
EDWARDS, THOMAS CHARLES (1837 - 1900), Calvinistic Methodist minister, exegete and preacher

Name: Thomas Charles Edwards

Date of birth: 1837

Date of death: 1900

Spouse: Mary Edwards (née Roberts)

Parent: Jane Edwards (née Charles)

Parent: Lewis Edwards

Gender: Male

Occupation: Calvinistic Methodist minister, exegete and preacher

Area of activity: Education; Literature and Writing; Religion; Scholarship and Languages

Author: Gwilym Arthur Edwards

First principal of the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth (1872-91) and second principal of Bala College (1891-1900). Born 22 September 1837, in the year in which his father, [Lewis Edwards](#), opened his academy at Bala. His first teachers were John Williams of Llandrillo and Evan Peters. He then went to Bala College (1852) (London matriculation 1852, B.A. 1861, M.A. 1862), and [after matriculating in 1862 at S. Alban Hall, Oxford] became a scholar of Lincoln College (1862-6), where he graduated with first class honours in Lit. Hum. [M.A. 1872. At Oxford he was deeply influenced by Pattison and Jowett; he kept in contact with both as long as they lived.] He received the degree of D.D. honoris causa from the Universities of Edinburgh [1887] and Wales (1898). He married Mary Roberts in February 1867, and had four children. He died 22 March 1900.

He began to preach in 1856 and was powerfully influenced by the revival of 1859-60. In the course of his Oxford vacations he did missionary work among those who were building the Pembroke railway. In 1866-72 [he had already been ordained in 1864] he was minister of the English chapel in Windsor Street, Liverpool, moving to a larger chapel in Catherine Street in the course of his popular ministry. He was an exceedingly powerful preacher, combining the fiery zeal of the evangelist with the highest culture of the scholar; year in, year out, he preached regularly throughout the length and breadth of Wales in preaching festivals and Associations. [He was moderator of the South Wales Association in 1883, and of the General Assembly in 1887.]

He wrote a standard commentary on *1 Corinthians*, 1885, on ' Hebrews ' (in the *Expositor's Bible*), 1888, and a Welsh version of the latter, 1900. His Davies lecture, 1895, on ' The God-man,' caused some uneasiness among the theologians of his denomination. He collected scarce Welsh books and different impressions of the Greek New Testament, which were left to the Bala College library.

In 1872 he was elected first principal of the first University College in Wales (Aberystwyth). The growth of the college in its early years was disappointing, according to the report of a departmental committee set up by Government (1880), and this

can be attributed to various reasons: shortage of money (until 1888), a disastrous fire in 1885, the opening of the two colleges at Bangor and Cardiff, and the endless calls on Edwards as a preacher. But, in spite of all criticism, there is no difficulty in accepting the following verdict: 'If it is no exaggeration to say that without [Sir Hugh Owen](#) the University College of Wales would never have been established, it is certainly less to say that it would never have reached its twentieth birthday but for Thomas Charles Edwards. It was his magnetic personality and his eloquent advocacy that, more than anything else, brought the College triumphantly through its trials' ([Davies and Jones](#), *The University of Wales*, 127).

In 1891 he resigned - principally for two reasons: Aberystwyth had taxed his health severely, and he was glad, at the earnest request of his denomination, to succeed his father as principal of Bala College. He reorganized the latter, turning it into a purely theological college; and he was the first president of the Theological Board of the University. His health broke down some years before his death (1900), and his hopes for Bala were not altogether realized, but he made an outstanding contribution to religion and learning in Wales at a critical period in the country's history.

Author

Reverend Gwilym Arthur Edwards, (1881 - 1963)

Sources

W. C. Davies, and W. L. Jones, *The History of the University of Wales*

T. C. Edwards, *Bywyd a Llythyrau y Diweddar Barch. Lewis Edwards, M.A., D.D.* (Liverpool 1901)

W. J. Gruffydd, *Owen Morgan Edwards Cofiant Cyfrol 1, 1858-1883* (Aberystwyth 1937), i

T. R. Jones, *Thomas Charles Edwards*

Iwan Morgan (ed.), *The College by the Sea* (1928)

G. A. Edwards, *Athrofa'r Bala, 1837-1937*

A selection of Edwards's correspondence during the formative period of University College, Aberystwyth, edited by T. I. Ellis, has been published by the National Library of Wales, in three supplements (1952-3) to the *The National Library of Wales Journal*

Further Reading

[Y Prifathraw T. C. Edwards, M.A., D.D., Y Geninen](#) (G yl Dewi), 1901, pp.1-10

Wikipedia Article: [Thomas Charles Edwards](#)

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