miraculous healing, newspaper accounts reveal that there were inevitable consequences of the refusal to accept qualified medical aid. Even if there had been no reference to claims of the miraculous in the religious periodicals, newspaper reports of inquests provide considerable evidence that would have raised concerns about the movement.

One of the central beliefs expounded by the Latter-day Saints was based on biblical passages, such as Mark 16:16-18, namely, that the laying on of hands could cure the sick. Their belief in the possibility of miracles was also based on the spiritual gifts listed in 1 Cor. 12. This particular aspect of Mormon faith requires separate attention, as it was such a controversial issue at the time. It was accompanied by the belief that faith required the exclusion of any medical intervention, an approach that sometimes resulted in tragic consequences.

An analysis of the writings of Revd W. R. Davies, including his pamphlet of 1846, reveals that it was the Latter-day Saints' claims regarding their practice of spiritual gifts, and in particular the gift of healing, that caused him the most concern. They claimed that there had been miracles in his locality: he denied that there was any evidence of the miraculous. His refusal to accept Mormon claims of miraculous healing singled him out as a key opponent of the Latter-day Saints. However, whatever he claimed about local individuals, these were in reality fairly minor cases.

There is clear evidence that W. R. Davies was not alone in his scepticism. However, newspaper reports often took the debate a stage further. They did not simply claim that no healing had taken place, but accused the Mormons of deliberately putting life at risk by their insistence that prayer and the laying on of hands was a substitute for proper medical intervention. As early as 1838, the Latter-day Saints were gaining a reputation for their rejection of medical aid, and as it did on numerous occasions, the

press was categorising those who followed them as 'ignorant', 'fanatical' and 'dupes.' As noted in Chapter 5, the *Preston Chronicle*[57] published one of the first reports where a Latter-day Saint refused medical intervention resulting in death and an inquest.[58] In this particular case, the Mormon elder Willard Richards and Ann Dawson 'one of his flock' were charged with causing the death of Alice Hodgson following the birth of her child. The inquest expressed grave concerns regarding the Mormon refusal to obtain qualified medical attention for the sick. Although this report was in the Lancashire press it provides evidence that from the earliest times of the British mission these teachings and practices were taking place, and with the authority and participation of the church leadership. While W. R. Davies might be suspected of defamatory speculation in his account of the debacle surrounding a local Latter-day Saint woman in childbirth,[59] press reports give credence at least to the possibility that his record was an accurate one. In 1841 another case of death resulting from non-medical intervention was widely published in the press. *The Times*[60] recorded the investigation by the coroner into the death of Elizabeth Morgan, aged 55, alleged to be due to 'improper treatment by unqualified persons.' The case occurred in London, but was reported throughout the country,[61] including Wales.[62] According to the testimony given, Elizabeth Morgan had suffered regularly from a 'spasmodic condition' but had at this time become very ill. No medical aid was sought because this was 'against the religious tenets of the sect to which she belonged'. It was explained at the inquest that she had joined the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who 'dated their origin from the apostles, and treated their sick according to the following text from the epistle of St. James: "Any illness amongst you ye shall call for the elders of the church, and anoint yourselves with oil in the name of the Lord"'(James 5: 14-15). The Latter-day Saints had given her 'sage tea with Cayenne pepper' and leeches and other remedies had also been applied, after they had been prayed over. A surgeon, who had attended the deceased on a former occasion,

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[57] *Preston Chronicle* (6 October 1838).
[58] The story was published in other newspapers across Britain e.g. *London Standard* (11 October 1838); the *Morning Post* (11 October 1838); *Berkshire Chronicle* (13 October 1838); *Leicester Chronicle* (13 October 1838); *The Champion and Weekly Herald* (14 October 1838); *Stamford Mercury* (19 October 1838); *Newcastle Journal* (1 December 1838).
[59] *Y Bedyddiwr,* Cyf. 111, Rhif 27, (Mawrth 1844), p. 100.
[60] *The Times* (4 November 1841).
[61] *London Standard* (4 November 1841); *Worcestershire Chronicle* (10 November 1841); *Bradford Observer* (11 November 1841); *Leicester Journal* (12 November 1841); *Western Times* (13 November 1841); *Carlisle Journal* (3 November 1841); *Inverness Courier* (17 November 1841); *Kendal Mercury* (4 December 1841).
[62] *Welshman* (12 November 1841).

testified that he had no doubt that if he had been called upon he could have saved her life. The coroner decided that the case was not strong enough to warrant a verdict of manslaughter, even though he had considered this a possibility. The outcome was a verdict of 'natural death'. However, 'he trusted the publication of it in the papers would act as a caution to the members of this strange sect, and they would see the necessity of calling in medical aid.' This was a warning that went unheeded.

Latter-day Saint attitudes to the sick were reported in the Welsh press. At the end of 1842 and beginning of 1843, the *Welshman*[63] and the *Glamorgan, Monmouth and Brecon Gazette, and Merthyr Guardian*[64] published a brief comment on the Latter-day Saints' activity in Kendal where there were 'persons so infatuated by the dogmas of Mormonism as to refuse medical advice in cases of sickness, but rely for a healing balm in the mummery and apish antics of their depraved "priesthood"'. In the summer of 1843, an inquest was heard at the Lion Inn at Clifton- on-Teme, near Worcester. It involved another case of a Latter-day Saint's refusal of medical help, resulting in his death. A blacksmith named James Jones had been taken ill three weeks previously 'but a young man of the "Latter-day Saints" persuasion, who lived with the family persuaded them to have no medical attention, saying, that "if it was God's will, he would die whether he was attended by a doctor or not."' Thus acting 'on this fallacious mode of reasoning', the people involved failed to apply 'the proper mode of treatment', and so James Jones died, 'the neighbours having been refused permission to see him.'[65]

Numerous accounts appeared in the press during the 1840s where lack of medical aid let to extreme suffering or death. It would not be unreasonable to suggest that each time the press recorded such cases, these reports contributed to a public perception of Mormonism, linking it to what might be considered as unreasonable and superstitious behaviour.

[63] *Welshman* (23 December 1842.)
[64] *Glamorgan, Monmouth and Brecon Gazette, and Merthyr Guardian* (14 January 1843): *Hereford Journal* (4 January 1843).
[65] *Hereford Journal* (12 July 1843). The case also appeared in the *Worcester Herald* (8 July 1843); *Worcester Journal* (13 July 1843); *Worcestershire Chronicle* (12 July 1843); *Northern Star and Leeds General Advertiser* (15 July 1843).

The public view of Mormon teaching on the matter was summarized in the *Cambrian* in 1849, which reported another case of reluctance to call for medical aid, under the heading 'Freaks of the Latter Day Saints!'[66] The story occurred at the Trades Hall in High Street, Swansea, where 'some extraordinary freaks', i.e. Latter -day Saints, had lately been gathering. One of them had the misfortune of spraining his ankle and because of the suffering that followed the accident he, at first, received medical aid. However, the *Cambrian* reported:

> This it appears, was contrary to the tenets of the saints and was considered as a reflection upon their miraculous powers which they allege they plentifully possess if they exercise a sufficient quantum of 'faith.' The deluded man partaking largely, at this time, of their fanatical notions, and afraid of incurring the 'pains and penalties' consequent on a refusal, consented to be 'cured' by them.[67]

Thus, it seems reasonable to conclude that by 1849, the Latter-day Saints' unwillingness to seek qualified medical help in cases of sickness or injury, was understood to be one of the 'tenets of the saints'. This was clearly not down simply to the writings of one Baptist minister in religious periodicals or in a pamphlet, but the wider dissemination of such information in society. It would also seem fairly easy to understand why people, reading such newspaper accounts, might have found it difficult to understand why no-one would call for medical help, when a seriously ill person was deteriorating. It would perhaps be unrealistic to expect people who were not Latter-day Saints to sympathise with exhortions to call for the elders of the church in such cases.

While it might be possible for people to read newspaper accounts and be bemused by stories of attempts to cast out devils, or claims to be able to speak in tongues, cases of extreme suffering and death, where no medical help had been sought, were a different matter. It might be suggested that it was these incidents most of all that had the potenial to affect the public perception of Mormonism in the late 1840s, especially during 1849 when there were three high-profile such cases, widely reported across Britain. The newspapers were so incensed by these incidents that in two of the cases they published editorial comments that not only expresssed shock at the conduct of

[66] *Cambrian* (11 May 1849).
[67] *Cambrian* (11 May 1849).

the Latter-day Saints involved, but criticised the verdicts of the juries. What is noteworthy about these cases is that they all occurred in Wales.

