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Philip Jones of Cirencester

by R. Austin
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PHILIP JONES, OF CIRENCESTER.

By ROLAND AUSTIN.

(WITH PLATE).

AMONG the rarest of Gloucestershire books is a volume of sermons which has given, and to some extent still gives, speculation as to the exact identity of the writer, though more knowledge has recently come to light through the researches of Mr. F. S. Hockaday, who most kindly followed up a clue presented by certain passages in the " Epistle Dedicatorie " of the work referred to below.

The book was the subject of a note by the late Rev. B. H. Blacker in *Gloucestershire Notes and Queries*, but it escaped record in the *Manual of Gloucestershire Literature*¹ where, in spite of not being exactly topographical, it would, had a copy been then known, surely have found a place as the earliest instance of the County of Gloucester being mentioned on a title page, this being eighteen years before the publication of *Feareful Newes*, an account of a storm at Olveston, printed in 1606 (*Manual*, ii, 258). In addition to its bibliographical interest the volume indicates a time of religious disturbance in the town where the sermons were preached and also tells us of proceedings which involved controversy with the bishop of Gloucester, John Bullingham.

Up to the present time I know of only two copies. The one now described was acquired for the Gloucester Public Library in 1908, and the other, as I learn from Mr. St. Clair Baddeley, is in Cambridge University Library. There is not a copy in the British Museum, the Bodleian, or even in the rich collection of Gloucestershire books owned by Captain A. W. Clifford. Inquiry in

¹ By Sir Francis Hyett and Canon W. Bazeley, 1895-7. 3 v.

Notes and Queries (Ser. 6, v, 25), in *Gloucestershire Notes and Queries* (ii, 134), and more recently again in the first (Ser. 11, ix, 45-6), failed to elicit information as to the identity of the author. Mr. Blacker's copy was from the library of the late Canon Lysons but whether it is the one now at Gloucester I cannot say. The title is as follows:

CERTAINE

Sermons preached of / late at Ciceter, in the countie of /
Glocester, upon a portion of the first / Chapter of the
 Epistle of Iames: wherein / *the two seueral states, of the*
riche and poore man / are compared and examined, the
 differen- / ces in quality, and duety betwixt them /
 shewed, both directed to such Chri- / stian parts and
 offices, as the suffi- / ciencie of the one may, and / ought to
 performe, and the / wants of the other do ne- / cessarily
 require./

Penned at the earnest requests of diuers / *well affected*
Inhabitanes of the place: and / now published as well for the
use of others, / as for the further profit of that parti- / cular
congregation.

By *Philip Iones*, Preacher of the word / of God in the
 same Towne. / *Allowed by authoritie.*

Imprinted at London by T. D. for
Thomas Butter, 1588.

The volume is octavo in size, without pagination, the signatures being ¶ to H[6]. In the Gloucester copy the first leaf¹ (before the title) of the first sheet is missing. The Epistle Dedicatorie, dated from London " May the 17, 1588 " is addressed as follows:

To the right Reuerend Father in God, *John*,² nowe
 Bishoppe of *Glocester, and Commendatarie of Bristow,*
Philip Iones wisheth the increase of all good graces fit for

¹ Mr. F. J. Jenkinson, Librarian of Cambridge University Library tells me that in the copy there the first leaf is blank except for a leaf ornament.

² John Bullingham.

the discharge, and answering of so great a calling in this life and in the next, the fruition of those ioyes, which are euerlasting in *Christ Iesus*.

There are three sermons occupying 122 pages (A—H[5]). On the recto of the last leaf (H[6]) in the book is a table of errata, described as:—

The errors and misprinting of wordes
escaped in the presse, are here amended,
which otherwise might marre the sense,
and hinder the Reader.

followed by the colophon:—

Imprinted at London
at the three Cranes in the Vintree
by *Thomas Dawson* for Thomas
Butter. 1588.

Publication was duly entered in the Register of the Stationers Company:¹

3 Maii [1588].

Thomas Butter. Alowed vnto him for his copies. *A Sermon preached of late at Ciceter in the county of Gloucester, wherein the twoo Different states of the poore and Riche man are compared together.* Master Crowleys hand is to yt Testyfyng it to be allowable to ye print. vi^d.

