

JOHN ap JOHN (1625? - 1697), the apostle of the Quakers in Wales

Name: John ap John
Date of birth: 1625?
Date of death: 1697
Spouse: Katrin wraig John ap John
Gender: Male
Occupation: the apostle of the Quakers in Wales
Area of activity: Religion
Author: William Ambrose Bebb

Called Siôn ap Siôn by **Ellis Pugh** in his *Annerch i'r Cymru* (1721); born at Pen-y-cefn in the township of Coed Cristionydd, Ruabon. He joined the Puritans in the days of the Commonwealth and became a member of the congregation at Wrexham which was under the care of **Morgan Llwyd**. On 21 July 1653 he and another man journeyed on **Morgan Llwyd**'s behalf to Swarthmore, Lancashire, to meet George Fox, the Quaker. Fox succeeded in converting both of them, one temporarily and the other, John ap John, permanently. He returned to **Morgan Llwyd** with a report and turned his back on his first teacher.

From this time on he was George Fox's disciple and the apostle of the Quakers in Wales. He established his first 'church' at Pen-y-cefn, and immediately began to evangelise in Wrexham, journeying thence along the Marches to the south - to Monmouthshire and Glamorgan where he was more than once thrown into prison. In 1657, accompanied this time by Fox, he made a similar tour to North Wales, proceeding by way of Carmarthen, Aberystwyth, Machynlleth, Dolgellay, and Caernarvon. In the course of these tours, and of others which followed, he slowly gained ground, especially in Monmouth, Montgomery, and Merioneth, and acquired disciples of some distinction such as **Richard Davies** of Cloddiau Cochion and the **Lloyd** family of Dolobran. From 1667 on, he was organizing and consolidating the movement, establishing monthly meetings, half-yearly meetings, and, in 1682, a yearly meeting. By 1686 the Quakers had begun to infiltrate into Anglesey - 'truth hath got some entrance into Anglesey.' But, so severe was the persecution, that from 1681 on some hundreds of the Welsh Quakers fled to Pennsylvania, thus seriously weakening the movement in Wales. He was faithful to the end. His wife, Katrin, had died in 1695, and he went to live with his daughter, the wife of John Mellor, near Stafford, where he died on 16 November 1697.

Author

William Ambrose Bebb, (1895 - 1955)

Sources

Thomas Shankland in *Cymru (O.M.E.)*, 1919

Penney, Norris, and others in *The Journal of the Friends' Historical Society*

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