The first of these tragic, and extensively reported,[68] incidents involved a collier named John Pugh, who was also a Mormon preacher. The inquest into his death took place in the Black Lion Inn, Aberdare, on 19 May 1849. Pugh had worked at the Wyrfa[69] colliery where an explosion had taken place, killing three men and injuring twelve others, with two men so badly burned that they were not expected to survive.[70] One of these badly burned men was twenty-nine year old Pugh.

The newspapers presented a case to the public that portrayed Mormonism as a religion that allowed considerable suffering rather than the administration of medical treatment.

The inquest heard that although Pugh was 'much burnt' he persisted in refusing medical aid 'alleging that his faith was sufficient.'[71] As soon as Pugh had been brought home after the explosion Mr Sims, a Mormon elder, was sent for. Pugh was anointed with oil and Mr Sims laid hands on him and prayed for him. Mrs Pugh testified that she believed that if her husband's faith had been strong enough he would have been cured instantly. Mr Evans, the surgeon, was called to give evidence and he added, 'I believe that the deceased might have recovered if ordinary means were used and the proper remedies applied to his wounds.' The jury found:

> … that the deceased John Pugh died from the effects of an accident … and the culpable neglect of his attendants, who were members of a certain society, called the 'Latter-day Saints,' in refusing to permit a medical gentleman to attend to his cure. The jurors beg in the strongest language to censure the conduct of these deluded people, and caution them not to repeat their foolish practices.

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[68] E.g. *Cambrian* (25 May 1849); *Principality* (25 May 1849); *Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian, Glamorgan, Monmouth, and Brecon Gazette* (26 May 1849); *Welshman* (1 June 1849); *Liverpool Mercury* (29 May 1849); *London Daily News* (30 May 1849); *Bath Chronicle and Weekly Gazette* (31May1849); *Northern Star and Leeds General Advertiser (*2 June 1849); *Bristol Times and Mirror* (2 June 1849); *Hampshire Advertiser* (2 June 1849); *Norfolk Chronicle* (2 June 1849); *Norfolk News* (2 June 1849); *Hampshire Telegraph* (2 June 1849); *Oxford Chronicle and Reading Gazette* (2 June 1849); *Hereford Times* (2 June 1849); *Hereford Journal* (6 June 1849); *Coventry Standard* (8 June 1849); *Nottingham Review and General Advertiser for the Midland Counties* (16 June 1849).

[69] Sometimes referred to in the press as 'Werfa'.

[70] *Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian, Glamorgan, Monmouth, and Brecon Gazette* (19 May 1849).

[71] *Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian, Glamorgan, Monmouth, and Brecon Gazette* (26 May 1849).

The deputy coroner said the jury had been 'exceedingly lenient' and 'very merciful' as,

> He fully expected to have had to commit several of them for manslaughter; but as it was, they had a most narrow escape this time, and he trusted that the serious caution of the jury would have due weight with them.[72]

The proceedings lasted nine hours. The inquest had ended with a warning that a verdict of manslaughter had only been narrowly avoided.

Just a couple of weeks after the inquest on John Pugh, under the headline 'Delusions and Religious Scruples of the Latter-day Saints', the *Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian*[73] reported an inquest into the death of a child named Cecilia Howe. The child's father, Richard Howe was a coal-heaver and 'teacher' with the Latter-day Saints. He and a shoemaker named George Taylor who served as a 'deacon' with the 'Saints' were accused of accelerating the child's death by the treatment meted out to her during her illness. Once again, this story was widely reported in the press across Britain.[74]

Strong words were used in the press to condemn the Latter-day Saints in this case. The *Hereford Journal*[75] printed a short account of the story under the headline 'Perversion of Scripture'. It referred its readers to the case of John Pugh, and added 'This same perversion of the Gospel was carried out against a poor child, Cecilia Howe, aged six years, at Cardiff.'[76] Clearly, the fact that this case involved a child made the condemnation it engendered more devastating.

The *Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian*[77] gave a full account of the inquest. The first witness was Anne Jenkins, the landlady of the house where these events took place, at Little Frederick Street, Cardiff. Jenkins spoke of the 'general objection which Howe and the "Saints" had to receiving medical advice, or as they termed it, to "relying upon an arm of flesh."' She confirmed that she heard Mr Paine, the surgeon, ask Mrs Howe,

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[72] *Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian, Glamorgan, Monmouth, and Brecon Gazette* (26 May 1849).
[73] *Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian, Glamorgan, Monmouth, and Brecon Gazette* (9 June 1849).
[74] E.g. *Principality* (8 June 1849); *Monmouthshire Merlin* (9 June 1849); *London Daily News* (11 June 1849); *Hereford Journal* (13 June 1849); *Hampshire Advertiser* (16 June); *Herford Mercury and Reformer* (16 June 1849); *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper* (17 June 1849); *Bath Chronicle and Weekly Gazette* (21 June 1849); *Liverpool Mercury* (22 June 1849); *Stamford Mercury* (22 June 1849); *Kendal Mercury* (23 June 1849); *Northampton Mercury* (23 June 1849); *Greenock Advertiser* (26 June 1849); *Leicester Journal* (29 June 1849); *Coventry Standard* (6 July 1849).
[75] *Hereford Journal* (13 June 1849).
[76] *Hereford Journal* (13 June 1849).
[77] *Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian, Glamorgan, Monmouth, and Brecon Gazette* (9 June 1849).

the child's mother, if she would give medicine to the child if he sent it to her, but she said that she would not. The *Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian* continued:

> This was on Tuesday last, at which time the child was not able to speak. The poor little innocent had been very painfully ill for several days; and its moanings and cries frequently attracted the attention of the neighbours, who were astonished to witness the apathy with which her natural protectors *seemed* to regard her, and to hear their expressions of repugnance to taking means for the alleviation of her sufferings.[78]

A woman named Harriet Reed gave evidence that in desperation she had asked Mr Paine the surgeon to visit the child, claiming 'I had not seen the child often; but I could hear her groans till I was most [sic] fainting from her screams and moans. I heard her father say "hush Cecilia" when she would be crying or moaning.' Paine was called to give evidence. He stated that when he arrived at the Howes' home on the Tuesday the child was in a 'half-comatose state and in an almost insensible condition … much exhausted and very low.' He visited the child 'in consequence of having being told by the neighbours that she had been ill some days, and shrieked dreadfully.' The child's mother told him it was wicked to interfere in cases of sickness. Paine told the 'Saints' in the house that it was 'brutal and cruel to allow a poor infant to lie in that state without attempting to do anything to mitigate her sufferings' and warned them that if the child died he would consider it his duty to inform the coroner concerning the treatment the child had received. Paine concluded his evidence with a startling condemnation:

> From the length of time that the child lingered in her sufferings without having anything done to alleviate her pain or to afford her relief, if application had been made when she was first taken ill, judging from other circumstances, in all probability she might have been saved … I fully believe that if proper attention had been paid to her, her life would have been spared.[79]

Despite the weight of evidence in the case the inquest also gives an indication that the Latter-day Saints, regardless of their obvious culpability, were given a fair hearing. This is apparent from the actions of the foreman of the jury, who following the

[78] *Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian, Glamorgan, Monmouth, and Brecon Gazette* (9 June 1849).
[79] *Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian, Glamorgan, Monmouth, and Brecon Gazette* (9 June 1849).

summation by the coroner posed a pertinent ethical question.[80] Since the parents and friends of the child 'seemed to have acted from conscientious motives' and were acting on 'religious scruples' he inquired whether it was consistent with 'our notions of freedom of thought and action' to charge them with manslaughter. However, the coroner's judgement on this difficult issue was clear. He ruled that if an adult were to refuse medicine and die as a consequence that would be a very different case from that of Cecilia Howe. He noted:

> In this case, a child of tender years was seized with a painful illness – she was too young to think and act for herself – she was in the hands of her natural protectors, who were bound by the laws of God and man to take care of her: but they had not done so: the child's death had been accelerated by their conduct; and in point of law, and common sense as well, they must be held responsible for the result. It would not do to plead religious scruples.[81]

Condemnation of the Latter-day Saints in this case could hardly have been more severe. The Coroner envisaged that if a mitigating plea of religious scruples were allowed, it might open the way for parents to 'murder their children' if they believed they would be 'better off in another world', and thus would open the way to 'all the temptations of sin'. The jury deliberated for nearly three hours, but the verdict, when it was returned was that the child 'died by the visitation of God' despite the fact that 'the coroner intimated that this was decidedly a case of manslaughter'.[82] The *London Daily News* had published the story with the headline 'Another Inquest on a Mormon Patient'[83] while the *Principality* entitled its report 'Death of Cecilia Rowe [sic]. The Latter-day Saints Again'.[84] Ultimately, the verdict was 'death by visitation of God' and the prisoners were released. In an age when even medical help could have proved ineffective, and during a summer when cholera raged throughout Wales, it appears that the situation was given some benefit of the doubt.

