

EDWARDS, DAVID MIALL (1873 - 1941), theologian and writer

Name: David Miall Edwards
Date of birth: 1873
Date of death: 1941
Spouse: Lilian Clutton Edwards (née Williams)
Parent: Jane Edwards
Parent: William Edwards
Gender: Male
Occupation: theologian and writer
Area of activity: Literature and Writing; Religion
Author: Hywel David Lewis

Born 22 January 1873 in Llanfyllin, Montgomeryshire, son of William Edwards, grocer and gardener, and Jane Edwards. He began his education at the Board School, Llandderfel, and the grammar school, Bala, before proceeding with an Exhibition to the University College of North Wales, Bangor. As the University of Wales was not yet empowered to confer degrees, he sat for the Honours School of English in London University, and was awarded second-class Honours in 1896. He then proceeded to Mansfield College, Oxford, but being prevented by illness from sitting his examination on the completion of his three-year course, he accepted a call to Salem Congregational Church, Ffestiniog, and was ordained in 1900. This, however, did not prevent his returning to Oxford where he graduated in 1901 from Mansfield College with first-class honours in theology. Returning to Ffestiniog he remained there until 1904 when he became minister of Plough Chapel, Brecon. In 1909 he was appointed to the Chair of the Philosophy of Religion and Christian Doctrine in the Brecon Memorial College, where he remained until 1934 when, after a protracted and extremely courageous struggle, he was compelled to yield to ill-health and resigned from his Chair, continuing, however, active in many other directions until his death in 1941. His career as a teacher of theology, writer, and preacher was a notable one, and the influence of his work and personality was widely felt, especially in Wales where he carried his religious fervour into many social and cultural fields. His reputation as a theologian was established by his two books, *The Philosophy of Religion* (1929) and *Christianity and Philosophy* (1932), works for which he was awarded a doctorate by the University of London, and by his numerous contributions to learned journals. His first Welsh book, *Crefydd a Bywyd* (1915) was followed by numerous other books in which he discussed religious subjects with peculiar incisiveness and clarity, and thus prepared the way for his main literary work, *Bannau'r Ffydd* (1939) in which he strove, with much success, to provide a comprehensive interpretation of the main Christian doctrines in terms of modern life and culture. His contributions to Welsh journals were very extensive and he himself was editor of *Y Dysgedydd* (1915-18) and *Yr Efrwydd* (1920-28) and of the widely-read series of essays published by Urdd y Deyrnas under the title *Efengyl y Deyrnas*. In his philosophical and religious views Edwards owed much to personal idealism as represented in the work of James Ward, Pringle-Pattison, and W.R. Sorley, but he was subsequently much impressed also by Otto's *Idea of the Holy*. The most distinctive strain in his own thought is his insistence on the idea of the Holy as the basis of other values, but his work was notable, less for original developments of the positions he himself adopted, than for vigorous defence of them and criticisms of rival theories. His interest for posterity will owe much to his pioneer work in the art of writing a readable Welsh style on philosophical subjects. Welsh philosophy will always be greatly indebted to his work and example.

He married 1914 Lilian Clutton Williams, of Manchester. He died 29 January 1941 and was buried at Brecon 1 February

Author

Hywel David Lewis, (1910 - 1992)

Sources

Y Dysgedydd, May, 1941

personal knowledge

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [David Miall Edwards](#)

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