

DAVIES, JAMES (died 1760), Independent minister

Name: James Davies
Date of death: 1760
Child: Mary Williams (née Davies)
Child: Samuel Davies
Gender: Male
Occupation: Independent minister
Area of activity: Religion
Author: Robert Thomas Jenkins

A native of Llanedy parish, Carmarthenshire, educated at Carmarthen Academy. In 1712 he was ordained minister of Troed-rhiw-dalar and Llanwrtyd. Thence he removed in 1724 to the pastorate of Cwm-y-glo, between Merthyr Tydfil and Aberdare; it was a joint pastorate with the distant congregation of Cefn Arthen near Llandovery (they had a common origin in the 'Brecknockshire church' of **Henry Maurice**); further, they were mixed congregations of Calvinists and Arminians. Davies's senior (Arminian) colleague was **Roger Williams** (1667 - 1730), who lived at Cefn Arthen (he had been in office since 1698, and upon his death in 1730 the union of Cefn Arthen and Cwm-y-glo came to an end, but not the doctrinal division within both congregations). Davies was not only a Calvinist but belonged to the new 'missionary' type of Dissenter. He itinerated vigorously in north Glamorgan and Monmouth (**Edmund Jones**, *History of Aberystroth*, 99, and diary for 1773), and on the inception of the Methodist movement welcomed it warmly, inviting **Howel Harris** to preach in the Glamorgan hill-country; there are two letters of his (138 and 145, both of 1739) in the Trevecka collection at N.L.W. In 1738 the Arminian wing at Cwm-y-glo chose a well-to-do local farmer, **Richard Rees** of Gwernllwyn Uchaf, as Davies's co-pastor (he died 1749). Relations between the two men and their followers became increasingly difficult, and the 'left wing' seceded in 1747 to form the congregation (now Unitarian) of Cefn-coed-cymer. Owing to the expiry of the lease, Davies and his people left their historic meeting-house at Cwm-y-glo and bought (February 1749) the site at Merthyr Tydfil on which Ynysgau chapel stands; and in 1750 Davies was joined as co-pastor by his son Samuel Davies. In 1751 the Aberdare members of Ynysgau hived off to form a new church. The younger Davies soon revealed Arminian tendencies, and the tale of Cwm-y-glo was repeated at Ynysgau. James Davies failed to control the situation, became well-nigh friendless, and died at Gwernllwyn Isaf, 29 April 1760. The diaries of **Philip David** of Penmain under 3 May, have a rueful reference to his former great popularity and the disesteem into which he had fallen through instability and time-serving; and **Edmund Jones** (15 August 1773) refers tersely to him as 'an apostate' - it would also seem from this passage that a daughter of James Davies's had married **David Williams** (1709 - 1784), the minister of Watford and Cardiff.

SAMUEL DAVIES (died 1781)

He was at Carmarthen with **Thomas Morgan** (1720 - 1799), who speaks most highly of him and attended his ordination in 1746 to a pastorate in Wiltshire. His defection to Arminianism (or Arianism) provoked unfriendly comment in the diaries of **Philip David** and of **Edmund Jones**, but it is clear that he was held in great esteem and affection at Ynysgau. He died 18 March 1781 -the year of his birth has not been discovered, nor that of his father's.

Author

Emeritus Professor **Robert Thomas Jenkins**, (1881 - 1969)

Sources

Josiah Thomas Jones, *Geiriadur Bywgraffyddol o Enwogion Cymru (Aberdŷr 1867-70)*, i, 139

Hanes Eglwysi Annibynnol Cymru, ii, 256, 257-8, iv, 362

Charles Wilkins, *The history of Merthyr Tydfil* (Merthyr Tydfil 1867)

manuscript sources named above

Walter J. Evans, NLW MS 10327B: Carmarthen Presbyterian College roll of students

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