Such was the intense reaction to this case that the *Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian* was moved to print its own editorial comment. It described the Latter-day Saints as having certain 'peculiarities in their worship and doctrines' that notably 'acquired an

[80] The *Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian* supplied a list of all the members of the jury at this inquest.
[81] *Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian, Glamorgan, Monmouth, and Brecon Gazette* (9 June 1849).
[82] *Hereford Journal* (13 June 1849).
[83] *London Daily News* (11 June 1849).
[84] *Principality* (8 June 1849).

unenviable degree of notoriety from their treatment of the sick.' It went on to pose the question:

> What opinion can we have of that species of religion, when we find it stifling the yearnings of natural affection, and causing parents to chide an innocent child for giving utterance to plaintive wailings in its last agony?

The article stated that the Latter-day Saints' conduct in the treating of suffering humanity was unfeeling and repugnant to common sense. It further noted that the final verdict by the jury in the Howe case was clearly not the one that the Coroner had expected to be delivered. The *Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian* made its own views clear:

> For our own parts [sic], we have no hesitation in declaring that the parties who assumed the direction of the child's treatment ought to be held responsible for the acceleration of death which Mr Paine clearly traces to their inhuman and culpable remissness.[85]

It would not be difficult to understand the strength of feeling underlying these comments in the *Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian.* It might be possible to suggest that many of the people who read the report would have experienced a similar reaction. Since this story was published in newspapers across Britain, we can only conjecture regarding the potential damage it caused to the public image of the Latter-day Saints, following on closely, as it did, to the case of John Pugh of Aberdare.

However, the potentially damaging nature of the reporting of this event may be perceived by the fact that Latter-day Saints felt the need to respond, just as they had been forced to do following the calamitous baptism of Sarah Cartwright in 1843.
It would appear that the notoriety of the two cases in Aberdare and Cardiff had led to the president of the Welsh mission[86] making a significant change in advice for public conduct of Latter-day Saints in their response to sickness. Clearly, his concern was that the notoriety of these cases had the power to influence public opinion.
This response was published in the *Millennial Star* in July 1849. It came in the form of a letter by John Davis, editor of *Udgorn Seion,* written in Merthyr Tydfil on 15 June 1849. Davis wrote that cholera was raging in Merthyr, and that several of the Latter-day Saints had succumbed to the disease. Some had recovered after prayer and the prescribed ministrations, but some had died due to 'want of faith.' From the

[85] *Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian, Glamorgan, Monmouth, and Brecon Gazette* (9 June 1849).
[86] At the departure of Captain Dan Jones in February 1849, William Phillips became president of the Welsh Mormon mission.

particular perspective of the Latter-day Saints, Davis proceeded to explain that the current situation called for expediency:

> We are obliged to be very cautious in visiting our sick, and in administering oil, because the doctors are seeking to trap us … In this exigency, our beloved president counsels us to advise the relations of the sick, to send for doctors, in case should the ordinance fail to restore, after trying sufficiently, in order that the officiating brethren may not be brought in for manslaughter, as people have been endeavouring their best to do lately at Aberdare and Cardiff, and even in this place.[87]

The letter demonstrates that the Latter-day Saints perceived the objection to their actions to have arisen from a desire to entrap and defame them with charges of manslaughter. Although the *Monmouthshire Merlin* had called the Cecilia Howe episode 'a revolting case',[88] it appears that from the standpoint of the Latter-day Saints there could be no understanding why any suggestion of manslaughter had occurred, other than a deliberate attempt at persecution. Such comments following the extreme cases of Pugh and Howe may help us to understand why W. R. Davies' opposition was seen as persecution. It appears that criticisms of Latter-day Saints' action that emanated from faith was viewed as an attempt to persecute their right to hold and practice such beliefs.

The final high-profile case concerning lack of medical intervention occurred in October 1849, and yet another inquest involving the Latter-day Saints was reported by the press across Britain.[89] The *Welshman* published one of the most detailed accounts of this inquest,[90] with a number of newspapers citing this report as their source. This case is different from the previous two because the main issue was not the withholding of medical treatment (although this does form part of the explanation for the deterioration of the man's condition). It centres on the premise that a dying man was in some way coerced into receiving baptism by full immersion, which

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[87] *Millennial Star*, vol. 11, no.13 (1July, 1849), pp. 203-204.
[88] *Monmouthshire Merlin* (9 June 1849).
[89] E.g. *The Welshman* (12 October 1849); *Pembrokeshire Herald and General Advertiser* (12 October 1849); *North Wales Chronicle* (23 October 1849); *The Times* (15 October 1849); *Daily News* (16 October 1849); *Bath Chronicle and Weekly Gazette* (18 October 1849); *Cheltenham Chronicle* (18 October 1849); *Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette* (18 October 1849); *Brighton Gazette* (18 October 1849); *North Devon Journal* (18 October 1849); *Chester Chronicle* (19 October 1849); *Coventry Standard* (19 October 1849); *The Examiner* (20 October 1849); *Hampshire Advertiser* (20 October 1849); *Leicestershire Mercury* (20 October 1849); *Leamington Spar Courier* (20 October 1849); *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser* (20 October 1849); *Newcastle Guardian and Tyne Mercury* (20 October 1849); *Sheffield Independent* (20 October 1849); *Westmoreland Gazette* (20 October 1849); *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper* (21 October 1849); *Dundee, Perth, and Cupar Advertiser* (23 October 1849); *Blackburn Standard* (24 October 1849).
[90] *Welshman* (12 October 1849).

hastened his death and thus opened the Latter-day Saints once again to a possible charge of manslaughter.

The case occurred in Pembrokeshire and involved a man named George Thomas, the brother of John Thomas, who held the office of 'priest' with the Latter-day Saints. John Thomas was well-known locally under the soubriquet 'Johnny Clay'.[91] The court at Haverfordwest heard that George, a well-known local drunkard, had died as a result of his 'being baptized at a very early hour that morning in the Priory Mill leet, according to the creed of the sect calling themselves *"The Latter Day Saints"*…'[92]
At the time of his death, Thomas was suffering from cholera, but it was suggested that while in this condition he was 'urged or forced' by his brother to undergo baptism.
A public inquiry ensued. The *Welshman* published a very detailed account of the suffering of George Thomas in his final hours. It was claimed in court that that he insisted that he wished to be baptized, realising that he was close to death. Unsurprisingly, very cold and wet, upon his return home his condition worsened.

George Phillips a surgeon gave evidence that he had called to see George Thomas between 8.30 and 9.00 that morning, at which point, Thomas was in a state of collapse. Unlike the two cases in Aberdare and Cardiff, the surgeon was allowed to treat him and 'applied remedies' giving him some opium, rubbing his hands and feet and placing him in a warm bath, with a mustard poultice to his stomach. The surgeon visited twice for half an hour at a time, but on neither occasion did either brother mention the baptism. However, somehow Phillips discovered this fact and confronted John Thomas, after George's death. Furthermore, Phillips had heard that George, who had always had problems with alcohol, had been in a state of drunkenness for some days. John Thomas admitted that this was true. Phillips, the surgeon, finally concluded:

> I think that his death was accelerated in the first place by the omission to take proper remedies, when the diarrhea [sic] first appeared, and the taking him out of bed upon a cold morning, and plunging him into the river, which was the most likely means of producing the collapsed state of cholera. I think it very probable that the man would have recovered if proper remedies had been applied, and had he not been baptized in cold water … The deceased, however,

[91] John Thomas was well known locally for drunkenness, and conversion to Mormonism. He appears in the *Pembrokeshire Herald and General Advertiser* twice prior to this incident (11 February 1849 & 17 March 1849) where it is claimed that he was 'renowned for his drunkenness.'
[92] *Welshman* (12 October 1849).

