

DAVIES, STEPHEN (died 1794), who revived the defunct 17th century Baptist church at Carmarthen

Name: Stephen Davies
Date of death: 1794
Gender: Male
Occupation: revived the defunct 17th century Baptist church at Carmarthen
Area of activity: Religion
Author: Robert Thomas Jenkins

The labours of **Enoch Francis** had settled a branch of the Newcastle Emlyn Baptist church at Ffynnonhenry (Llanpumpsaint), and Davies, a son-in-law of his, was a member there. In 1757, Davies rented a dwelling-house in Priory Street, Carmarthen, for holding occasional preaching services, as some of the members of Ffynnonhenry lived in the town. In 1765, Davies opened a linen-draper's shop in the town, and came to live there - in Lammas Street; and in 1768 (**Joshua Thomas**, *Hist. Bapt. Assoc.*, 62) Ffynnonhenry and Priory Street were incorporated as a single church. In 1775 some members wished to have Stephen Davies ordained co-pastor, but there was so much opposition that a schism arose. Davies's opponents removed to the old Priory - this was the congregation which afterwards became the Dark Gate church, now at Tabernacle chapel. But Davies and his party kept their hold on the Priory Street meeting-place, and also on Tŷ Coch in Llangynog parish, and duly ordained Davies as their pastor - not before 1778, however (**Joshua Thomas**, *op. cit.*, 67), did the Baptist Association grant them formal incorporation. A chapel was built in Priory Street in 1786 - the predecessor of the present Penuel. But in 1792 Davies was dismissed by his church. Some (J.T. J., i, 112) attribute this to his failure in business; **David Jones** (*Bed. Deheubarth*, 444) to a dispute concerning moneys collected for building the chapel. It is perhaps easier to believe (**David Jones**, *op. cit.*, 443) that personal clashes were the cause: Stephen Davies's former pastor **Daniel Davies** (1756 - 1837) testifies that he was a good man, but that he could not brook opposition - he describes him as a strongly-built man who dressed well, with powdered wig, a public figure of consequential appearance and aristocratic manners. Nor, in view of what happened at Priory Street in 1799 (see under **Watkins, Joshua**), should we disregard the hint given by **William Richards** of Lynn (1749 - 1818) that there were doctrinal differences within the church (see *Trafodion Cymdeithas Hanes Bedyddwyr Cymru*, 1930, 35-6). Davies died in 1794 and was buried in Ffynnonhenry burial ground.

Author

Emeritus Professor Robert Thomas Jenkins, (1881 - 1969)

Sources

Joshua Thomas, *Hanes y Bedyddwyr ymhlith y Cymry: o amser yr Apostolion, hyd y flwyddyn hon: yn ddwy ran* (Caerfyrddin 1778), 558, 574, and the above references

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