

**THE PARLIAMENT
EXPLAINED
TO WALES**

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The Parliament explained to Wales by John Lewis

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JOHN LEWIS

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BY
JOHN LEWIS,
OF GLASGRUG, LLANBADARN FAWR.

CARDIFF.

—
1907.

B- 1820.370.1



*One hundred and twenty-five copies privately
printed for "Cymdeithas Llen Cymru"
by WILLIAM LEWIS, Duke Street,
Cardiff, August, 1907.*



PREFACE.

It has always been a matter of regret to students of Welsh history that so many of the most important political and social pamphlets relating to the history of Wales and Welsh institutions are practically inaccessible. Even the British Museum Library, complete as it is in most directions, lacks a large number of pamphlets of essential value to the Welsh historian. The readiest way to supply this want is to reprint the rarer tracts, and this it is proposed to do in the present series.

The tract which is here reprinted is of interest because (excluding the controversial works of John Penry) it was one of the first political appeals addressed to Welshmen. It has also considerable historical value as representing the views of a Welsh country gentleman of good position at one of the most critical periods in the history of the Principality. It will be remembered that Wales was Royalist to the backbone throughout the Civil War, and that the only portion of the country that showed any sympathy for Puritan ideals was the English part of Pembrokeshire. Nevertheless, there were a few thoughtful people here and there who regarded the policy pursued by the king and his advisers with no friendly eye, and amongst these we must count John Lewis, the author of this tract. He was the son of James Lewis, of Cwmowen, in Cardiganshire, by his wife Mary, daughter of Edward Morgan David Lloyd, of Glasrug, Aberystwyth, and it is probable that he inherited Glasrug from his mother, as he made it his place of residence.

Of his early life little is known except what can be gathered from some remarks made by him in the preface to a book published in 1656. He there states :
" I may truly say that I have had a genius to the

affairs of religion, and this thirty years known something from it, and have been something versed in men and books of severall sorts. I might also add that I was the first of my country that did publish anything in order to the Parliament; and what reproaches, dangers and discouragements I incurred I list not to mention. For my part I envy not any that come in at the eleventh hour, and I hope my portion is reserved for mee in the better world. I was in the number of those that were named in the Act of Propagation of the Gospel in Wales, all which together I hope will warrant mee to offer my poor thoughts unto the world in an affaire of so much consequence to God and my countries good."

There can be little doubt but that the publication of this pamphlet got Lewis into bad odour with his Cavalier neighbours in Cardiganshire; but he secured the countenance of Parliament, and was trusted and honoured by the Puritan party. His book is frankly written from the Puritan standpoint; and it may be that his description of the state of religion in Wales before the Civil War is overdrawn; but there is nothing to show that he was actuated by any unworthy motives, while his patriotism and his zeal for religion are sufficiently evident. The suggestion made at the end of the book, that a college should be founded in Wales for the training of the ministry, he afterwards elaborated in a tract printed in 1656, and in a series of letters addressed to the great Presbyterian divine, Richard Baxter.*

*For further particulars with reference to Lewis, see *Wales*, 1896, page 121.

CONTEMPLATIONS UPON THESE TIMES,

OR, THE

PARLIAMENT

EXPLAINED TO

WALES.

DIGESTED INTO THREE PARTS.

I.—Containing, A brief, faithfull, and pithy History of the Parliament, wherein (as in a mirrour) is represented the marvellous mercies of GOD in its preservation : Whence it is evinced, That doubtlesse it is designed for some notable purposes of His in these later times ; And (by some materiall Probabilities) even to set up the Kingdom of His Sonne in all the world.

II.—Clear Resolutions of such Doubts, as his Countrymen of Wales are not so well satisfied in, as could be wished ; which are reduced to these 3 Points touching the

{ King
Covenant
Common-Prayer-Book.

III.—A closer application unto the state of Wales, interwoven with sundry remarkable and profitable observations.

Written by a Gentleman, a cordiall Well-wisher of his Countries happiness.

LONDON,

PRINTED BY R. W. FOR NATH. WEBB, AND W. GRANHAM, AT
THE GRAY-HOUND IN PAUL'S CHURCHYARD, 1646.

To

THE RELIGIOUS, AND MOST WORTHY,

SIR ROBERT HARLEY,
KNIGHT OF THE BATH,

SIR THOMAS MIDDLETON,
KNIGHT,

MASTER JOHN GLYNNE,
RECORDER OF THE FAMOUS CITY OF LONDON,

EMINENT MEMBERS OF THE HONOURABLE
HOUSE OF COMMONS,

AND ALL OTHER HIS WORTHY FRIENDS AND COUNTRY-MEN,
THAT EITHER ARE, OR SHALL BE MEMBERS
OF THE PARLIAMENT OF ENGLAND.

IF ever it was true, it is now, that *Scribimus indocti, doctiq;* so that it may grow almost a question, whether now the sword, or pen is most busie? or more effusion of ink, or blood? What here offers it self to your view, comes from a modest and peaceable hand and heart, and meerly relative to the good of those countries, whose happiness I am confident you prefer before any particular interest. Conceptions of this kinde I have not yet seen any; and though (praised be God) our hands are pretty well restrained, yet that our hearts be wholly purged of the old poyson, there is some slender endeavour to inform our country-men with the right understanding of the Parliament, and its principles, and clear demonstrations of God's speciall providence and goodnesse in its preservation; so that to harbour a thought against it, we must take heed we be not found to fight against God: I confesse them but a rude heap of thoughts; I have laboured to be Seneca his scholar, and in writing to observe his rule, not so much the *Quemadmodum*, as the *Quid*, being assured none can be more eloquent, then he that hath well conceived a truth; it is with things of this kinde, as with burthens of the womb that are teemed with perturbations and dangers, they prove lesse thriving; and what is here might have appeared more comely had they not been conceived at such times and places, when and where indeed I durst not scarce owne them as thoughts. Worthy sirs, whatever they are, they implore your favourable acceptance, they court neither for praise nor preferment; if the poore author may not still be under the insultation of our old enemies, *Mutato nomine*, and enjoy but common justice, it is the apex of his desires: I would not be behinde for my poore mite to further the great work, which