> might have died of his complaint without being plunged in water, if proper remedies had been neglected to be applied to him.[93]

George Llewhellin Millard, a Haverfordwest surgeon, stated that the only thing that could have hastened death was the immersion into cold water during the baptism. He stated:

> I am not aware of the religious feelings of the parties. But even if a party was desirous of having the rite administered, no person using ordinary caution and judgement would attempt to administer it. It hastened his death decidedly, I have not the slightest doubt of it.[94]

After the calling of additional witnesses, the Coroner summed up the case. He stated that if death ensued from the action of another person, even if the motives are lawful, good and have no evil intention, that person is still guilty of manslaughter. In this case to induce a man suffering from cholera to leave his bed at a very early hour, walk nearly a mile and be plunged into a cold stream 'before the sun was up' indicated that ordinary precaution and care had not been taken. The fact that this was done to gratify the desire of the deceased was not relevant. The jury were told that they had to decide whether George Thomas' death was 'accelerated by the means adopted by the brother John Thomas'. If they considered that by administering the rite of baptism 'he acted in a careless and improper manner, and without due and necessary caution to prevent mischief, and if they found so, then it was their duty to find that John Thomas was guilty of manslaughter.'

Yet again, a possible charge of 'manslaughter' was levelled at a member of the Latter-day Saints. In this case especially the Coroner very clearly indicated the verdict that he expected to be returned. The *Welshman* noted that: 'A great number of the "brethren" were waiting the result of the investigation with much apparent anxiety.'[95]

The jury, after a short deliberation returned the verdict that 'the deceased died of cholera, his death being accelerated by immersion in cold water by John Thomas, at the request of the deceased.' Once more, a Latter-day Saint narrowly missed being convicted for being complicit in the death of another person.

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[93] *Welshman* (12 October 1849).
[94] *Welshman* (12 October 1849).
[95] *Welshman* (12 October 1849).

Furthermore, following a full account of the inquest, the *Pembrokeshire Herald and General Advertiser*[96] published (on the same page), a column containing its own judgement on the whole incident. The article was written in very strong terms. It introduced the subject by stating: 'The Latter-day Saints have presented us during the week with a fresh chapter from the Book of Mormon' and called the events surrounding the baptism and death of George Thomas 'deplorable'. It went on to comment:

> England [sic] is the land of toleration. Sects and parties, of whatever description, are free to promulgate their doctrines, and make their proselytes … If men, of whom it is hard to say whether their knavery or folly be the greatest, are allowed to play on the ignorance and superstition of the people, to foist upon them a sham bible filled with lies and blasphemy, to wheedle them by multitudes into an emigration to some imaginary paradise in America, and thus to put them in the fairest way for the destruction of their interests temporal and eternal – if such men and such a religion are not to be put down by the strong arm of the law, it must be admitted that toleration has approached the utmost verge of guilty connivance.[97]

It continued that only a madman would take a sick man, even one not suffering with cholera, to a river for baptism. Furthermore, an intoxicated man undoing the sacrament of baptism seemed incongruous. It argued that although the coroner's address had been given with clarity, the jury had not returned the expected verdict. Regarding the jury's decision, the *Pembrokeshire Herald and General Advertiser* was also scathing. It commented:

> It is fair to suppose that pity for the deluded fanatics was the prominent feeling; and there may be some reason to hope that the careful and lengthened investigation which this business has undergone may have a tendency to open, at least partially, the eyes of their ignorant dupes to the absurdities which are sanctioned by this most mischievous sect.[98]

It is difficult to know with certainty the public reaction to this case. The fact that despite it occurring in Haverfordwest it was reported throughout Britain indicates that it was deemed to be of public interest. Just a couple of weeks later, John Thomas was attacked in Haverfordwest, and brought three of his assailants to court, resulting in fines and imprisonment. The attack took place on Thomas and some other Latter-

[96] *Pembrokeshire Herald and General Advertiser* (12 October 1849).
[97] *Pembrokeshire Herald and General Advertiser* (12 October 1849).
[98] *Pembrokeshire Herald and General Advertiser* (12 October 1849).

day Saints while they were leaving a house where they had attended a Mormon meeting. No reason was given for the attack, but since it involved his assailants taking him to North-gate lake where they 'submerged him sundry times in his favourite element, and otherwise dealt with him in not the most gentle manner',[99] it suggests that the incident at least contained an allusion to the case involving his brother.[100] Although Thomas received justice with the conviction of his aggressors, 'When the court broke up, the complainant, made his escape through a back street, otherwise he would have run a great risk of being again roughly handled.'[101]

It is impossible to determine to what extent the general public shared views such as those expressed by the editorial comment of the *Pembrokeshire Herald and General Advertiser.*[102] However, it is possible to suggest that the three cases in 1849 where the conduct of Latter-day Saints was difficult to justify and widely publicised, must inevitably have had some influence on the public view of Mormonism.

Despite evidence of the above ill-treatment of John Thomas, it must be noted that in each of these three high profile cases, and other inquests during the 1840s, no Latter-day Saint was ever convicted of manslaughter, even when the coroner appears to have strongly advised such a verdict. This suggests that the juries in these cases did not act out of prejudice or hatred despite the deplorable circumstances of each case. It suggests that there was no element of persecution sufficient to have led to any such conviction, which might have been anticipated had persecution been a reality in Wales.

The final comment on issues concerning the Latter-day Saints and their belief in miracles was made in the Welsh press in November 1849. The article in the *Principality*[103] quoted verbatim from the *New York Tribunal.*[104] It claimed that its readership would be 'astonished' to hear this piece of news:

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[99] *Welshman* (26 October 1849).
[100] *Principality* (2 November 1849).
[101] *Welshman* (26 October 1849).
[102] *Pembrokeshire Herald and General Advertiser* (12 October 1849).
[103] *Principality* (9 November 1849). It was also printed, verbatim, in the *Pembrokeshire Herald and Daily Advertiser* (16 November 1849).
[104] Although the paper is referred to thus it was actually the New-York Daily Tribune (17 October 1849). The report was part of a column entitled 'Latest from "The State of Deseret"'.

> The work of the Lord is progressing very rapidly in England and Wales. Since Capt Jones left Wales, there have been over eight hundred baptized into the church of Jesus Christ, and the sick healed by the power of faith, and many believing. By the *Millennial Star,* we learn that the cholera is cured, the dumb made to speak, the deaf made to hear, the blind made to see, devils cast out, fevers rebuked, leprosy cured, and many of them, after they had been attended by physicians, who could not effect a cure, and even then cured almost instantly, by the laying on of hands and the power of faith.

Both *The Principality* and the *Pembrokeshire Herald and Daily Advertiser* concluded 'Nobody on this side of the Atlantic had the slightest idea of wonders like these being performed in the "old country."' Thus, in this brief comment these newspapers questioned the claims of the Mormon periodical.[105] The *North Wales Chronicle* went further and concluded the same article by stating 'It is only by such enormous lying as this that the supports of the Mormon imposture are able to carry on their wicked schemes.'[106]

It appears that there is strong evidence to support the view that criticism of the Latter-day Saints was the norm in reports found in the British press. Opponents such as W. R. Davies must therefore be understood against this context. His criticisms were not made in isolation, but reflected views also widely expressed in the secular press. Considering the extent to which these stories spread across Britain, it is feasible to suggest that newspapers played an important part in the dissemination of information about the Latter-day Saints. It is evident that the beliefs and practices of the Latter-day Saints had become well-known throughout Britain by the end of the 1840s. While W. R. Davies had questioned the reliability of Latter-day Saint claims that miracles had taken place in his locality, the newspaper reports of inquests involving Latter-day Saints ultimately confirmed his view that in some cases miracles had most certainly not taken place. Moreover, they accused Latter-day Saints of inexplicable and reprehensible conduct. The newspaper accounts throw further doubt on the charge that W. R. Davies was Mormonism's greatest foe and arch-persecutor.

[105] The Mormon claim to perform the miraculous, without evidence to support this claim was noted by T. Ab Ieuan in a somewhat mocking and acerbic letter to *Amserau* (14 December 1848).
[106] *North Wales Chronicle* (6 November 1849).

4. Reports on Mormon Baptism.

When missionaries from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints arrived in England, on July 19, 1837 they immediately travelled from Liverpool to Preston, Lancashire. Shortly after their arrival in Preston, they baptized the first nine British converts in the river Ribble. Thus, from the outset, the baptism of converts by full immersion accompanied the preaching of the message of Mormonism.[107] During the 1840s various newspaper articles that attempted to outline the origins and tenets of Mormonism usually included some reference to their belief in this form of baptism.[108] As the movement spread throughout the country, newspaper accounts indicate that there were certain features of Mormon baptism that seem to have been routine practice. W. R. Davies first wrote about naked, nocturnal Mormon baptism in March 1844.[109] He never returned to these issues. However, there is considerable evidence that such beliefs about Latter-day Saint baptism were repeatedly kept in the public domain, not by Welsh religious periodicals, or even the Welsh secular press, but by newspaper stories that appeared across Britain throughout the 1840s.

