

PROBERT, LEWIS (1837 - 1908), Independent minister and college principal

Name: Lewis Probert
Date of birth: 1837
Date of death: 1908
Gender: Male
Occupation: Independent minister and college principal
Area of activity: Education; Religion
Author: Richard Griffith Owen

Born 22 September 1837 at Lanelli, Brecknock. He was brought up in Siloam church, where he came under the influence of two celebrated ministers, **John Davies** of Cardiff and David Richards of Caerphilly. In 1860 there was a vigorous revival in the district, which had a considerable effect on him and after experiencing 'a spiritual conviction which was very keen and fervent' he was admitted to membership of the church. He began to preach in 1862 and went to the Rev. Henry Oliver of Pontypridd's preliminary school. In the summer of 1863 he was admitted to Brecon Independent College. He made rapid progress in his studies and long before he had finished his course Bodringallt, formerly Gelligaled, chapel had taken him to its heart. In July 1867 he was ordained there as its first minister. At that time the Rhondda valley was beginning to develop and the country people were pouring there in thousands. He immediately began to establish new churches in the district. Siloh church was started at Ystrad and a chapel built for it; he also started the church at Cwm-parc and an English church at Ton-y-pandy. In 1872 he concentrated his labours on Siloh chapel, Pentre. In 1874 he moved to Salem chapel, Portmadoc, as successor to **William Ambrose**. Here he started another church and in 1877 built a chapel (known as the Memorial chapel) in memory of his predecessor; both these churches were in his charge until 1886, when he returned to Siloh, Pentre. On 20 April 1898 he was elected principal of Bala-Bangor College in succession to **E. Herber Evans**. For the second time in their history the Independents had failed to agree to set up one theological college for the denomination and about the time Probert came to Bangor it had been decided to co-operate with the Baptist College in preparing students for the B.D. degree - an arrangement which had the approval of the University of Wales. In this difficult testing time the new principal proved himself to be a wise and skilful leader. In his time, too, the college was moved from 'The Poplars' to the place where it now stands. He published *Y Weinidogaeth Ymneilltuol yng Nghymru*, 1882; *Esboniad ar y Rhufeiniaid*, 1890; *Esboniad ar yr Effesiaid*, 1892; *Crist a'r Saith Eglwys*, 1894; and *Nerth y Goruchaf*, 1906. In 1901 he was elected chairman of the Union of Welsh Independents. He was regarded as a preacher of the first rank, a fine theologian (although tending to be conservative in his views), and a man of noble character. He died suddenly 29 December 1908 and was buried at Llanelly, where he had lived as a child.

Author

Reverend Richard Griffith Owen, (1890 - 1973)

Sources

Hanes Eglwysi Annibynnol Cymru, ii, 286

Album Aberhonddu â€¦ o'r flwyddyn 1755 hyd 1880 (1898), 232

Y Tyst, 6 and 13 January 1909

Y Dysgedydd, 1909, 68-74

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