The author of these Sermons is given by more than one bibliographer as the Philip Jones who translated in 1589 *Certaine briefe, and speciall Instructions for Gentlemen, merchants, students, souldiers, marriners, &c. Employed in seruices abrode, or anie way occasioned to conuerse in the kingdomes, and gouernementes of forren Princes*, by Albertus Meierus. In the British Museum Catalogue the translator is described as “Rev., of Cirencester” though

¹ Arber's Transcript of the Registers of the Company of Stationers of London, 1554-1640. II, 489.

correspondence (in 1911) with the late Mr. G. K. Fortescue, formerly Keeper of Printed Books, elicited the opinion that there was no evidence for this and that it seemed to be merely the guess of an ingenious cataloguer. Possibly the bibliographical works of Watts¹ and Lowndes² were consulted, for both include the Sermons and the *Instructions* under the same name. The Sermons are mentioned by Wood (*Fasti*), who records three graduates of the name of Philip Jones but he was unable to assign the authorship to any one of them. It will be seen later that the preacher of the Sermons never graduated.

The " Epistle Dedicatorie " reveals difficulties with the bishop of Gloucester, John Bullingham (1581-98), and also that Philip Jones had endeavoured to secure the support of the archbishop of Canterbury and other commissioners of the High Court. After giving his reasons for printing the sermons he proceeds

Wherunto besides sundrie effectuall motives inducing me, (which for some respects I here suppress) one is of good consequence, meete in this place to bee introduced, and specified: and that is, an earnest desire wherewith I have for a season travailed, to have you thorowly acquaynted with the state, and trueth of certaine actions of mine, which by reason of the practises of suche adversaries, as *Iuda* and *Benjamin* sometimes had, in a matter not muche different in nature though somewhat in circumstance, are so farre from beeing entertayned with lawfull favour, as that they are prosecuted with extreeme displeasure under you, yea and by you, (as of late in your heate and passions openly appeared) to the great incouragement of the common enemie, and no little discomfort of manie that professe sincerely and discreetely.

¹ *Bibliotheca Britannica*.

² Ed. 1857-64. "The Sermons at Ciceter" is not given in the first edition (1834).

Whereunto when I adde in my private consideration, the immoderate and fierce proceedings of your self, your courts, and officers, by interrupting the use of my ministry, and stretching the aimes of authoritie to the uttermost (I may not say beyond law, reason, and christian conscience) to the increase of my disquietinges, and the full measure of my molestations, I see small cause in common sense, of taking any heart or spirite to fulfill my course, and to growe on in that spirituall worke, whereof a beginning of great hope is already made, and a foundation layd amongst them, who at this present do inioy the benefite of my attendance.

.

Which thing hath made me of this opinion, that either you have egregiously forgotten (my reverēce to your place & person premised) or that you do wittingly neglect the advise, or rather charge of the most reverend, & honorable, the Archbishoppe of this province, (whō for dutie & honors sake, in respect of many his speciall favors towards my selfe I here reēmber) sent & directed to you by letter, to doe nothing, that might tēd to my discourage or troble . . .

The cause for the complaints of the "fierce proceedings," and the interruption of his ministry by the bishop is shown in the act books of the Gloucester Consistory Court, which are now quoted by the kindness of Mr. F. S. Hockaday. There are other entries concerning Philip Jones which tell us something of his career before his connexion with Cirencester.

The earliest entry found is on the 25th September, 1581, when he was presented to the rectory of Welford-on-Avon by the patron, Lewis Grevell. He was instituted on 19th October, 1581. His sureties for first fruits (23rd November, 1582) were Thomas Watkys, of Welford, and Edward Maxfeld, of Weston-on-Avon, gentlemen.

In 1584 (c. April-May) he was found to be "of suspected life; not a graduate, nor a preacher. Holds another benefice. Did not appear, nor will." The statement that he was not a graduate disposes of any connexion being established with those of the same name and time mentioned by Wood (*Fasti*, i, 221), or in Foster's *Alumni*. On the 5th November, 1585, Philip Jones was instituted to the vicarage of Weston-on-Avon, also on the presentation (24th August, 1585) of Lewis Grevell.

Within a short time of his institution to these benefices Jones was preaching at Cirencester, for the next entries in the act book relate to his irregularities in that town. Described as "Curate of Cirencester" he appears in the consistory court on 4th October, 1586, before William Blackleech, chancellor of the diocese.

Philip Jones, clk., curate of Cirencester.

Gloucester Consistory Court.

Oct. 4, 1586. Before Mr. Wm. Blackleech, LL.B., chancellor, in his house.

Detection—He came into this diocese without letters testimonial from the place of his ordination or of 2 justices of the place whence he came and served the cure and preached without licence of the bishop or the judge [*i.e.* the chancellor of the diocese].