Latter-day Saint baptisms were regularly reported. Since at this time the Latter-day Saints had no purpose-built places of worship in Britain, it was to be expected that their baptismal beliefs led them to rivers, ponds, canals and even the sea.[110] These places were not without danger, thus, it is hardly surprising that some of these baptisms ended in tragedy, and accounts of such incidents were printed in newspaper reports across Britain.

As we have seen in Chapter 5, Davies' comments on baptism were almost certainly informed by the well-publicized deaths of Sarah Cartwright and Robert Turner in November 1843. Although the cases of Cartwright and Turner were the highest-profile incidents that clearly involved nocturnal Mormon baptism, they were not the last incidents of this type to be reported. Yet another account of the death of a Latter-day Saint during a nocturnal baptism appeared at the end of the decade, in 1849, suggesting similar risks continued to be taken throughout the decade. This happened

[107] R. L. Evans, *A Century of Mormonism in Great Britain* (Salt Lake City: Publishers Press, 1837; repr.1984), p. 32.
[108] *E.g. Monmouthshire Beacon* (21 November 1940); *The Times* (31 October 1840).
[109] *Y Bedyddiwr,* Cyf. 111, Rhif 27 (Mawrth, 1844), p. 99.
[110] The *Hereford Journal* (10 February 1841) described a baptism in the sea on the Isle of Man.

in Castle Foregate,[111] near Buildwas, Shropshire. In this instance the baptism was being performed at 9.30pm in the river Severn.[112] Newspapers reported that a woman named Ann Griffiths, who had converted to Mormonism, was taken to the river to be baptized by a Latter-day Saint elder named Thomas Lloyd. Following the baptism, while Lloyd was returning to the shore, his foot slipped and both fell into the water. Despite the fact that he had baptized at the same spot several times previously, and was accompanied by a fellow Latter-day Saint named James Bishop, he got out of his depth and 'sunk as if the ground had given away.'[113] Griffiths was rescued with some difficulty, but Lloyd drowned, and his body was not found until some time later. He was twenty-three years old, and left a widow and three children. The inquest was told that the baptism was 'by moonlight' and was done at Ann Griffiths' request. The verdict was 'accidental death.' Once more, this incident was widely reported across Britain. Even by the end of the decade, these nocturnal baptisms in dangerous conditions were not unusual, though in this case there is no suggestion of any nudity.

The impropriety that W. R. Davies alleged must be viewed within the context of press reporting which reflected events in the wider society. Whatever the Welsh religious periodicals may have printed, newspaper stories from across Britain contributed to an unfavourable portrait of the Latter-day Saints, and this was true in reports on Mormon baptism. Whatever Davies suggested appears to have been believed about Mormon baptism elsewhere in the country.

In 1845 the *Wiltshire Independent,* reported that a Mormon preacher was having some success in Trowbridge. It stated:

> It will be a matter of astonishment to many to learn that he has here, and in the neighbourhood, many proselytes, whom he baptizes in the middle of the night, and, we have heard, stripping before they go into the water.[114]

[111] Castle Foregate is an area of Shrewsbury.
[112] *Chester Chronicle* (30 November 1849).
[113] *Welshman* (7 December 1849).
[114] *Wiltshire Independent* (29 May 1845).

Attributing its story to the *Glasgow Post,* the *Bradford Observer* reported that while two men were passing through Glasgow Green, at Fleshers' Haugh they heard voices. It was 11.00pm. They observed:

> a small party of figures in the water, apparently half undressed, who seemed engaged in the performance of 'some mystical rites, which required water, secrecy, and darkness'.[115]

Furthermore, 'three new lady converts were soundly dipped as an initiation process to their admission among the brethren'. The newspaper commented that the party 'had chosen this time of night to avoid public observation.'

On 19 March 1847 the *Liverpool Mercury* described a Latter-day Saint baptism 'between eleven and twelve o'clock on Monday evening last' of five persons in the river close to St Michael's Church, Tonge, near the Oldham Junction of the Manchester and Leeds Railway. Furthermore, 'The three men and two females were in a state of nakedness, and were plunged over head in the water, which was about three feet deep.' This was not the last report regarding Mormon baptism from this area.
In 1849 the *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*[116] reported that a Latter-day Saint meeting had taken place at 'Saints Hall' near the Old Jolly Butcher Inn, at Lower Tonge, near Oldham. There had been a tea party and singing which had lasted until 11.00pm. At that point, the whole assembly, including women and children, walked to a secluded stream near the Oldham Junction of the Manchester and Leeds Railway. Here they sang a hymn and baptized a weaver named Peter Ogden. The whole ceremony was not completed until midnight. The press noted 'The Tonge Wood or Springs, it appears, is the favourite spot with these deluded people for their midnight exhibitions.'[117] Similarly, the following year *The Examiner*[118] recorded an instance of Mormon baptism at Perth. It stated that on a Sabbath night the 'disciples of Joe Smith were observed wending their way through the town.' They gathered a large crowd as they went, which continued to grow until they reached the riverside. At this point 'two men and a woman, after being surrounded by their respective friends, began to strip in the moonlight, and were forthwith led into the

[115] *Bradford Observer* (5 February 1846).
[116] *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser* (7 February 1849).
[117] *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser* (7 February 1849).
[118] *The Examiner* (23 December 1848).

Tay …' to be baptized by immersion. While these incidents do not appear to have been reported in the Welsh press, their occurrence reveals that the practices described occurred in different parts of the country and that the press reported them, presumably because they believed they would be of interest to their readership.

It appears that stories continued in the press that perpetuated the view that there was an aspect to Mormon baptism that involved indecency. A report in the *Manchester Times* in 1849,[119] attributed to the *Carnarvon and Denbigh Herald* and *North and South Wales Independent*, stated that the Latter-day Saints had recently arrived in the neighbourhood of Caernarvon and were operating with some success. It comments that:

> This is evidenced by the regular nocturnal 'dippings' which take place in the river Seiont, at which it is not an infrequent occurrence to see four or five at a time receiving the rite of baptism. The manner in which this ceremony is performed is disgraceful, and altogether unprecedented – common decency not being observed. The saints, however, are always desirous, were it possible, of keeping the place of meeting secret …[120]

Of course, it is difficult from a twenty-first century perspective to determine exactly what was meant by the expression that 'common decency' had not been observed, just as it is difficult to decide what exactly would be defined as 'disgraceful' and 'unprecedented' in the context of the time. It may simply have been reference to the perceived indignity of baptism by full immersion in a river. However, it is clear that the practice was viewed with distaste.

Reports on full immersion baptism also provided the opportunity to condemn the foolishness of the converts as in an account published in the *Daily News,* following the arrival of Mormonism in Carmarthen in 1847:

> On the admission of any dupe into their ranks, he is at the hour of midnight taken to the river side, and if his 'faith' is equal to the trial, he is ducked in the running stream until the 'chiefs' are satisfied that the young 'saint' is purified from his sins …[121]

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[119] *Manchester Times* (29 May 1849).
[120] *Manchester Times* (29 May 1849); *London Daily News* (29 May 1849). Both attributed to the *Carnarvon and Denbigh Herald and North and South Wales Independent.*
[121] *Daily News* (30 November 1847). Attributed to the *Carmarthen Journal.*

The fact that the Latter-day Saints were considered to be secretive about their baptismal practices may have encouraged people to be suspicious. Possibly, the very fact that baptisms took place under cover of darkness made people, at the very least, curious about the proceedings. Newspapers by printing this information spread these ideas about the followers of Mormonism.

It seems the Latter-day Saints may have had good reasons to be reticent about announcing these ceremonies, or performing them in the full light of day, as the following report makes apparent:

> The *gamins* of Caernarvon will not allow this, having always been accustomed to be present — treating the poor fellows to frequent volleys of hard stones and missiles, and keeping such a continual uproar, so that the solemn performance can scarcely be got through.[122]

This particular story of events at Caernarfon was reported in a number of newspapers.[123] The possibility of disruption and violence[124] would certainly be a good enough reason to attempt baptisms in secret, and may even go someway to explain the reason why Latter-day Saint baptisms frequently took place under cover of darkness, a practice clearly confirmed by numerous newspaper reports.
Captain Dan Jones had argued in his pamphlet addressing criticisms of the Latter-day Saints[125] that nocturnal baptism was done for expediency. The press report of the disruption that occurred at Caernarfon certainly supports Jones' claim.

