

DAVIES, WILLIAM (1805 - 1859), Independent minister and schoolmaster

Name: William Davies
Date of birth: 1805
Date of death: 1859
Gender: Male
Occupation: Independent minister and schoolmaster
Area of activity: Education; Religion
Author: Robert Thomas Jenkins

Born 20 March 1805 at Pant-ysgyffarnog in Llan-y-crwys, Carmarthenshire, was educated first at Castell Hywel and then (after keeping school for six months at Ffald-y-brenin in his native parish) at Carmarthen Academy (1826-30), where he showed considerable linguistic and mathematical ability. He ministered for a few years (seemingly not too successfully) in Cornwall, being ordained (1832) at Helford and living at Truro; but ill health compelled him to return home in 1834. In 1835 he became tutor to the children of a land surveyor named Davies, at 'Froodvale' (in Welsh, Ffrwd-y-fâl) in Llansawel, who built him a school-house which became quite famous as the seat of a preparatory school for aspirants to the ministry; the school elicited one of the very few laudatory reports of the royal commission of 1846 (*Report*, i, 227). Davies also preached in the chapels of the district, and from 1841 to 1856 was pastor of a small congregation founded in 1840 by an uncle of his at Parc-y-rhos in Pencarreg parish. He was an unattractive preacher, and was suspected (incorrectly) of Unitarianism, partly because of the aridly academic nature of his discourses but more because he was *persona grata* among the Unitarians and acted annually as examiner at Carmarthen Academy; his fairly copious writing all appeared in orthodox Independent periodicals. But he was undoubtedly a most capable teacher, and his scholarship was sound; he received in 1842 a complimentary Ph.D. degree from Germany - the university is not specified, but the fact is attested by one who had seen the diploma. At the end of 1854 he removed from Ffrwd-y-fâl to Troed-y-rhiw (Allt-Walis), again combining a family tutorship with a private school; but in 1856 he was appointed Hebrew and mathematical tutor at Carmarthen Academy. He died at Carmarthen, 11 December 1859; he was buried in the graveyard of Elim Independent chapel, Ffynnon-ddrain. His not immodest judgement upon himself was that 'his only eminence consisted in his tact as a teacher.'

Author

Emeritus Professor Robert Thomas Jenkins, (1881 - 1969)

Sources

Autobiographical fragment printed by G. Eyre Evans in no. 31 of his *Antiquarian Notes* (London 1898-1906)

Hanes Eglwysi Annibynnol Cymru, iv, 95-6 (inexact)

Geirlyfr Bywgraffiadol o Enwogion Cymru (1870) (with amusing reminiscences)

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Published date: 1959

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APA Citation



Jenkins, R. T., (1959). DAVIES, WILLIAM (1805 - 1859), Independent minister and schoolmaster. *Dictionary of Welsh Biography*. Retrieved 11 Nov 2024, from <https://biography.wales/article/s-DAVI-WIL-1805>

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