Jones appeared and confessed a portion of the detection and that he preached at Cirencester with the bishop's permission (*venia*) but that he has not a licence under the seal of either the bishop or of the judge; wherefore he was monished by his lordship to appear before him in the same place, this day, at 1 p.m. to answer certain articles. Which time having come he did not appear and was suspended from his office.¹

It will be noticed that neither "the place of his ordination" nor "the place whence he came" is stated.

¹ G. D. R. vol. 59. This and other entries are renderings from the Latin.

Search has so far failed to obtain any information on these points. There is certainly no record of the presentation of Jones to Cirencester. In his history of Cirencester Church, the Rev. E. A. Fuller mentions (p. 94) that "Mr. Jones is styled the Preacher in a will of 1587." This will is entered (f. 2) in the Vestry Book.

Throughout the year 1587, there are further proceedings. On 11 January, 1586/7 Jones is charged with serving the cure at Cirencester "without licence." The apparitor (Robert Hawkins) swore that he cited Jones personally at the feast of Epiphany at Cirencester, but he did not appear. For his contumacy he was excommunicated in writing. On the 31st March he came before the bishop in the consistory court and evidently had considered his position. After the inspection of letters from the archbishop of Canterbury and others of the Court of High Commission the bishop gave him absolution on his having first subscribed to the articles of religion and sworn to obey the laws. This recognition of ecclesiastical authority was but temporary for within three months Jones is cited once more before the bishop and the chancellor. It is alleged that

He dothe not followe the book of comen prayer in divers poyntes, he doth not reade the 11th and 12th verses of the lateny, he refused to Baptize two children.

There is no record of act, but on 8th November, 1587, there is a marginal note which seems to show that the case was in the Commissioners' Court. In this same year Jones was presented for non-payment of subsidies for Welford-on-Avon and Weston-on-Avon, and having been cited by *viis et modis* at his house he was, on 8th November, suspended at both places, though from the entry of the presentation on 10th March, 1592, of Edward Vernon (instituted 28th March) to the rectory of Welford, and on 25th June, 1592, of Thomas Heath (instituted 21st July)

to the vicarage of Weston-on-Avon, in each case described as vacant by the "death of the last incumbent,"¹ it is evident that both livings were held by Philip Jones until the end of his life.

In the last entry found he is described as "late curate of Cirencester." The act book records:—

Oct. 11, 1587. In Gloucester consistory court. Philip Jones, clk., late curate of Cirencester. He used very sclanderous and seditious wordes against the curate there and others. He appeared. Also appeared Henry Bushoppe, clk., now curate there, Adam Spill, Robert Tayler, and Edward Herberte of the same, who had been cited to appear and were sworn to depose what they knew in the matter of articles concerning the health of the soul and reformation of the excesses of Philip Jones and they were monished to undergo examination after the rising of the court.

According to the register of Welford-on-Avon "Phillip Jones, parson of Welford," was buried the 8th of February, 1592.² He died intestate, administration of his goods being granted 9th February, 1592 to his relict, Ann Jones. He is there described as "clericus" of the rectory of Welford. Sureties in £100 were given by John Jones and John Parker.

The identity claimed for the writer of the sermons preached at Cirencester as the translator of *Brief Instructions*, referred to in the earlier part of this paper, cannot be entirely dismissed and yet is difficult to establish. Both books are dated from London within a year of each other and there is nothing in the second work which might not quite well have been produced by a country parson who would have been acquainted with Latin.

¹ In an "Abstract of Original Presentations in the Diocese of Gloucester" among the Gloucester Diocesan Records, the livings of Welford and Weston are described as void in 1592 "By Philip Jones's death."

² Rev. A. J. Davis, rector of Welford-on-Avon, kindly sent me a copy of the entry.

There is, however, yet another Philip Jones to whom the translation might be attributed. In the account of William Towerson's third voyage to Guinea, printed in Hakluyt's *Voyages*, we find it stated :

28 August [1577]. This day Philip Jones, the Master of the Christopher came aboard us.¹

This Philip Jones was the writer of *A true report of a Worthy Fight . . . at Pantalarea*, 1586,² and in the days when the great Elizabethan seamen knew how to wield the pen, as they also knew how to sail the ocean, it is not so improbable that such a mariner would translate the *Instructions*. It is also relevant to note that the translation is dedicated to Sir Francis Drake, and Jones there refers to "my very good and learned friend M. Richard Hakluyt," while in a letter from John Newbery to Hakluyt dated 28th May, 1582, the writer says "I pray you make my commendations to . . . Master Philip Jones."³

¹ Hakluyt, II i, 51 (ed. Macle hose, vi, 250).

² *Ib.* II, i, 285 and vi, 46.

³ *Ib.* II, i, 462 and v, 453.