It may be observed that there were also newspaper reports on baptisms where no impropriety was alleged, and which appear to have taken place during the day.[126] However, in many cases the reports contain elements that might appear peculiar or

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[122] *Manchester Times* (29 May 1849*); London Daily News* (29 May 1849). Both attributed to the *Carnarvon and Denbigh Herald and North and South Wales Independent.*
[123] *Leamington Spa Courier* (2 June 1849); *Northern Star and Leeds General Advertiser* (2 June 1849); *Northampton Mercury* (2 June 1849); *John Bull* (16 June 1849).
[124] In Ryhall, Lincolnshire, in May 1849 a Latter-day Saint baptism was abandoned after a number of people jostled the Mormons 'pushing them down in the water, ducking and nearly drowning them.' See: *Daily News* (21 May 1849).
[125] Captain Dan Jones, *Atebydd y gwrthddadleuon a ddygir yn fwyaf cyffredinol drwy y wlad yn erbyn Saint y Dyddiau Diweddaf, a'r athrawiaeth a broffesant; mewn ffurf o ymddyddan, er symud y rhwystrau oddiar ffordd y Cymry ymofyngar, heb, 'anmhwyllo ynghylch cwestiynau, ac ymryson ynghylch geiriau, o'r rhai y mae cenfigen, ymryson, cableddau, a drwg dybiau yn dyfod; ac na ddaliont ar CHWEDLAU ac achau anorphen, y rhai sydd yn peri cwestiynau, yn hytrach nag adeiladaeth dduwiol, yr hon sydd trwy ffydd: gwnaed [pawb] felly'* (Rhydybont: John Jones, 1846), p. 23.
[126] E.g. *Bristol Mercury* (12 October 1844); *Liverpool Mercury* (19 March 1847); *Hereford Journal* (23 February 1848); *Worcester Journal* (12 December 1849).

questionable to the reading public. In a description of what was clearly a daytime baptism, the *Worcestershire Chronicle* reported that:

> On Sunday week, a party of Mormonites, or 'Latter-day Saints', assembled at the Delph,[127] and after breaking the ice on the canal, proceeded to dip fifteen of their converts, the majority of whom (as usual in such cases) were females. A crowd of between three and four hundred persons assembled on the banks of the canal to witness the ceremony. We understand that another batch of the same sect were to undergo the same cooling process, at the same place, on Christmas-day.[128]

What is noteworthy here is that a very large crowd 'between three or four hundred persons' had gathered to watch the ceremony. Yet there is no suggestion of any disturbance, threat or trouble caused by this large number of people, suggesting that they had assembled out of curiosity rather than to harass or persecute the Latter-day Saints. Undoubtedly, the idea of the performance of the baptismal rite in icy water would have been regarded as strange. There is also perhaps some underlying suggestion that females were more easily induced to join the Latter-day Saints, and this is certainly implied in a reference to 'weak-minded females' in the sea baptism reported by *Hereford Journal.*[129] The press often passed comment on the fact that females were involved in Mormon baptism, although it is difficult to be certain of the motives for making this point. In the very widely reported baptism in the canal at Llanfoist in 1847, the person baptized, from whom 'three devils' had been cast out, was a woman.[130] In a description of a December baptism at Bromyard, it was reported that although women should have been baptized, the icy conditions meant that while men were baptized, the female baptisms were postponed.[131] With a slightly light-hearted approach, the *Fife Herald,* and many other newspapers,[132] reported on a female baptism in March 1841 at Chadderton, near Manchester. The woman was so large and heavy that a shawl was wrapped around her to aid the procedure of lowering her into the water. Since she was heavier than the man attempting to baptize her, she fell and pulled the man into the water, nearly drowning them both, as the pool was deeper than either had expected. In an account of a public

[127] The Delph is an area of water near Chorley, about 12 miles from Preston, Lancashire.
[128] *Worcestershire Chronicle* (30 December 1846).
[129] *Hereford Journal.* (10 February 1841).
[130] *Monmouthshire Merlin* (17 April 1847); *North Wales Chronicle* (20 April 1847): et al.
[131] *Worcester Journal* (12 December 1849).
[132] E.g. *Exeter Flying Post* (11 March 1841); *Liverpool Mercury* (12 March 1841); *Stamford Mercury* (12 March 1841); *Hereford Times* (13 March 1841); *Kendal Mercury* (13 March 1841); *Leamington Spa Courier* (13 March 1841); *Newcastle Journal* (13 March 1841).

debate on the merits of Mormonism in Worcester in 1848, the debate ended with the Mormon protagonist 'being hugged off in the embraces of his female devotees'[133] suggesting that he had a certain appeal for the female sex.

Apart from the time of day of the Mormon baptisms, the places where they were conducted often drew the criticism of the press. Reports on these places also conveyed an impression of strange and inexplicable behaviour. While Davies never drew attention to these specific incongruities of Mormon baptisms, the reporting of such events and public attendance at them suggests that there was a curiosity about Mormon conduct, and that Davies' brief comments may be placed within the context of national observations about such things as expressed in the newspapers.

In 1841 *The Times*, attributing its report to the *Fife Herald,*[134] described the baptism of an 'aged and infirm female labouring under affliction' on Weymss Moor, Scotland. It was noted that: 'The place chosen for the ceremony was an old lint-hole full of filthy stagnant water!' Furthermore, such a place was not conducive to baptism as:

> The poor old woman was literally smeared – we cannot say baptized, for as the vagabond minister was proceeding to plunge her over head and ears, away went the edges of the pool, and carried away with them the aged woman and the priest into the bosom of the stinking element! But the worst of this tale is yet to be told – the old woman, as might have been expected, became worse after this rough and highly censurable usage, and in a few weeks died. This shameful exhibition happened on a moor, else, we think, it might have ere this time been looked into.[135]

The account is full of critical language, with its reference to the 'vagabond minister' and his 'censurable usage' of the elderly convert. Apart from the rivers where tragic accidents occurred, the places chosen for public baptism were often, described in the press as dirty and unhygienic. In 1841 the *Hereford Journal* reported on Mormon activity in Presteigne:

> Several of them have been baptized, or rather immersed in brooks, ponds, ditches, and even coolers. Some have been plunged in the bogs of Comb Moor,

[133] *Hereford Journal* (23 February 1848).
[134] *Fife Herald* (9 September 1841).
[135] *The Times* (17 September 1841).

> to the amusement of many of the inhabitants of Presteign [sic], who attended the ceremony.[136]

A similar comment that the Latter-day Saints used unsuitable places can also be found in a report from Stratford upon Avon in 1843 in the *Glamorgan, Monmouthshire and Brecon Gazette and Merthyr Guardian*. Commenting on the arrival of a Latter-day Saint preacher to the area, it stated:

> Last week he dipped two or three of his followers in the 'soft flowing Avon,' where people of the town wash their horses; … It was really a very ludicrous scene to see the poor ducks of delusion walking through the lanes, dripping wet, and followed by a crowd, after being well soused in the water on a severe cold day; and one of them, it is said, seriously ill in consequence.[137]

A similar baptism occurred at Bromyard in 1849:

> A dipping came off Sunday week, when a great crowd was attracted to the spot … two men were dipped by one of the elders in a prepared *dung-hole!* -one of them being so tall and the place so short, that that the ceremony had to be performed twice to make it complete. The candidates went to a nearby stable where one was overheard saying to another 'They dipped my brother Harry last Sunday, and did it stunning; but they had to break the ice, and it stuck to his whiskers.'[138]

Places that were just muddy, rather than dirty, were also used, although this still conveyed an element of unreasonableness. The *Worcester Journal* commented in 1847 on a Mormon baptism in the parish of Hartlebury. In this case the Mormon elder had taken up his station in the middle of the pool, and called 'his disciples' to him one by one. After muttering some 'impious gibberish' the Mormon elder 'soused each over the head and ears in the muddy element'. [139] This report noted that two or three weeks previously some 'navvies' had assembled at the pool to witness a baptismal ceremony. The Mormons being apprehensive that these men would disrupt their ceremony 'were fain to beat a retreat, and seek a mud-bath elsewhere.' While this provides evidence that they feared there would be trouble from the observers, it does not confirm that this actually happened.

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[136] *Hereford Journal* (17 November 1841).
[137] *Worcester Journal* (2 March 1843); *Cheltenham Chronicle* (9 March 1843); *Glamorgan, Monmouthshire and Brecon Gazette and Merthyr Guardian* (18 March 1843).
[138] *Worcester Journal* (12 December 1849).
[139] *Worcester Journal* (12 August 1847).

Canals appear to have been a used frequently by the Latter-day Saints for baptism.

