

GRIFFITH, DAVID (1792 or 1794-1873), Independent minister

Name: David Griffith
Date of birth: 1792 or 1794
Date of death: 1873
Child: David Griffith
Child: Robert William Griffith
Gender: Male
Occupation: Independent minister
Area of activity: Religion
Author: Richard Griffith Owen

Born at Rhiwfelen, Abergwili, Carmarthenshire. The family moved to Llanegwad and the son was brought up in Panteg chapel where he began to preach at the age of sixteen. After spending two years at **David Peter's** school at Carmarthen, he became minister of Bethel, Llanddeiniolen, Caernarfonshire, an offshoot of Pendref, Caernarvon, founded about 1810; there he was ordained in 1815. He married the daughter of Bryn farm, Llanfair-is-gaer, and settled in her home, farming and ministering to Bethel and the neighbourhood. He soon became very well known in North Wales, partly because of his work in opening up new churches but more particularly because of his readiness to stand surety for the debts of the chapels, often to his own personal disadvantage. He took a prominent part in founding the churches of Ebenezer, Deiniolen (of which he was the first minister, 1822-32) and Seilo, Portdinorwic, of which he was minister until 1851. He died 27 February 1873 and was buried in Bethel cemetery.

In 1849 his eldest son, DAVID GRIFFITH (1823 - 1913), became joint minister with him of Seilo and Bethel; he was born in 1823 at Bryn, Llanfair-is-gaer, and was educated by the Rev. Griffith Hughes of Cefn, Llanddeiniolen, and at Liverpool. He founded Moriah chapel, Portdinorwic. In 1873 he was appointed minister of the church at Dolgelley; he retired in 1889 and went to live at Degannwy and later at Bryntirion, Bethel, where he died in 1913; he was buried in Llanfair-is-gaer churchyard. He is said to have been the ablest of the family. He delighted in literature, edited *Dysgedydd y Plant* (1871-8), and was chairman of the union of Welsh Independents (1890). He published a stout volume, *Hanes yr Eglwys Gristionogol drwy y Byd*, but for all his labour and care failed to establish a reputation as a historian. He also published a memoir of **David Roberts** (1818 - 1897) of Wrexham.

His youngest brother, ROBERT WILLIAM GRIFFITH (1835 - 1894), was joint minister with him at Bethel, Seilo and Moriah from 1866 to 1873; he was born at Bryn, January 1835. He was educated at Portdinorwic school, the Liverpool Institute, and at the Rev. Evan Harris's school at Mold. He was a farmer at Bryn until 1866 when he was ordained minister; he had sole charge of the churches from 1873 until his death in 1894. He achieved considerable prominence in political affairs and was the local Liberal leader; 'as long as he lived he represented his ward on the county council ... Robert Griffith did not discharge his duties as a minister - he was probably the most negligent minister ever to have had charge of a church.' (**W. J. Gruffydd** in *Hen Atgofion*, 31, 32). Under his leadership sufficient money was raised to open a British school at Bethel and to get a college-trained master to run it. He was for twenty years the secretary of the Caernarvonshire Independent quarterly meeting. He died 30 December 1894.

Author

Reverend Richard Griffith Owen, (1890 - 1973)

Sources

Hanes Eglwysi Annibynnol Cymru, iii, 254-8, v, 460

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W. J. Gruffydd, *Hen atgofion blynyddoedd y locust* (1936), 31-2, 46

Y Genedl Gymreig, 4 March 1913

Llawlyfr Undeb Caernarfon (1930), 1930

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