

LEWIS, JOSHUA (1816 - 1879), Independent minister

Name: Joshua Lewis
Date of birth: 1816
Date of death: 1879
Parent: Timothy Lewis
Gender: Male
Occupation: Independent minister
Area of activity: Religion
Author: Robert Thomas Jenkins

Born at Neuadd-fach, Llanybydder, Carmarthenshire, son of Timothy Lewis, a tailor who was a Baptist of Aberduar church - Joshua Lewis was thus uncle to **Timothy Richard**. He went to a school kept at Rhyd-y-bont chapel by William Jones (later of Swansea), and there became attached to the Independents. At 16 he opened a school at Gwernogle, but soon became assistant in a school at Tre-lech, kept by the pastor Evan Jones; at Tre-lech he began preaching. He entered Carmarthen Academy in 1834, and the reports on him there were exceptionally laudatory. In 1838 he was ordained as co-pastor of Henllan Amgoed - the senior pastor, John Lloyd (1775 - 1850) had been pastor of Henllan and its numerous 'branches' since 1805; but after Lloyd's death Lewis persuaded most of these to become separate churches, and at the end of his life he had charge only of Henllan itself and of Llanboidy. He was not at first regarded as an eloquent preacher, but eventually developed a power which made him sought after in all parts of Wales. But he was above all a student; and his diaries (extending from 1838 till 1872) testify to an unusual breadth of study - Hebrew, Greek, Latin, philosophy, and higher mathematics; he was more than once sounded for tutorial appointments at Independent colleges. Politically, he was a stubborn Radical, with a special interest in popular education; he was a prominent advocate of Voluntarism in education, and was pretty nearly the last man to surrender to state aid. He wrote much in the periodicals - he was a good-tempered debater. In 1874 he had a seizure, which ended his preaching, and he died, suddenly, 8 October 1879, unmarried. There is a biography (1881) of him, by Lewis James, on which the present note is chiefly founded - it is an interesting book, not least so for its copious extracts from Lewis's diaries.

Author

Emeritus Professor Robert Thomas Jenkins, (1881 - 1969)

Sources

L. James, *Cofiant y diweddar Barch. Joshua Lewis, Henllan gyda dyfyniadau helaeth o'i ddyddlyfr* (Rhymney 1881)

A History of Carmarthenshire, ii 245, 257, 258

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