On a November night in 1848 two Mormon converts were baptized in the 'cold canal' in Newport, Monmouthshire.[140] The *Cambrian* reported that in in the locality of 'The Green' in Neath the Latter-day Saints had several followers, and 'two young women underwent the rite of baptism by immersion in Neath Canal, which was performed by one of the brethren.'[141]

Although Davies briefly mentioned the Mormon doctrine of baptism by proxy for the dead in *Y Bedyddiwr* in June 1848, he had little to say on this teaching and neither did the secular press. That the doctrine was known is evident form the press review[142] of Henry Caswall's book *The City of the Mormons: Or Three Days at Nauvoo.*[143] One of the activities he had witnessed on his visit to Nauvoo was baptism for the dead, with one woman being baptized six times in a proxy baptism and presenting herself for a seventh immersion. The *Liverpool Mercury* in 1849 gave a description of public meetings in Rotherham dealing with the Mormon doctrine of baptism, including baptism for the dead.[144] The *Derby Mercury*, later that same year, reported a public debate in Derby, between a local Primitive Methodist preacher, and an elder of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints named John Wheeler, who refused to comment on the doctrine.[145] Following the death of Joseph Smith in 1844, the *Northern Star and Leeds General Advertiser* gave a full account of the movement, including a description of the Mormon Temple at Nauvoo. It noted that various types of baptism were conducted there, including 'baptism for the dead'.[146] The writer went on to note that one of these deceased persons was George Washington.

It might be proposed that the Latter-day Saints' practice of adult immersion baptism excited public interest and was thus frequently mentioned in the press. This was not primarily due to the actual process of full immersion, since newspapers sometimes

[140] *Monmouthshire Merlin* (18 November 1848).
[141] *Cambrian* (2 March 1849).
[142] *The Times* (2 September 1842): *The Times* (6 September 1842).
[143] Caswall, *The City of the Mormons*.
[144] *Liverpool Mercury* (27 February 1849); *Sheffield Independent* (24 February & 3 March, 1849).
[145] *Derby Mercury* (11 July 1849).
[146] *Northern Star and Leeds General Advertiser* (3 August 1846).

reported such occasions conducted by the other groups without criticism.[147]
It appears that the fact that Mormon baptisms were often nocturnal, done in unusual, and not always salubrious places, and that they were accompanied by a suggestion of impropriety, together made them fascinating to the public, or at least the journalistic mind. Furthermore, the high-profile tragedies that accompanied them in 1843 and 1849, possibly entrenched in public opinion views of Mormonism that would have been difficult to repudiate. Following the deaths of Sarah Cartwright and Robert Turner in 1843, the *Millennial Star* appealed to its readership:

> We sincerely hope that the Saints will take warning by the late lamentable accidents, and let a word to the wise be sufficient, neglecting nothing with regard to the fitness of time, place, or appearance.[148]

From a review of the newspaper accounts of Latter-day Saint baptisms of the 1840s, it would appear that this advice was not always heeded.

Whatever bias or prejudice press reports of Mormon baptism may have contained, these reports created an impression of Mormon baptism that would probably have been accepted by the newspaper readership. The frequent reporting of similar incidents would have reinforced perceptions of this Mormon activity. It would appear that on occasions there was a lack of propriety, and certainly a lack of good judgement in the way this rite was administered. Thus, it appears that the press in general regarded it to be sufficiently interesting for its readership to publish reports on Mormon baptism throughout the 1840s. In doing so, it might be the case that such reports contributed to establishing, or at least confirming, public perceptions about the Latter-day Saints' beliefs and practices regarding this rite, whether accurately or with some element of prejudice is difficult to establish.

Press reports frequently involved derogatory comments, or mockery and censure of Latter-day Saint conduct. W. R. Davies' comments need to be viewed against this

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[147] Some of these reports are in sharp contrast to reports of Mormon baptisms. The *Monmouthshire Merlin* (2 September 1843) gave an account of a public baptism in the river Ebbw, written in reverential tones and presenting a scene of great dignity. Females were also baptized on this occasion. Similarly, *Monmouthshire Merlin* (28 October 1843) reported again on a baptism in the river Ebbw, at Pontymister. The scene was described in similarly reverential language e.g. 'The banks of the stream were crowded by attentive and respectable persons, who seemed to view the solemn ceremony with the awe and veneration it should command.' In both stories the place of the ceremony is described as 'romantic' and 'picturesque.' The *Cambrian* reported ninety-four persons baptized at Llanelli in 1841 (29 May 1841).

[148] *Millennial Star*, vol.4, no.9 (January, 1844), p.143.

context. However condemnatory, it is difficult to conclude that types of articles published about on the Latter-day Saints was a form of persecution. While we may concede that it did not help their cause and possibly resulted in mis-understanding and unpleasant incidents, there is no evidence of any organized expression of persecution. By the same token, when Davies' articles were published in the Nonconformist press, while strident and critical in their opposition, they are best viewed in the same manner as the newspaper reports. Davies commented on the same issues that gained public interest as Mormonism spread across the land, except that his comments were based on his local experience as a minister at Dowlais.

Conclusion

This study of British newspapers between 1840-49 has revealed that the press printed a variety of articles on the Latter-day Saints during these years. While these were often condemnatory or derogatory in the descriptions and terms they used, there was generally a sense of mockery and bemusement rather than any attempt to stir up hatred or any encouragement to persecute the movement. When the press were at their harshest it was in the most serious cases, such as the death of six-year-old Cecilia Howe in Cardiff in 1849. Few would dispute the justification for their comments.

However, it may be admitted that reporting on the Latter-day Saints was generally negative in tone. The newspapers published and disseminated stories about the origin and founder of this new religion in the most critical terms, and their reiteration of claims that the basis of Mormonism was an elaborate money-making scheme persistently reinforced this notion throughout the 1840s. The Welsh religious periodicals often simply translated and repeated these well-publicised stories, sometimes months after they had first appeared, and their power to create opposition to the Latter-day Saints must be viewed in light of this fact. Thus also with W. R. Davies, and the other 'reverends' who entered the debate on the validity of Mormonism. We may ask where ministers initially received their information, and ultimately conclude it was through published anti-Mormon tracts and booklets, such

as those by Henry Caswall, and almost certainly through stories that had been widely disseminated by the newspapers. The newspapers also reported on Mormon claims that they possessed spiritual gifts such as speaking in tongues. Such claims were treated with bemusement rather than hostility, as were many of the reports regarding nocturnal baptism and various states of undress. It would not have been entirely unnatural for the reading public to have been suspicious about the apparent clandestine element of Mormon baptism, or to have been bewildered by reports of baptisms taking place in muddy bogs. Reports of failed attempts at healing and deaths during baptism in raging rivers in the cold and dark inevitably would have strengthened public criticism of the Latter-day Saints, especially following the reports of inquests. These events were in the public domain and it would have been extraordinary had they not influenced the views of the public about the Latter-day Saints. However, we may also conclude that when juries passed judgement, they found in favour of the Latter-day Saints and in every instance where manslaughter sentences seemed possible, no Mormon was ever convicted. This provides compelling evidence that while Latter-day Saints were often misunderstood by the wider society, mocked and belittled frequently in the press, and sometimes suffered local hostility and rough treatment, they were never the victims of official or organized persecution or attempts to destroy the movement. Had there been widespread hatred and injustice, it is reasonable to suggest that this would have manifested itself when opportunities arose, especially in 1849.

Thus a study of newspapers enables us to place the Latter-day Saints against the backdrop of a wider society. It also enables us to conclude that the expressions of disbelief and distrust conveyed by W. R. Davies echoed the voice of a wider sceptical and critical public.

Furthermore we may conclude that a study of the newspapers of the period leads us to ponder the things that they omitted from their reporting. With the exception of the report about preparations for the emigration in February 1849,[149] and reports of the

[149] E.g. *Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian, Glamorgan, Monmouth, and Brecon Gazette* (13 January 1849).

actual departure from Swansea,[150] there are no press reports on the activity of Captain Dan Jones. As President of the Welsh Mormon mission from the end of 1845, and prolific author of numerous pamphlets and *Prophwyd y Jubili,* it seems strange that given his importance there is such an absence of references to him in the secular press. Perhaps we may conclude that he was important for the mission of the Latter-day Saints, but that this significance did not transfer into society at large. This is also true for W. R. Davies, whose mention in the press during this period is simply within the context of his role as a Baptist minister, mentioned attending marriages and funerals. With the exception of one strange and dramatic incident in Newport, when a deaf and dumb man was restored to full health following his baptism in the canal,[151] there are no recorded examples in the press of miracles having taken place, despite the claims of Dan Jones, and his constant ire at the refusal of W. R. Davies to believe them. Looking for newspaper evidence regarding the increasingly tense and dangerous situation Jones described in Dowlais in 1847, we find there is none. None of this refutes the idea that Davies was a fierce opponent, or that Latter-day Saints did not encounter prejudice and unpleasant treatment, but these things were not of sufficient import to excite the press.

