

WILLIAMS, JOHN (1806 - 1856), Baptist minister and author

Name: John Williams
Date of birth: 1806
Date of death: 1856
Parent: Elizabeth Jones
Parent: Robert Williams
Gender: Male
Occupation: Baptist minister and author
Area of activity: Literature and Writing; Religion
Author: William Phillips

Son of Robert Williams, a native of Llanddodged, Denbighshire, and Elizabeth Jones of Yr Efail, Glanwydden, Creuddyn, Caernarfonshire; he was born at his mother's home, 20 June 1806. His writings show his early interest in literature and languages, and he set to work to study and improve his mind. After a short period at the school kept by John Hughes, incumbent of Llanddulas, he found a patron in the **Bodysgallen family**, who sent him to Robert Watkin Lloyd's school at Tamworth to be prepared for Oxford. He only stayed there nine months and then returned home to find himself in an awkward position - his patron disappointed and his people vexed.

He resumed his studies, was invited to keep a school at Eglwys-bach (1830-3), and began to preach. He became minister of Llansilin and Moelfre (1833-6), Rhos and Brymbo (1836-41), Newtown (1841-53), Rhos, and Penycae (1853-6). In some of these places he kept a school for the training of candidates for the ministry.

He was influenced by the Campbellite movement. He translated Alexander Campbell's dissertation on forgiveness, and in 1839 began to translate the *New Testament* under the title *Yr Oraclau Bywiol*, 1842. It is now considered that the *Oraclau Bywiol* is not, as the author maintained, a translation from the original Greek but a literal translation of Alexander Campbell's Testament and the works of George Campbell, J. Macknight, and P. Doddridge. His most outstanding work is *Ffugyrau y Beibl*. This is an attempt to instruct the reader in the principles of exegesis. His contribution as a linguist is none the less valuable and it is evident that he had a clear conception of the functions of the grammarian. His writings show the independence of his judgement and prove clearly that his intention was to enlighten the understanding, cultivate the intelligence, and make man a free citizen. He died 15 November 1856, and was buried in Pen-y-cae cemetery where there is a tombstone on his grave.

Author

Reverend William Phillips, (1880 - 1969)

Sources

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