

EDWARDS, CHARLES (1628 - after 1691), Puritan man of letters

Name: Charles Edwards
Date of birth: 1628
Date of death: after 1691
Parent: Robert Edwards
Gender: Male
Occupation: Puritan man of letters
Area of activity: Literature and Writing; Religion; Scholarship and Languages
Author: Griffith John Williams

Son of Robert Edwards of Rhyd-y-croesau in the township of Lledrod, Llansilin, Denbighshire. Very little is known of his early youth; in 1644 he was elected ' Bible Clerk ' in All Souls College, Oxford. In 1648 he was expelled from that college because of an unsatisfactory answer which he had given to the visitors sent to the university to ask the members of the various colleges whether they were prepared to submit to the authority of Parliament. In October 1648 he was awarded a scholarship at Jesus College, whence he graduated B.A. in 1649. The following year he is found serving as an itinerant preacher under the Act for the Propagation of the Gospel in Wales, and it may be surmised that he continued in that work until 1652-3 when he was given the sinecure living of Llanrhaeadr-ym-Mochnant. He lost that living in 1659 and it is difficult to trace his steps during the years that followed the Restoration in 1660. [*N.L.W. Jnl.*, 1961, 82 indicates that he was again at Llanrhaeadr in 1660.] He went to Oxford c. 1666 or 1667 in order to see his first book, *Y Ffydd Ddi-ffuant*, 1667, through the press. It is likely that he spent the next few years at his old home in Llansilin, but he was back at Oxford in 1670 and the year following, supervising the printing of two books, namely, *Dad-seiniad Meibion y Daran*, 1671, a reprint of the translation by [Morris Kyffin](#) of bishop Jewel's 1595 *Defensio Ecclesiae Anglicanae*, and the 2nd edition of *Y Ffydd Ddi-ffuant*, 1671, which has an important addition - ' Hanes y ffydd ymhlith y cymru ' (A history of the Faith amongst the Welsh). Some time between 1673 and 1675 he came into contact with [Stephen Hughes](#) and [Thomas Gouge](#) and the Englishmen who formed the ' Welsh Trust ' with the object of establishing charity schools and publishing Welsh books to be distributed free to poor persons. He was in London, therefore, until 1684, superintending the work of printing those books. He also published some works of his own, including the 3rd edition of *Y Ffydd Ddi-ffuant*, 1677, translations of religious works, together with a 'primer,' *Llyfr Plygain gydag Almanac*, 1682. Some time after 1686 he returned to the vicinity of Oswestry, where he had served as a preacher in 1672 after Nonconformists had been permitted to meet in dwelling houses that had been licensed; it may be surmised that he served again there as minister c. 1690-1. But he could not remain there long, for in 1691 he is again in London, printing that strange book, *An Afflicted Man's Testimony concerning his Troubles*, a kind of autobiography. His object in writing this book was not to chronicle facts but to complain of the oppression of his enemies. It is obvious that the afflictions from which he had suffered had begun to affect his judgement; one sees here some of the first signs of insanity. He completed the writing of the autobiography on 1 July 1691; what his history was after that is not known.

Y Ffydd Ddi-ffuant has won a secure place for itself among Welsh prose classics. It cannot be denied that Charles Edwards is the chief writer of Welsh prose between the days of [Morgan Llwyd](#) and those of [Ellis Wynne](#).

Author

Emeritus Professor Griffith John Williams, (1892 - 1963)

Sources

Bye-Gones, relating to Wales and the Border Counties, 1886-7, 44-5

Y Traethodydd, 1886, 283-307

G. J. Williams, ed., *Y Ffydd Ddi-ffuant adroddiad o helynt y grefydd Gristnogol er dechreuad y byd hyd yr oes hon, a phrofiad oi gwirionedd* (Oxon 1667), 1936, v-lxxvi

Saunders Lewis, *Ysgrifau Dydd Mercher* (Aberystwyth 1945), 60-4

Hugh Bevan, *Hanes y Ffydd yng Nghymru detholiad o'r Ffydd ddi-ffuant* (Cardiff 1948)

Efrydiau Catholig, iv, 45-52

Baner ac Amserau Cymru, 6 December 1950

G. Milwyn Griffiths, [A note on Charles Edwards](#), *The National Library of Wales Journal*, 1961, 82

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Charles Edwards](#)

Works

Charles Edwards, *Hebraismorum Cambro-Britannicorum specimen: honorandis antiquae Britannicae gentis primoribus, aliisque ei benignis mecaenatibus eudaimonia... Lond. Decemb. 24. 1675* (London 1675)

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