Ultimately, we must conclude that newspaper reports informed the public about Mormonism and Mormon activity. That this reporting was initially negative and often prejudicial cannot be contested. However, newspaper reports reveal that in some instances the extreme and culpable conduct of the Latter-day Saints themselves reinforced these prejudices and confirmed the worst suspicions of their opponents. In some senses, W. R. Davies' accounts and charges against Mormonism pale into insignificance in their light.

[150] E.g. *Cambrian* (16 February 1849).

[151] *Monmouthshire Merlin* (30 September 1848); *Hereford Journal* (4 October 1848); *Bristol Times and Mirror* (7 October 1848); *Leicestershire Mercury* (7 October 1848).

Conclusion

This research set out to investigate and reassess the currently accepted account of the Latter-day Saints' mission to Wales between 1840-49. As little research had been conducted on this subject for many years, part of this reassessment asked whether more could be learned about the earlier years of the Mormon mission. It also investigated claims that the Latter-day Saints were subjected to opposition and persecution, much of which originated from Nonconformist opponents, and in particular W. R. Davies, Dowlais.

The thesis was introduced with a brief outline of the beginnings and characteristics of Mormonism. From this necessarily simplified analysis, it was evident that Mormonism's unique theological ideas, including acceptance of the *Book of Mormon,* the principle of emigration to 'Zion', and the emphasis on the return to practices found in the New Testament concerning spiritual gifts, were part of the Mormon message as it entered Wales in 1840. While it is not possible to determine the extent to which the complex theology of Mormonism was fully understood in Wales at this time, it seems feasible that much of it was unknown. It is likely that, were it known, the particular Mormon teaching about God would have inspired Nonconformist ire and been refuted in the religious press. The fact that there is no mention of it suggests that it was either not known outside Mormon circles or that it did not form part of their message at this time. Nevertheless, it is clear that the origins of the movement and its founder Joseph Smith were treated with scepticism in both the secular and religious press, and its adherents frequently treated with scorn and derision. However, the most controversial aspect of the movement was clearly its teaching about the practice of spiritual gifts, and in particular claims that miracles had occurred in Wales. Furthermore, by the end of the decade it was the refusal of medical aid for the sick and dying that had become the most contentious issue of all. The far-reaching publicity about such matters in the secular press took the issue beyond the confines of chapel walls, or the condemnation of Nonconformist opponents. Journalists and senior members of the judiciary added their voices to condemnation of Mormon claims that the sick could be healed by faith through prayer and the laying on of hands and, more especially, to their refusal of medical intervention.

As far as the early years of the Welsh Mormon mission are concerned, the discovery of missionary journals written by those labouring in north and south Wales between 1840-43 has revealed a significant amount of new information. This information leads to a broader understanding of the sending of Royle and Cooke to Cloy, Overton, viewing this more precisely as a borderland mission that encompassed Shropshire, rather than the start of a mission directed specifically at proselytising Wales. Furthermore, there is persuasive evidence that the Latter-day Saints were already active in Monmouthshire and that this mission was at the very least contemporaneous with the mission in Flintshire.

The journals also provide previously unpublished evidence regarding the daily lives of the missionaries, their travels, the opposition they faced, the strategies they employed, their successes and failures. From the journals we learn of an itinerant ministry where opposition manifested itself mainly from Methodists, Wesleyan Methodists and Baptists, but this opposition was in the form of debate and dispute rather than persecution or violence. There is evidence that there were occasions when the opposition became noisy and unpleasant, with the threat of violence, but no actual harm appears to have been done and the instances of unpleasant or potentially dangerous behaviour are few and far between. However the journals also provide information about the care and support the missionaries received, the homes where they made their bases and held Latter-day Saint meetings. From the journals of James Palmer and John Needham we obtain a picture of the hitherto unrecognised significance of Llanfoist and Abergavenny in the earlier years of the Welsh mission, significance also supported by references in contemporary newspaper reports.

It is clear that the nature of the mission changed following the appointment of Dan Jones as President of the Welsh mission. What is evidenced from his prolific writing is that he was a determined protagonist of the Mormon faith and sought to defend it vehemently whenever it was challenged. An analysis of Ron Dennis' claims about W. R. Davies reveals that they are based not simply on W. R. Davies' writings, but are heavily influenced by Dan Jones' claims and assessment of Davies' character, motives and activity. Upon investigation, it is now apparent that many of these claims cannot be substantiated and the representation of Davies is flawed on many levels. Furthermore, the view of Davies as the 'most vociferous' and 'relentless' opponent of Mormonism can also be brought into question. It has not been measured against the

writings of other opponents of Mormonism in Wales, nor considered against the backdrop of the wider criticism of the Latter-day Saints found in a study of newspapers of the period. While this study has been able to confirm W. R. Davies can be identified with 'Tobit ger y bont' it has not been able to provide further evidence that he wrote under other pseudonyms.

While we are forced to agree that Davies was a vehement opponent of the Latter-day Saints, he was no more vehement defending his views than Dan Jones was in defending Mormonism. Davies certainly called the Latter-day Saints 'Satanists', but it is difficult to agree that this should be defined as persecution. Furthermore, he was not as 'relentless' as Dennis has suggested and that while he used the word 'Satanist', in fact his primary objection was to Mormon assertions about the miraculous. He clearly objected to claims being made that, in his view, were not substantiated by the evidence and his aim appears to have been to expose this (even if using harsh language). Perhaps it is the language used which leads to Dennis' conclusion, but his assessment hides something of the reality of the situation.

Davies was certainly a concerned commentator, strident and sometimes offensive. He was a dedicated opponent of the Latter-day Saints, but opposition and persecution cannot always be equated. The term 'persecution' was regularly employed by Captain Dan Jones to describe the situation as he viewed it, and in particular the actions of W. R. Davies. It was a term that was guaranteed to elicit an emotional response from the readership of *Prophwyd y Jubili,* evoking images of harsh, relentless and undeserved treatment by bullies seeking to torment and destroy the Latter-day Saints. As we have seen in the introduction, the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines 'persecution' as 'hostility and ill-treatment, especially because of race or political or religious beliefs; oppression or persistent annoyance or harassment'. Oppression is defined as 'prolonged cruel or unjust treatment; mental pressure or distress'. Using this definition as our criteria, we must conclude that there is no independent evidence that supports the view that Latter-day Saints were victims of persecution, as the term is understood in this thesis. They were subject to misunderstanding, often promoted by questionable conduct, particularly involving baptismal practices, their treatment

of the sick, and claims of the miraculous that were unsupported by empirical evidence. Evidence exists that they were regularly challenged by Nonconformist ministers, in the streets, with anti-Mormon lectures and also in print. While they were sometimes subjected to ridicule and hostile behaviour, to claim that there was persecution, and in particular, persecution by Nonconformist ministers, is to overstate the case. In W. R. Davies, Dan Jones met someone who believed the Mormons were spreading falsehoods. At this distance, it is impossible to be certain that this was the case, but the evidence presented in this thesis suggests that the matters Davies opposed were widely treated in the religious and secular press. Whether correct or not, Davies was not the only person to hold such views of the Mormon mission.

Evidence discussed in this thesis has attempted to broaden the prevailing narrative regarding the Welsh Mormon mission. It has challenged perceptions about what can be known about the early years between 1840-43, and added detail to our understanding of Latter-day Saint activity during this period. Furthermore, it has challenged the established view of W. R. Davies, and offered an alternative explanation for the claims made concerning him.

While this research has provided an alternative interpretation of the story of the Welsh Mormon mission during the 1840s, its findings are limited by its scope as a detailed, localised study. Clearly it has shown that further research may be undertaken into the early period, perhaps a further exploration of the families who did respond to the message and embraced the call to emigrate. While it has only been possible to investigate claims about W. R. Davies, and draw attention to the existence of other Nonconformist opponents, the latter group opens up a whole new area of research for the willing researcher. There is clearly an opportunity for evidence discovered in this thesis to provide a starting point for a new history of the Latter-day Saints in Wales for this period. Little has been written on Dan Jones himself, nor has there been any systematic analysis of his numerous published articles or pamphlets. Neither has there been a detailed narrative of his return to Wales between 1852-56. The story of the Welsh emigrants who established the Mormon communities in Utah

and Idaho have received little attention. While a study of the Latter-day Saints' mission to Wales has mainly engaged the attention of Mormon scholars, it may be hoped that the activities of this extraordinary religious group may find a greater place in the histories of Wales yet to be written.

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