

HENRY, PHILIP (1631-1696), Presbyterian minister and diarist

Name: Philip Henry
Date of birth: 1631
Date of death: 1696
Child: Matthew Henry
Gender: Male
Occupation: Presbyterian minister and diarist
Area of activity: Literature and Writing; Religion

Born 24 August 1631; his father came from Briton Ferry in Glamorgan, migrated to London, where he tended the king's gardens in Whitehall; there young Philip came into contact with Charles I's two sons and with archbishop Laud. His foster-father was [Philip, 4th earl of Pembroke](#); in 1643 he became one of Busby's pupils at Westminster school; in 1647 he entered Christ Church, Oxford, with a scholarship. Thus the whole atmosphere of Henry's early life was unmistakably Anglican; for all that, he became a convert to the Presbyterian way and outlook, seeing no hope of a relaxed and liberal Episcopalian system. After graduating B.A. (1651) and M.A. (1652) he was appointed tutor to the sons of [judge John Puleston](#) at Emral in English Maelor, and preacher at Worthenbury chapel in the parish of Bangor Iscoed; he became attached to the presbytery nearest to him in Shropshire, Bradford North, and in September 1657, he submitted to Presbyterian ordination. Unfortunately, those days of religious anarchy were not very auspicious for the full working of the Presbyterian system, and Henry saw no objection to entering, like Baxter and others, into voluntary associations in north-eastern Wales with Independents, and even with men of Anglican affiliations. But the Restoration of 1660 laid a dead hand not only upon voluntary associations but upon classical Presbyterianism as well; before the end of 1661 Henry was turned out of Worthenbury by the act known as 12 Charles II, cap. 17 (not under the Act of Uniformity of 1662). As a silenced Puritan preacher he had to suffer in the days of persecution; and his diaries testify to the many schemes resorted to, some comparatively innocent, others depending upon discovering loopholes in the laws, to evade the disabilities of the Clarendon Code. He held out bravely until the Indulgence of 1687, except for the short interlude of freedom in 1672-5. As a high-principled Presbyterian he had little sympathy with declarations of indulgence or with conditional toleration; in 1672 he never asked for a licence to preach, but accepted one to preach at his own house at Broad Oak when it was obtained for him by one of his friends; his opinion about the Declaration of 1687 implied that 'God's intention was to do good by it.' When Toleration came in 1689 he felt somewhat peevish because he had to travel outside English Flintshire to secure the necessary certificate. His troubled journey came to an end on 24 June 1696. The *Diaries* leave the impression of a man somewhat too scrupulous about cases of conscience, but of his standards of life there can be no doubt - he was a Christian gentleman of unimpeachable piety.

MATTHEW HENRY (1662 - 1714), theologian and author

His second son, who was born at Broad Oak, 18 October 1662, became more famous in Wales than his father because of his commentaries on the Old and New Testaments which were published 1708-10, in five volumes, bringing the work down to the gospel of S. John; he had completed Acts before his death, ready for the sixth volume (other divines became responsible for the Epistles and Revelation). A Welsh epitome of the whole work was published at Carmarthen in 1728, and a larger translation in four volumes was published at Swansea, 1828-35. Of less ambitious works of his, several were translated into Welsh, some by [James Davies](#) (Iaco ap Dewi, 1648 - 1722). A rich collection of the various editions of Henry's works is lodged in the Salesbury library at Cardiff University College. He had been a student at Nonconformist Academies, and had entered Gray's Inn in 1685. It was at Chester, and in the Presbytery of that county, that he did his great work as author and preacher. He moved to Hackney in 1712, and died on a visit to Nantwich, 22 June 1714.

Sources

M. H. Lee (ed.), *Diaries and letters of Philip Henry, M.A. of Broad Oak, Flintshire, A.D. 1631-1696* (London 1882)

An account of the life and death of Mr. Philip Henry minister of the Gospel, near Whitchurch in Shropshire Who dyed June 24. 1696 in the sixty fifth year of his age, 1698, 59-61 (for the Voluntary Associations)

T. Richards, *Religious Developments in Wales, 1654-1662* (1923), chap. viii

T. Richards, *Wales under the Penal Code, 1662-1687* (1925), 12-19

Further reading

Wikipedia Article: [Philip Henry](#)

Wikipedia Article: [Matthew Henry](#)

Works

Jenkin Evans, Matthew Henry, *Catechism byrr i blant: at yr hwn a chwanegwyd un arall er addysc i'r rhai sydd iw derbyn a'u cymmeryd i Swpper yr Arglwydd* (Caerfyrddin 1708)

Matthew Henry, James Davies (translator), *Catechism o'r scrythur, yn nhrefn Gwyr y Gymmanfa* (Mwythig 1717)

Matthew Henry, *Eglwys yn y t : neu, Bregeth am grefydd-deuluaidd* (Mwythig 1772)

Matthew Henry, Joshua Thomas (translator), *Golwg ar Destament Newydd ein Harglwydd a'n Iachawdwr Iesu Grist: sef crynhoad o swm a sylwedd y pethau hynny a gynnwysir ym mhob llyfr, ac ym mhob pennod wedi ei gasglu allan o esboniadau helaeth y diweddar a'r Parchedig Mr. Mathew Henry, gweinidog yr efengyl. At yr hwn y chwanegwyd tabl a'r fesur cerdd yn ol yr egwyddor A.B.C. i helpu'r côf ac i wneuthur i fynu goncordans bychan i'r Testament newydd* (Caerfyrddin 1728)

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